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Exploring the Lived Experiences of Trainees on the Extended Public Works Programme: The Tshwane Leadership Foundation Case

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DECLARATION

I, Tshepang Mabusela declare that except with reference to other people's works, which have been duly acknowledged, this report is my own unaided work. It is being submitted in partial fulfilment for the award of Master of Social Science in Development Studies at the University of Pretoria, South Africa. The report has not been submitted before any degree or examination in any other University.

Tshepang Mabusela
29 January 2019

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate and describe the impact that lived experiences have on trainees of the EPWP. As one of the main employment creation strategies, the EPWP is aimed at reducing unemployment as well as contributing to ending the skills deficit in South Africa by creating temporary employment opportunities for the unemployed and mainly unskilled. Given the strong link between waged employment and poverty income in South Africa, it is important to respond to the challenge of unemployment. Understanding the type of participants who join the EPWP is crucial in order to understand if the programme has an impact on the lives of trainees. Hence the lived experiences of trainees are examined. Firstly, the study examined how the education, skills and training attained by trainees impact on the EPWP training experience. Secondly, the research investigated the conditions of EPWP employment to obtain evidence on whether the programme working and training experience increase the skills and employability of trainees. Lastly, the survival strategies employed by trainees in order to deal with and overcome their socio-economic embeddedness was researched. This study made use of semi-structured interviews conducted with thirty former trainees of the EPWP at Tshwane Leadership Foundation. The study reveals that lived experiences have a significant impact on determining how participants interact with the programme. The programme is being implemented as more of a social protection measure than a labour market performance booster. The principal reason for this was the programmes lack of work experience and training that could improve the participant's labour market performance. In this way, the program is more of a social safety net and less of a labour market performance. This nuance helped participants meet and overcome their socio-economic embeddedness

Keywords: Lived experiences, South Africa, Tshwane, Unemployment, Extended Public Works Programme (EPWP), Bullshit Jobs, Precarity, Skills development.

Acronyms

ANC	African National Congress
CBD	Central Business District
CBPWP	Community Based Public Works Programme
CCT	Conditional Cash Transfers
CoT	City of Tshwane
DPW	Department of Public Works
EGP	Employment Guarantee Programme
EPWP	Extended Public Works Programme
EPWP- SS	Extended Public Works Programme – Social Sector
ETI	Employment Tax Incentive
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GEAR	Growth Employment and Redistribution
IDT	Independent Development Trust
NDP	National Development Trust
NPO	Non-profit Organisation
NPWP	National Public Works Programme
NQF	National Qualifications Authority
NSS	Non-State Sector
NYDA	National Youth Development Agency
PAYE	Pay-as-you-earn
PWP	Public Works Programme
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SARS	South African Revenue Authority
SDA	Skills Development Act
SECP	Special Employment Creation Programme
TLF	Tshwane Leadership Foundation
UIF	Unemployment Insurance Fund

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1 Chapter One: Introduction to the Study

1.1 Background

After forty-two years of racial discrimination under the apartheid regime, a more democratic system of governance, which accorded all citizens with equal civil liberties and human rights, came into being (Seekings, 2007). After the apartheid system's discriminatory social services and welfare policies that favoured the white minority, the post-1994 government led by the African National Congress (ANC) was met with the mammoth task of creating policy and welfare strategies that would address past injustices of the apartheid system (Visser, 2004: 6-7). From various spheres of the economy and society, the expectation was that the state must create opportunities that would meaningfully include formerly disadvantaged people who had, for decades, been subjected to widespread poverty, inequality, exploitation, harassment and exclusion from formal employment (Ray, 1998: 170-171).

The apartheid regime was brought to its knees in 1986 when economic sanctions were imposed on South Africa. This meant that the new dispensation, that previously led the liberation struggle, was left an ailing economy. The new government was obliged to adopt a robust, vibrant economic policy that could attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), increase growth and international competitiveness while decreasing the debt bill on the nation (Ray, 1998: 172; Terreblanche, 1999: 2; Visser, 2004: 8). Internally, the government needed to ensure the inclusion and activity of the previously disadvantaged population.

South Africa's first post-apartheid President, Nelson Mandela, described this change in systems as part of a prospective 'better life' for all South Africans. Implicit in this conception was that the

country would create and deliver broad-based development and prosperity for all South Africans while still being durable for economic growth (W. M. Gumede, 2007: 123; Wehner, 2000: 183). The economic blueprint for the new dispensation saw the government adopting the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) in 1994, a policy that was mainly principled around redressing past injustices of the apartheid system while forming a welfare strategy that was compatible with the new governments development commitments (Adelzadeh, 1996: 66; Visser, 2004: 6).

The RDP became the priority and guiding policy for government. As Adelzadeh (1996: 67), Visser (2004: 8) and Terreblanche (2002: 89) argue, socially, the systematically deprived and indigent majority supported the RDP as it promised a democratic society that would focus on releasing the economic potential of the country by providing employment, equal distribution of income and wealth, and provision of basic needs for all South Africans. In terms of social security, the RDP arguably achieved certain results. For instance, Magubane (2002: 95) and Marais (2001: 190) assert that the entitlement of all citizens to receive social security was immediately realised with the new constitutions provision where the government established an extensive welfare system (social grants system) catering for the aged, disabled, children in need, foster parents and those unable to meet their basic social requirements. Free healthcare programmes were established for pregnant women and small children, and free meals were provided for between 3.5 to 5 million school children (Magubane, 2002: 95; Marais, 2001: 170-175)

Soon after being implemented, the RDP ran into trouble. The government began realising that staff administering and managing the RDP lacked capacity and skills, there were huge backlogs in providing access to basic services and employment, and there was mass provincial maladministration (Seekings & Natrass, 2002: 471; Visser, 2004: 7). Added to this, the RDP was met with huge criticism from business, the financial sector and the opposition who mainly argued that the RDP

lacked a workable and coherent macroeconomic framework; and its socialist measure was incompatible with the realities and demands of the globalised economic system (Magubane, 2002: 96; Terreblanche, 2002: 109). The South African government seemed to have turned away from its stance of creating an economic policy that could synchronise with a globalising world; and moved towards policies that were more inward focused to redress the inequalities that left the majority living in destitute.

Despite the policy's social stance, its impact on unemployment and the inclusion of the previously disadvantaged in the economy was disappointing (Gelb, 2007: 20). A final blow was taken by the RDP when the country encountered its first major currency crisis bordering an economic recession since the post-apartheid era in 1996 due to a slowdown in macroeconomic policy activity and the country's narrow focus on reallocating existing revenue (Visser, 2004: 8). Commentators such as W. M. Gumede (2007), Adelzadeh (1996), Meyer (2000) and Natrass and Seekings (1997) have made claims that in an effort to prevent capital flight and calm foreign currency markets, the government was compelled to introduce a more neoliberal, macroeconomic strategy; Growth Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) in 1996 . GEAR departed significantly from the RDP. Implicit in its strategy was the idea that redistribution should be achieved through economic growth – Gross Domestic Product (GDP) increase and trickle down philosophy held sway (Bond, 2003: 78; Meyer, 2000:96; Visser, 2004: 9). Therefore, GEAR was taking the opposite trajectory to the RDP which advocated for growth through redistribution.

GEAR was premised on the idea that creating an investor-friendly environment that would maintain competitiveness, led mainly by the private sector, would promote economic growth, thereby creating jobs, redistribute wealth and provide funds for social expenditure and welfare programmes (Adelzadeh, 1996: 71; Magubane, 2002: 97). The government and its stakeholders expected that

GEAR would reach its set targets through the significant reduction in government spending, and export-orientated economy, relaxed exchange controls and through reprioritizing social service delivery budgets and municipal infrastructure (Bond, 2003: 183,187; Magubane, 2002: 97; Visser, 2004: 9-10).

Under the new development model, the government projected that 400 000 new jobs would be created while increasing the economic growth rate to 6% by 2000 (*Growth, Employment and Redistribution: A Macroeconomic Strategy*, 1996; Magubane, 2002: 97). Basically, GEAR was moving away from the people-orientated development policy that the newly elected government prided itself on, with the vision that the correct economic environment conducive to durable economic growth would bring about a better life for all through poverty reduction and employment creation. The government moved towards neoliberal economic approaches where priority shifted further to profit maximisation for a few elites, domestically-owned and multinational corporations in the name of increasing 'GPD', as a measure and sole indication of growth.

Using GDP to define growth is problematic because this type of growth does not always amount to an improved quality of life for citizens. Fioramonti (2013) states that GDP has become the overarching parameter to gauge the acceptability and feasibility of policies, development initiatives, social welfare provisions, and infrastructure investment; ultimately making it the benchmark that defines the global pecking order. However, its exclusive focus on formalized economic transactions and exclusion of the informal economic structures (goods or services within households, informal economies, bartering) that most so-called 'developing countries' are dependent upon, make the GDP an inadequate measure of a country's economic performance, development and social welfare (Fioramonti, 2013). Therefore, to have GDP growth dominate the economic discourse, more so the

development trajectory in a country problematises policy making because, ultimately, GDP has no bearing on equity, social justice and redistribution.

The stark shift in policy from a development model of policymaking to a more neoliberal model meant that redressing past injustices and redistribution to the marginalized majority was to be determined by the performance of the country's economy. Neoliberal ideology promotes economic liberalization through free markets, advances policies of liberalisation, privatisation, austerity and free trade; supports the increased role of private sector involvement in the economy and society and reduced interference by the state in public life (Zadra, 2017: 12). The knock on the effects of neoliberalism has been centred around the erosion, rollback or downsizing of "social" states, and therefore, social exclusion of the poor and marginalised (Ferguson, 1990, 2015; Zadra, 2017). Given South Africa's urgency to grow and redistribute wealth, a shift to neoliberal policies appeared economically sound and pragmatic, however, the economic transformation of the country failed to reach its growth targets, creating devastating growth rates that ultimately led to a wider inequality gap and high unemployment. This meant that the exclusion of the already poor and marginalised increased while the richer got richer, the poor grew poorer.

Critics lambasted the failure of GEAR on its 'inability to present an analytically sound and empirically justified strategy, therefore failing to provide a credible framework for productive investors' (Adelzadeh, 1996: 27-28; Gelb, 1999: 155; 2007: 24-26; Marais, 2001: 123-138; Terreblanche, 2002:436-439). Since its inception, GEAR underperformed and under-delivered whereby during the period 1996-2001 the economy grew an average of 2.7% a year instead of the 6% that was envisaged (Magubane, 2002: 98; Visser, 2004: 10). Added to the poor economic policies, scholars and economists alike attributed the country's slow economic growth to political uncertainty,

ailing investor confidence, and a lack of openness to the international markets (Bhorat, 2004; Bhorat & van der Westhuizen, 2008; Marais, 2013; Natrass, 2003).

South Africa was experiencing jobless growth where even though there was growth, the growth did not yield any new jobs. Employment shrank by 3% with more than 1 million jobs being destroyed since 1996 (Magubane, 2002: 98; Visser, 2004: 10). Visser (2004: 10-11) and W. M. Gumede (2007: 124-126) ascertain South Africa's experience of jobless growth accompanied by major layoffs took place in the public and private sector, primarily due to the mass privatisation of public sector services, a move from being a labour intensive to a skills-intensive economy, the introduction of labour saving technologies, increased outsourcing, and a market turn towards using casual and contract labour.

The above mentioned structural changes to the political economy were in an effort to put South Africa's economy on the international map and in good standing to compete in the global markets (Narsiah, 2002; Natrass, 2003). This drastic shift away from the employment trends in South Africa meant that the then primary sectors, mining, manufacturing and agriculture, were moving away from unskilled labour which resulted in a sharp shedding of unskilled labour (Klasen & Woolard, 2009; Marais, 2001). South Africa's employment *modus operandi* relied heavily on providing jobs through labour-intensive industries, but as the global economic dynamic changed, so did the sectoral composition of employment in the country; which meant that the educated, skilled workers were favoured over uneducated low skilled labourers. This meant that the black majority, who mainly occupied the low skilled labour positions, were excluded from employment circles because these circles were now looking for skilled labourers.

Suffocated by increased labour costs, a concomitant decrease in international mineral prizes and the demand to increase profits, the majority of South African companies in the mining, manufacturing

and agricultural industries, decided to pursue strategies in line with economic globalisation where free movement of goods, capital, services, technology and information meant mass profit margins and a sustainable corporation in times where economic growth had stagnated (Bond, 2003; Budlender, 2009; Gelb, 2007; Natrass, 2003; Seekings & Natrass, 2002).

In light of this, corporations clamoured for labour market ‘flexibility’ which gave them the prerogative to change various aspects of their workforce and organisation to meet the demands of a globalising market (Marais, 2013). These factors added to the mass ejection of many low educated, unskilled labourers and the stagnation of the labour market which meant that work seeking youth entering the labour market as new entrants were met by an unfavourable market unable to take them in.

Despite these development mantras and models, the post-apartheid South African government has provided minimal opportunities and has created a largely polarized unequal society where a significant number of the able-bodied, would-be working population, especially the youth, are living in hopeless circumstances. South Africa’s economy has been unable to grow in a manner that would allow for greater access to the labour market for the disenfranchised, black majority who are unemployed and mostly unskilled. The fragility of the economy lies in the misrepresentation of ownership and economic exclusion created by decades of unjust apartheid policies. Under a disguise of ‘development’ defined and measured in GDP terms, the remnants of this unjust system premised on racial exclusion persist and have set the precedence for the current unequal society where employment levels and income differentials are distorted, skills and education levels are low; gender and spatial inequality is the norm. The unemployment rate is currently at an all-time high standing at 39% for youth between the ages of 15-34 (*Quarterly Labour Force Survey: Quarter 3 2018*, 2018).

1.2 Problem Statement

In an attempt to close the inequality gap, the skills deficit, and the high unemployment rate, the government of South Africa introduced the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) as a major employment strategy in 2003 (Phillips, 2004). EPWP was created to expand on the preceding Public Works Programmes (PWP), which was announced by the former President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki during the State of the Nation Address in February 2003. The programme was subsequently endorsed by various stakeholders at the Growth and Development Summit (GDS) held in June 2003. It was finally adopted by Cabinet in November 2003 and launched in May 2004 (Ibid). The EPWP was initiated in part as a counterbalance of the criticism levelled against the jobless growth discourse, which was at the time being presided over by GEAR. The call for pro-poor growth around the same time in which GEAR was delivering jobless growth, created a discourse crisis for the administration. Due to this, GEAR had to be propped up with a redistributive scheme for public legitimacy.

As one of the main employment creation strategies, the EPWP is aimed at reducing unemployment and contributing to ending the skills deficit, and in turn improving development in South Africa. The programme recruits over a quarter million participants each year. Some scholars argue that even though there are disparities between the popular perception of the EPWP and the actual outcomes, the programme arguably has the potential to offer some response to the unemployment and skills shortage crisis in South Africa (McCord, 2004a, 2004b; Noble, Ntshongwana, & Surender, 2008). Given the centrality of the programme in the discourse of poverty alleviation through employment creation and skills development of marginalized populations, especially women and youth, it is imperative to understand the impact of the programme. More so, the impact it has on its participants in terms of their socio-economic standing, education, skills and their labour market performance post the programme.

Thus far, scholarship tends to focus less on the personal experiences of the participants and the critical nuances that are evoked by these experiences. Rather, the focus tends to be more on the quantitative evaluation of the programme such as its impact on labour market performance of participants, poverty alleviation brought about by the programme or skills development and working condition components of the programme (McCord, 2004b; Mothapo, 2011; Moyo, 2013).

For these reasons, the current study is motivated towards exploring the impact of these experiences using the case study of the Tshwane Leadership Foundation (hereafter, TLF.), which is part of the EPWP. TLF is a faith-based non-profit organisation operating in the Tshwane metropolitan area. To this end, this study seeks to explore ways in which the EPWP can be used not only as a social safety net by participants but also as a means to gain skills and experience which can help improve their employability. From the side of participants, *lived experiences* need to be unpacked and understood in order to grasp how the programme has impacted the grassroots majority it was introduced to serve. Added to the economic climate in which the EPWP is taking place, there are also everyday socio-economic and psycho-social factors that participants must face as unemployed, unskilled black individuals. These factors affect the participants' interaction in and experience of the programme, which ultimately has an impact on programme outcome. Majority of EPWP participants come from disadvantaged households and are often breadwinners or financial contributors to their family income, having minimal or no post-secondary education, with little to no experience of employment (McCord, 2004a: 5)

These factors experienced by the participants can be defined as *lived experiences* and tend to play a pivotal role in the way participants interact and make decisions. *Lived experiences* are described as the subjective experience by individuals of being in their world (Moran, 2001: 9). Therefore, they can be understood as one's personal knowledge about the world gained through direct association in

everyday practice and events. Due to its encompassing nature, for purposes of this study, focus will be placed on unemployment, education and literacy, and survival strategies.

1.3 Aim and Motivation of the Study

This study focuses on the impact that lived experiences have had on the trainees who are part of the EPWP at Tshwane Leadership Foundation. The aim is to investigate how the participants' experiences, pertaining to education and skills, household formation and survival strategies, impact the training experience and whether this impedes or advances the opportunity for gaining skills that could influence their labour market performance as envisaged by the programme rhetoric. Hough and Prozesky (2012: 332) argue that because of their daily circumstances, disadvantaged participants of the EPWP could either have a desire to perform well during training with the hope of gaining skills or entry into the job market; or their circumstances could present difficulties that significantly influence the training experience.

Objectives of the study

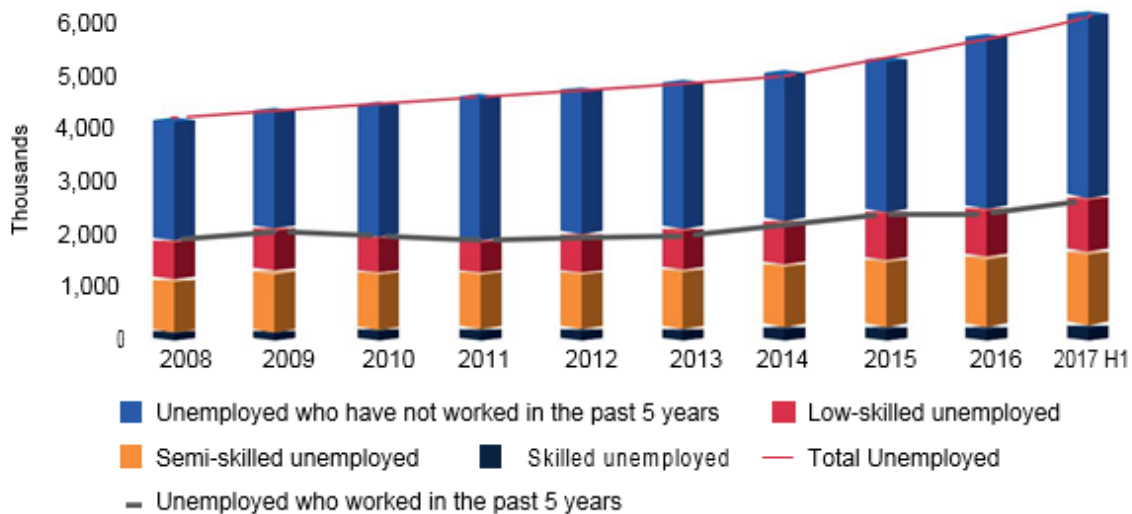
The aim of the study has been broken down into the following objectives:

- To Evaluate the EPWP's impact on unemployment and poverty alleviation on the trainees at TLF.
- To examine the impact of the EPWP, as a skills development programme, on the labour market performance of participants.
- To explore the lived experiences of EPWP participants, specifically focusing on the participant's educational, skills and training, household responsibilities and survival strategies and how they impact the overall experience provided by the programme.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The causes of unemployment in South Africa are complex and varied, however, the general consensus is that unemployment is a consequence of dynamics that affect both the supply and demand side of the labour market (Banerjee, Galiani, Levinsohn, McLaren, & Woolard, 2006; Borat, 2004; Marais, 2013; Nattrass, 2003). On the supply side, the increasing rate of labour force participation is on the rise, meaning an increase in job seekers. On the demand side, not enough jobs are being created to absorb the labour force due to a stagnant economic climate, need for more skilled professionals and shrinking demand for labour. According to a World Bank Report of 2017, since 2008, 3.5 million people have entered the labour force, but only 1.6 million additional jobs have been created (see Figure 1.1 below). The unemployment rate has risen from 22.5% in 2008 to 27.7% in the first half of 2017 (*South Africa Economic Update: Innovation for Productivity and Inclusiveness*, 2017: 12).

Figure 1.1: Unemployment by Skills Level, 2008-17 (Skills Level and Duration of Unemployment)



Source: World Bank staff calculations based on StatsSA

By the narrow definition of unemployment, nearly 6.3 million South Africans are unemployed and 9.3 million by the broad definition (*South Africa Economic Update: Innovation for Productivity and*

Inclusiveness, 2017: 12). According to Statistics South Africa, the unemployment rate can be defined as either narrow or broad. Narrow unemployment rate refers to people who are unemployed and actively seeking work, while the broad definition of unemployment includes people who are unemployed and available to work but have not taken active steps towards seeking employment mainly because of feeling discouraged (*Quarterly Labour Force Survey: Quarter 2 2018*, 2018).

South Africa's overall unemployment rate is 36.6% and of this number 57.1% (3.5 million) have not worked in the past five years (see Figure 1.1). This number has increased by 1.2 million since 2008 (*South Africa Economic Update: Innovation for Productivity and Inclusiveness*, 2017). South Africa's employment environment is such that there are more unemployed low-skilled workers than there are unemployed skilled workers. This disparity speaks to the high youth unemployment experienced in the country as many young people are unskilled or have low skills and are looking for entry into employment to change this trajectory. The percentage of youth aged 15-34 years who were unemployed, not in any educational or training programme but were seeking employment rose by 0.7% from 38.3% in 2017 to 39.0% in the third quarter of 2018 (*Quarterly Labour Force Survey: Quarter 3 2018*, 2018). By the broad definition, the youth unemployment rate of youth aged between 15-24 years of age was at 52.8% in the third quarter of 2018 (*Quarterly Labour Force Survey: Quarter 3 2018*, 2018).

The country's economic growth is too low to generate sufficient jobs needed to curb rising unemployment. In light of the maturing youth bulge where many are entering the labour force with a lack of experience and skills, the government decided to intervene and introduce active labour market programmes with the aim of solving the unemployment problem for youth. As a means of fostering skills development, numerous policy interventions were introduced, however, they have been widely seen as having failed to lead to an increase in the numbers of skilled workers.

For instance, the Job Fund which was introduced in 2011, sought to co-finance projects by the public, private and non-governmental organisations that will significantly contribute to job creation through innovation and investment ("The Jobs Fund," 2018). This fund has facilitated more than 700 000 jobs since its inception (*South Africa Economic Update: Innovation for Productivity and Inclusiveness*, 2017). In 2014, the South African Revenue Service (SARS) introduced the Employment Tax Incentive Scheme that is aimed at encouraging employers to hire young, less experienced work seekers and the employer can claim to reduce the amount of Pay-As-You-Earn (PAYE) tax that they incur ("Employment Tax Incentive (ETI)," 2018). The ETI has supported more than 700 000 jobs and has a budget of more than R2 billion (*South Africa Economic Update: Innovation for Productivity and Inclusiveness*, 2017). Both programmes are criticised for not being able to bring the majority unskilled population into the formal jobs market like they are meant to do. Added to this the major job strategy that has dominated the employment/skills discourse in South Africa is the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) which employs more than half a million people, annually, on a short-term basis.

