

The Effectiveness of the Expanded Public Works Programme as a Poverty Alleviation Strategy

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ABSTRACT

This article examines how the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) enhances food security in South Africa's City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality (CTMM). The main objective is to investigate the effectiveness of the EPWP on food security and as a poverty alleviation strategy. Documents were analysed to identify major themes that address the research question. The major themes identified are unemployment, food insecurity, human capital challenges and the lack of consistency in policy implementation and execution. The article draws the following conclusions: the EPWP has the potential to alleviate poverty through the provision of stipends. The stipends are an important element in ensuring that beneficiaries' families are food secure. Moreover, the programme has the potential to improve the beneficiary's skills and enhance employability. Food security is a multifaceted phenomenon that requires a multi-sectoral approach to addressing complex livelihood challenges and problems. The article recommends that adequate human capital resources must be in place to support the implementation and coordination of the CTMM EPWP. Moreover, the CTMM must consider employing the beneficiaries permanently and explore the untapped sectors such as the green economy. The EPWP is a temporal poverty alleviation strategy, failing to remove people from total poverty; consequently, food insecurity due to lack of continuity. The article is relevant as an intervention strategy for challenges facing the CTMM EPWP mandate on poverty alleviation.

INTRODUCTION

The post-apartheid government inherited an unequal society, characterised by high unemployment levels and extreme poverty among previously disadvantaged groups. The majority of South Africans facing these challenges live in rural areas, with some in urban areas. The rural areas are receiving more attention because of the disadvantages and challenges faced, while the urban areas receive less due to the belief that most people are in a more advantageous position to deal with poverty, unemployment and other socio-economic difficulties. The fact that the urban areas are experiencing large numbers of employment seekers means that there is a high prevalence of socio-economic challenges, disease, crime, poverty, and migration, among other factors.

The South African Constitution, in Section 27(1) (b), upholds the right to have access to sufficient food and water and that the state must take reasonable legislative and other measures within its available resources to achieve the progressive realisation of each of these rights (Section 27(2)). Through these stipulations, the government has a constitutional mandate to ensure access to food for its citizens. Through the establishment and initiation of various regulatory frameworks governing South African food security, the government has spelt out its commitment to tackling food security issues (Hendriks 2014:2; Hendriks & Olivier 2015:557).

The government has implemented numerous initiatives, such as the EPWP, aimed at creating work opportunities to alleviate poverty. However, ever-rising poverty levels and unemployment remain contributing factors towards household food insecurity (CTMM, EPWP 2012). The EPWP, launched in 1994 as part of the policy agenda addressing job creation and the successor to the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP); is aimed at redressing apartheid era disparities. The RDP informed by both the White Paper for Social Development of 1997 and the National Development Plan (NDP), was supposed to contribute towards alleviating poverty, developing communities, providing work opportunities and enhancing social protection. According to CTMM EPWP (2012), the EPWP is a government initiative that caters for labour absorption and income transfers to poor households. The EPWP is also used by public-sector bodies in the creation of work opportunities with expenditure on goods and services, with the National Department of Public Works (DPW) as the custodian and national coordinator. The participants are employed on a temporary or ongoing basis, and the work opportunities are created in the infrastructure, non-state, environment, culture, and social sectors of the programme.

At the national level, the programme surpassed its set target and created over one million work opportunities in its Phase 1 (Olifant 2009). According to Mukhathi (2015:86), the EPWP is successful for Social Auxiliary Work (SAW) in poverty alleviation and skills development. EPWP participants who previously

had no income attested to an improved financial position after becoming beneficiaries. Similarly, Moeti (2013:98) attested that some of the participants appreciated the opportunity to earn income through the EPWP, while others attributed the programme to better standards of living. The participants indicated that the EPWP has improved their lives through increased income; as such, they could afford to increase the quantity and quality of their food consumption.