The EPWP has become an essential component of the country's job's strategy, however as with the other programmes mentioned, critics argue that they are poorly coordinated, monitored and evaluated because it is unclear on how many net jobs these programmes have generated overall. The EPWP needs to be closely monitored and assessed to see if it is reaching its intended outcomes and if it has had a significant impact on the beneficiaries lives.

1.5 Delimitations of the Study and Operational Terms

The development of viable conclusions in this study is contingent upon specific critical terms. For purposes of this study, the conception of lived experiences will be examined looking at the following indicators. Firstly,

Educational and Literacy attainment will be observed looking at trainees' highest level of education completed and the levels of literacy. This will assist in terms of understanding the socio-economic locations of the trainees at TLF.

Secondly, Household responsibilities will also be studied, looking at the characteristics of the trainee's households. Factors such as the level of contribution to the household income made by trainees', who benefits from the income trainees receive from the programme and the size of the households they come from. Examining the magnitude of their responsibility will help underpin the role such responsibilities play when seeking employment through the EPWP.

Lastly, *lived experience* will be scrutinised looking at the general, everyday social characteristics of the participants, termed as their survival strategies. For this, aspects such as the daily caregiving of dependents, employment activities before and after participating in the EPWP will be unpacked .

It must be highlighted that although these factors are not directly aligned and definitive of one's participation in the EPWP, they can be used as indicators to contribute to profiling the socio-economic situation of the participants for purposes of this body of work (see Hough & Prozesky, 2012: 340; McCord, 2004a: 19; Triegaardt, 2006: 5).

Note that in this study the term 'social' is conceptualised in two distinct ways. One refers to the aspect of peoples lives that are not economic in character but can be described as 'dimensions' and are

categorised as peoples relational and subjective needs (Devereux, 2002: 6). The second meaning refers to the social ‘dynamics’, that are not economic but can be understood to be those social, cultural and political processes that shape and produce outcomes (Devereux, 2002: 6). Therefore, when discussing social protection the first definition relates to the social impact of social protection interventions, while the second describes the impact of social protection interventions on overall social dynamics and processes.

When referring to skills, the definitional term that will be used is the technical expertise, knowledge, practice and aptitude needed in a specified labour field (Robles, 2012: 456). For purposes of this study, the skills that will be referred to include general skills such as computer literacy, writing, reading basic math literacy and any other skill deemed important for participants to adequately execute their duties when employed. The definitional term of skills will also encompass broader skills that do not necessarily depend on acquired knowledge but are nonetheless valued in the labour market (Heckman & Kautz, 2012: 456). These skills include interpersonal skills, personality traits, personal goals and aspirations, noncognitive skills, attitudes and behaviours possessed by individuals (Heckman & Kautz, 2012; Robles, 2012).

Reference of EPWP trainees applies to those individuals who have worked and have received training and a stipend at TLF, under the EPWP.

1.6 Chapter Outline

Chapter One: Introduction to the Research - The context, purpose and problem area of the research are defined, followed by research aims, objectives and motivation of the study. A broader description and background of the chosen site of study is included. This is followed by a more detailed broader

perspective of the background of the topic which includes background on unemployment in South Africa and how the EPWP came about. Key definitional terms are then laid out.

Chapter Two: Literature Review - This chapter outlines the basic arguments in the existing scholarly work with regards to the EPWP and its ability to alter the socio-economic experiences and labour market performance of participants. The chapter unpacks the conversation on precarious labour and EPWP's contribution to this argument in South Africa. Conceptual frameworks on lived experience, precarity and the notion of "Bull Shit Jobs" are discussed in relation to the study.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology - This chapter outlines the methods employed by the study to address the main research question regarding the impact of EPWP employment and training on the lived experiences of its trainees.

Chapter Four: The EPWP and TLF – This chapter will provide a historical context and unpack the implementation of the Public Works Programme in South Africa. It will also introduce TLF as the case study of this research study. The chapter will also introduce the demographic profiles of the interviewed trainees.

Chapter five to seven outlines the findings of the three key areas that were researched:

Chapter Five: Education, Literacy Skills and Training – This chapter critically outlines and examines the research findings pertaining to the educational and literacy levels, skills and training background and outcomes of trainees of the EPWP. The chapter argues that due to their temporary nature, EPWP's are unable to impart the skills and experience required in the labour market.

Chapter Six: Working Conditions – Chapter six looks at the working conditions of the EPWP, how they influence the trainee's experience of the programme and whether these have an impact on the

programme development and experiential learning of trainees. Argues that participants on the EPWP are subjected to precarious labour through the lowering of labour standards and programme implementation that is not standardized.

Chapter Seven: Survival Strategies – This chapter will unpack the social lives of participants outside of the EPWP and how that informs and motivates their participation in the programme. This chapter further explored the discussion around trainees labour market performance in relation to the strategies employed to perform their everyday social experiences. Brings to the fore that peoples everyday lived experiences have a significant impact on how they interact with the programme.

Chapter Eight: Conclusion and Recommendations - This chapter makes deductions about the overall findings of the study summing up the overall themes picked up while putting forward recommendations that could address the findings in future.

2 Chapter Two: The Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

A number of scholars have written on the EPWP as a policy, its influence on the unemployment and poverty debate. Specifically, they attempted to explore whether participating in the EPWP impacts on reducing unemployment and increasing the employability of youth and the unskilled (Antonopoulos, 2009; Budlender, 2009; Devereux, 2002; Hough & Prozesky, 2012; McCord, 2004a, 2004b; Phillips, 2004). Their analyses, however, have not accounted for the relationship between the lived experiences of trainees and their participation in the EPWP.

To give this study a more nuanced perspective, this chapter is divided into major two sections. Section one will look at the conceptual frameworks employed to understand the existing knowledge of the EPWP and the people participating in the programme. The three conceptual frameworks explored are ‘Phenomenology and lived experiences’ drawing from the works of van Manen (1984) that covers the significance of capturing the point of views, knowledge and narratives of those living in the world of a particular experience. The second theory is on ‘Precarity’; it unpacks the insecurity and casualisation of work. Lastly, and closely linked to precarity is the theory of ‘Bullshit Jobs’ coined by David Graeber. As a framework, the ‘Bullshit Jobs’ theory contends that most jobs in modern day labour markets are unnecessary and do not add to the greater good of ones psychological and psychosocial wellbeing (Graeber, 2018).

Section two of this review will unpack the existing empirical literature on the EPWP. This section draws from two major streams of literature by different scholars exploring the EPWP. The first stream is more quantitative and explores the targets and outcomes of the programme. The central debate in the literature is around whether or not Public Works Programmes can be used as a skills transfer

mechanism to the unemployed and, often, unskilled based on the assumption that these skills will assist them to find employment in the formal labour market (Altman & Hemson, 2007; Henderson, 2016; Lulu, 1996; McCord, 2004b)

The second stream is more qualitative in nature and seeks to highlight the conditions and lives of EPWP workers and trainees (Budlender, 2005; Dube, 2014; Hlatshwayo, 2017a; McCord, 2005; Samson, 2015). This stream looks at the impact of the programme, however, does not include the voices and experiences of the people who are directly a part of the programme.

2.2 Conceptual Frameworks

Phenomenology and Lived Experiences as a theoretical perspective

Phenomenology describes the attempt to get the truth of matters, to understand phenomena (Moran, 2001: 4). Phenomenology is derived from the Greek word phenomenon and means appearance, or put in light or manifest something that can become visible within itself (Heidegger, 1962 as cited in Moran, 2001). Phenomenology is both a research method and a philosophical movement whose primary objective is to directly investigate and describe phenomena as consciously experienced without being experienced by pre-conceptions (Spiegelberg, 2012; van Manen, 1984).

As a theoretical movement, phenomenology is rooted in the nineteenth-century works of Franz Brentano which explore descriptive psychology. The approach distinguished between the philosophy of intentional relationship (intentionality) and psychological and physical phenomena (Moran, 2001; Spiegelberg, 2012). Brentano considered experience from an empirical and intuitive perspective.

The phenomenological movement gained momentum with the contributions of Edmund Husserl (1859-1938). In fact, Husserl was the first to employ the term phenomenology (Moran, 2001: 6). Husserl's idea of phenomenology sought to study 'acts' in their essential elements and structures or

from a natural standpoint - as usually lived by the subjects (Husserl, 2012). This approach, as a method of practice and philosophical perspective, spread in the twentieth century and started influencing politics, the arts, humanities, psychology and many other disciplines (Moran, 2001). The term “to the things themselves” is attributed to Husserl which is understood to be the natural viewpoint or the world as actually lived, and the results of an active process of classification and naming (Husserl, 2012; van Manen, 1984).

As a philosophical perspective, phenomenology is simply concerned with what things are, not if they are. The context of the experience is the given reality and this approach tries to navigate ways in which lived-experiences can be represented in a raw and un-elaborated way without biases and presuppositions. Scholars within this school of thought are of the view that the only ‘true’ knowledge of an experience comes from those living in the world of the experience and it is from this personal view and understanding that meaning emerges and insight revealed (Husserl, 2012; Moran, 2001; van Manen, 1984). Phenomenology and the understanding of lived experiences help us to understand the type of worlds in which people are located, the different ranges of the human experiences that occur and how these influence peoples realities and their interactions with different occurrences in their lives.

Within the context of this study lived experiences are researched looking at the survivalist strategies and the agency of the EPWP trainees. That is, looking at the everyday strategies trainees employ in order to survive and provide for themselves and their families. Despite the political economy of marginalization in which trainees are located, they still manage to survive and make a living (McCord, 2004b, 2012).

Precurity and the nature of work

There is a growing body of literature that highlights the growing prevalence of precarious work in the labour market. Scholarship in this area focuses on investigating a workforce that is insecure and unstable; where jobs are casualised, low-paying and have no benefits (Hlatshwayo, 2017b; Kalleberg, 2009; Marais, 2001, 2013; Meth, 2003). For instance, Kalleberg (2009) asserts that historically, precarious work accompanied wage labour and is as old as paid employment as a primary source of sustenance. However, it was only in the 1970s that precarious work became a mainstream phenomenon that affected all spheres of paid work.

The concept of precarious work can first be traced back to the work of Bourdieu in the 1960s¹. Bourdieu viewed and understood precariousness to be a modern ascendancy over workers that led to a permanent state of insecurity, low wages and poor working conditions (Bourdieu, 1964). He argued that *précarité* is the root of problematic social issues in the twenty-first. In the 1950s in Algeria, he observed an echelon of black workers who did not enjoy the same social and economic protection as their white counterparts and referred to these precarious workers as “precarariat” (Bourdieu, 1964).

Many scholars attribute the rise of precarious work in the twenty-first century to policies that promote austerity measures, technological advances and neoliberal globalization (Hlatshwayo, 2017b; Kalleberg, 2009; Standing, 2016). Neoliberal globalization is promoted by the ideology of neoliberalism and is understood to have intensified economic integration, increased competition faced by companies, allowed greater opportunity to outsource to low-wage countries and opened up new

¹ Bourdieu was a professor of Sociology at the College de France and Directeur d'Etudes at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes. His work mainly covers the anthropology of Algeria and French colonialism and the sociology of culture and education in France. ‘His work mainly problematizes and reflects upon the human sciences as a locus of objective knowledge and as a legitimation of relations of power’ (Foster, 1986: 103)

labour pools through immigration (Kalleberg, 2009: 2). The above-mentioned occurrences saw a decline in the security of work and an increase in the vulnerability of the worker.

Kalleberg (2009) postulates that precarious work has far-reaching consequences that permeate areas of life creating insecurity for many people. According to him, the pervasive consequences not only affect the nature of work, workplaces and peoples work experiences, but it also affects the outcomes of non-work individuals (stress, education), social (family, community) and political (stability, democratization) discourse (Kalleberg, 2009). In his book, *The Precariat: The Dangerous Class*, Standing (2016) succinctly concludes by saying “this book presents the Precariat – an emerging class, comprising the rapidly growing number of people facing lives of insecurity, moving in and out of jobs that give little meaning to their lives.”

Precarious work is an increasing problem in Africa that is undermining workers wages, conditions of work while threatening to divide work people between those who are secure and those who are vulnerable (Abiodun-Badru, 2015). According to Abiodun-Badru (2015) and Hlatshwayo (2017b), precarious work flourishes whenever there is a labour surplus and workers are driven to accept work at any cosy conditions.

In Africa, precarious employment is the ‘norm’ and has been for a long time (Abiodun-Badru, 2015) where workers are often left vulnerable. An instance of such an occurrence is in Nigeria where the Midwife Service Scheme (MSS) was established in 2009 to improve the healthcare of pregnant mothers by giving them access to skilled birth attendants during pregnancy and childbirth (Abimbola, Okoli, Olubajo, Abdullahi, & Pate, 2012). Newly graduated, unemployed and retired midwives are employed to work for a temporary one-year period in rural areas around Nigeria. However, instead of creating stable employment that can help improve the prenatal care of pregnant women, the MSS

has faced major challenges around its promotion of precarious labour. Challenges reported included cases of work uncertainty and job insecurity, lack of social benefit, limited instances of contract renewals or absorption into permanent positions (Abimbola et al., 2012; Abiodun-Badru, 2015). Due to the surplus access of Midwives in Nigeria, those temporarily employed witnessed precarious working conditions and were often denied access to basic employment rights.

Another instance of the prevalence of precarious labour in Africa is with the experiences of Basotho migrant domestic workers in South Africa. As these workers generally do not possess South African identity documents or official work visas (like many immigrants from around the region and continent), they have no access to basic labour protections and rights (Griffin, 2011). As deportable migrants, these domestic workers live in fear of being sent back home by authorities, which oftentimes leads to a heightened dependence on their employers (Griffin, 2011). Unsurprisingly, this dependence tends to create conditions for their exploitation and precariousness. This is reflected in the workers long working hours., low or variable pay levels, limited access to leave and benefits (Griffin, 2011).

The theory of 'Bullshit Jobs' in the EPWP context

Where there is a scourge of precarious employment one finds inferior jobs that offer low pay, no protection of workers rights and a lack of skills development and opportunities. Through research, scholars (Altman & Hemson, 2007; Hlatshwayo, 2017b; Marais, 2013; McCord, 2004a) identified three kinds of ways in which participants responded to the precarious nature of the EPWP, and these are outlined below.

Firstly, there were participants who appreciated the support and financial relief from the state which helped them earn a salary to survive in the context of high poverty, unemployment and inequality.

Secondly, there were participants who lobbied for decent pay and wanted permanent employment. Lastly, one found participants who responded through strike action or work stoppages over wages and conditions of work and the fight for more secure employment.

Interestingly, all the above-mentioned groups are driven by and focused on wage income and security rather than on the types of work experience and skills they were gaining on the job. For example, a participant was quoted as saying that

The work is fairly hard and sometimes it's the same thing every day (redundant), but the money that you earn is a little bit more than previous jobs and we get paid every month (Hough & Prozesky, 2012: 341)

This precarity that participants face and the lack of motivation towards work speaks to anthropologist, David Graeber's theory of the 'Bullshit Jobs'. Studying North America and European job markets, Graeber (2018: 21) defines a 'bullshit job' as 'a form of employment that is so completely pointless, unnecessary or pernicious that even the employee cannot justify its existence'. In his argument, Graeber contends that the majority of jobs in society are pointless and unnecessary that they become a point of psychological destruction as many people pair work with self-worth. What proliferates 'bullshit jobs' is the idea of a 'service economy' where a country's economy is described as being dominated by the service sector (Graeber, 2018: 148). The idea that these pointless jobs create a vibrant society where people are supporting themselves principally by serving each other through the work that they do (Graeber, 2018).

Although Graeber's study looks at the job market within the first world economies, the theory is applicable to this study. This is seen to be true within the context of the EPWP where the temporary employment of participants, is articulated to help the government meet its service delivery targets

while creating jobs and imparting skills to participants (Altman et al., 2004). However, when analysing the programme's realities, it can be argued that the work performed by participants is meagre and, oftentimes, can be defined as a 'bullshit job'. Hence the participant's heavy focus on the earnings side rather than on gaining and developing skills through work.

2.1 Empirical Literature

For this study, the two strands of qualitative and quantitative literature were examined as part of an empirical perspective on the EPWP: The first interrogates the characteristics of Public Works Employment, working conditions, the demographic representation of its participants and the programmes' abilities to conduct 'on-the-job' training while providing an experience that catapults trainees' access to permanent employment. The second seeks to examine the experiences and perspectives of those being investigated, in this case, the EPWP beneficiaries and administrators.

The first stream of literature, extensively presented by McCord (2003, 2004a, 2004b, 2005, 2012) argues that as currently conceptualised, public works programmes and subsequent employment do not have a significant impact on the skills development of its participants and do not enhance the subsequent employability of participants once they leave the programme. McCord argues that the job training offered is limited in terms of the number of days and quality. As a result, it is unlikely to have a positive impact on the participant's labour market performance. Again, the structural nature of unemployment, excess supply of low and unskilled labour, and a growth strategy adopted by the government, which requires high skills intensive labour, play a significant role in restricting the progression of participants into formalised employment post public works.

The second strand of literature is critical of the precarious nature of employment created by public works programmes and looks at the effect that this has on the state of the programme and its

participants. In this catalogue of literature, there is a growing body of literature that starts to introduce the narratives and lived experience of those participating in such programmes, *albeit* minimal (Chakwizira, 2010; Hlatshwayo, 2017a; Theron, 2014; Thwala, 2011).

Empirical evidence on EPWP training and work experience in improving the livelihoods of EPWP participants

Studies relating to the impact that EPWP training and workplace experience have on the employability of participants is limited. Mitchell (2008) believes the reason is that only a few data sets have collected longitudinal data on EPWP beneficiaries and econometric analysis of this data has not yet been undertaken in great depth and detail. Despite the discourse of the EPWP's implementation being linked to contributing towards precarious labour, some studies have found that when it comes to the EPWP experience (training and work experience) the perceptions thereof has been positive (Dube, 2014; Mitchell, 2008; Ramachela, 2005). Lal et al. (2010) state that in making the case for a long-term development approach, Employment Guarantee Programmes (EGP's)² such as PWP's are justified useful tools that enable states to strengthen their capabilities to provide support to livelihood strategies of the poor. They further ascertain that these policy tools provide social protection and a forward-looking approach to employment, to make labour markets function more effectively for the poor (Lal *et al.*, 2010).

For instance, the government of Botswana has since 1972 implemented several labour-intensive programmes in efforts to alleviate high levels of unemployment, poverty and under-development, especially during its drought years in the 80s and early 90s (Teklu, 1995). Since the drought years, the programme has expanded and now generates employment for poor households, while also finding

² EGP is a public employment programme developed within the framework of an 'employer or last resort approach, which implies that it includes a formal entitlement to work (Lal *et al.*, 2010: 35)

low-cost methods for producing rural assets that promote growth and development such as tarred roads, vegetable gardens and food distribution to school children (Teklu, 1995).

Similar to the Botswana experience, Dube (2014) concurs with the rationale of the EPWP in South Africa, stating that the programme extricates people out of poverty and offers one of the biggest opportunities to enhance skills levels of people trapped in the 'second economy' who would otherwise, not have the opportunity. Ramachela (2005) overarchingly states that the EPWP has demonstrated the ability to achieve South Africa's social development goals through the benefits that accrue to the poor and to communities in which they are implemented.

A study by McConnell, Groth, and Kamman (2008) as cited in Moyo (2013) reveals that out of a sample of 768 EPWP participants, two-thirds were employed and one-third unemployed six months after the completion of the programme. About 60% of those still employed had continued their employment with EPWP. Approximately 12.5% of those employed were working elsewhere in government, while 20.8% of those who were working were employed in private firms. The study further states that despite the imminent need for improvement on the general socio-economic outcome of those exiting the EPWP programme, the aforementioned outcomes are encouraging considering that 72.8% of the participant sample was unemployed and only 4.4% had full-time jobs prior to programme entry.

A study by Mothapo (2011: 53-61) which analysed the impact that EPWP has on poverty alleviation in the Bushbuckridge Municipality in Mpumalanga found that there was an improvement in the economic and social lives of the participants. From an economic standpoint, the EPWP created an opportunity for participants to earn an income that allowed them to gain better access to everyday basic needs such as food, shelter, transport and school fees for dependants. It was also noted that the

stable monthly income enabled participants to buy basic appliances which improved their living standards such as televisions, radios, stoves and kettles. From a social perspective, the researcher found an improvement in the level of social capital in the communities where EPWP projects are located. Social networks, norms and mutual trust among the community members had improved because of the EPWP project participants, who were receiving a stable income which enabled them to join community investment clubs (STOKVELS) and burial clubs to help one another pay for funerals of the dead (Mothapo, 2011: 61).

There is, however, some scholarly analysis that views the EPWPs impact in the opposite fashion to the aforementioned literature. McCord (2004a: 54-59) concedes that there was a measurable impact on the participants of the two EPWP programmes implemented in KwaZulu Natal (Zibambele project) and Limpopo (Gundo Lashu programme). The comparative study found that in terms of:

Use of Income

Households noticed an improvement in material assets (clothing, furniture, cooking implements). 65% of KZN households reported that their material assets had improved, compared to 27% in Limpopo. 64% of KZN households noticed improved financial resources since joining the PWP, while in Limpopo only 27% of households shared the same sentiment.

Nutrition

The programme had a significant positive impact on the status of nutrition of participating households. The frequency of adults who skipped meals regularly due to lack of funds. In KZN this number fell from 49% to 1% of households while in Limpopo it moved from 13% to 7%. Households that frequently reduced the size of children's meals due to a lack of money fell from 53% to 1% in KZN and from 14% to 7% in Limpopo.

Education

The PWP had a significant impact on the educational participation of children from the interviewed household in both areas. In KZN, regular school participation rose from 66% before PWP to 86% after participation. While in Limpopo, regular school participation rose from 83% to 92%. It must be noted that the impact was marginal starting from a much higher base in the case of Limpopo – higher levels of educational participation for children in the community (McCord, 2004b, 2012).

Psychosocial Impact

The psychosocial dimensions of interviewed households participating in the programme significantly improved in both communities. The following examples were shared: Households reported being able to contribute and participate in community activities without shame due to regular income. All households noticed improved observance of social norms and customs such as the performing burial rites, ancestral offerings, and anniversary ceremonies for the bereaved. Lastly, households expressed that they were able to better feed and clothe their children.

Despite the positive programme impact highlighted above, McCord (2004b) mainly argues that direct labour market impact of EPWP training is limited and even if it does provide some useful training, the training offered is not enough to differentiate public works participants from other people in the labour market who have not received training. Phillips (2004) further stresses that although it is likely to temporarily reduce the depth of poverty experienced by participants, the EPWP is not a solution to South Africa's unemployment and poverty problem. The short-term nature of the programme does not allow for the accumulation of surplus income that can increase income-earning activities that can improve livelihoods over a long period.

In a survey of participants in the Working for Wetlands programme, Ndoto and Macun (2005) concluded that the programme improved people's livelihoods in terms of income during the period of employment and removed some constraints in accessing education and improved nutrition. However, the programme made little progress in providing skills that can be used after the programme to secure employment that could inversely improve their livelihoods.

Scholars suggest that the inability for EPWP, as a policy response, to effect any real change to poverty and unemployment is based on the assumption, inherent in the programme, that unemployment is a *transient* problem in South Africa (Aliber, Kirsten, Maharajh, Nhlapo-Hlope, & Nkoane, 2006; McCord, 2004b; Phillips, 2004; Samson, 2008). That is the idea that unemployment is temporary in nature. Failure to recognise that unemployment is chronic and structural has led to the implementation of a policy response that is appropriate for *transient* rather than chronic unemployment (Aliber et al., 2006; McCord, 2004b; Phillips, 2004; Samson, 2008).