The CTMM is responsible for the implementation of the EPWP and ensures the achievement of the set targets. According to the CTMM EPWP (2012:6), the EPWP in CTMM has been in force since 2009, and the city has not been able to attain the set targets. These results are attributed to a variety of problems; including ineffective implementation of the programme; poor institutional arrangements, management, and reporting; inadequate project funding; unfair recruitment processes; and poor working conditions (Mogagabe 2016:73).

This article aims to establish whether the EPWP is effective as a poverty alleviation strategy for the participants in the CTMM. The main question is: what are the challenges affecting the effective implementation of the CTMM EPWP in the alleviation of poverty, subsequently food security? The article utilises a qualitative research method, with a case study research design and document analysis. The document analysis unearthed major themes on the EPWP's success and failure as a poverty alleviation strategy. The next section presents the problem statement underpinning the study.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Unemployment, poverty and inequality have been the key challenges facing South Africa since the advent of democracy. The EPWP was introduced as a strategy to provide poverty and income relief through temporary work for unemployed South Africans (Nzimakwe 2008:207). The EPWP is an important government mechanism, contributing to the state's key policy priorities of the provision of decent work, sustainable livelihoods, food security and the fight against crime.

The Household Food and Nutrition Security Strategy (HFNSS 2013) asserts a need for coordination and monitoring of the measures in place, due to the complex nature of food insecurity that remains unacceptably high, despite the strategies in place. The City of Tshwane Climate Response Strategy (CRS), (2017:5–8) asserts that food security and the nourishment of the CTMM residents is a top priority, and thus the development of an Urban Agriculture and Food Security Policy and Plan, guided by the need for food security and climate realities. The EPWP's biggest challenge is the implementation of the programme through the mobilisation of the three spheres of government. As such, the programme is classified as a DPW programme, instead of being a local government programme (Nzimakwe

2008:207). The other challenges, as identified by Moeti (2013) and CTMM EPWP (2012:7), include a lack of capacity in design, coordination and reporting in the attainment of the set targets. This article aims to enhance the understanding of how the identified challenges of programme implementation affect the EPWP's effectiveness in poverty alleviation in the CTMM. The next section provides an overview of the EPWP.

THE EXPANDED PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME

The EPWP was established in 2004 as an initiative of both the departments of Public Works and Social Development. The objectives of the programme are the creation of temporary employment and income opportunities, the provision of labour-intensive public services and goods, and ensuring that at least 14% of the participants find permanent employment after exiting the programme. The programme was established to recruit participants within its four sectors, and these participants are equipped with skills and knowledge, as well as an opportunity to earn an income. The successes of the programme include the attainment of its Phase 1 target of creating employment opportunities for a million people between 2004 and 2009. In Phase 2 80% percent of the target of creating 4.5 million work opportunities was achieved in 2014 (ILO 2018:3). Currently, the EPWP is in its third phase, 2014 to 2019, with targets to create a cumulative total of six million work opportunities by 2019, against a government funding commitment of ZAR150 billion (approximately US\$11.4 billion) over five years (ILO 2018:2).

The EPWP comprises four sectors that are also components of the programme, each with functions and activities to ensure the attainment of sectoral goals, and these comprise the infrastructure, environment, social and economic sectors. According to the DPW (DPW 2005:16), the infrastructure sector entails the activities requiring intensive labour and may include the building of low-volume roads and storm-water drains. The environmental sector's activities create employment, care for the environment and contribute to sustainable development. The social sector specialises in home- community-based care (HCBC) and the Early Childhood Development Programme (ECDP). The HCBC works on the provision of home-based health and social services by formal and informal caregivers (DPW 2005:17). The economic sector is dependent on the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) for coordination and implementation of the EPWP. This sector is focused on the creation of own businesses, as well as the provision of learner-ship ventures. This article focuses on the infrastructure component of the EPWP because it is the biggest creator of work opportunities.

From 2014 to 2019 projections, the total work/job opportunities (WO) and full-time equivalent (FTE) targets in the infrastructure were higher than the other three

sectors, with a target of 2 452 003 WOs and 799 240 FTEs (South African Cities Network (SACN) 2017:12). The FTEs and WO are targets for the different spheres and sectors of government. Set in the EPWP Phase 3 of the national DPW, FTEs are an indication of how sustainable the WOs are and are used to measure the contribution towards permanent jobs created over one year (1 FTE = 230 person-days of work). The relationship depends on the duration of the WOs. The longer the duration, the higher the FTEs (SACN 2017:12). To assess the effectiveness of the EPWP as a poverty alleviating strategy, it is necessary to equate the initiative to theory. The next section provides an analysis of the relationship between the EPWP and the Theory of Change (ToC).

THEORY OF CHANGE AND THE EPWP

ToC is a tailor-made approach for planning, participation in, and evaluation of social-change programmes. The theory defines the long-term goals of an intervention and then maps backwards to identify necessary preconditions. It focuses on generative causation, examining the processes and context, leading to varying intervention outcomes (Blamey and Mackenzie 2007:177).

The theory is prominent in different government and non-governmental organisations and is used in addressing some of the challenges encountered by evaluators when assessing the impact of complex social development programmes. These include, *inter alia*, poorly articulated assumptions, a lack of clarity on how change processes unfold, and insufficient attention being given to the sequence of changes necessary for long-term goals to be reached (O'Flynn 2012). As Vogel (2012:5) posited, the change process is ongoing; it encompasses discussion-based analysis and learning that produce valuable insights to support programme design, strategy, implementation, evaluation and impact assessment.

Drawing from this assertion, therefore, the ToC can be used to guide CTMM on how to effectively implement the EPWP programme as a poverty alleviation strategy. De Silva, Breuer and Lee (2014:267) argued that the ToC has several potential benefits for evaluation, as it can provide an organising framework with evaluation targeted at different outcomes and processing levels. In addition, Barnett and Gregorowski (2013:5) reiterated that the ToC is flexible, facilitating the implementation of multiple causal pathways. This is supported by the EPWP poverty-alleviation strategy of employment creation, achieved in four channels; labour intensity in government-funded projects, public social programmes, public environmental programmes and government support for small-enterprise learnerships and incubation programmes (SACN 2017:13). The following section presents an in-depth analysis of the governance of the EPWP in CTMM.

EPWP IN TSHWANE METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY

The EPWP is used in all three spheres of government, including state-owned enterprises (SOEs). The programme provides a channel for poverty eradication and food security by providing employment opportunities, which serve as a source of household income, on a temporary basis. The workers attached with the government, contracted parties, and other non-government organisations are coordinated through the ministerial conditions of employment, or learnerships (CTMM EPWP 2012:7)

The CTMM EPWP beneficiaries or participants are classified according to their South African citizenship status, local municipality residence status, income level, and household composition (CTMM EPWP 2012:25). This classification is important in ensuring that only residents benefit from the programme, and in addition, eliminates bias and any form of political manipulation.

The EPWP has an exit strategy for its participants to ensure that the acquired skills may be useful to the future employability of residents (CTMM EPWP 2012:7). The CTMM ensures the effectiveness of the EPWP through its incorporation into the municipality's activities, specifically, the promotion of the programme's principles in every integrated development plan (IDP).

The CTMM has created projects of street-cleaning, road and infrastructure maintenance, installation of storm-water pipes and the maintenance of local parks (Moeti 2013). The street-cleaning projects remain popular among the residents because they are visible in the townships as the biggest employer. These empowering projects are important to cushion against poverty, food insecurity and unequal societal disparities inherited from the apartheid era. The projects are still prevalent, with 4 499 WOs created in 2016/2017 as part of the main umbrella sector of environment and culture (SACN 2017:31).

In 2014, the CTMM aligned its EPWP policy to Phase 3 of the national EPWP. The policy provides guidelines on implementing the EPWP in the city and comprises of the subsequent sections, namely, "background to the EPWP, overview of the EPWP at provincial and national level, and coordination within the CTMM". The CTMM coordination system comprises targeted EPWP sectors, employment targets, and participant's recruitment and reporting processes. The coordination system is underpinned by comprehensive sets of short- and long-term initiatives and policy reforms (SACN 2017:30).