The line of thinking that informed the implementation of EPWP lies on the notion that through improved education and experience the unskilled, who are currently excluded in the labour market, will be absorbed into formal employment in the wake of economic growth. This notion is a fallacy that completely disregards the socio-economic construct of South Africa. The economy cannot grow at a pace that can include workers unless appropriate policy measures are implemented that will allow for greater inclusion of the low skilled.

The Capability of EPWP to improve the labour market performance of trainees

This section examines the beneficial aspect of training and workplace experience of trainees and how this enhances labour market participation for public works trainees once they exit the programmes. The literature suggests that even though the EPWP is not far off its job creation targets, rationale and

aims behind the EPWP skills development strategy are discrepant to the problems they seek to address (Altman & Hemson, 2007; Marais, 2001; McCord, 2004b, 2005, 2012; Phillips, 2004). The major argument is that EPWP employment involves limited training in which the skills development component does not match the skills requirements for South Africa's formal labour market. The programme thus is inadequate in transferring marketable skills to participants, thus making them unemployable in the future.

Critique of the ability of EPWP to increase the labour market performance of public works participants

South Africa's National Development Plan (NDP) offers a long-term perspective on the country's development trajectory and seeks to improve the living conditions of South Africans by creating a more equitable society by 2030. The NDP further states its aim to urgently address and eliminate the 'triple challenge of unemployment, poverty and inequality' so that the fruits of democracy can be enjoyed by all (*National Development Plan 2030 - Our future make it work*, 2012: 29). One way the NDP envisions this happening is through the EPWP and the proposal put forward emphasises the broadening of the EPWP to cover two million full-time equivalent jobs by 2020 (*National Development Plan 2030 - Our future make it work*, 2012: 29). Scholars such as Altman and Hemson (2007) and McCord (2004b) have refuted the notion of EPWP being able to significantly contribute towards alleviating South Africa's 'triple challenge'.

The EPWP is designed and premised on the idea of 'providing poverty and income relief through temporary work for the unemployed to carry out socially useful activities,' while at the same time equipping participants with a "modicum of training and work experience", which should enhance their ability to earn a living in the future (*EPWP a Success Story*, 2014; Henderson, 2016). Despite

this, some authors contested the explicit critical disjunction between the programme presentation, aspirations and its reality in terms of impact and scale. For example,

McCord (2004b:10) expressed the following reservation:

The limited scale of employment offered under the EPWP and the short-term duration of the employment period for the workers make it unlikely for the programme to have a significant impact on unemployment, poverty and inequality, at either household or national level.

Altman and Hemson (2007:5) supported that:

The EPWP is not far off its job creation targets as originally framed in 2013. However, these jobs are short-term opportunities and if the jobs are translated into the equivalent of full-time jobs (that is, 230 hours per year) then the programme would not reach its targets... The overall contribution of the programme towards reducing unemployment is, therefore, small.

Authors of this school of thought primarily argue that the duration of poverty-reducing benefits arising from PWP's short-term employment is futile and is only limited to the period while the wage transfer is taking place. Added to this, they argue that the training and skills transfer experience gained through participation in PWP' does not significantly enhance the employment prospects of participants. This is due to the high rates of unemployment and the lack of demand for labour that acquired the type of skills gained through the programme (McCord, 2004a; Phillips, 2004).

In recognising the unskilled nature of most PWP work opportunities, and the lack of value in skills development that comes with this experience, government, business and labour unions reached a consensus that all work opportunities in the EPWP must include training or a skills development component. Each EPWP sector (that is the: social sector (non-state), the economic sector the environmental, and infrastructure sector) offers different types of training according to the

specifications of employment. However, the overall objective of the training in each sector is to ensure that the participants are able to translate their experience into gainful employment. Considering the short-term employment offered by the programme, it would also mean that training is generally not over a long period; and, it is expected that through on-the-job training EPWP participants would transition from the low or unskilled segment of the labour force to the intermediate skilled segment over a relatively condensed time frame (Lulu, 1996; McCord, 2004a; Mothapo, 2011; Moyo, 2013).

In the case of EPWP's Non-state Sector (EPWP-NSS) the training received seems to be different in that participants tend to remain in EPWP-NSS programmes for several years due to volunteerism or prior affiliation with the organisation (*Extended Public Works Programme: Non-State Sector Procedure Manual*, 2012). Therefore, Samson (2015:84) argues that the participants who remain in these particular programmes for several years stand a better chance of accessing sufficient training that can lead to more defined career paths or exit opportunities. However, this stance fails to clarify if more nuanced training over several years directly translates to access to formal opportunities for the trained candidate's post-EPWP-NSS. Formalised training can take place, however, it does not take away from the structural nature of unemployment in South Africa.

Critics have refuted the opinion that the EPWP and the training it provides has yielded improved labour market performance of participants. Rather, the literature reviewed highlights that as currently conceptualized, the EPWP training strategy and its experiential "package" does not allow for participants to transition from the low or unskilled segment of the labour force to the intermediate and high skills levels which there is high demand for labour in the South African labour market (Marais, 2001; McCord, 2004a, 2012; Phillips, 2004).

While the DPW proudly characterises post-PWP-employment as graduating to being employed under normal conditions, some studies demonstrate that workers really graduate to unemployment, returning to the *status quo ante* in terms of their labour market performance, or remain in the programme for several years through, sometimes, dubious contracts that are renewed on an annual basis. Participants in the EPWP are employed on a temporary basis under conditions governed by the Code of Good Practice for Special Public Works Programmes, or by the Learnership Determination for Unemployed Learners. The Department of Public Works has iterated that once participants complete EPWP they are eligible to join the formal intermediate to high skills job market (*Code of Good Practice for Employment and Conditions of Work for Special Public Works Programmes*, 2002; *EPWP a Success Story*, 2014; *Extended Public Works Programme: Non-State Sector Procedure Manual*, 2012; "Ministerial Determination and Code of Good Practice 4: Extended Public Works Programme," 2015).

The EPWP as the driver of precarious work in South Africa

There is a growing body of knowledge that unpacks the types of jobs offered by EPWP's and the main arguments are that EPWP employment adds to the already existing problem of precarious labour in South Africa. As Hlatshwayo (2017b) states, precarious work has created a resilient, two-tiered labour market system in South Africa where one tier comprises relatively stable permanent workers, on the one hand. On the other hand, it has created an unstable insecure workforce. In 2002 and 2003, Samson (2007) conducted research for the Municipal Services Project and the South African Municipal Workers' Union as part of broader research on the restructuring of waste management. The public works projects evaluated were to provide street cleaning services in different sections of Galeshewe Township in Sol Plaatje and Soweto Township in Johannesburg (Through the Pickup-the waste management utility in Johannesburg).

Samson (2007) discovered that workers employed in these projects entered into employment agreements with limited security, labour rights, wages and benefits, thus participating in these projects created “second economy” conditions of vulnerability. This contradicts the presiding rhetoric surrounding the EPWP’s contribution to eradicating poverty and shifting participants into the perceived “first economy” opportunities and they had no one to fight for equal rights for them. Samson picked up several dynamics of exploitation and precarious employment from the two projects where workers were paid substantially lower wages than their counterparts doing the same work but were permanently employed. For instance, the Galeshewe project, in Sol Plaatje, employed 681 people, 60% of whom were female. Workers were paid - wages below the minimum wage prescribed by the country’s labour law. For example, team leaders were paid R40 per day. Key team leaders were paid R65 per day while elementary workers were paid R30 per day for working eight hour days. By contrast, the waste management workers permanently employed by the Sol Plaatje municipality were paid an average of R1, 754 per month for partaking in the same tasks, which was relatively higher than the previous project (Samson, 2007: 221). The EPWP workers were not unionized and could not lobby for better pay while their counterparts employed by the municipality were (Samson, 2007).

Hlatshwayo (2017b) defined EPWP participants as workers serving the state by virtue of the low wages they earned and lack of benefits and protection received. To demonstrate, Hlatshwayo (2017b: 749) gave an account of EPWP workers based in Shallcross, a disadvantaged area in Durban, where participants, earned R2000 per month, reported to be sharing half of their monthly salaries to Ward committee members that claim to have arranged and secured their employment.

Despite their awareness of the exploitative conditions of their employment, it seems that workers in the researched settings felt powerless to do anything. Accompanied by the fact that most people

surveyed (especially from the Galeshewe project) had been retrenched from permanent employment, participants felt the need to accept the unfair wages and conditions of employment as it meant they had a job in the context of very high levels of unemployment. The participant's state of precarious employment was constituted by the lack of opportunities and social protection.

The precarity of employment in South Africa

The literature above highlights the major changes in the global economy and how they have given rise to a growing trend of precarious work. Similar sentiments are felt within the South African labour market context where workers are increasingly being employed in jobs that offer limited payback in terms of poverty reduction and security.

The emergence of precarious work within the South African labour market is shaped by the global economic changes that manifested a movement towards economic financialisation and privatisation of the South African economy (Marais, 2001; Samson, 2007). At the core of the financialisation propagation, lies a change in South Africa's corporations, industries and public sector, where, in a bid to compete in the global market, they introduced "new paradigms of work" by restructuring production, establishing new patterns of work organisation, relocating production units and introducing casual labour (Hlatshwayo, 2017b; Marais, 2001, 2013; Theron, 2014).

This restructuring has given rise to the occurrence of a shrinking core of full-time skilled workers and an increase in 'stock' of less skilled casual or outsourced labour that is deprived of wages, benefits and rights that are usually enjoyed by the former (Marais, 2013: 181). It is, therefore, conceivable that the emergence of financialisation and privatisation has led to the massive shedding of secure jobs in the South African labour market and has radically reduced the quality of existing jobs.

This means that ‘casualised labour’ or precarious work in South Africa typically does not guarantee basic labour rights such as standardised working hours, paid leave, Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF), death and funeral cover and access to healthcare schemes which are afforded to individuals in more formalised employment. This phenomenon is summed up by Marais (2013) when he argues that the binary perspective that equates unemployment with poverty and employment with wealth is flawed, and effectively denies a large number of workers protection and security under post-apartheid labour protection, yet continues to be at the centre of the employment discourse.

This sheds light on the existing reality whereby formal-employment does not necessarily mean one will be included in the so-called ‘first economy’³ as the employment trajectory is increasingly insecure (V. Gumede, 2008; Marais, 2013; Samson, 2007). There is growing evidence that a large number of workers earn such low wages under insecure terms, often without any benefits, that their employment does not shield them from poverty (Marais, 2013: 181)

Participants’ perceptions of EPWP programme training and experience

There is developing literature that explores a more qualitative perspective of the EPWP (Budlender, 2009; Hough & Prozesky, 2012; McCord, 2004a, 2005; Ndoto & Macun, 2005). The literature primarily covers the participant's perceptions of the value of training and programme participation and the impact they have on the participants ‘employability’. The gap in the literature has been the exclusion of the voices and personal accounts of the workers or trainees who participate in the programmes. More specifically, the lack of literature in identifying how participants realities and

³ V. Gumede (2008: 15) explains the idea of a ‘first and second economy’ as a metaphor and is seen as an expression of socio-economic dualism in South Africa: A dominant first economy that is at the cutting edge, globally integrated; alongside a second economy that is marginalised, exists at the edges, and consists of large numbers of the unemployed and ‘unemployable’, and does not benefit from the progress of the first economy.

experiences influence their participation in the programme. Primarily, the studies that cover this topic conclude that workers perceive EPWP training to have no benefit in terms of helping participants realise their actual or anticipated labour market performance. Scholars assert that even though the programme temporarily improved peoples livelihoods, and relieved the constraints of accessing education and nutrition, it appears that the training received was not enough to alter their employability. Even in instances where programme participants positively endorsed the quality of training, it was argued that the time and level of training were not enough to make any significant changes in their lives and that being part of the programme created financial dependence rather than independent job seekers post the programme (McCord, 2005; Ndoto & Macun, 2005).

From the above coverage of literature, it can be deduced that even when studies focus on investigating the perceptions of participants, the focus tends to be more on the labour market impact and temporary livelihood improvements, and not on getting the overall perspectives and voices of the participants by getting a view of the actual needs of the beneficiaries of such programmes. Hlatshwayo (2017a) argues that the leaning towards a more quantitative evaluation of EPWP in South African research excludes the voices and views of those who are part of the programme from the scholarly domain; which can lead to overarching presuppositions and assumptions that are generalised and sometimes far from reality. In a research paper titled: *Listen to those who matter the most, the beneficiaries*, Twersky, Buchanan, and Threlfall (2013: 41) affirm:

In bypassing the beneficiary as a source of information and experience, we deprive ourselves of insights into how we might do better - insights that are uniquely grounded in the day-to-day experiences of the very people the programs are created for.

This contribution lobby's for the need to place greater value on the narratives of programme participants. In fact, Chakwizira (2010) contends that, while working towards addressing and eliminating the existing social and economic inequalities, the analysis and interrogation of EPWP projects requires a qualitative examination of the conditions of the participants in order to understand their social locus. The above arguments speak to the idea of exploring the lived experiences of participants through phenomenology, to derive better meaning from an occurrence.

2.2 Chapter Summary

As stated earlier, the crux of this research is to examine the impact that lived experiences have on the participants of the EPWP. The research focus is on the impact that everyday lived-experiences have on trainees working under the EPWP at Tshwane Leadership Foundation. The research will focus on the trainees' experience of education, skills training prior to joining and during the programme, the working conditions of participants in the programme and their survival strategies. This is in an effort to measure the true impact of the EPWP in changing the narratives and lived experiences of the participants it is created to employ and train. The literature review explored the conceptual frameworks guiding this study and empirical literature about the EPWP which were of a qualitative and quantitative nature. From the scholarly works reviewed, there was no literature that touched on the impact that lived experiences have on the EPWP participants.

3 Chapter Three: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of the impact that lived experiences of EPWP trainees have on the EPWP programme. This chapter outlines the research methods that were used in this study; and also discusses the research design that was utilized. Additionally, the chapter details the sample selection and size, data collection tools and data analysis methods employed. Information on data capturing and editing and ethical considerations.

3.2 Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative methodological approach to the case study of EPWP at TLF, to illustrate the impact of the participants lived experiences on the programme. A qualitative approach was selected because this type of research allows for meaning to be derived out of the collection, organisation and analysis of non-numerical formats such as interviews, survey's and anthropological field research (Trochim, 2001: 152) This study followed a phenomenological approach. The EPWP at TLF was used as the case study. De Vos (2002: 272) asserts that a case study is an intensive study aimed at the exploration or in-depth analysis of phenomena. Case studies involve systematically gathering enough information about a particular person, social setting, an event or a group which permits the researcher to effectively understand how it operates or functions (Berg, 2001: 225). For this study, an instrumental case study was employed as it provides a better understanding of an issue or refines a theoretical explanation (Skate, 1994 as stated in Berg, 2001: 234). Therefore, the intention of this type of study is to help the researcher to better understand some external theoretical question or problem.

It is to this end that phenomenology was employed as an approach to the qualitative methodology. This approach helps to explore and understand the day to day lived experience of EPWP trainees in an attempt to discover the essence, to understand and explain the impact that the daily experiences have on the programme experience and perception.

The rationale of research design

Hermeneutic phenomenology, as a method, is used to describe, interpret and understand the lived experience in an attempt to discover meaning rather than to explain and predict (Moran, 2001: 236). According to van Manen (1990: 63), the phenomenological research method is a “systematic explicit, self-critical and inter-subjective study of its subject matter and of the lived experience.” Therefore, phenomenology is a way to investigate subjective phenomena and is premised on the notion that essential truths about reality are grounded in the everyday experience (Husserl, 2012; Spiegelberg, 2012; van Manen, 1984). Because phenomenology studies the meaning that experiences have in peoples lives and how these experiences influence their understanding and interaction with particular phenomena, it is a valuable research method when trying to interpret context and critical nuances around development discourse. So within the EPWP context, grasping phenomenology is beneficial for understanding not only the programme and its participants, but also the social and economic environment in which it is taking place.

The product of a phenomenological study is to reveal the meaning and essence in the experience being researched which allows for an in-depth and descriptive understanding of a particular phenomenon. Recording and unpacking the lived experiences of EPWP trainees may shed light on the context in which the EPWP takes place and all the nuances which influence how the programme is implemented and why it is taking shape in the way that it is.

Data for this study were obtained through the use of different qualitative methodologies, namely phenomenology and case study methods, to illustrate the impact of lived experiences on the programme. These two methodologies were combined for a more nuanced and critical analysis on lived experiences and programme trainees who partake in the EPWP. According to Alsaawi (2014) combining different data collection methods helps to overcome the limitations one finds when just employing one method such as interviews. Using methodological triangulation as an approach increases the comprehensiveness of the overall findings by showing how data provides an explanation for occurring phenomena; and expands the dimensions of the research topic (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

3.3 Population, Sampling and Setting

The main target of this research study was former participants of the EPWP at TLF. The selection of candidates employed a mixed sampling procedure; namely purposive and snowballing. Purposive sampling was first employed. In this research method, the researcher selected predefined participants who have the desired experience in order to obtain optimal accounts of the experience, and increase understanding of a phenomenon (Trochim, 2001).

The following criteria were initially purposively employed for considering the respondents to be interviewed for the study - EPWP trainees should have joined and participated in the EPWP programme at TLF for at least three months. Trainees were informed and gave consent to share personal accounts of their lives outside of the EPWP. This helped the researcher gain a holistic view of their lived experiences. Each trainee respondent must consent to a face to face interview session that is between 45 minutes and 1 hour. In addition, the researcher purposefully ensured the selection of males, females, youth as to best represent the population of programme participants at TLF.

Once the first seventeen respondents were identified and interviewed, snowballing came into effect. This assisted in reaching the target of interviewing 30 trainees from the programme. Snowball sampling is useful in identifying respondents who meet the criteria for inclusion in the study who are oftentimes hard to locate. Through snowballing, once a researcher finds a few respondents who meet the inclusion criteria they are recruited to assist in finding participants with similar characteristics (Trochim, 2001: 58). Inherent in this method is the built-in bias as the subjects are interrelated through association (Trochim, 2001: 58). Because the EPWP trainees were scattered and had finished training with the programme, some for more than 5 years, it was appropriate to use this method for the study to locate different variations of respondents who were not all from the same cohort or year of participation.

3.4 Data Realibility and Validity

Guba and Lincoln (1994) assert that the nature of knowledge within the quantitative paradigm is different from the knowledge in the qualitative paradigm in that the qualitative paradigm requires specific criteria in order to reflect the multiple ways of establishing truth. In qualitative research the most important test of reliability is the quality of the study (Golafshani, 2003: 600). Within this paradigm, reliability can be understood as a concept used to evaluate quality with the purpose of generating understanding and ensuring trustworthiness (Golafshani, 2003: 601).

According to Connell (2003: 55), the strength of a research study is determined by examining statistical methods, internal, external and content validity. An outcome of research is considered valid if it represents, in an accurate and consistent way, the phenomenon it intends to describe, explain or theorize (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Therefore, to achieve validity the researcher had to ensure an accurate, truthful representation of the findings. According to various scholars, reliability and validity

remain appropriate concepts for attaining rigour in qualitative research and the assertion is that reliability is an indicator of validity (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, & Spiers, 2002).

In order to improve or maximise the validity and reliability of studies, triangulation can be used as an approach (Morse et al., 2002). Mathison (1988: 13 as quoted in Golafshani, 2003: 603) elaborates this by stating that triangulation has risen an important methodological issue in the qualitative approach to evaluation as it controls bias and establishes valid propositions because traditional scientific techniques are incompatible with alternate epistemology. Triangulation has been found to be beneficial in providing confirmation of findings and increasing validity, thus decreasing the weaknesses of an individual method and strengthening the outcome of the study through the combination of methods (Bekhet & Zauszniewski, 2012).

3.5 Data Collection Tools

Document analysis: Desktop and library research

This study drew information from desktop research by searching the world wide web for documentation specific to the EPWP and the library to collect books and texts that were important in helping unpack the topic. Official documentation was mainly obtained from the Department of Public Works Website, EPWP website, research journals and general websites that covered the EPWP. The information from the official websites mainly yielded official documentation which set the prescripts for the programme such as the 1997 Public Works White Paper, the Ministerial Determination on the EPWP which gazetted minimum conditions of employment for public works participants, Codes of Good Practice for the EPWP, Frameworks for Evaluating EPWP's and procedure manuals for the programme.

Some of the literature that critiques and unpacks various aspects of the programme such as the impact it has had on the labour market, its contribution to employment creation and poverty reduction and the perceptions of the programme by participants and the public was sourced both online and through books and text sourced from the library. These sources were able to give a holistic overview of the discourse and debate around the EPWP and the impact it has had. Through this method, it was established that there is a gap in research that includes the voices of the participants on the EPWP experience.

Semi-structured interviews

After potential respondents were identified, an initial interview was scheduled via phone, at a time and place convenient to the respondent. In-depth semi-structured interviews are the main research tool used that supplemented the document analysis. The semi-structured interviews were conducted with two sets of respondents, the programme trainees and the programme administrators. As a qualitative research method, this type of interview method is understood to be a more personal form of research that is case-centric in approach where the framing and positioning is more fluid and the interviewer has some discretion to probe or ask follow up questions to ensure that the researcher covers the correct material (Trochim, 2001: 109). Semi-structured interviews collect data in a style that is conversant and gives the researcher room for revision of the variables (questions or themes) as the interview process takes place (Spradley, 2003). Therefore, the fluidity of the interview process allows the interviewer to gain opinions and impressions while building rapport with respondents. Inversely, this gives respondents the opportunity to talk freely and discuss personal material that the pre-set interview may not have garnered. Spradley (2003: 44) argues that if rapport is built while eliciting information, respondents are encouraged to talk about their culture and personal lives, allowing for the free flow of information.

For this research, interview schedules (Appendix A) were employed which required respondents to reflect broadly on the biological details, personal experiences, work histories, the experience of working in the EPWP at TLF, and their personal views and perceptions on the EPWP. Thirty trainees who had completed at least three months of EPWP training and two programme administrators based at TLF were interviewed. The two sets of respondents were interviewed to get an understanding of the program experience from a participant perspective but also from the administrators who play a central role in the implementation of the programme and, thus, a better overall picture on the programme and its impact on participants.

The questions asked to respondents were specific and task-related questions and more grand tour questions such as “what has the EPWP experience been like for you as a trainee” and “in your view as an administrator, how is the experience like for the trainees?”. Such questions allowed the respondents to tell their story without constraint. According to Spradley (2003), grand tour questions simulate an experience and allow respondents to give the interviewer a tour through a particular time period, event or experience. For these type of questions, prompt questions were asked as a follow-up to get clarification and focus. These questions encouraged and elicited meaning and examples about the experience being described and were not used to steer the conversation.

Interviews were conducted at either the respondents home environment, at TLF or in a quiet restaurant as chosen by the respondent during a time of minimal interruption to allow for reflective storytelling of the experience. All respondents were interviewed separately to allow for privacy and rapport building between the interviewer and respondent. The length of the interviews was not constrained to time but generally lasted about an hour. At the end of each interview, a leading question was asked such as “Is there anything more about your experience, on or off the EPWP, that you feel is important to share that we may not have covered?” In most instances, this questions elicited information that

has already been shared and in such an instance, it was emphasised or re-phrased. Respondents were encouraged to use their mother tongue (mostly Setswana or IsiZulu) in instances where they struggled to answer questions in English.

All interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim by the researcher. Field notes were also taken as a secondary measure to the recorder. Field notes also helped record other contributing factors that the recording does not capture such as body language and facial expressions as respondents when describing their experience. In the phenomenological method, the interview is produced together by the interviewer and the respondent. The researcher is not just doing research; but becoming a partner working together with the participant as a co-researcher (Husserl, 2012).

3.6 Data Analysis Methods

After the data was collected, information was captured on a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet document in a tabular format using themes i.e. Respondent profiles, education and skills, EPWP training and perception. The responses were captured as they appeared on the interview schedule. The text findings were summarised by checking the key reoccurring themes, phrases and narratives that were used in the more detailed analysis. Each interview schedule had a number attached, which represented each respondent. There were not many data errors in capturing each interview schedule. This can be attributed to the constant presence of the researcher on site who conducted all interviews and took all notes and recordings.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

The following ethical issues were considered pertaining to the study: At the interview, the purpose of the study was explained and thereafter the respondents were asked to sign a written consent form (Appendix C). Throughout the interview oral process, consent was solicited. According to Alsaawi

(2014), process consent is an oral negotiation and renegotiation during the interview as unexpected consequences or situations occur. Therefore, process consent demonstrates a sensitivity to the participant's personal stories and occurrences when sharing their lived experience. An Assurance was given to respondents that information was going to be treated with a high level of respect and confidentiality.

Once interviews were concluded, respondents were informed of the next steps of transcribing and writing up of the study. The researchers made sure to get verbal consent for follow up phone calls in case more information or clarity is needed. To ensure that respondents were able to answer questions freely and in confidence, they were given the option to remain anonymous as explicated in the consent form on confidentiality. There were respondents who did not mind their names being shared but stressed that as long as the information they share is not misconstrued and that they are informed of what will be included.

3.8 Limitations and constraints to the study

Below are the constraints and limitations of the study:

Due to time constraints and a limited budget for the study, the scope and coverage of the study had to be limited. For instance, in-depth interviews with trainees were limited to those who still reside within the Pretoria metro, suburbs and surrounding townships. The researcher was unable to visit those trainees based outside of Pretoria because financial resources would not allow for long distance trips.

Another limitation, related to the aforementioned, is the limited ability to increase the interview scope. Only trainees who still reside in the Pretoria area were interviewed. This could be seen as biased as it is likely that there are some trainees who have relocated after participating in the programme either

to go back home or due to finding employment. The inability to trace all former trainees of the programme who were at TLF is problematic for the research scope to authoritatively assert the impact of lived experiences on all trainees of the EPWP at TLF. This limitation means that the validity and generalisability of the research findings are limited because the interviewed respondents are not from a representative sample of all former trainees who have been part of the EPWP. However, it is considered that, with the sample interviewed, this study will be able to provide insight into the impact of lived experiences on the EPWP trainees.

Due to the goal of understanding the lived experiences of trainees, some questions asked to respondents were regarded as private and respondents were at times reluctant to fully answer the question. The rapport built between the interviewer and respondent helped counter the guardedness of respondents and they were able to eventually share their personal experiences. It was very important for the research to produce accurate, trustworthy results.

Looking at the impact that lived experiences have on the EPWP is not to say that the outcome and impact that the EPWP has is only determined by lived experiences. It is acknowledged that there are other factors and variables at play that affect the programme outcome and its participants. Rather, this study is an attempt to understand if factors such as trainees' prior education, training and survival strategies have a direct bearing on the programme.

Due to the lack of baseline data on respondents, the survey questions used to inform the findings were largely phrased in terms of the current and previous experience of respondents, making them reliant on respondents recall rather than panel information for the same respondents over a period of time.

3.9 Chapter Summary

The This chapter has highlighted the types of research methodologies, population, sampling, setting, data analysis and collection tools employed in this chapter By doing so empirical information was presented which justified the significance of the study. The ethical considerations and limitations and constraints to the study were also included

4 Chapter Four: The EPWP and Tshwane Leadership Foundation

4.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the background of Public Works Programmes in South Africa highlighting the subsequent inception of the EPWP. The chapter will also introduce the demographic characteristics of the EPWP trainees who were interviewed in the study. This is in order to understand and articulate the location of the participants who join the programme

Public Works Programme's (PWP's) have been employed by many countries, both in the developed and developing world, as 'temporary auxiliary measures' aimed at providing employment and sustenance to the greatest possible number of the unemployed on a temporary basis in times of acute or transient shocks (Aliber et al., 2006; Samson, 2007). Major PWP's were introduced in Britain and Prussia during periods of heightened unemployment and labour market disruption brought about by industrialisation and conflict in the nineteenth century; in the USA during the Great Depression; and most recently in the twentieth century in Africa, Latin America and Asia (Subbarao, 1997).

In developing countries, PWP's have been used as a response to developmental and emergency crises with objectives relating to livelihoods improvement, poverty reduction, and an increase in labour market performance (McCord, 2007). According to McCord (2007: 10) the design of PWP's has taken different forms and has presented the following typologies:

Type A: PWP's that offer a single short-term episode of employment.

Type B: Large-scale government programmes that may offer some type of employment guarantee

Type C: Programmes that promote the labour intensification of government infrastructure spending

Type D: Programmes which enhance employability.

All these PWP's share the common characteristic of being 'cash-for-work' short-term programmes that create both physical and social goods that are disproportionately in high demand by the poor (McCord, 2005, 2007, 2008). Table 4.1 below highlights some of the PWP's being implemented in different developing countries. PWP's are scrutinized and are questioned for being framed as appropriate instruments in contexts that are not characterised by transient labour market disruption and basing the programmes on the assumption that short-term PWP intervention can effectively address unemployment irrespective of the nature or cause of the labour market's malfunctioning (McCord, 2008). Following the neoliberal shift, unemployment increased exponentially around the world. Therefore, the notions that the implementation of short-term PWP intervention could have a significant and sustained impact on a country's poverty and unemployment crisis without facing the real structural issues brought about by neoliberal policies and historical particularities are flawed.

This chapter will explore the history of Public Works Programmes in South Africa and the subsequent introduction of the Expanded Public Works Programme in post-apartheid South Africa. More specifically zooming in on the EPWP at TLF that is an implementing partner of the programme. The chapter will also outline the demographic characteristics of the trainees who were interviewed for this study.

Country	Context & Origins	Focus and Scope*	Activities	Institutional Design	Funding
India (NREGA)	Widespread rural poverty with inadequate livelihoods opportunities NREGA enacted by legislation in 2005; operational in 2006. Rights-based framework making the government legally accountable for providing work	All rural HHs who volunteer to do unskilled manual work for statutory minimum wage are entitled to 100 days of work /financial year; this can be divided among adult HH members. In FY 08-09, 45 million households benefited; 2.163 billion person-days of work were created in 615 districts A 60:40 wage and material ratio has to be maintained. No contractors or use of machinery is allowed.	<i>Objective:</i> to create durable assets and strengthen the livelihood resource base of the rural poor through works that address causes of chronic poverty like drought, deforestation, and soil erosion. <i>Focus:</i> Nine areas, including water conservation, natural resource management, and rural infrastructure.	Nodal ministry: Ministry of Rural Development; advisory role for Employment Guarantee Councils at the central and the state levels; village Gram Panchayats responsible for the selection, planning and execution of works and registering and working with applicants. The DPC at the district level and PO at the block level responsible for planning works to match the demand; NREG Act provides for an institutional framework for social audits for transparency/accountability	The central government covers wage costs, 3/4 of material and a % of administration costs. The state government covers 1/4 of material costs, the administration costs of state council and the costs of paying an unemployment allowance if work is not provided within 15 days of being requested.
South Africa (EPWP 2)	Extremely high rates of structural unemployment, legacy of poorly skilled workforce, high youth unemployment Phase I of EPWP was launched in 2004 and Phase 2 in April 2009	All unemployed willing to work at wage rate offered. No person may be employed for more than 24 months within a 5-year cycle (some exceptions). People selected to work on projects; no centralised registry; duration of employment varies by project/sector but, on average, assumed to be 100 days EPWP II provides new targets to lengthen the duration of jobs created. Target: 2 million FTE jobs by 2014 (4.5 million people)	Infrastructure for basic services and social services (child care and home- and community-based care, environmental rehabilitation, conservation and management). For new approach in the context of EPWP II, see Government of South Africa (2008)	All government departments, municipalities and parastatals are required to take steps to increase employment creation in their infrastructure programmes, where technically and economically feasible. Dedicated centralized structures at the national level, integrated with technical line ministries or local governments; EPWP II also allows for the non-state sector to implement (i) area-based and (ii) institutional programmes.	Conditional grants to provinces and municipalities for infrastructure or services to be provided Wage incentive to complement grants and encourage use of local government's own funds
Argentina (<i>Jefes y Jefas de Hogar</i>)	Launched in April 2002 to mitigate the unemployment impacts of the economic crisis; Scaled down after 2003, as workers moved to other jobs, lost eligibility or were shifted to other programmes	<i>Eligibility:</i> heads of households that contain children under the age of 18, persons with disabilities, or a pregnant woman. Work is provided for a maximum of 20 hrs./week at a monthly wage of 150 pesos (about 1/2 of the mean HH income/ capita/month in 2002). At its peak, employment for 2.2 million people (22% of the economically active population)	Community services (child care, community kitchens, health projects) and projects (public building maintenance, housing construction and repair, small productive projects); formal schooling; training programmes; administrative work	The federal government is responsible for funding, general guidelines for project execution, and management support (through Ministry of Labour and through GECAL, e.g., national registry of beneficiaries, project databases) Municipalities responsible for assessment of needs and community resources and projects proposed and outreach to beneficiaries	Dedicated funds including through a shift from other safety nets that were eliminated or reduced Federal government funds a maximum of 80% of project costs; additional non-wage costs to be covered by local governments, NGOs or communities
Ethiopia (PSNP)	Food shortages for large parts of the rural population; PSNP launched in 2005 initially as a 5-year programme to target previous recipients of food aid and newly vulnerable HHs.	<i>Target:</i> 7-8 million rural Ethiopians either through PWs (80-90%) for 6 months/year or Direct Support (10-20%) to HHs with no labour. <i>Eligibility:</i> HHs facing more than 3 months a year of food insecurity year after year. HHs entitled to a minimum of 5 days/person in the HH.	Address underlying causes of food insecurity Focus on developing sustainable community assets and improving natural resource base and social infrastructure and watersheds	Funding and oversight centralised through Ministry of Rural Development Strong community participation in identifying activities and assets required; implementation through local districts. Community committees propose which households are to participate in public works vs. which receive direct transfers.	Supported by a consortium of donors: Government of Ethiopia provides in-kind support: project management staff, office space, etc.

Table 4.1: Summary of key Public Employment Programmes

(Source: Lal, Miller, Lieuw-Kie-Song, & Kostzer, 2010)

4.2 The EPWP in post-apartheid South Africa

The PWP's were first introduced in South Africa in the 1920s to 1930s as a response to the 'Poor White Problem' where many rural whites, mostly of Afrikaner descent, were living in poverty and rife mass unemployment (Abedian & Standish, 1985). This group began to fight for better living standards; from which the government implemented a PWP named the Special Employment Creation Programme (SECP) which had the purpose of creating labour intensive projects that drew whites into productive work (May & Govender, 1998)

In the 1980s during the economic shift, from an infrastructure labour-intensive economy to a technological skills intensive economy, the government was faced with another employment crisis; this time with the majority of the black population (Lal et al., 2010). For blacks, years of discriminatory labour policies, poor education and inadequate social and physical services resulted in dire living circumstances and limited access to employment opportunities (Abedian & Standish, 1985; McCord, 2004b). During 1983 and 1984 the SECP was re-initiated to provide temporary relief to the unemployed, blacks included (Thwala, 2006).

After 1994, PWPs gained more traction in government policy discourse where the government reimagined them as programmes that could create public infrastructure while generating necessary skills for its participants instead of just being a social safety net mechanism (Thwala, 2006). The National Public Works Programme (NPWP) was the first post-apartheid PWP and was introduced during the RDP policy era in late 1995 under the Department of Public Works (Subbarao, 1997; Thwala, 2006). Soon after its inception, the NPWP then shifted and was named the Community-Based Public Works Programme (CBPWP) and was operationalised in mid-1996. It was set to be a more long-term structured labour intensive programme. It was to be a social compact within the

government, labour, the construction industry and civil society. This compact made the pronouncement for industry to commit to the maximisation of labour intensive systems in construction for public works with ‘emphasis on smaller companies and regulatory bodies than a national programme.’ (Thwala, 2006).

The CBPWP moved into the GEAR era where the white paper set a target of creating 100 000 new jobs each year through labour-intensive infrastructure works and service provision (McCord, 2003, 2004b). Overall the CBPWP was not successful in achieving some of its goals, including creating the stated 100 000 jobs (W. M. Gumede, 2007). The application of PWP’s gained prominence in the early 2000s where government, business and the civil society came together and introduced EPWP’s as a means of alleviating poverty through active employment and training (Phillips, 2004). The reimagined EPWP was aimed at directly addressing the chronic unemployment and poverty and not just to have it be a ‘patch the wound’ solution.

In reaction to worsening poverty in the 2000s, lack of job security and adequate safety nets to assist the unemployed, the government began to look towards public works programmes or what is sometimes referred to as special employment programmes in South Africa’s policy discourses. At its policy conference in late 2002, the ANC government resolved that there should be a large scale employment and skills development accelerator programme that can address the mass unemployment crisis. The government became increasingly aware of the great extent of unemployment and poverty that prevailed in South Africa; which subsequently led to the introduction of the EPWP that is currently administered and managed by the National Department of Public Works (McCord, 2004b: 4; Visser, 2004: 13).

The programme was meant to provide poverty and income relief through temporary work for the unemployed, especially youth and women. The EPWP is the major government initiative intended to address a range of government policy priorities such as social and economic development challenges (Department of Public Works, 2016). The intention of improving access to the labour market for unemployed individuals through the EPWP is highlighted in the official documentation as being:

A nation-wide programme covering all spheres of government, state-owned enterprises and non-state owned sectors that aims to draw significant numbers of unemployed into productive work accompanied by training so that they can increase their capacity to earn an income, through improved labour market performance (Department of Public Works, 2005: 3).

At face value, the EPWP seems like an ideal solution that benefits the unemployed, government and communities. It is premised on the idea that the acquisition of skills and workplace experience will improve participants' chances of obtaining more formal employment and therefore contributing to the alleviation of poverty (McCord, 2005: 556). The reality of unemployment in South Africa, however, is that it is structural and extensive. According to McCord (2004b: 3), structural unemployment occurs when there is a decline in the formal sector for unskilled labour due to changes in the economy that have led to a fall of the primary sector, increase use technology and the country's entry into the global economy.

South Africa's transition from a labour-intensive to a skills-intensive economy meant that there has been a low demand for unskilled labour, in relation to its mass supply. According to McCord (2004b: 3), the consequence of this economic transition meant that the number of labour market entrants exceed the number of jobs available, resulting in mass unemployment, especially of unskilled labourers.

As the only major skills training policy intervention available to unemployed persons of working age in South Africa, the EPWP is meant to upskill participants to a level where they can meet the needs of the job market (McCord, 2004b: 9). If this is the aim, it is then crucial that participants benefit from this short-term programme in terms of skills development and prospects for further employment. Since its inception, the popular discourse around the EPWP has created certain assumptions and expectations implying that the programme would create massive employment while decreasing poverty and lifting the economy to new levels. An example of this rhetoric was given during then-President Thabo Mbeki's address at the National Council of Provinces in 2003 where he stated that:

Unemployed people will get jobs over the next 5 years because of a dramatically expanded government public works programme... which would draw significant numbers of the unemployed into productive employment, so that workers gain skills while they are gainfully employed, and increase their capacity to earn an income once they leave the programme (Mbeki, 2003).

Similarly, in 2014, then- President Jacob Zuma praised the success of the EPWP by stating:

The number of people in employment grew by approximately 5.6 million between 1994 and 2013...This has also not been adequate to meet the objective of reducing unemployment substantially... It is all largely due to the EPWP's contribution towards supporting employment generation. (EPWP a Success Story, 2014).

These statements highlight the programme's prominence within the political field despite there being much contestation around its impact and effectiveness. Scholars such as McCord (2012), Moyo (2013), Samson (2007) and Hlatshwayo (2017a) have argued that a training programme such as the EPWP cannot be expected to solve the high unemployment dilemma in South Africa. According to

the aforementioned, part of the reason for this is that its temporary nature does not afford participants enough time to gain the necessary skills that are needed in the labour market which could impact on their labour market performance (Hlatshwayo, 2017a; McCord, 2012; Moyo, 2013; Samson, 2007). Arguably, even if the necessary skills were imparted to participants, the economy is currently not growing fast enough to absorb the multitude of unemployed people.

4.3 The case of Tshwane Leadership Foundation (TLF)

TLF was launched in 1993 as a faith-based non-profit (NPO) organisation based in the heart of the City of Tshwane's (CoT) Central Business District (CBD). The organisation consists of seven programmes that work towards renewing urban communities and providing services to the marginalised within the CBD. The programmes work in areas that support and provide social services to at-risk women and girls, the homeless, individuals involved in sex work, children in need, patients with chronic mental illness, people living with HIV/AIDS and residents living in the inner city's social housing projects.

Since TLF provides services to the marginalised in the CoT's metropolitan area it is important to provide some context on the city. The CoT is the largest metropolitan municipality in the country and the third largest in the world in terms of land and mass ("City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality", 2017). According to the last conducted census in 2011⁴, the city has a population of approximately 2.9 million people which translates to 911 536 households (*South Africa's National Census*, 2011).

⁴ The last recorded national population census was in 2011. Typically a population census is held every 5 years which means a subsequent census was supposed to take place in 2016. According to Statistics South Africa, due to a lack of capacity within the organisation, the interval has been extended to 10 years ("Statistics South Africa," 2018). This has made it hard to retrieve more recent population information on the City of Tshwane as the Quarterly reports released by Statistics South Africa release statistics per province and not per city or municipality.

The majority of the population in the city is made up of young people with average age of between 30-39 years, thus, the majority of the population falls within the working age group (*South Africa's National Census, 2011*).

The inner city core of the region is the largest job opportunities zone ("City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality ", 2017). This has caused mass economic migration to the city for people seeking employment and a better life. However, the decentralisation of commercial hubs has caused an exodus of commercial activity to areas outside of the CBD, leaving the city susceptible to urban decay, mass unemployment and dilapidating infrastructure (Moeti, 2014). Due to this, the municipality has initiated mass rejuvenation projects in the city, which include the use of EPWP projects to help alleviate decay and unemployment.

EPWP at Tshwane Leadership Foundation

The EPWP currently creates opportunities for employment in four sectors namely, Infrastructure, Non-state, Environment, and Social and Cultural sectors (Department of Public Works, 2016). TLF operates under the Non-State Sector (NSS) of the EPWP programme, which was introduced in 2009 and uses wage subsidies to support NPO's with their community development initiatives (Department of Public Works, 2016). The NSS programme houses NPO's that have a strong social impact component and address social issues such as gender, poverty, skills, and education (Chakwizira, 2010). According to some scholars, The NSS model has the best opportunity to integrate the socio-economic growth and development needs of the intended EPWP beneficiaries with the EPWP (Chakwizira, 2010; Samson, 2008, 2015). Thus, this model addresses the needs of the marginalised communities that NPO's serve while also providing opportunities for employment and development to these communities.

TLF started to take part in the EPWP in 2012 and has managed to train around 450 participants thus far. The organisation has an annual intake of between 80 and 85 trainees⁵ who assist and are trained in various activities including social assistance, office administration, fundraising and marketing, early childhood development, arts and culture, primary healthcare and advocacy work. The trainees are divided into the seven projects At TLF according to which project requires the most assistance. It is then up to the project manager to define duties and job responsibilities for the trainees.

4.4 Demographic Characteristics of the EPWP Trainees at TLF

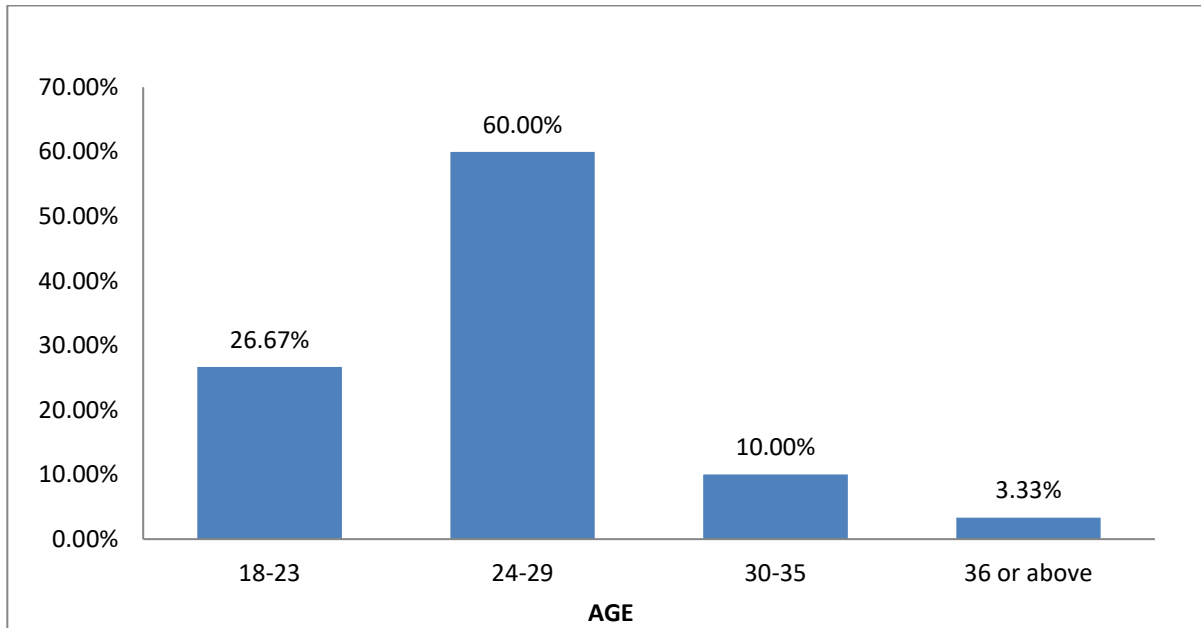
For purposes of understanding the study and the results thereof, it is important to define the demographics of the interviewed respondents. Almost 100% of the interviewed EPWP trainees were Black. They were youth and women who constituted the majority of the sample.

Age distribution

All trainees interviewed were Black youth between the ages of 18 and 36. As Figure 4.1 below shows; more than three-quarters of the trainees interviewed were between the ages of 24-29 years of age (60%). The trainee who falls within the 36 and above age bracket was 33 years old at the time of participating in the programme.

⁵ TLF refers to participants on the programme as trainees instead of employees because, according to the organisation, the use of trainees gives the participants affirmation that they are undergoing formal training for a particular profession. This helps trainees see the programme as an opportunity to learn and develop than just one for gaining a source of income.

Figure 4.1: Age Distribution of Interviewed Trainees



Gender distribution

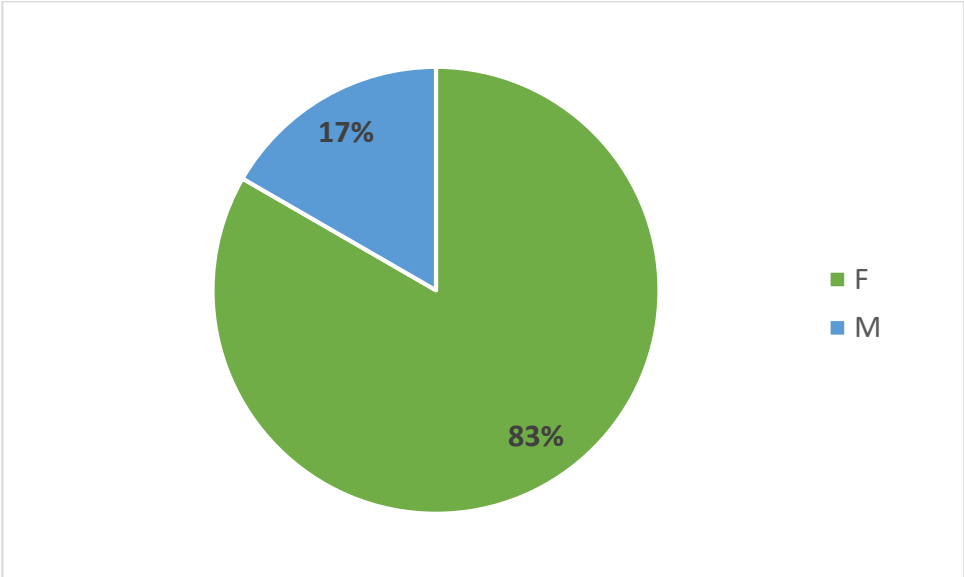
As Figure 4.2 depicts, the majority (83%) of EPWP trainees interviewed consisted of female participants while men only constituted 17%. One of the reasons for the high percentage of females participating is based on the quotas set by the EPWP non-state sector's equity targets that emphasises targeting employment at vulnerable groups that include, women, youth between 16 and 35 years of age and persons with disabilities (Henderson, 2016:18).