In 2016, the CTMM embarked on a massive restructuring exercise. This involved moving the EPWP from the Department of Economic Development to the Department of Community and Social Development. Furthermore, the assignment of group heads to more than one department. This was useful as an efficiency strategy (SACN 2017:30).

The CTMM EPWP unit's institutional arrangements comprise sector specialists aligned to different departments. The specialists report to the deputy directors, and directors of their respective departments, namely, Monitoring and Evaluation, and Sector Coordination and Programme Management. The departmental heads report to the executive director of the EPWP in the CTMM. The major challenge affecting the efficient implementation of the EPWP in the CTMM is a lack of experienced personnel or unfilled department specialist positions. As reported by SACN (2017:31), the specialist positions for the departments of Sector Coordination and Programme Management were vacant. The shortage is prevalent to the administrators in all the departments, including Monitoring and Evaluation.

The other challenges include mainstreaming and institutionalisation of the programme; a lack of commitment from political and administrative leadership; and, finally, inadequate project-design capacity (CTMM EPWP 2012:12; Moeti 2013:97). To address these challenges, there is a need for proper coordination in the implementation processes of the CTMM EPWP and also filling of the departmental specialist positions as well as support staff.

Matsena (2017) reported the presence of loopholes in the recruitment policy, for example, incidences of nepotism in the recruitment system. Moreover, there is political interference in policymaking and implementation. However, the CTMM policy reforms are commendable for curtailing these practices, by closing the loopholes and ensuring that qualifying beneficiaries have equal access to job opportunities (SACN 2017:57).

The literature on the CTMM EPWP is scant. However, results from other South African provinces can be related to the municipality. McCord (2004:54–59) conceded that the EPWP positively contributes to the improved conditions of households. Households attest that their financial situations and material assets improved after participation in the programme. More evidence of nutritional gains was recorded in the study population of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) and Limpopo.

Satumba (2016:48) asserted that the positive impacts of the EPWP programme are more qualitative than quantitative. It contributes to home improvements and changes the participants' quality of life and ability to access adequate food among households in Bushbuckridge, Mpumalanga. The EPWP impact studies in KZN, as presented by Motala and Ngandu (2016:30), identified increased welfare benefits, and a decline in the number of households above the poverty line during the programme intervention. Once exited, the beneficiaries fall back to poverty. The assumption that the EPWP programme enhances labour-market entry was not realised.

The welfare benefits of the EPWP as detailed in the poverty alleviation strategy can be equated to household food security, which is a proxy for poverty eradication. The next section provides a discussion on the relationship between poverty alleviation and food security, and subsequently the EPWP.

POVERTY ALLEVIATION, FOOD SECURITY AND THE EPWP

Poverty alleviation, also termed *poverty reduction*, is a set of economic and humanitarian interventions from the government and non-governmental organisations implemented to improve food security. The employment component of the EPWP, livelihood support grants and enforcement of the national minimum wage amount are examples of poverty alleviation strategies. These play an important role in improving the food security status of a nation (Van de Merwe 2017).

The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO 1996) describes *food security* as, “The state when people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to adequate, safe and nutritious food”. Food security comprises four dimensions, namely, availability, access, stability and utilisation. The four dimensions are interdependent and rely on the stable availability of food supply (Hendriks 2015:610). *Food availability* refers to the adequate and continuous supply of food. Food is made available through agricultural production, commercial imports, and food assistance (National Policy on Food and Nutrition Security, NPFNS 2013; Hendriks 2015:611). Through the EPWP, availability is necessitated through the acquisition of agriculture equipment. This has a positive impact on productivity, and subsequently stimulation of demand. In addition, the programmes of the EPWP promote water and soil conservation, which subsequently mitigate disaster risk (M^c Cord 2013:21).