Another reason that could be identified for the high participation of women was the household dynamics and the roles women play in their families as secondary breadwinners or single parents. According to the EPWP procedure manual for NPO's provided by the DPW, organisations should work towards implementing the following equity targets: 55% women, 40% youth and 2% persons with disabilities (*Extended Public Works Programme: Non-State Sector Procedure Manual*, 2012).

The equity targets were advantageous to the female participants who mostly played a breadwinner role in their family structures. One interviewee supported that:

Being part of a programme with other women my age who help their families is really positive as one learns a lot from other women on how they are able to support their families and survive outside of the programme. I ended up finding myself and received so much support the other women on this programme. (Huma, 2017)

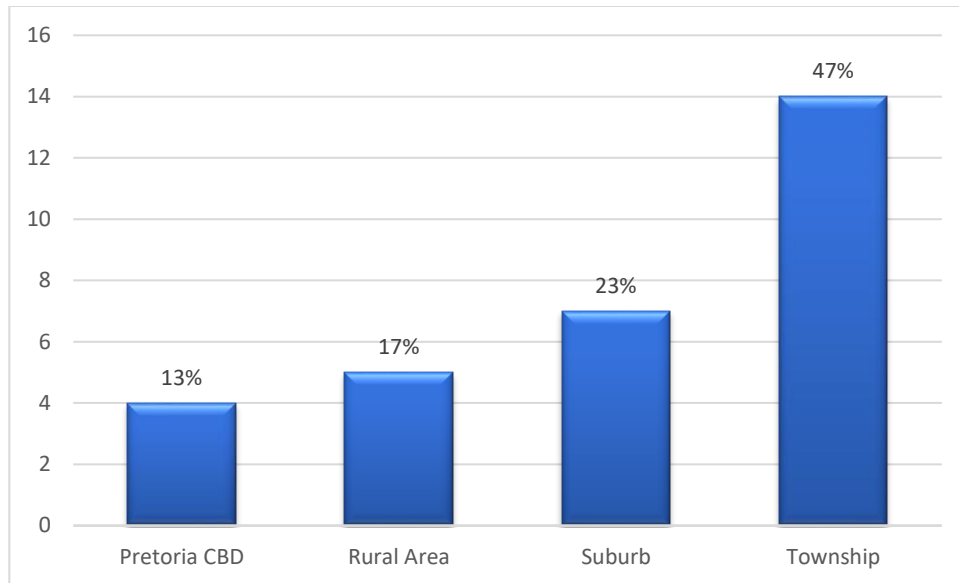
Figure 4.2: Gender Distribution of Interviewed Trainees



Original place of residence

Figure 4.3 below shows that more than three-quarters of the trainees were originally from township and rural areas in and outside Pretoria and are now living in the Pretoria Central Business District mostly due to economic and financial circumstances.

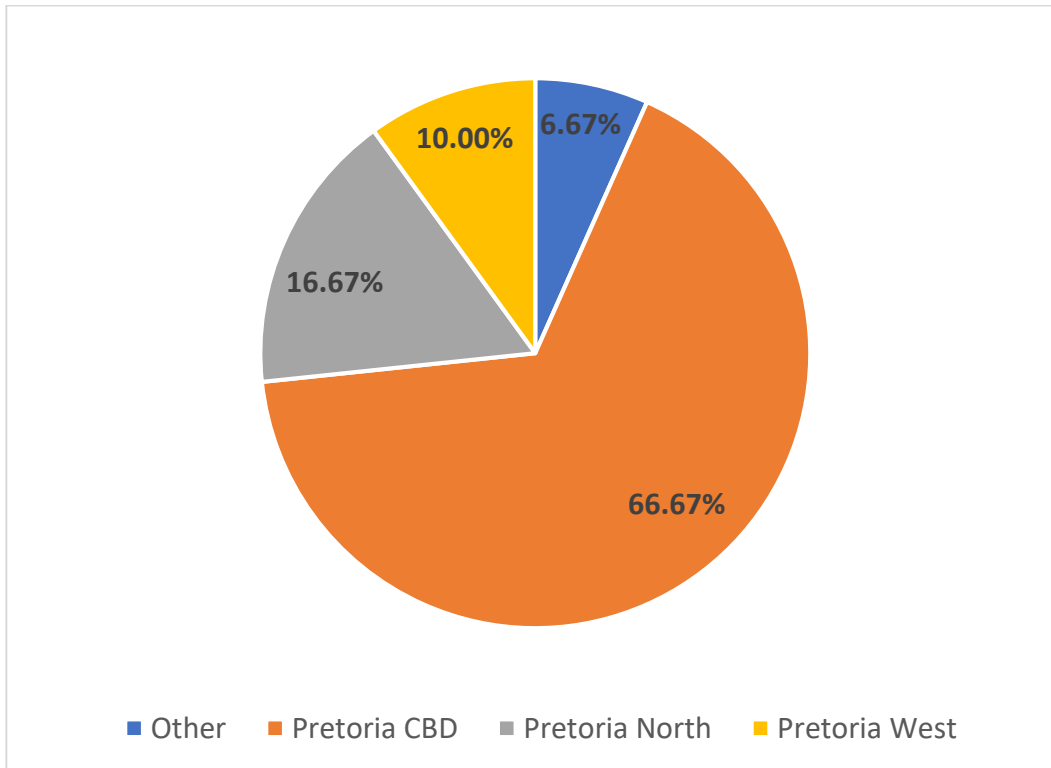
Figure 4.3: Original Place of Residence



Current place of residence

The majority (66.67%) of EPWP trainees interviewed are living in the CBD and surrounding areas. Of the majority, more than 50% are from townships and informal settlements around Pretoria, Mpumalanga and Limpopo and Kwa-Zulu Natal. The participants living outside the CBD all live with either families or relatives in a permanent homestead. Figure 4.4 below illustrates the areas where trainees reside while on the programme.

Figure 4.4: Areas where Participants Reside while on the EPWP



All of the respondents living in the CBD are temporarily based for either economical, personal or health reasons (see Table 4.2 below). About 35% of the trainees live in the CBD because of their studies, 30% are in the CBD to find employment while 20% are there for both work and study purposes. The remaining 15% of CBD-based trainees live in the area due to reasons such as health issues, a breakdown in family relations and seeking lodging at TLF’s woman’s shelter due to homelessness.

Table 4.2: Reasons for CBD Residence

Reasons for CBD residence	Freq.	%
Economic	6	30.00%
Education	7	35.00%
Employment and Education	4	20.00%
Personal Reasons	3	15.00%
Grand Total	20	100.00%

The trainees based in Pretoria for job seeking reasons were all students who originally came to the city to study and remained thereafter to seek employment. One of the trainees, who completed her studies in Social Auxiliary Work, states that:

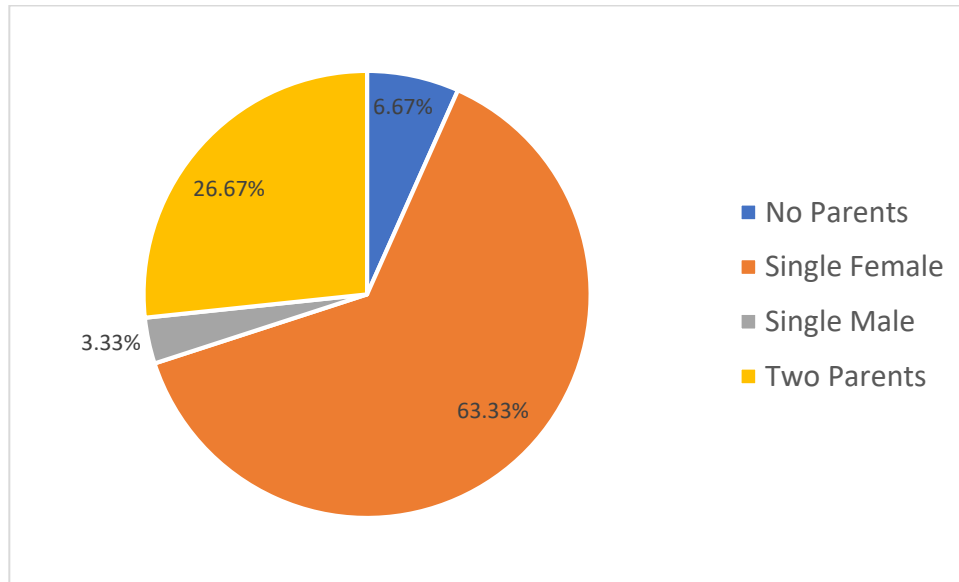
I am originally from Hamanskraal, but after completing my studies in 2011 I realised I couldn't go back home because it would be too difficult and expensive to job hunt from home. I have been in Pretoria since completing my studies and have not been able to secure employment. (Lekalakala, 2017).

The trainees stayed even after completion of their studies and the EPWP was complete with hopes of finding more permanent employment. This is an everyday reality of many previously disadvantaged people in South African who are experiencing spatial inequality and are then forced to flock to the urban areas for opportunities that are already so limited.

Household breadwinners

Figure 4.5 below illustrates the composition of family members who financially support the respondents' families. A significant number of about 63.3% of the respondents came from single female-headed households where a female figure, either a mother, grandmother, aunt or sister was the head of the household and was the only person financially supporting the family.

Figure 4.5: Household Breadwinner by Sex



All the trainees interviewed mentioned that they have experienced growing up in an environment where everyone was either unemployed or where the primary breadwinner was dependent on monthly government social grants payouts to provide sustenance for their families. Interestingly, the composition of household structure plays a pivotal role in determining the participant's interaction with the EPWP as a survival strategy and this will be unpacked in chapter seven.

According to the 2015 report on the living conditions of households by Statistics South Africa, in 2014/2015 eight out of ten households in South Africa were headed by Black Africans (*Living Conditions of Households in South Africa 2014/2015*, 2015). The report states that there were more Black male-headed households (58.64%) compared to female-headed households (41.36%). However, compared to other races, there was greater gender parity in Black and Coloured households where the split was closer to fifty-fifty in terms of household-head composition (*Living Conditions of Households in South Africa 2014/2015*, 2015).

Female-headed households are prevalent within the EPWP community, as one participant describes:

My mother is the only breadwinner. As the eldest daughter, it is my duty to help out by contributing towards some of the household responsibilities. EPWP gives me enough money to make a difference at home and help my mother (Anonymous, 2017).

4.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter sought to unpack the introduction of PWP's within the South African unemployment discourse, by firstly providing a broad overview of the PWP's that exist in different countries and then locating this conversation within South Africa's pre and post-apartheid era. The inception of post-apartheid EPWP was discussed whereafter the programme was discussed in context to TLF where the organisation was introduced as a case study. Finally, an overview of the demographic characteristics of the respondents who were interviewed for this study was provided and discussed.

The next three chapters will present the research findings, analysis and interpretation of the findings of the study before reaching conclusions and providing recommendations going forward.

5 Chapter Five: Education, Skills and Training among EPWP Participants

5.1 Introduction

Forming part of the data analysis and presentation, chapter five aims to unpack how education, skills and training acquired by participants impact the EPWP training experience. Moreso, an analysis of whether the aforementioned factors impede or advance the opportunity for gaining skills that can influence the participants' labour market performance. The views and opinions of the selected respondents and programme facilitators are shared and used as basis points that can help shed light on the programme from the participant's experience.

The EPWP is the major benchmark of the government's social protection and employment development policy and there is a general perspective on the educational attainment and literacy levels of those participating in the programme. The general perception is that participants are uneducated and have not completed their secondary education and have low literacy levels (Ashton, 2005; McCord, 2004a, 2005; Moyo, 2013). This makes the efficacy of the EPWP as a skills and employment development driver problematic considering South Africa's landscape where unemployment directly affects all regardless of education and literacy levels. In an effort to assess the socio-economic location, in terms of education, of trainees on the programme, trainees were asked about their educational background, literacy and skills levels. According to McCord (2004a: 19), educational background and skills levels are indicators that can be examined and used to contribute to the socio-economic profiling of interviewed respondents.

This chapter is divided into four sections that will examine the respondents highest levels of education and the impact they have on the skills gained and overall programme experience. The second section

will look at the impact that the EPWP has on the trainee's labour market performance. Section three will unpack the trainee's perceptions of the EPWP to gain an understanding of their thoughts about the programme experience. Finally, this chapter will discuss the premise underlying the EPWP experience, namely, educational and skills attainment equates to improved chances of finding employment for participants.

5.2 EPWP Trainees Highest Level's of Education and Skills

As table 5.1 shows, of the trainees, interviewed, the majority (43.33%) had grade twelve (Matric)⁶ as the highest educational qualification attained. Eleven trainees (36.67%) had acquired a diploma or degree as their highest qualification.⁷ Within this group, seven of the trainees had national diplomas while four had degrees. Only two trainees had obtained postgraduate degrees and they were an Honours degree in social work and a Masters degree in marketing management respectively. Five respondents had obtained their National certificates, termed N4, N5 or N6⁸, in social work, hospitality and financial management respectively; and only one of trainees had grade eleven as the highest educational level completed while on the programme. TLF prides itself on training youth who have strong educational backgrounds but are unable to find employment or further their careers. As the programme coordinator stated:

⁶ South Africa's secondary education starts at Grade 8 and ends with Grade 12 (Matric). Upon the completion of Matric, scholars receive a National Senior Certificate (high school diploma) and is commonly known as the matriculation certificate. It is only compulsory to complete secondary education through to Grade 9.

⁷ Diplomas obtained by trainees are in the fields of marketing, Early Childhood Development, business management, international communications, computer science and office administration. Degrees were in the fields of political science, social work, marketing, graphic design and public administration.

⁸ N4- N6 qualifications are post-matric, national certificate programmes that lead candidates towards obtaining a National Diploma. Each certificate is obtained over a 3 month period and is considered a qualification on its own.

We [TLF] try by all means to employ and train youth who have matric and post-matric qualifications but are unable to find employment. We hope that they will be able to gain skills that can help them gain more permanent employment with their qualifications and from the experience gained while on the programme (Mfubu, 2017).

Table 5.1: Highest Qualification Completed

Qualification	Freq.	%
Below matric	1	3.33%
N4- N6	5	16.67%
Diploma/ Degree	11	36.67%
Matric	13	43.33%
Grand Total	30	100.00%

One's educational attainment and learning new skills does not always ensure that employment will be created. Dias and Posel (2007) argue that the relationship between education and unemployment is not always linear. Their research shows that working-age South Africans have become more educated as compared to 1995. In 2003 a larger proportion of youth, particularly black youth, reported that they had a 'matric' qualification as the highest level of education. Despite this rise, the unemployed group showed a growing proportion of persons with tertiary, matric and incomplete secondary education proving that the relationship between education and unemployment is not linear. Despite this, there are studies that show that access to higher levels of education appears to make a significant difference in the labour market performance of individuals and their chances of successfully finding a job after leaving school (Allais, 2012; Ashton, 2005; Rainbird, 2000).

As a proclaimed employment creation programme through skills development, a microscopic look into the programmes skills training strategy and its ability to transfer the necessary skills needed must be investigated. This is in order to understand the type of skills transfer that takes place in the programme. Not all organisations partaking in the programme attract participants who have secondary

level education and possess entry level to intermediate skills (McCord, 2003). TLF is one organisation that has been able to attract a cohort of trainees who are educated, literate and have some work experience. They joined the programme because there were no other opportunities for them in the labour market. By looking at TLF's case one can extrapolate that improving labour supply quality by providing basic training is a misnomer and does not always guarantee employment. Case in point, the respondents who trained at TLF are already equipped with a strong educational background and possess basic skill sets that can, ideally, increase their prospects for employment.

This speaks to South Africa's paradoxical nature of structural adjustment policies that move between a neoliberal economic paradigm which reduces the role of the state in providing social services such as education, transport and health, and a more developmental state that has a people-centred political and economic agenda (Peet, 2002; Pitcher, 2012: 247). The labour market (created by a high skills economic trajectory) is in demand of specified, often complex, skill sets that realistically cannot be provided by the EPWP. This is because the EPWP is a social protection programme that needs to create as many jobs as possible for a substantial proportion of the population with different skill sets and educational levels.

Added to conflicting policies, the job market is strained and unemployment is rife. This predicament makes the EPWP premise of increased skills equalling to increased access to the labour market tricky. This is because this premise ignores the external circumstances that affect its implementation and the reason why the programme was introduced in the first place. The programme conceptualisation implies that unemployment is 'frictional' in nature as would be the case in more developed countries, such as Western Europe, where people who were dislocated by cyclical economic shocks and recession took part in PWP's which provided permanent employment once the programme was complete (McCord, 2005). Such a policy response in South Africa, where there are high levels of

unemployment and structural inequality, is inappropriate. South Africa has a population of highly skilled and educated people entering programmes such as the EPWP because the labour market cannot absorb them.

An opportunity to the programme and TLF would be to explore and hone the educational backgrounds and expertise trainees possess so as to develop them in their fields of study or interest while also ensuring maximum impact and gain for the organisation. There are trainees with qualifications and skills, albeit intermediary, that can be of benefit to the various programmatic areas at TLF. This has the potential to improve the trainees' skills sets and create opportunities for development moving the focus from just financial gain towards working to develop tangible skills and experience that could instil confidence in their potential labour market performance.

Skills gained by trainees on the EPWP

Trainees were asked if they felt that they have gained any new skills which have either improved their skill set or have given them the confidence to enter the job market. As Table 5.2 depicts, about 67% of respondents said that they did not gain any skills that have improved their skill set or improved their confidence while on the programme. The remaining 33% said they gained new skills that have given them the confidence to search for employment which they will add to their curriculum vitae when applying for jobs. The newly gained skills mentioned by trainees included: basic administration skills, computer literacy, interpersonal skills, communication and presentation skills, conflict management skills and overall professionalism. All the skills mentioned by this group of respondents are soft skills⁹ that can be appreciated by newly working, inexperienced trainees. The respondents

⁹ Soft skills are defined as the personal and psychological attributes that one develops when in a formal workplace and often causally produces one's success in the workplace (Heckman & Kautz, 2012). Examples include: work ethic, communication skills, teamwork and conflict management.

who mentioned to have gained new skills all had Grade 12 as the highest qualification obtained at the time of training.

Table 5.2: Did you Gain any New Skills while on the EPWP?

	Freq.	%
No	20	66.67%
Yes	10	33.33%
Grand Total	30	100.00%

Respondents who felt that they did not gain any new skills were asked the type of skills they would have liked to gain on the programme? They mentioned computer programming (coding) and information technology skills, event planning and management, minute taking and recording, report writing, monitoring and evaluation, palliative care work, marketing communications and advocacy skills. Many of the respondents felt that the programme did not offer tangible skills that can be used going forward, instead, they felt they would attend work every day to be tasked with simple duties such as answering the switchboard, filing, babysitting at the daycare centre and helping make food for the afterschool learning programme.

Collected data shows that TLF’s EPWP programme has procedures in place that are supposed to impart skills to trainees by offering frequent training opportunities and ensuring that each trainee receives on the job practical experience. According to the 2015 mid-term report and minutes of staff meetings on the EPWP shared by TLF, trainees were trained in projects that were skilled intensive (such as palliative care, finance and administration and event management) in order to help them develop tangible skills that could help with their marketability and, thus, their labour market performance. More than 60% of respondents stated that although they were working in areas that could help them gain the necessary skills needed in the formal employment sector, the type of work

duties and training they were subjected to did not help develop appropriate skills for the market. As one trainee tellingly states:

I was working in the Health Care Unit, however, I never got an opportunity to work with patients. All I did was wash bedding linen and make sure that the patients are accounted for. I wanted to learn how to be a healthcare provider but was never given the opportunity to learn
(Nethononda, 2017).

The programme and organisation were not sensitive to the heterogeneous training requirements of EPWP trainees. Trainees who join the programme come with different educational and skills levels, they were all literate, and most had significant knowledge and understanding of the organisation. Being an organisation that relies heavily on volunteerism to meet the demands for its services, TLF did not fully recognise the potential of its trainees to help them meet this demand.

The type of skills training provided at TLF was not skills development-oriented, thus, leaving many of the trainees feeling demotivated and despondent, only looking towards earning an income. Despite its clear recognition of having a skills-intensive development component that will allow trainees to enter into the so-called 'first economy' (skilled) labour market; the organisation's measures to fulfil this are quite futile.

Supply-side concerns

The type of skills being transferred are not aligned with the type of skills needed in the so-called 'first economy'. Thus, the supply side of the programme will never be able to meet the demand created by the skills deficit in the economy. When unpacking the training side of the programme, one finds that it is a problematic area that is not cognizant of the economic climate in South Africa.

The South African Skills Development Act (SDA)¹⁰ requires that any programme that administers training must be occupationally based, provide a credit towards a qualification registered in terms of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), address identified skills needs and makes use of an accredited training provider (McCord, 2005: 571).

The Department of Labour is mandated to develop and coordinate the training and skills development component of the programme in accordance with the EPWP Code of Good Practice (McCord, 2005). Based on empirical evidence, the training offered is not in line with the requirements of the SDA. From the findings, only 67% of trainees interviewed stated that they did not gain any new skills from participating in the programme and the 33% who said they had, mentioned skills that had little impact on their actual or anticipated labour market performance. The trainees also mentioned, as a grievance, the fact that they have never been presented with any form of certification as proof that they have undergone formal training.

The training offered by the programme is opposite to the requirements set out by the Code of Good Practice that is essentially the white paper governing the EPWP. This lack of formal training underlines the programmes inability to provide the necessary skills needed in the markets. The trainees also developed a pessimistic outlook about the prospects of finding employment after the programme. As one programme administrator describes:

When the trainees start the programme, a lot of them have hope and believe that the EPWP will be a doorway to permanent employment. But as the program proceeds, they become despondent and start asking for training that can help them develop 'real'

¹⁰ The Skills Development Act aims to develop the skills of South Africa's workforce and to improve the quality of life of workers and their prospects of work. To improve productivity in the workplace and the competitiveness of employers ("Skills Development Act," 2018)

skills. Unfortunately, due to budget constraints, we can't always provide the type of training they need (Mfubu, 2017).

The EPWP relies heavily on 'on the job' training rather than on standardised classroom-based training creating concerns that it has moved away from its goal of training skilled participants. The despondent attitude from trainees suggests that more work needs to be done to package and standardise the training in the programme so that trainees can get value from the experience and gain skills that can build confidence in their pursuit to enter the labour market.

Learnerships and the EPWP

TLF was at an advantage to have recruited a cohort of trainees who have some formal educational background and others with work experience. This presents an opportunity for the EPWP's training component to equip trainees with skills experience that is tangible for their growth and entry into the formal job market while harnessing those skills for the organisation daily work. However, for this compatible situation to be a reality, the skills development component of the programme would need to be prioritised and strengthened to provide skills and expertise to trainees that would give them an added advantage when entering the labour market. One way in which this can be achieved is by implementing the EPWP as an active labour market programme such as a learnership programme. Daniels (2007) asserts that the learnership initiative has become crucial to the effectiveness of the skills development regime in South Africa; and because they are formally recognised, through the NQF, they allow individuals who qualify a significant degree of transferability into the labour market that is associated with the newly acquired skills.

It is important to note that even the learnership programme has its own limitations. Two of the biggest critiques of the learnership model has been its complex bureaucratic system and the lack of capacity

to carry out accredited programmes. This stems from a rigorous coordination and accreditation process which involves many stakeholders such as the Department of Education, the Department of Higher Education and Training, Labour, Sector Education and Training Authorities's (SETA's) and the training providers (Daniels, 2007). The management of this system often leads to long implementation delays that frustrate training providers, thus thwarting their efforts to provide training (Daniels, 2007). This complexity would affect the EPWP operation and annual training targets.

Streamlining the training and skills development process of the programme would promote the proliferation of opportunities for the lower skilled trainees who are often locked out of the labour market. Subsequently, this would move the relevance of the programme from one that is focused on social welfare to one that is skilled intensive with the aim of promoting participants entrance in the formal labour market.

5.3 EPWP's Impact on Labour Market Performance

The current posture of the EPWP is set on the notion that only the marginalised and unemployed with low skills from disadvantaged backgrounds will volunteer to be part of the programme to gain new skill sets that can be used to escape unemployment, and therefore, poverty. This study shows that individuals who had educational qualifications and some work experience also self-selected to join the programme, it was not only people with low education levels who joined the programme. What is certain is that regardless of educational or skills level trainees admitted to joining the programme as a means to earn an income stream. This confirms McCord's (2004a: 17) findings that given an extremely high percentage of the population living in poverty without an income for basic needs, it is ideal for the majority taking up the programme to be poor. However, in the context of

mass unemployment across the board, and extremely low informal sector earnings, it is unlikely that only the poorest and unskilled will succeed in accessing EPWP employment (McCord, 2004a).

The study also showed that TLF mostly trained, secondary and tertiary educated trainees who, at the time of the training, had no access to employment or funds to further their studies, thus disputing the programmes essential bearing of only training the low skilled with low educational levels. The competition to find employment in South Africa for unemployed youth is wide and affects all socioeconomic tiers. Educated, unemployed young people with intermediate work experience are competing with low skilled lowly educated people to enter the programme with the goal of earning an income. The scales are unbalanced and the trainees lived experiences are prescribing the reality in which the programme is taking place. That is, a reality where access to gain paid employment takes precedence over being trained to gain skills and experience for future employment.

5.4 Perceptions about the EPWP Training and Experience

All the respondents were asked how they perceived the value of training received on the programme and if they have gained any new skills that could increase their labour market prospects. Trainees overwhelmingly stated that the training and experience they received in the programme had little impact on their current or anticipated labour market performance. Ndoto and Macun (2005:31-32) concluded that the programme's intervention has not made a significant difference with regards to skills provision, but has rather temporarily improved people's livelihoods in terms of income.

The study agrees with this finding in that despite the fact that trainees received some 'on-the-job' skills training prescribed by EPWP standards (McCord, 2004a:74); the training is not valuable enough to catapult trainees into the formal job market. In the case of TLF the respondents who found employment attribute this to their prior work experience, educational background and qualifications

and not to the programme. Ndoto and Macun (2005:34) understand the failure of trainees to value training to be in part due to the fact that trainees on the programme were ‘not presented with any form of certification as proof that they were trained, especially on technical skills.’ As one programme participant mentions

I am studying towards a law diploma and while at TLF I worked for their advocacy section, assisting with the administration in the law clinic. However, I do not have a certificate to show the experience I have gained, so going forward some organisations might not believe I have some knowledge of how a law office works (Tsiri, 2017).

5.5 The Miseducation of EPWP

The key insight provided by various scholars investigating the correlation between educational attainment and labour market performance is that education increases the probability of employment in modern economies. The EPWP is premised on the same thought, that is, the acquisition of skills and work experience will improve participants’ chances of obtaining employment post the EPWP (McCord, 2005: 556).

This study disproves this line of thought, with context to the EPWP. This is because the majority of respondent trainees who joined the programme had formal educational qualifications before starting the programme, and were unable to find employment before and after participating in the programme. Given the nature of the programme, its content and the short-time span in which it takes place, it can be argued that the programme is limiting and will not be able to yield the desired results of moving participants from unemployment to employment. The EPWP does not give participants the opportunity to break into the formal employment circle, known as ‘the first economy’, which many of them desire to be a part of.

Added to this, the structural nature of unemployment in South Africa impedes on the chance of trainees to find employment. In South Africa, high educational attainment, skills training and development does not automatically mean that jobs will be available for trainees to fill. Scholars have pointed out that South Africa's move from a labour intensive to a skills-intensive economy that prioritized markets and privatisation through neoliberal macro-economic policies has marginalized intermediary and low skilled work to a point where the country is struggling to create jobs that can absorb youth with basic to intermediate skills who make up a significant number of the unemployed pool in South Africa (Kingdon & Knight, 2007; McCord, 2005; Triegaardt, 2006).

The programs training ethos is wrongfully predicated on the assumption that supply-side interventions can impact on unemployment by creating gainful employment for EPWP participants on the demand side. When unpacking the skills and education levels of the interviewed trainees, one can deduce that the program's vision of skills development for improved labour market performance is flawed and arguably corresponds with the error in Say's Law. Say's law confers that the supply of whatever an economy produces creates the demand to buy it (Amsden, 2010). In ideal cases, skills development programmes created by the state can boost the labour market activity of its population because there is a labour demand. However, this is not the case in South Africa where the constraint of joblessness cannot be solely attributed to the EPWP and its failure to transfer the necessary skills that would enable trainees to find employment. The country's stagnant economic growth path plays a major role in limiting access to economic opportunities for the poor, unemployed, unskilled and inexperienced respectively.

The trainee's experience from the programme proves that multiple-short term employment opportunities in EPWP projects serve to 'recycle' the unemployed replacing one cohort of the unemployed with another, thus acting more as a social safety net that creates more short-term

participants, who receive minimal skills training, than long-term employees. Some EPWP projects do house educated, skilled participants who cannot find employment due to South Africa's slow economic growth rate and skills preference which lead to subsequently low job opportunities offering.

The misaligned argument that is made is that the key constraint in the country is on the demand side of employment rather than on the supply side. However, South Africa's large skills gap that needs high-end vocational skills means that workers and entry-level trainees need to have been vigorously trained in specified fields before their skills accumulation can have an impact on their labour market performance. A few weeks or months of training cannot be expected to address the mismatch between the quality of education and the needs of the job market (*South Africa Economic Update: Innovation for Productivity and Inclusiveness*, 2017).

EPWP does not address the reality of the labour market demand and the training provided is grossly inappropriate to the demands of the mainstream economy. Instead, the programme seems to be creating more precarious labour where participants are vulnerable and unable to find stable job opportunities after the programme. McCord (2005: 577) asserts that the programme is creating an unmet demand for workers as there are no labour market indications that there is a demand for low skills jobs and it cannot be assumed that the majority of EPWP graduates will be distinguishable from non-EPWP participants in terms of skills acquisition; thus leaving participants in the same skills bracket as any other new entrant.

5.6 Chapter Summary

Chapter five outlined the impact of the education, skills and training acquired on the trainees participating in the EPWP. In the South African context of mass unemployment and poverty, high levels of educational attainment do not equate to securing employment. Moreso employment within

one's field of study. Instead, people with different skill sets and education levels are scrambling for similar job opportunities, through the EPWP. The opportunities offered by the EPWPs are temporary in nature and do not have the capacity to impart the necessary skills, training and experience that can help trainees compete for jobs in the high skills labour market.

6 Chapter Six: Working Conditions of EPWP Trainees

6.1 Introduction

Chapter six discusses the findings from the interview regarding the participant's entry into the programme, the recruitment process, and the respondents' perceptions of the programme. As alluded to, organisations taking part in the EPWP have to follow specific equity quotas in terms of recruitment and TLF managed to meet these. However, it is important to find out how the participants were selected, how they found out about the programme and their participation and interaction in the programme in order to get an overall view of the programme expectation and reach versus programme reality and conditions on the ground. Also important to understand is the trainees' value of the employment created as well as the expectations and ambitions that are brought about by participating in the EPWP.

This chapter will unpack sections around working conditions of EPWP participants at TLF. The sections will discuss the recruitment and entry process of the programme, the participant's duration in the EPWP training and their access to standard working conditions. The chapter will also explore the benefits and earnings of participants and if they adhered to the standard set by the EPWP's Code of Good Practice. Lastly, this chapter includes the experience of EPWP participants by unpacking their reasons for joining the EPWP and their desire to gain permanent employment from the programme.

6.2 Recruitment and Entry in the EPWP

According to the recruitment process outlined by the EPWP Non-State Sector (NSS) manual, NPO's need to advertise internally and externally in order to attract unemployed prospective trainees in the area (*Extended Public Works Programme: Non-State Sector Procedure Manual*, 2012: 18). TLF has

a standard recruitment process where once the organisation is awarded funds for the programme, an internal notice goes out to the different projects. Once advertised internally, TLF would informally notify the surrounding community about the opportunity. According to the programme administrator at the organisation, the reason for the informality is because once the call is made for external applications, they usually receive over one thousand applications annually. These are hand delivered by people in their surrounding community and those who come from as far as KwaMhlanga, for instance, which is more than seventy-five kilometres away from the CBD in the neighbouring Mpumalanga province (Mfubu, 2017).

If the programme were to advertise on more formal platforms, it would garner widespread reaction from thousands of people looking for jobs all over and unfortunately, TLF would not be able to meet the demand. This phenomenon demonstrates the dire circumstances in which the unemployed find themselves and their need to break the unemployment barriers they face regardless of distance and type of employment that is available.

Table 6.1 represents the different ways participants heard about and entered the programme. When respondents were asked how they heard about the programme the majority, about 43%, of participants said from friends and relatives. Of these participants, only a few knew of the programme prior to their family members and friends notifying them. Around 23% of participants heard about the programme from internal channels of communication while they were volunteering and 13% while they were busy with their school practical work at TLF.

Two of the participants were made aware of the programme because they were beneficiaries living at the organisation's women and girls' shelter. The programme managers of the shelters encouraged the two women to sign up for the programme because they were aware of their financial constraints and

thought the financial aid and work experience would help them develop. Four of the participants had no prior affiliation with TLF or the EPWP but heard of the programme through the programme administrator who plays a pivotal role in the informal recruitment process. According to the programme administrator, the reason why recruitment is conducted internally and informally is that:

TLF already has a significant pool of volunteers, beneficiaries' and students internally who could benefit and gain new skills from the EPWP while getting paid. Additionally, recruitment of the programme is kept locally in order to recruit close to the organisation's vicinity to avoid logistical matters such as participants using their entire stipend on transport to get to work (Mfubu, 2017).

Table 6.1: Awareness and Entry into the EPWP

How did you hear about the programme?	Freq.	Percentage
From a friend/ relative working at TLF	13	43.33%
Other	2	6.67%
While volunteering at TLF.	7	23.33%
At TLF while doing school practicals.	4	13.33%
From EPWP Programme Administrator at TLF.	4	13.33%
Grand Total	30	100.00%

From the findings, there were still some volunteers and beneficiaries from TLF who qualified for the programme but were not absorbed upon its introduction. Even though it is understandable why TLF chooses to recruit through more informal methods; if TLF is to follow its current recruitment procedure fairly, it would need to look at making sure that volunteers, students and beneficiaries are given precedence over individuals who enter through their family members and friends.

Much of the labour recruitment lay with the programme administrator. This made it easier for insourcing recruitment and apparent nepotism and favouritism that plagued the recruitment process

to take place. The administrator had collegial relations with the friends, relatives and parents of some of the trainees, giving them access and the ability to sway the recruitment process. Thus, preference is given to those individuals with contacts over those without. As one respondent stated:

The organisation that is in control of this programme needs to come and evaluate who is hired because there are more family and friends of people who work for the organisation than some of us who came in without knowing anyone... This would make the recruitment process fair (Anonymous, 2017).

6.3 Duration of EPWP Training

The EPWP training runs for one full year at TLF from April to March of the following year. Table 6.2 below highlights the length of time that participants stayed on the programme. More than 66% were part of the programme for the full one year cycle. 10% of the trainees worked for more than one year in the programme. Trainees who participated in the programme for more than a year typically continued to stay in the organisation post the programme as volunteers until the programme cycle starts again. About 23% of the participants were on the programme for less than one year. These participants stated that they left because they were not learning or gaining technical skills that could help improve their labour market performance. Some complained that the majority of the stipend received went to logistical expenses such as transport or accommodation, which meant that they could not use the money for other living expenses they needed.

Table 6.2: Duration that Participants were Part of the Programme

	Freq.	Percentage
1 year	20	66.67%
Less than 1 year	7	23.33%
More than 1 year	3	10.00%
Grand Total	30	100.00%

All the respondents that worked less than a year come from the pool of respondents who heard about the programme from a friend or family relative working at TLF. These trainees mention that they applied because they were unemployed at the time and were ‘looking for anything to keep them busy’. Arguably, these participants had little to no idea about the organisation and the programme and its expectations; and took on the opportunity to earn an income while waiting for their circumstances to change. It can be inferred that a determining factor that contributes to trainees’ being part of the programme for longer is their affiliation to TLF prior to joining the programme.

The lack of value from trainees in the experience offered by EPWP suggests that more mechanisms need to be employed to ensure that those recruited to participate in the programme are those who would find it impactful in either improving their socio-economic circumstances or in gaining confidence in their abilities to enter the labour market. Some of the trainees who gained employment through family affiliation came from more advantaged backgrounds and the programme did not significantly impact their earnings or skills development, thus making it easier to render the programme futile. Failure to employ a more objective recruitment process could result in a programme that employs trainees who are already established while leaving out those without ‘connections’ who often need this opportunity more.

6.4 Benefits and Earnings of Trainees

Employment and conditions of work for the programme are regulated by the Ministerial Determination for the Extended Public Works Programme issued by the Minister of Labour in terms of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act of 1997 and must be read in conjunction with the Code of Good Practice for Special Public Works Programmes (Department of Public Works, 2005; "Ministerial Determination and Code of Good Practice 4: Extended Public Works Programme," 2015). The code provides guidelines for the protection of workers engaged in special public works programmes taking into account that workers need to have basic rights, the objectives of the programmes and the resource implications for the government (Budlender, 2009).

Encompassed in the code is the overtime rate, compressed work week, remuneration for long meal intervals, Sunday pay, night shift and transport allowance. Leave such as annual leave and pay, sick leave, maternity leave family responsibility leave is also covered. Other guiding information such as employee rights, information about remuneration, deductions, notice, certificate of service, and duration of employment is included (*Code of Good Practice for Employment and Conditions of Work for Special Public Works Programmes*, 2002: 6-12).

Against the provisions of the Sectoral Determination governing conditions of employment in EPWPs, this research investigated conditions of employment in TLF's EPWP. The sectoral determination clearly stipulates the terms and conditions of workers employed by the EPWP and is quite explicit about the terms of working hours; various types of leaves, and the remuneration each trainee should earn.

According to the code, hourly rate for minimum wage for the NSS programme in 2016 was R78,86 and effectively increased to R83,59 from November 2016 due to per annum inflation. Trainees were

also allowed a weekly rest period of two days. When viewed against the legislation, one could gauge that TLF's EPWP followed more of its own protocol and procedure in terms of remuneration and time, instead of following the stipulated conditions set out by the Determination. This was problematic in that at TLF the trainees who earned more and had more responsibilities are those who have been volunteering with the organisation prior to the EPWP.

At TLF, payments to trainees varied. There were three distinguishable categories when trainees were asked what their monthly income was from participating in the EPWP:

43% of respondents said they were paid R1500 per month regardless of logbook¹¹ submission. The respondents in this category were previously volunteering at TLF and worked forty-hour weeks despite the prescribed two day rest period per week. Secondly, 37% of respondents received varying amounts of remuneration due to logbook entries and stated that they worked the prescribed number of days per week. Lastly, 20% of the respondents earned R1100. These are the trainees who were part of the programme in the 2015/2016 financial year where the programme stipulated that trainees only work 14 days a month.

A similar pattern was established with regards to leave entitlements and benefits where the study found that the programme implementers generally did not afford all the workers benefits and entitlements as stipulated by the sectoral determination. The group that worked five days a week that had been volunteering with TLF had more access to these benefits than those who only started working at TLF under the EPWP.

¹¹ TLF requires all volunteers to keep a logbook record of all the duties performed in a week. The book would then be signed by a supervisor. The organisation decided to use the same system with the inception of the EPWP.

These discrepancies became a real sore issue for the participants who became aware of the differing access to benefits and pay. One respondent augmented this by saying that:

There was preferential treatment at TLF. People who had been volunteering before EPWP were paid more, they had better jobs and had more leave. They were treated more like workers than us. For some of us, if someone were sick for a long time, you would lose out on money instead of being given sick leave because the logbook would show that you were absent.

(Monyama, 2017)

The issues that stand out from the findings and quotation are that firstly, TLF violated terms of the determination by denying some of their trainees entitlement to sick leave and other types of leave regardless of receiving the stipulated two day rest period. This violation is worsened by the trainees' ignorance of the sectoral determination and ignorance of the labour laws and rights they are afforded as participants of the programme. According to the sectoral determination, only workers who work for more twenty-four hours per month have the right to claim sick leave in terms of this clause and that a worker may accumulate a maximum of twelve days' of sick leave in a year ("Ministerial Determination and Code of Good Practice 4: Extended Public Works Programme," 2015). The interviews with trainees' and programme coordinators show that the average number of hours worked by trainees was well over the specified time in a month which means that many of the trainees were eligible for sick leave during their employment in the programme.

Secondly, monthly payments that are determined by a task-based payment system via the logbook, where the remuneration is determined by the type and amount of tasks performed, is problematic. This type of system creates the idea of preferential treatment in the organisation where people who have been at TLF longer get paid more because they are given better tasks and are afforded the

opportunity to gain more experience and skills. Remuneration is a motivating factor that encourages trainees to join the programme. TLF should clearly outline how the logbooks are used and create a transparent system that encourages equitable treatment of trainees.

6.5 Working Conditions at TLF

Respondents were asked if they encountered any problems relating to their working conditions while on the programme. They raised notable, anecdotal problems relating to low wages, unfair treatment, late payment, leave denial and long hours of work without proper compensation.

Data also highlighted that delayed payments and the lack of support from the organisation that manages the programme, NYDA, were problems amongst respondents who felt that they were not being treated fairly despite being professional and fulfilling their duties. The issue of delayed payments to respondents was prominent and was a point of contestation as indicated by one respondent:

We come to work every day so we can earn a living to provide for our families. We don't get paid on time but we are expected to be at work and motivated every day. Sometimes it feels as if we don't matter. (Mtshweni, 2017)

Another condition that exasperated respondents was the lack of job description for their roles. Respondents could not give a clear answer when asked to describe their average workday. More than 50% mentioned that their tasks are determined on a daily basis through the directive received from programme managers. This style of working created dissatisfaction amongst trainees who felt that they would sometimes come to work and do nothing and would be seen as incompetent and lazy by their colleagues. Respondents also raised concern that they did not know who to raise complaints with as even when they shared their problems with the administrator no change would come about.

The senior programme administrator was asked if there is any official process (internal or external) that workers could follow for lodging complaints, sharing problems or resolving disputes with their employer. She mentioned that trainees could approach her and she would then contact the necessary parties for resolution. If the issue was not resolved then she would consult the human resources officer and the CEO of TLF. The three of them would then form a steering committee that would attempt to bring resolution to a situation. The administrator mentions that there has never been a situation where they have had to escalate matters and consult with the NYDA or the Department of Public Works directly. The administrator added:

In cases where the issue takes longer to resolve, like the one time when trainees protested and decided not to come to work because they had not received their wages on time, I had to wait to bring this up at the regional meetings with NYDA which take place once every quarter. The trainees did not get paid for the days they missed, and the NYDA stressed that the delayed payments are caused by the delayed bureaucracy at the Department of Public Works in paying implementing partners. (Mfubu, 2017)

Trainees are subjected to poor working conditions where they receive low wages that are often delayed, and have limited access to appropriate recourse should they want to lodge a dispute or complaint. These conditions and treatment anchor trainees in the precarious work standards that the EPWP is trying to eradicate, through the skills training and on the job experience offered by the programme that is aimed at moving trainees into more secure formal employment.

Samson (2007: 252) verify's this argument by stating that public works programmes have played a major role in contributing to the creation of inferior, 'second economy' working conditions for workers who are relegated outside the sphere of formal employment. This creates a deeply disturbing

situation in which black workers, are stripped of their rights and benefits associated with formal employment (Samson, 2007, 2015). These workers are contracted to extend services that are often used by the poor and disenfranchised. This contradiction further segments the labour market through contributing to the already existing racial hierarchies in the South African labour market.

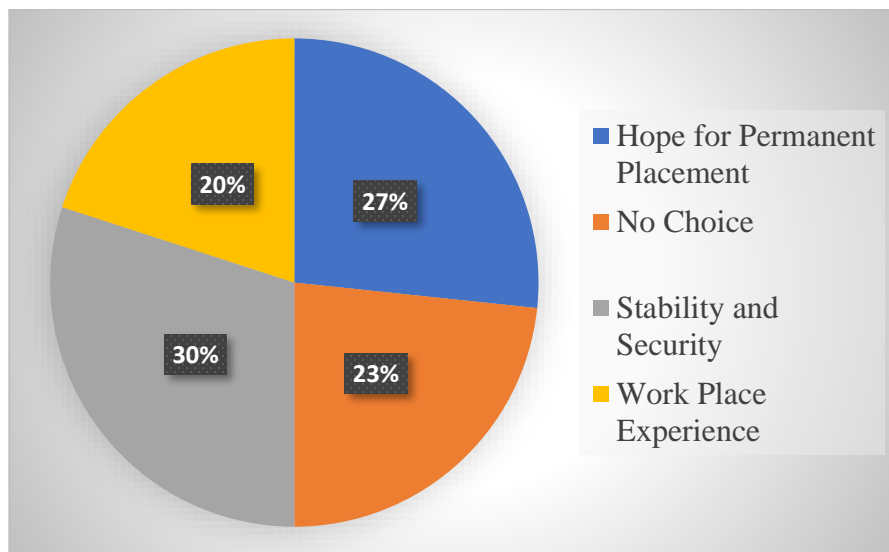
6.6 The Desire for Permanent and Stable Employment

As one of the only major skills training policy interventions for unemployed youth, the EPWP misses the paramount potential of systematically providing crucial skills and opportunities for its trainees who would otherwise not have access to such an opportunity. Although some EPWP project interventions have proven unsuccessful and inadequate in terms of providing formal work training and development; the argument is the opposite in the non-state sector intervention. A study on the effectiveness of non-state sector intervention from the Economic Policy Research Institute commissioned by the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation shows that NPO's who participated in the EPWP stated to have noticed a significant improvement in work outputs, skills and lives of the beneficiaries as compared to other sectors where the programme is active (Samson, 2015: 18).

The work outputs need to be defined and explained from when a participant joins the programme. Trainees at TLF have shared that the experience of the programme has not had a significant impact on their skills development, the working conditions and duties were poor and their lives have only experienced a temporary improvement since participating in the programme (see chapter 7). Despite the programmes disreputable reputation, respondents from the programme mentioned that that being part of the EPWP gave them some sort of hope for a better future.