Food access is the capability of a household to obtain food regularly through purchasing, borrowing, bartering, and receiving gifts (Household Food and Nutrition Security Strategy (HFNS 2013). Access is dependent on physical, economic and socio-cultural elements. The physical element encompasses the transport required to deliver food to different recipients. The economic element relates to affordability, and access to markets. The socio-cultural element relates to a lack of access based on social conflicts or gender discrimination (FAO 2017; Hendriks and Olivier 2015). Stipends obtained from the EPWP enable direct food acquisition, lift liquidity constraints to invest in own food gardening programmes and also increase reservation wages for agricultural labour, in particular small-scale commercial farming (M^c Cord 2013:21).

Food utilisation refers to the intake of safe nutritious food for meeting people’s dietary needs. The concept also covers factors such as the provision of adequate sanitary facilities and safe food preparation processes and storage (Hendriks 2015:11). Finally, food *stability* is the state of being food secure by having an acceptable quantity or quality of food at all times. Stability is determined by economic, political, market and natural conditions (Hendriks 2015:12).

It is important to note that poverty alleviation does not encompass calorie intake alone; it comprises of all four components of food security, access, utilisation and stability.

Despite being progressive, the EPWP contributes to poverty alleviation and equality. This is through an increase in income, which translates to increased food consumption and nutritional diet (Moeti 2013:51; Mogagabe 2016:73).

The EPWP's expectations of poverty eradication and food security support the Fetsa Tlala initiative established in 2014, to promote food and nutrition security. This initiative entailed cultivating one million hectares of land for food production by 2018/19, an outcome that is not achievable due to the prevailing drought conditions in the country.

The following section presents the regulatory framework governing food security in South Africa. Food security encompasses all the components of poverty alleviation. The policies are reviewed in the context of their challenges and successes. The challenges pave the way for the implementation of the EPWP, which is a better initiative for poverty alleviation and subsequently food security.

THE REGULATORY FRAMEWORK GOVERNING FOOD SECURITY IN SOUTH AFRICA

The regulatory framework governing poverty alleviation in South Africa, is directly related to food security. The *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996*, contains the Bill of Rights in which the right to access food and other basic needs is enshrined. Section 27 (1) (b) stipulates that all citizens have a right to access adequate food and water. In addition, Section 27(2) states that the government must take reasonable legislative and other means to achieve the continuous realisation of this right. To ensure that the constitutional mandate is fully adhered to, the government has put in place various interventions to address the food security issue. The Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) has a mandate to develop agricultural policies and support programmes that ensure South African citizens are given agricultural opportunities for meeting their basic food needs (Du Toit 2011; Mogagabe 2016). The department has initiated numerous programmes to address food security and create opportunities to ensure that South Africans participate in ensuring food security through agricultural activities. Among these is the Integrated Food Security Strategy (IFSS) launched in 1996, the purpose of which is to consolidate and improve the coordination of the multifaceted and diverse food security interventions in South Africa. Specifically, the IFSS was introduced to ensure “the availability of adequate food to all citizens; align people’s income to food prices, empower citizen’s choices on healthy, nutritious and safe food; and ensure the availability of safety nets and food emergency management systems” (Drimie & Ruysenaar 2010:316). Through the IFSS various sectors and stakeholders work together to achieve food security objectives by efficient, economical and productive use of resources). The IFSS intended to provide

a multisectoral framework for addressing food, but the lack of implementation was the major challenge faced by the policy (Drimie & Ruysenaar 2010:333).

The Zero Hunger Programme was implemented in 2012 under the coordination of DAFF and the Department of Health (DOH). DOH is responsible for nutrition and DAFF for food production. The programme entails the following: first, provision of an effective mechanism for the organisation of stakeholder resources (national, provincial, and private) in pursuit of rural agriculture development and food security. Second the institution of effectual support structures for farmers through capacity building and institutional support; and third, enhancing nutritional security. Fourth, is the establishment of marketing channels and finally, the creation of opportunities for income diversification.