Trainees were asked why they remained on the programme after having experienced poor skills development, workplace experience and receiving low wages which were often delayed.¹² About 30% of the respondents said they stayed on the programme because it was more secure and stable, in terms of payment and employment duration as compared to their previous circumstances and any other employment they have had before (See Figure 6.1).

Figure 6.1: Reason for Staying on the EPWP



This finding supports the argument that the labour market decisions of public works labourers are not always driven exclusively by the goal of maximising current wage, but also by considering the security and predictability of their income stream and the quality of employment (McCord, 2004a: 71). Although, a Public Works Programme can only exercise this stability function if the available employment is on a sustained and long-term basis, offering regular income over a longer period of time. According to McCord (2004a), finding stability through Public Works Programmes such as the EPWP could create a policy dilemma because of South Africa’s chronic and mass unemployment, if

¹² The trainees who left early were also asked why they decide to stay for as long as they did before deciding to leave.

public works programmes were to be over a longer term it would perform more of a social insurance function that could blur the lines between the programme and the country's social grant system. This could ultimately lead to a bottleneck in the programme implementation where either, there would be a select few who benefit from the programme or state funds would need to be increased exponentially in order to absorb the new unemployed entrants on an annual basis.

According to Figure 6.1 above, 27% of respondents said they decided to stay on the programme because they were hoping that the training under the EPWP would solicit more permanent employment either at TLF or elsewhere. The notion was that because they were actively employed they would attract more permanent opportunities. 23% of the respondents said they had no choice and no better option for employment or to further their studies which is why they remained on the programme. The remaining 27% remained on the programme to gain work experience to add to their CV's in the hopes that this would increase their marketability in the labour market.

It is clear that trainees have the ambitions and aspirations for permanent employment, to be actively engaged in society and within the labour market, and to have financial and employment stability and security. Evidence shows that employees desire to live better lives than what they are currently experiencing under unemployed circumstances, and they are willing to learn and work to achieve this goal.

6.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter revealed that trainees on the EPWP have no employment protection and are subjected to much lower labour relations standards and working conditions than ordinary employees. Despite the many regulations, codes and schedules that set out the labour standards of the EPWP, the programme continues to create a pool of vulnerable labourers who have the aspiration to attain permanent

employment. This vicious cycle is carried on through the lowering of labour standards and the inconsistencies between the implementing and managing organisations as well as the Department of Public Works.

The EPWP is not fulfilling its commitment towards improving the skills set and work experience of trainees. If anything, the programme is repeating the precarious cycles that trainees would like to break away from. The policies of an aspiring neoliberal economy affect the labour market segmentation which in turn influence the implementation and conditions of the EPWP as a development policy response. Inversely, the operation of the programme turns more into a social safety net policy response than a skills development programme that has the potential to improve the labour market performance and lives of participants. These findings confirm the need to improve the quality of employment and working conditions for participants who have ambitions of gaining stable employment that can counter their unfavourable living circumstances.

7 Chapter Seven: Survival Strategies and the Social Embeddedness of EPWP Trainees

7.1 Introduction

The trainees' family life and living circumstances are some of the main driving forces that determine how they interact with the programme. The imminent need to provide for themselves, their dependents and family tends to be on par with learning and developing skill sets that can be beneficial when seeking employment that guarantees survival. Even trainees who had no dependants and solely used the income on themselves, and those coming from middle-income households that are able to provide security, saw the programme as an opportunity to gain income that they can utilise for personal care and advancement.

The direction the programme has taken is in line with the development narrative which, in his book, *Give a man a fish: Reflections on the new politics of distribution*, Ferguson (2015) terms "the rise and rise of social protection as a development policy in a neoliberal world". Even though the world is in the neoliberal era, social protection (welfare) has become, a policy priority in times where the agenda of transferring economic control to the private sector and global economic adjustment programmes are prominent policy features (Merrien, 2013).

This chapter will look at the survival strategies and social and economic embeddedness of EPWP trainees and how they inform their participation in the programme. Added to this, there are critical socio-economic nuances that need to be unpacked in order to get an understanding of the EPWP's ability to alter the labour market performance and entry into the labour market of trainees'. The chapter has six sections that will cover the family life and living circumstances of trainees, their spending drivers, their survival strategies including understanding the social protection measures used

by participants and how they are able to navigate their everyday social experiences in relation to the EPWP.

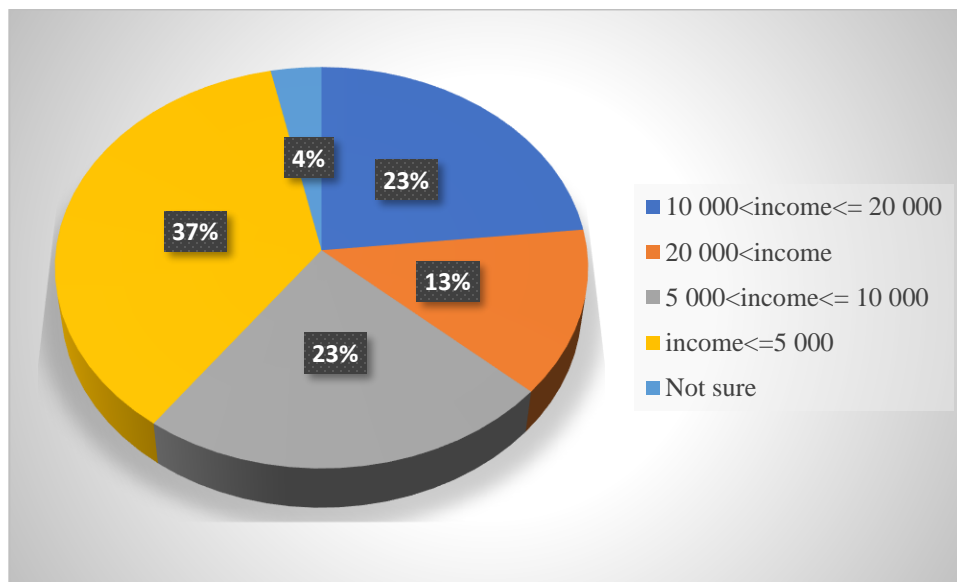
7.2 Family Life and Living Circumstances

Part of the analysis undertaken during this study was to find out about the trainees family life and living circumstances. This was to get a better sense of their familial background and to discover the difference, if any, in responsibility for trainees who come from different income households. The study found the following:

Family income levels

All the interviewed trainees come from middle to lower income households. According to Statistics South Africa (StatsSA), annual household income can be categorised as middle income if the income coming into a household is between R19 201 and R307 200 per annum (*Census 2011: Income Dynamics and Poverty Status of Households in South Africa*, 2011: 13). Low-income households earn combined income amounts of between R1 and R19 200 per annum (*Census 2011: Income Dynamics and Poverty Status of Households in South Africa*, 2011: 13). Respondents were asked about their average family income and were given a scale as an estimate of the monthly income coming into their households. Trainees were asked whether their family income was above R20 000, above R10 000 but below or equals to R 20 000, above R5000 but below or equals to R10 000 or if it was below or equals R5000 per month. Figure 7.1 below represents the answers received.

Figure 7.1: Average Family Income per Month (Rands p/m)



These findings reveal that while the programme aims to target the non-working, most indigent population who have limited access to formal work opportunities, the contrary is occurring. In the case of TLF, there was an equal number of respondents who came from the highest and lowest earning brackets (11 trainees each). Individuals, from what's deemed a more comfortable background, are part of the programme and like their counterparts, who are from poorer homes, are in the programme due to lack of access to more formal work opportunities.

Unlike many African countries where socio-economic profiles of people determine the ease of access to employment, in South Africa, unemployment is not confined to particular income levels or spatial localities (Klasen & Woolard, 2009). The need for financial relief through an income stream cuts across different household income lines, especially within the black community. The EPWP is the governments' attempt at raising peoples standards of living through social policy measures that address the problem of unemployment by issuing cash payments for low skilled labour that would otherwise be jobless. However, the economic development of the country is not growing at a pace

fast enough to help curb the many structural issues of poverty and joblessness that exist. This often leaves participants of the programme looking for work to gain cash payments rather than working to gain experience for employment prospects.

Seekings and Natrass (2008: 336) note that, overall, inequality has widened in South Africa because of the deepening unemployment crisis, and people from disadvantaged backgrounds were more vulnerable to the shocks of unemployment but were poorly placed to take advantage of the opportunities that were opening at the top end of the labour market. The sharp decline in the demand for low skilled and manual labour has meant that there is a decreased access to wages for poor people and those with low-skill sets in South Africa (Ferguson, 2015: 103). The country's current labour market climate knows no bounds- meaning that unemployment affects the different income levels, including those that are deemed to be resistant to unemployment and poverty.

Contribution to family income

When asked if trainees contributed to their family income, around 73% indicated that they do, while approximately 27% said they do not contribute (see Table 7.1 below). Of the 22 participants who said they do contribute, 19 were female and came from the low-income household bracket. Budlender (2005: 34) understands this phenomenon to occur because women are more likely than men to live in poverty, raise children alone or head a single parent household. One respondent augmented this by saying:

I joined EPWP because I needed to help out at home all while taking care of my child. My mother is a single parent and doesn't earn a lot of money, I am also a single parent so I need to play my part and help at home (Monareng, 2017).

Table 7.1: Do you Contribute to the Overall Household Income in your Family?

	Freq.	Percentage
No	8	26.67%
Yes	22	73.33%
Grand Total	30	100.00%

The prevalence of young people playing a distributive role in their kinships speaks to Ferguson's assertion of “distributive labour” where he suggests that distribution¹³ can become an object of labour (Ferguson, 2015: 97). This means that people labour very hard so that they can create opportunities that will allow them and their families to survive and benefit through distributive means such as income from work or the informal economy. That is, understanding the politics of labour and distribution in this way assists in recognising that livelihoods are incremental in determining the survival strategies of the poor and those outside of the formal labour market.

The EPWP is effective in providing short-term financial security for trainees, most of whom, contribute to their family income. This correlates with the argument that people from lower-income households who receive any sort of income (be it from employment, pensions, disability payments) are likely to encounter strong claims on that income and never get a chance to wholly own their income and what they do with it (Ferguson, 2015). The contribution to the family income by a member who gains employment (temporary or permanent) is common practice for participants in the EPWP; and often times a motivating factor for joining the programme, this is especially true for women (See McCord, 2004a; Samson, 2007).

¹³ Distribution can be understood as the way that total output, income or wealth are distributed among individuals

7.3 Spending Drivers of EPWP Trainees

The day-to-day activities and responsibilities that trainees are confronted with play a huge role in how they navigate and negotiate with the training experience. More importantly, the earnings gained from being a part of the programme provide some financial assistance towards the trainees' responsibilities.

When asked what they mostly used their stipends for, trainees indicated that the stipends received were used mostly for financial relief towards familial obligations and consumption. Table 7.2 below breaks down how wages received were used by respondents. As mentioned, respondents (27%) with dependents used their income for childcare; which included groceries, nappies and medication. Second, to this, 27% of respondents used their income for healthcare and household services for themselves and other family members. Items mentioned included medication and clinic visit costs for sickly children and ailing elders, electricity coupons and water-related services. About 17% used the money to pay their rent, groceries and miscellaneous items (toiletries, transport and so on). The other 17% sent most of their earnings home to help relieve the financial strain on their family members. These respondents move between households where one is a permanent family homestead in the rural areas while the other is more temporary and in an urban area.

The remaining 13% of the respondents used a significant amount of their earnings on transport to and from work. One condition that the sectoral determination of the EPWP provides is that trainees under the EPWP should be locally based, living in close proximity to the organisation of work. However, due to TLF's already existing pool of volunteers, some trainees who were employed lived further than the sectoral determinations prescribed proximity. Some trainees from this group were disgruntled and felt the programme was not in any way beneficial for their professional or personal development mainly because a lot of their money and time was spent on travel.

Table 7.2: Wage Usage by EPWP Trainees

	Freq.	Percentage
Childcare	8	26.67%
Healthcare and household services	8	26.67%
Rent and groceries	5	16.67%
Sending money home	5	16.67%
Transport	4	13.33%
Grand Total	30	100.00%

From this, it can be deduced that trainees used their money for everyday financial relief from their lived experiences. This temporary relief experienced by trainees during the time of training imposed the need to earn some consistent income even after the programme. Arguably, the idea and freedom that comes with earning a consistent income, despite how little it may be, creates more of an aspiration for stable formal employment than the skills one could gain from the programme.

Being a part of the programme, not only benefits trainees in some way, but also their families and, for some, their extended relatives. Importantly, what they do with this money is crucial. The dynamic of kinship sharing is a huge feature in this experience where the earnings of participants are not just for themselves but are distributed to, often unemployed, family and community members through cash transfers or other resources. Sharing among kins is a crucial survival strategy and depends on what Toit and Neves (2009b as quoted in Ferguson, 2015: 107) termed ‘horizontal philanthropy’¹⁴. Amongst young black South Africans, this phenomena has gained momentum in everyday discourses and has been popularly coined ‘Black Tax’. Black Tax refers to the financial obligation that black

¹⁴ Horizontal philanthropy can be understood as a process in which people who are poor or have limited access to resources mobilise and share resources among themselves where these transactions provide a type of mutual support and act as an investment to improve conditions and future support. (Wilkinson & Fowler, 2015)

professionals are obligated to share every month to support and subsidise their less fortunate family members and relatives (Ratlebjane, 2015). This phenomena also affects individuals from low-income streams who, once securing employment, are subjected to paying 'Black Tax' with the little that they earn. Trainees who participate in the precarious and often insecure, EPWP end up having a hard time navigating the expectations of kinship distribution, their own aspirations, and what they earn. This offers a bleak realisation of the programmes limited ability in helping to better the lives of trainees, and, subsequently, their families.

There were periods, during the programme, where trainees would receive their stipends late or not at all in a particular month, thus affecting their obligations to support their families. In such instances, participants were highly dissatisfied with the programme to the extent where three of the participants ended up quitting the programme. Five trainees' mentioned that they have once resorted to borrowing money from a *Machonisa* (unregistered micro-lender popularly known as a loan-shark, *Machonisa*) in order to meet their monthly obligations. The decision to resort to borrowing from the *Machonisa's* is a coping strategy that costs the trainees dearly. The *Machonisa's* are notorious for charging exorbitant interest (sometimes as high as 50%) on money borrowed, which leaves trainees in a financial deficit with less money to spend on distribution and their obligations. This leaves trainees worse off than when they started as they have accumulated more debt against an income that is temporary.

This resonates with James (2014) work which states that in South Africa upward mobility is much aspired to but seldom easily attainable. This leaves households with little choice but to borrow (both from formal and informal institutions) and spend money they have not yet earned. James (2014) asserts that this culture of borrowing puts households under immense pressure; but, in order to fulfil

their social requirements, people often acquire intensified obligations which get them “deeper into a hole” of indebtedness.

Respondents also made use of *stokvels*¹⁵ as income saving mechanisms. Seven of the respondents joined a *stokvel* that was started by the permanent employees at TLF. Their decision to save with the *stokvel* was because they did not want to use the money earned just for immediate expenditure but also wanted to have enough money during times of the year when claims to their incomes increased, for example during Christmas time when dependants want new clothes and groceries have to be stocked up, and in January when dependants go back to school and new stationery and uniform is required. *Stokvels* have become a popular saving mechanism amongst low-income earners in precarious positions because they enable funds to be detached from an individual and sheltered within a collective group that is less vulnerable to the daily needs and demands that make saving difficult at the individual and household level (Ferguson, 2015: 96).

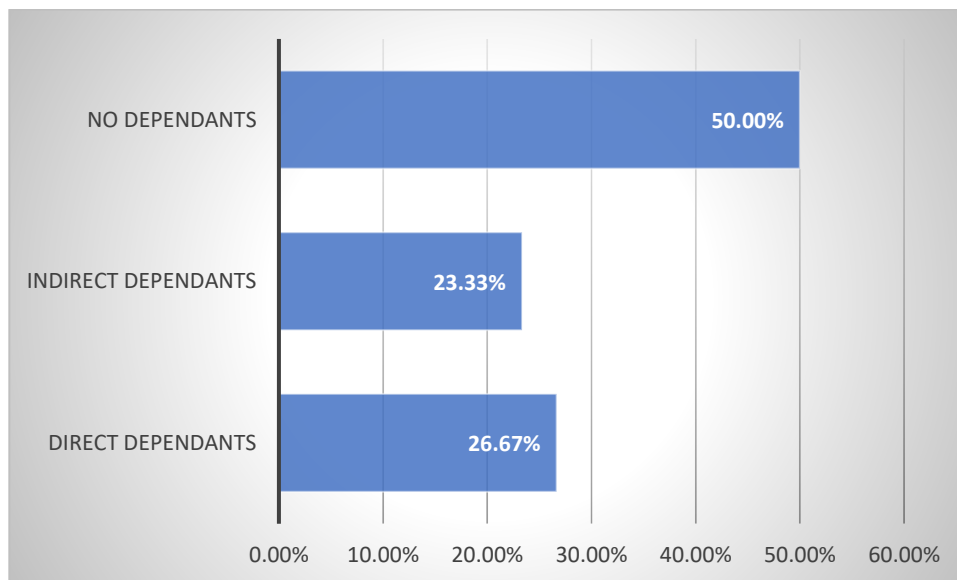
According to Krige (2012), saving clubs such as *stokvels* have played an important role among the working class communities in mobilizing collective credit and saving, retaining flows of monies within townships and urban areas. These mechanisms open up spaces for the little (or forgotten) to practice solidarity and mutuality in often hostile socio-economic ecologies which they are a part of (Krige, 2012). The interviewed trainees mentioned that with their savings, they were able to not only meet their financial responsibilities but also survive the sudden shock of unemployment once the programme ended and their income dried up

¹⁵ Stokvels are clubs formed by a group of people that serve as rotating credit schemes or saving schemes. Members contribute fixed sums of money to a central fund or account on a weekly, bi-monthly or monthly basis. Stokvels can take on different forms. There are stokvels that are funeral schemes, annual savings, monthly or annual grocery collection.

Income spent on dependants' care

Of the 30 interviewed participants, only 8 had direct dependants (children) under the age of eighteen. The remaining 22 respondents did not have direct dependants. However, of the 22, seven mentioned that they either had indirect dependants who were their siblings, nephews, nieces, cousins and even mothers and grandmothers whom they cared for and considered to be their dependants (See Figure 7.2 below).

Figure 7.2: Trainees with Dependents (%)



Those trainees with direct and indirect dependants had a huge association and attachment to earnings gained from the programme more than those without dependants. The emphasis on financial provision in kinship relations heavily defines the trainees economic and social existence where having a means of consistent income allows trainees to care and provide for their dependants. Scholars have termed this phenomenon the ‘sociality of money’ where it is understood that the most important and highly valued forms of sociality, solidarity and care among the poor are those that are facilitated by the use of money and participating in markets (Ferguson, 2015; Neves & Du Toit, 2012).

It can, therefore, be inferred that the economic existence of trainees as caregivers means that they interact with the programme in terms of providing financial relief for their current circumstances. Receiving cash, in the form of income, has become more than just a desirable consumer good; it has become a need so basic that it dictates a range of crucial forms of social action and social being (Ferguson, 2015: 137). In this respect, income for one's daily existence and socialisation negates the programme's stance that its existence is to assist participants to gain work experience and skills that will prepare them for the formal job market. In reality, the programme is taking shape in the opposite form. Participants are a part of social realities that are navigated by one's ability to obtain money for support, caregiving and provision

Predictably, the majority of the trainees whose income goes towards the caregiving of dependents are women. These findings concur with studies by Budlender (2005: 35) who found that women with dependants under the age of 18 tend to spend far more time and money than anyone else on child care. Another study found that even women without children of their own tend to spend more time on childcare than men who have their own children living with them (Budlender, Chobokoane, & Mpetsheni, 2001). Money has become increasingly ubiquitous with caregiving and programmes such as the EPWP should be explicit in recognizing that when people join the programme they are motivated not just by the potential to enter the labour market, but by various social and redistributional deductions bound to them.

Caregiving roles of trainees

Trainees with dependants under the age of 18 were further asked who takes care of their dependants while they are working. Of the 8 respondents, 3 had children who went to primary school and 5 had toddlers aged between the ages of 2 - 4 years. The respondents with toddlers said they took their children to daycare. Four of the respondents enrolled their children in the daycare centre at TLF.

According to the respondents, their children attending a daycare centre right where they worked made life easier and less expensive because as staff members of TLF they received a discount on the school fees.

Due to unemployment subsequent to the end of programme participation, 3 of the mothers had to deregister their children from daycare and take them to their parents home for caregiving. It is important to note that all eight respondents received monthly child support grants from the government. All trainees who receive grants indicated that the monthly R400 is not sufficient to afford basic necessities such as food, nutrition, medication and daycare school fees. Although the South African government intends that social grants be used to substitute or supplement the income of families, the trainee's responses show that they are using the grants for more than subsistence and more for survival.

James (2014) states that money from social grants is used as a means of sustaining multi-generational households by being a substitute for the unemployed's income and a resource for income shocks. In this context, social grants, in the form of child support grants, are unable to act as a buffer against poverty. However, the supplement of the EPWP stipend, *albeit* for a short-term, to grant money earnings had a positive impact on the social participation and inclusion of their dependants.

Also interesting to note was that more than 50% of respondents with young children mentioned that they had no emotional or financial support from the children's biological fathers. Seekings (2008: 15) suggests that men sometimes do not recognize their responsibilities to their own children and may evade claims on their time and income. This tends to leave mothers in economically precarious conditions where they have to use different means of earning an income to provide for their children, including joining the EPWP.

7.4 Employment Activity Before Joining the EPWP

Africa's fast-growing cities are becoming inhabited by people who lack formal sector employment and have had to find ways to improvise their, often, complex and contingent livelihoods. People have resorted to combining various activities such as informal trade, casual labour, begging, hustling, theft, seeking assistance from relatives and partners and so on (Ferguson, 2015). Tellingly, Table 7.3 below indicates the activities respondents were engaged in before joining the EPWP. The majority (46.67%) of respondents were studying before joining the EPWP at TLF. It is interesting to note that from the group that had been studying, about 13% of them conducted their practical work at TLF under the programme and were absorbed into EPWP once it began. Seven respondents were absorbed into the programme while volunteering at TLF (23.33%). Also, 6 of the trainees who were volunteering before the EPWP were volunteering at TLF.

The participants who mentioned they were unemployed (16.67%) prior to joining the programme all stated that they were actively seeking and applying for employment. When these respondents were asked how they survived financially before the programme, they indicated that they relied on family members and some on the child support grants they received for their dependents or elderly family members. Respondents who indicated that they were employed listed working as a receptionist, administration clerk and cashier prior to joining the programme. The respondent who was involved in casual work mentioned that her main activities included working in a restaurant and selling perfumes and handbags informally.

Table 7.3: Employment Activity and Survival Strategies Before Joining the Programme

	Freq.	Percentage
Casual Work	1	3.33%
Working	3	10.00%
Unemployed	5	16.67%
Volunteering	7	23.33%
Studying	14	46.67%
Grand Total	30	100.00%

Those respondents who were involved in other economic activities (paid or unpaid) prior to the programme reported giving up or reducing this work in order to participate in the programme. As one trainee mentions:

The programme requires more of your time and it pays better than what I was doing before. If you miss work for a day your log book will show and you won't get your full pay. That's why I choose to only focus on the programme (Mkhondo, 2017).

Duration of activities before the programme

Table 7.4 below highlights the duration of the respondents' activities before participating in the programme. For 20 of the respondents, the duration of activity was between one to three years. Among those, 11 respondents were busy with their post-secondary education studies. Five other respondents were busy with their stated activity for a shorter period of time (3-11 months) and within this time frame, 2 of the 5 participants finished their studies and were unemployed, but actively seeking employment. The remaining 5 respondents were either studying, involved in casual work or volunteering for four to seven years prior to joining the programme, but have never worked in the formal labour market or had a stable job.