The NPFNS was introduced in 2013, to build on existing food security initiatives and systems, as well as aligning relevant mechanisms and ensuring proper coordination and oversight. Specifically, the policy provided a guiding framework to maximise the cooperation between different food security strategies and programmes of government and civil society.

The discussed policies are good on paper, but failing in implementation. The literature attests to the failure as evidenced by the growing numbers of food-insecure households in South Africa (Mogagabe 2016:3). The EPWP expands on most of the failures of the poverty alleviation or food security policies implemented in the Republic. The strategy is region-oriented, helping reduce poverty and subsequently food insecurity at the targeted local government level. The following section presents the research methodology used in addressing the main research question.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research utilised a qualitative research methodology, a case study design and document analysis. According to Miles and Huberman (1994:6), qualitative research is primarily exploratory research. It is used to gain an understanding of underlying reasons, opinions, and motivations or is a form of inquiry that assists to understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena with little disruption of the natural setting. A case study design explores existing life events through detailed contextual analysis of events and their relationships. Case studies allow variations in terms of instrumental, intrinsic and collective approaches to be used in data analysis (Zaidah 2007:2).

Documents allow the researcher to gather adequate information from various sources, thus saving on the resources and time constraints of primary data collection techniques, such as surveys (Doolan & Froelicher 2009:13). Documents, comprising institutional reports, surveys, public records, and books were reviewed

and analysed to interpret, evoke meaning and derive knowledge of how effective the CTMM's EPWP is in alleviating poverty. The documents were classified in three categories. First were policy documents to analyse the EPWP and the South African food security policies. Second were progress documents, to gather information on the EPWP's execution. Third, were EPWP assessment reports, books, journals and newspaper articles, to gather information on the successes and challenges facing the EPWP as a poverty alleviation strategy. The document analysis process entailed gathering data from passages, quotations and extracts. The data was then organised into major themes related to the main question of the research using content analysis. The following section presents the empirical findings on the challenges and capacity of the CTMM's EPWP in poverty alleviation.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The functionality of food markets and food distribution systems influences the adequate access to food at a household level. According to Motala, Ngandu, Masvaure, Hart, and Gwenhure (2016), food insecurity in South Africa can be linked to widespread chronic poverty and unemployment, leading to varying depths of food insecurity among households. Table 1 presents the major themes emanating from the document analysis on the effectiveness of the CTMM's EPWP as a poverty alleviation strategy.

Table 1: Main documents and themes

Main document	Theme
StatsSA, 2016 Community Survey	Household food security
State of the Expanded Public Works Programmes in South African Cities 2016–2017	Unemployment Human capital challenges
Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition Report 2017	Effective policy implementation
Implementation Evaluation of EPWP in the Social Sector: Phase Two (2009/10–2013/14); Phase Three (2014/15–2018/19)	Ability to earn an income

Source: (Author's own representation)

Household food security

The achievement of household food security depends on the government's commitment to halve poverty. Income-generating projects from the EPWP are necessary as a poverty alleviation strategy. About 19% of the CTMM households are

impoverished. This is the second highest rate in the country, after KZN (20.6%). In addition, 15% of the households have no income to improve access to food (Stats SA 2018; Ndobu and Sekhampu 2013:311).

Unemployment

According to SACN (2017:57), unemployment is the main cause of poverty and food insecurity in South Africa and in the CTMM. Factors affecting the ever-rising unemployment levels include rapid globalisation, a lack of skills, a lack of research and development and foreign direct investment in the country's economic sector. Moreover, graduates and the economically active population lack work experience. The inability of households to achieve food security may be because of their poor access to an income and purchasing power. Through the EPWP programme, the unemployment rate in CTMM worsened from 14.7% in 2011 to 22.3% in 2015. This represents an increase of about 337 600 from at least 313 700 unemployed in 2011. The EPWP offers temporary employment, with no guarantee of future employment opportunities. Through temporary employment, participants of the EPWP are provided with stipends that ensure that their living conditions are improved. Moreover, they are equipped with skills to make them employable in other organisations or self-start-up businesses. The CTMM should, however, improve the demographic allocation of job opportunities. In the year ending 2016/2017, the city fell short of the demographic targets for youth, women and people with disabilities (SACN 2017:57).

Human capital challenges

The programme's recruitment process in the CTMM before the intervention of the Democratic Alliance-led coalition in 2016 was reduced to a cadre deployment drive, as most participants were members or relatives of those in the prior governing party. Being part of the African National Congress (ANC) or an active participant of its activities was enough for employee loyalty and a reward scheme (Hlatshwayo 2017:4). The recruitment and development of skilled and knowledgeable public-sector officials are important to ensure that government policies and programmes are established; as well as the efficient, effective and economic utilisation of public resources which are noticeable challenges and recurring problems in the South African public service. The commitment from municipal officials is crucial to the achievement of programme goals and objectives. The challenges emanated from the procedures followed in terms of recruiting and the employment of the EPWP workers. According to Hlatshwayo (2017:4–5), the challenges included nepotism, political interference and cronyism, resulting in the city's inability to achieve the Phase 2 employment targets. The failure to attain

the set targets, due to the flawed recruitment processes, led to the CTMM review of the EPWP's recruitment process, and, in November 2017, a revised EPWP recruitment drive, launched to promote transparency in the employment processes of the EPWP. Finally, the EPWP cannot provide employment to all economically active unemployed households. The programme is determined by the ability to create work opportunities (supply driven), rather than the need for employment (demand driven) (Peres 2019).

Leadership challenges

Poverty alleviation is a phenomenon with various complexities and challenges. The challenges cannot be solely addressed at local government level. With no clear mandate for local government, there is no commitment and capacity for its involvement in the EPWP. The leadership challenges also spill over to commitment inconsistencies and partisan contentions, leading to the implementation and coordination failure. The lottery system instituted in 2016, in selecting beneficiaries, is effective in restraining nepotism and the partisan-based allocation of opportunities (Matsena 2017). In addition, management failure, as seen in quarterly site visits, revealed that the city lost work opportunities created in the infrastructure sector through subcontracting (SACN 2017:57).

Effective policy implementation

The effective implementation and delivery of policies and investment plans aligned with the EPWP require adequate funding, setting the right priorities and strengthening institutional capacities. In 2014, the CTTM approved a five-year EPWP policy, with the help of business and sector plans. These stakeholders provided advice on implementing EPWP in the city. The implementation plan included a background to the EPWP, a national and provincial perspective of the EPWP, coordination within Tshwane, an overview of EPWP sectors, job-creation targets, and beneficiary recruitment and reporting processes.

The CTMM's performance in policy implementation and delivery is positive, with the Tshepo 10 000 initiative and the Vat Alles project continually adding to the job opportunities created by the municipality. Moreover, the Tshwane Food and Energy Centre (TFEC), implemented by the Sustainability Division, created 25 sustainable job opportunities in farming livestock and crops. In addition, the Research and Innovation Division implemented the *Water Hygiene Convenience Leakless Valve* pilot project, which created about 20 job opportunities (SACN 2017:57).

The CTMM has made full use of different policies to address food insecurity through employment. However, there is a need for sustained periods of

accelerated and inclusive economic growth and a comprehensive set of short- and long-term policy reforms and initiatives. These include labour-market interventions and improving the quality and accessibility of the city's work readiness programmes.

Ability to earn an income

According to Tawodzera (2016:12–13), income is among the key determinants of poverty alleviation and food security. Hlatshwayo (2017:7) asserted that most participants appreciated the opportunity of earning an income, which provided them with purchasing power for basics, such as food and electricity. According to Ndobo and Sekhampu (2013:310), low-income households are susceptible to food insecurity as opposed to their middle- and higher-income counterparts. The ability to earn income, through gifts, grants and donations, reduces the incidences of food insecurity in all four dimensions of access, utilisation, availability and stability. An income is the mechanism that affords the individual the power to purchase. It also enhances the participant's livelihood in the short term, and subsequently in the long term when the skills gained are translated to employment in various economic sectors (Tawodzera 2016:13). The EPWP, through its creation of work opportunities, affords the Tshwane participants an opportunity to earn an income, ensuring that lives change for the better. EPW Phase 3 project-based training through cooperatives and small enterprise development will capacitate participants for formal employment, hence creating food stability (Henderson 2016:28).

CONCLUSION

The EPWP can be a mechanism to provide income support to the poor in critical times rather than as a way of getting the unemployed back into the labour market. This can be achieved through a proper implementation and evaluation process to ensure that set targets are achieved, and that a programme's sustainability in the long term is set. The following conclusions are drawn from this study: the EPWP has the potential to alleviate poverty through the paying of stipends. This programme's success depends on the commitment and coordination of all role players involved. The money that the participants receive is an important element in improving livelihoods. In addition, the EPWP has the potential to improve skills and enhance employability. Channelling these skills in relation to the requirements of the region, as well as the changes in global and environmental factors, such as the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) and climate change; are necessary to ensure maximum benefit from the programme and the employability

of participants. There are many provincial successes of the EPWP in both rural and urban areas. However, the programme can achieve all its obligations through a change in prioritisation of the objectives and improved policy implementation, as well as continuous monitoring and evaluation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The CTMM EPWP policies, interventions and programmes aimed at reducing poverty must adhere to laid down processes of the policy agenda setting, policy formulation, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. For effective service delivery, the coordination should involve various stakeholders. In addition, the mandate of the central government, provincial government, and the local government must be clear and unambiguous, showing clear lines of authority.

In striving to eradicate poverty through the EPWP, the article recommends the following interventions:

Adequate human capital support

Skilled human capital is critical in ensuring the successful coordination, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the CTMM EPWP activities. A lack of staffing in key departmental specialist positions has hampered the effectiveness of the EPWP sectoral coordination. The filling of positions should be performed with formal human resources recruitment processes to avoid corruption and nepotism.

Permanent employment opportunities

The creation of permanent employment opportunities is critical in ensuring that households have a stable income source. Preference should be given to women and the disabled. These two population groups are susceptible to food insecurity and poverty. In addition, there is a skills gap in the environmental segment as well as the 4IR. CTMM should create programmes to equip residents with skills on the green economy as well as 4IR (*Cape Times* 2019).

Effective policy implementation and maintenance

According to Gumede (2008:167), public policy is a declaration and implementation of the government's intention. The EPWP is a government programme that must be effectively implemented and maintained to ensure that its objectives are achieved. In a policy cycle, all stages must be coherent for effective service delivery. The CTMM EPWP needs to be effectively evaluated to determine the

achievement of set objectives, areas for improvement and possible policy maintenance. Benchmarking against other municipalities and drawing lessons from their successes is an important intervention strategy.

Development of strategies to ensure employability

Programmes and strategies to oversee employability should be regulated and implemented. This will assist in keeping a record of the skills developed and ensuring that they are utilised to benefit both the government and the individual. The CTMM has an indigence policy that needs proper implementation to ensure that the participants are identified accordingly.

Monitoring and evaluation

The monitoring and evaluation of policy, programmes and projects is critical in determining whether objectives are attained, household food security is enhanced, and records are kept and this will ensure that programmes are changed or terminated. Monitoring and evaluation of any policy, programme or project is vital at every stage to ensure the attainment of the set goals, as well as revisiting the objectives, to allow adjustments and corrective action to be instituted. Monitoring and evaluation should also go beyond the EPWP in ensuring that the participants can utilise the acquired skills for future employability. In summary, the authors are of the opinion that the EPWP in the infrastructure sector has the potential to enhance food security and contribute towards the improvement of the lives of its participants, but the income earned is not sustainable for poverty eradication.

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