Table 7.4: Duration of Employment Activity and Survival Strategy Prior to the EPWP

Duration	Freq.	Percentage
3-11 Months	5	16.67%
1-3 Years	20	66.67%
4-7 Years	5	16.67%
Grand Total	30	100.00%

Responses highlight that trainees were engaged, for a significant time, in activities that could help open the proverbial ‘employment door’. However, at the time of this study, more than 50% of the respondents were unemployed and 33% went back to volunteering with the hope of being employed by the organisation or absorbed in the EPWP once it commences in the new year.

Trainees have qualities typically associated with being employable but hardly see any changes to their employment status after completing the programme. Arguably, the problem with temporary EPWP employment is that it creates a short-term security ‘bubble’ which eventually ‘bursts’ leaving them back to being ‘unemployed’. This adds to the existing problem of discouraged work-seekers who enter into such programmes with the sole purpose of securing an income for the year and nothing more because of the programmes cyclical nature of taking participants from being unemployed to being employed and back to being unemployed in a short space of time.

Survival strategies during unemployment and dependency on social grants

When considering Southern Africa’s massive unemployment rates, the idea of distribution taking place via access to wages and markets fails to account for how the numbers of unemployed and poor people obtain goods and survive. Most of the African poor are not wage labourers and do not obtain their goods and services through the traditional market of wage labour (Ferguson, 2015: 91). Rather,

they find different means and improvise to survive through an array of plural economic activities. Ferguson (2015: 94, 98, 99) understands this to be a kind of '*improvisation under conditions of adversity*'. State and private transfers play a pivotal role as part of the unemployed's 'survivalist improvisations'. They can include state social grants, community or family based transfers such as loans, gifts, and *stokvel* payouts (Ferguson, 2015; McCord, 2012).

The current social protection measures in South Africa are in the form of social grants that are paid to children and pensioners on a monthly basis. Usually, in low-income communities, the grant income gained, which is often inadequate, is subject to claims from family members, relatives, and sometimes neighbours. As meagre as this income might be, it should not be discounted as these small dribbles received by the poor and unemployed provide part of the answer to the question of how people with no visible means of earning an income manage to survive their everyday realities (Ferguson, 2015: 96). People with very little income have managed to survive with the little that they receive.

The grant system has, however, created a gap in the social system where the young unemployed able-bodied population, including youth, have little to no direct social protection or support. Some able-bodied unemployed individuals receive financial relief, through social grant money collected by dependants and pensioners in their families. This effectively means that households where everyone is unemployed and are without any children, disabled people or pensioners have no access to state distribution and therefore no social protection.

Given the lack of social protection and the high unemployment rate for able-bodied youth, many young people have turned to skills development programmes, one being, the EPWP with the hope of gaining skills while earning an income. As Table 7.5 shows, trainees at TLF were asked if either they

or a family member are beneficiaries of the social grant payment system? If yes, they were then asked if they have noticed any significant improvement in their economic reality?

Table 7.5: Are you or a Family Member a Beneficiary of the State Social Grant System?

	Freq.	Percentage
No	17	56.67%
Yes	13	43.33%
Grand Total	30	100.00%

Approximately 57% of the respondents said they either were or had a family member who was a beneficiary. Of this group, all of the respondents said that the social grant had somewhat improved their economic reality and activity. However, they all mentioned that, on its own, the grant money is not enough, and they oftentimes find themselves supplementing with other income streams. In this instance, the supplementary salary was from being part of the EPWP. The social grant system is supported by many scholars who maintain that the government's approach of pursuing development initiatives to address the plight of the poor and unemployed who otherwise have limited access to the formal job market is a step in the right direction (Samson, 2015; Triegaardt, 2006, 2014).

Social grants, however, do not just enable their direct recipients to use the small amounts of cash on their own needs. Instead, those who access resources are dependents of the state, and themselves the source of income for others whom Ferguson defines as sub-dependents' (Ferguson, 2015: 104). Sub-dependence has created strenuous situations for indigent families who already survive on so little, but are forced to stretch this for the survival of other family members. Having to share the small grant amount with able-bodied individuals who cannot find employment, or provide for themselves is sometimes a point on contention in families. One respondent supported:

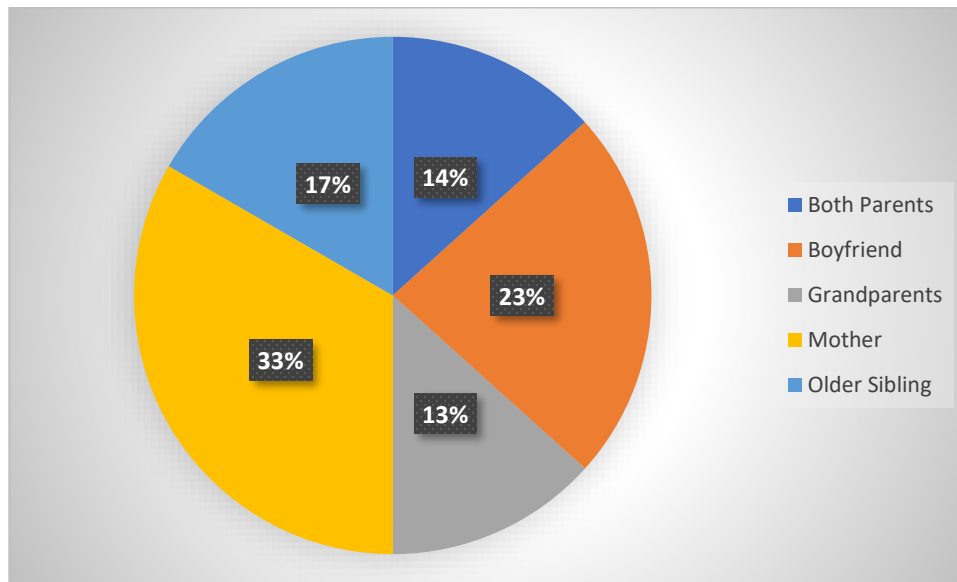
I sometimes have to ask my mother, who earns a pension grant, for money to do my own personal things. We sometimes fight before she can help me. It's frustrating and I know that sometimes she cannot afford to help me but where else can I go? (Anonymous, 2017).

Not being able to find employment is in most instances no fault on the part of the trainees (job seekers). It is more so a fault on the system of the labour market that cannot absorb young unemployed youth eager to work and grow. This can be attributed to a slow growth affected by economic policies that are out of touch with the situation on the ground and have become antagonistic towards the social realities many of these participants are facing.

Other supplementary means of income

Trainees were asked if they have received or still receive any other financial assistance before or during their participation in the EPWP. Figure 7.3 shows that all the interviewed respondents mentioned that they mainly depend on financial relief from a parent, relative or partner in times of financial difficulties when employed or unemployed. The majority of the trainees were receiving this assistance in the form of a monthly stipend, while others mentioned that they only received upon asking.

Figure 7.3: Financial Assistance while Unemployed



The politics of distribution and dependence have changed where in the past mass access to unskilled labour (needed by the mining and manufacturing industries) meant that young men would be the breadwinners who earn an income which was made claim to by their families (parents, partners and siblings) often by a female figure who would then distribute accordingly (Seekings, 2008). This is no longer the case due to the sharp decline in labour-intensive industries where men were the preferred candidates for jobs. The resizing and shutting down of factories and mines, and turning to modern solutions, such as technology, for business saw the mass exodus of jobs that once employed masses of unskilled black labour. Today relations of distribution have reversed where new streams of income, through social grants and informal trading, mean that women, children and the disabled are the ones with the distributive duty and power. Through their income, they have become the breadwinners and are now holding down homes and assisting the unemployed able-bodied figures who would usually be the ones providing the financial assistance.

What is also notable is the dynamics between intimate relationships and economic transfers. Seven women mentioned that they rely on their partners for financial assistance even while receiving EPWP income or a child support grant. As a form of survivalist improvisation respondents navigate their political economy through social relations and sexual relationships which help them guarantee enough income to meet their financial obligations and claims made to their income. Ferguson (2015) states that reciprocities of the economic and the sexual are linked with the deeply conflicted gender relations that are entrenched in the fibre of society¹⁶.

Paradoxically, with the rise of improvised livelihoods, more women have started to enjoy possibilities of being independent of men and supporting themselves through improvised livelihoods; social grants provision and informal trade are more open to women than to men (Ferguson, 2015: 112). Also, the EPWP has quotas where women and youth constitute the majority of programme participants. Under these transformed conditions, women are able to earn independent sources of income. Despite this, it is still very clear that sexual relations and love continue to be tightly bound up by distributive flows, where more frequently the source of the resources is expected to be a man (Swinder & Watkins. 2007 as cited in Ferguson, 2015: 112).

7.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter has sought to highlight the importance of lived experiences on trainees who join the EPWP. The social and embeddedness of trainees, as unemployed, able-bodied individuals, who are caregivers and breadwinners; coupled with the unfavourable economic climate in South Africa has

¹⁶ Gender relations are still dominated by patriarchal ideology and relations of power where, ethnographically, the man is the head of the household and the decision maker. Additionally, the growing *blessing/blesee* phenomenon where sexual relations between older men and younger girls (stereotypically schoolgirls) take place in exchange for money to buy the girls desired consumer goods (Ferguson, 2015).

meant that trainees have had to improvise to survive. The family structure is pivotal in the respondents' everyday economic politics and in most cases, acts as a determining factor for economic activities that trainees take part in. Many black South Africans' have long secured their livelihoods by accessing a multitude of channels through which distributive 'flows' water the social field.

This can be seen through the various networks of income streams trainees undertake in order to secure enough money for distribution. Trainees use the experience as a social safety net due to household dynamics. Great expectation is placed on them to find work (at times multiple activities that can secure multiple streams of income) and contribute financially to the household and care of dependants. Those who receive distributive allocations (either through the state or privately) are themselves subject to claims from their own dependants. Trainees have proven to want to learn and gain skills that can help them find employment, however, given South Africa's structural unemployment dilemma, gaining new skills does not guarantee employment will be created and readily available. However, gaining an income guarantees economic relief. In these tough economic times, governed by neoliberal policies, a well-defined welfare policy for the mass unemployment crisis engulfing South Africa is necessary.

8 Chapter Eight: Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

8.1 Introduction

This chapter draws conclusions based on the research findings and conceptual framework focusing on the impact of the lived experiences of participants on the Extended Public Works Programme, looking at the TLF experience. The chapter will give a summary of the study, major findings and reflections on the objectives of the study will be discussed. Following this, observations looking at the conceptual frameworks discussed will be unpacked before setting out the recommendations.

8.2 Summary of the Study

The study sought to investigate the impact of lived experiences on participants of the EPWP trained at TLF. A qualitative case study design with a phenomenological approach was followed. This allowed for the use of various methods of data collection including document analysis and semi-structured interviews. Thirty EPWP trainees who previously trained at TLF were sampled and interviewed. The senior officials of the programme were also interviewed to get a better sense of the overall running and management of the programme.

The EPWP is hailed as the government's major employment programme aimed at decreasing the unemployment rate at a time where the inequality and unemployment gaps in South Africa are at their highest. The youth unemployment rate was sitting at 39% in the third quarter of 2018 (*Quarterly Labour Force Survey: Quarter 3 2018*, 2018). As the major employment and skills intervention programme, the EPWP is unable to meet its main target of creating work and training opportunities that can result in the participant's improved labour market performance.

To further unpack the EPWP experience, it is important to focus on the lived experiences of the participants who join the programme. This was in an effort to uncover critical nuances that influence how participants interact with the programme and their decision to join the programme. The study found that the trainees' lived experiences play a major role in determining how they interact with the programme and how lived experiences influence the overall programme outcome and perception. Particularly, the lived experiences researched in this study were participants experiences around education, skills and training; the working conditions while on the programme and those encountered before joining the programme, and the survival strategies they employ in order to navigate their social and economic embeddedness.

8.3 Reflections on the Objectives and Findings of this Study

In determining whether this study met its intended objectives, this section provides a discussion on the findings of the study against the set objectives.

Objective 1:

The first objective aimed to evaluate the EPWP's impact on unemployment and poverty alleviation in South Africa. The major finding pertaining to this objective is that in its current position, participation in the programme has had only a temporary beneficial impact on the dimensions of poverty and unemployment. As the findings show, the improved dimensions include temporary access to the labour market, income, basic services and improved psycho-social characteristics of the participants. The study proves that once the programme cycle ends participants tend to go back to the unemployment cycle they were once in.

Therefore, a key finding is that the EPWP is a social protection programme that is meant to provide temporary relief from unemployment to the unskilled and poor population. In its current scope, the

programme cannot provide long-term permanent employment or be considered as an opportunity that can relegate its participants into formal employment and subsequently, move them and their family out of poverty. Also adding to the discourse, as can be seen from Chapter 6, in the case of TLF, there was a large portion of participants who joined the programme who may have been unemployed but were not necessarily from the targeted poorer backgrounds. There were participants who were from affluent backgrounds, those who joined because they knew someone working in the organisation, and others who joined because they just needed a supplementary source of income. The programme was not targeting the poor and unemployed. There were also instances where people who come from more poorer backgrounds were excluded from joining the programme.

Acknowledging this characteristic about the programme removes it from being the figurehead programme thought to break the unemployment cycle. Also being cognizant of the current economic climate of the country. The slow economic growth rate is unable to address the high unemployment and rife poverty plaguing the country. Participants from the highest and lowest earning brackets were competing to join the programme because they were unable to find employment, regardless of their economic and educational backgrounds.

It would be beneficial for the programme to be recognised and defined in popular and policy discourse as a social protection measure, rather than a programme that moves people from the ‘second economy’ to the ‘first economy’ through temporary employment and skills development measures. This would allow for more programme focus and streamlining making sure that it reaches the people who are most affected by unemployment and poverty; namely, women, youth and the disabled from indigent backgrounds in South Africa.

Objective 2:

The second objective was to consider the impact of the EPWP as a skills development programme, on the labour market performance of participants. The vision of the EPWP is that the temporary employment of trainees, who entered the programme as semi-skilled to unskilled participants, would result in the improved labour market performance of these participants. Ultimately, the goal is to have participants leave the short-term employment opportunity equipped with skills needed in the skilled economy of South Africa; resulting in employment creation and, thus, poverty alleviation. However, findings from this study show that the EPWP is unable to equip participants with skills that can go beyond the scope of the programme.

Added to this, the skills found to be transferred to programme participants are rudimentary and do not meet the needs of a high skills economy that South Africa has transitioned into. As mentioned in Chapter 5, participants gained ‘soft skills’ such as communication, conflict management, and interpersonal skills. These skills usually go unrecognized when participants are in pursuit of a job post the programme experience. About 67% of participants felt that they did not gain tangible skills that could increase their employment marketability and translate into more permanent jobs.

The study also found that in relation to the skills development component, the programme failed to take into consideration the unemployment crisis in the country. From the TLF case, the people choosing to be a part of the programme were from varied educational and skills backgrounds. The programme employed participants with postgraduate degrees and those with less than a high school diploma. It was not just the unskilled and those with lower education levels joining the programme.

This can be attributed to the stagnant labour market. Given South Africa’s slow growth rates and demand for experienced skilled labour in juxtaposition with its excess supply of low skilled labour;

the labour market is unable to create enough jobs to absorb new market entrants. Thus, even if EPWP's were to be developed into a robust skills intensive intervention programme, there is no guarantee that there would be jobs available for those trained.

Added to this, the study revealed that the structure and implementation of the programme absolve it of being a skills development programme that can improve the labour market performance of participants. As Chapter 5 reveals, the training aspect of the EPWP does not give participants registered or accredited certificates that are recognized qualifications that can add to their credentials. The programmes heavily reliance on 'on the job' training discredits the training development phase. This way of learning and training also does not guarantee that participants will receive the same level of skills imparted to them because of the lack of standardization.

Objective 3:

The third objective was set to describe and understand the lived experiences of EPWP participants. That is to see how they negate their social embeddedness and the survival strategies that participants employ. As Chapter 7 shows, about 73% of respondents indicated that they contribute financially to their family income. These respondents rely on the stipend received from the programme to meet their monthly family responsibilities. Women's lived experiences were as breadwinners and distributors played a significant role in determining their interaction with the programme.

The study reveals that the lived experiences of EPWP trainees play a significant role in determining how they interact and participate in the programme. Trainees from different socio-economic backgrounds, who have had little to no access to employment, partake in the programme and use it as a social safety net that can provide a means to gain income (wages) for survival.

As determining factors of socialisation, lived experiences highlight the sometimes unanticipated outcomes of the programme's impact on social and economic politics. The reality in which the programme exists is one where youth and women participants are contributors to their family income and great expectation is placed on them for their distributive power. Therefore, participation in the programme is more than just about skills and experiences imparted to the individual. It is also about being able to provide, afford and meet the claims made on one's income.

The social embeddedness of women, as primary breadwinners and single mothers, meant that they assumed a bigger distributive role in their families than their male counterparts. Ferguson (2015) states that distribution can become an object of labour. This study found this assertion to be accurate as the majority of respondents joined the programme as part of their survival strategy. Participants wanted to earn an income so that they can meet their financial obligations in their families and households.

Despite its many challenges, the EPWP provides a material basis for communities and families to imagine and experience a different future for themselves. The programme is comprised of three elements intrinsic to its nature as a Public Works Programme. That is, the EPWP opens up the opportunity for participation in work, a transfer of income in the form of wages, and delivery of assets and services (Philip, 2013). Of all three, the element that has an immediate impact on families and society is the income aspect which is also a big motivation for participation. The EPWP has the potential to be a fully fledged social protection measure for unemployed youth, women and persons with disabilities. It would need to be rethought and restructured for this purpose while an alternative programme is created that focuses on building the skills that are needed in the economy.

Social grants have played a pivotal role in reducing poverty and promoting social development in South Africa and have been fastest growing category of government expenditure since 2001 (*2017 Budget Review*, 2017; Triegaardt, 2014). Research has demonstrated that social grants have a distributive difference in poverty-stricken households with more people from these households experiencing an increase in their households, labour market performance and employment rates, faster than those whose homes that do not receive social grants (Samson et al., 2004). However, this protection measure is not afforded to young able-bodied unemployed people (unless receiving grants as a sub-dependents). Findings from this study found that monthly income to able-bodied participants, who do not have access to the social grant system, helped improve the lives of participants and their families. The added income received relived the stress of depending on the monthly grant payout as the main source of income in households.

The social embeddedness of participants plays an incremental role when deciding to join and stay on the programme; it gives the opportunity to create a means for survival and distributive income. In such cases, participation is for the betterment of their kinships.

8.4 Interpretation of Results in Terms of Literature and Conceptual Frameworks

The study's key findings coincided with existing empirical literature on the EPWP. Scholars such as McCord (2004a, 2004b, 2005, 2008, 2012), Samson (2007); Samson et al. (2004) and Moyo (2013) argued that that the EPWP has the capacity to only act as a temporary social safety net for the unemployed. The reviewed literature further ascertains that the programme cannot extricate people out of poverty or enhance their skills levels to a point that can move them into the 'first economy' and differentiate EPWP participants from other job seekers in the labour market (McCord, 2004a; Moeti, 2014; Samson, 2007; Samson et al., 2004). Despite the abundant empirical literature, limited

literature was available that touched on the lived experiences of EPWP programme participants. To get a better understanding and analysis of this the following conceptual frameworks were analyzed.

Phenomenology

As a conceptual framework, phenomenology helps in defining the concept of lived experiences and their impact on particular phenomena. Phenomenology is concerned with the experience in a given reality and tries to navigate the natural viewpoint and reality as actually lived without bias and presuppositions (Husserl, 2012; van Manen, 1990).

In trying to understand the views and personal experiences of participants of the EPWP, the study was able to understand the world in which participants are located and how their realities influence their interaction with different occurrences, such as joining the EPWP, in their lives. Employing a phenomenological perspective assisted in understanding the various survival strategies employed by participants as a means of navigating their lived-experiences. One such strategy has been joining the EPWP in order to survive the difficulties of being unemployed and marginalized. For most participants finding labour, through the EPWP, to earn an income was the main survival strategy that allowed them to meet their socio-economic responsibilities.

Precarity

Precarity involves the growing prevalence of insecurity and instability of the workforce. This state of insecurity creates a precarious existence for workers in the labour market. The labour market is saturated with precarious positions where jobs have become increasingly casual, lacking predictability, low-paying with a lack of benefits and no prospects for job permanence (Hlatshwayo, 2017b; Marais, 2013; Meth, 2003).

The rise of precarious work in the twenty-first century is promoted by the advancement of neoliberal ideologies that promote the value of free markets and greater opportunity to maximize profits and revenue, thus, forgetting the workforce. The pervasive consequences of the increase in precariousness amongst workers are its effect on other spheres of their lives outside of work. Kalleberg (2009) states that being in a state of precarity affects other facets of workers' lives such as their social, political and psychological wellbeing.

This study concurs with the effects of precarity on workers. The study found that the EPWP perpetuates a state of precarity for the participants. The program's unstable working conditions, inadequate training and skills development opportunities, uncertain job descriptions and frequent late payments meant that the programme was promoting precarious labour. This state of precariousness affects the mechanisms employed for the participant's survival. Participants not being able to find stable employment that gives them the opportunity to consistently contribute to their familial responsibilities while finding personal and professional development and growth was a point of contestation. The study proved that the insecurity they find themselves in gives little meaning to the lives of participants, which ultimately sees them leveraging the experience as a means of earning an income, from one pay-cheque to the next.

Bullshit Jobs

The lack of motivation towards work created by being in a constant state of precarity and not being able to grow and develop in a job is a reality faced by EPWP participants. This reality of work can be critiqued as proliferating the idea of 'Bullshit Jobs'. According to Graeber (2018) the theory of "Bullshit Jobs" speaks to the form of employment that is completely unnecessary and pointless and brings no sense of meaning and development to the people working in these jobs.

In EPWP projects, such as TLF, cohorts of unemployed people substitute one another on an annual basis with no prospects for future employment after the programme. The training and work experience provided in the programme fails to deliver meaningful personal and professional development for the participants. Due to this, participants engaged with the EPWP employment as a social safety net more than an employment and skills development opportunity. Once the year-long tenure of employment expires, participants find themselves in the, once familiar, rut of unemployment. The study's findings concur with this theory. The EPWP premise does indeed perpetuate the notion of 'bullshit jobs' where people are stuck in meaningless employment that amounts to very little and ends up being psychologically destructive (Graeber, 2018).

8.5 Discussion: Development policies in neoliberal times

South Africa's social security system is proving to be an investment that contributes to the country's development, ironically, in times where the world has moved away from 'developmental states' policies towards more neoliberal structures. However, in the case of South Africa, there is no other way to tackle its internal issues than with such policies.

The latter part of the 20th century saw a 'retreat of the state' and the ascendancy of neoliberal doctrine in the world (Zadra, 2017: 68). This was much to the solicitation of international donors such as the World Bank and IMF (in full) as they advocated for Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP) that imposed measures aimed to supposedly open the economies of 'developing countries' (in the Global South) to be more market-oriented. According to advocates of this transition, opening the economies would happen through concentrating on more trade and production through 'free market policies' such as privatisation and deregulation where the market would rule and the state would take a back seat (Samson et al., 2004; Zadra, 2017).

Once implemented, it became a stark reality to developing countries that relying on the market to distribute resources for development intentions was flawed. Many of these countries, South Africa included, implemented neoliberal policies, with the coercion of funding giants, during times when they were confronted with dire internal social and economic hardships. This made it difficult for these countries to be on par and meet the expectations of a neoliberal state. The imposition of neoliberalism in the global south saw many social initiatives and programmes that were implemented by the state, for developmental purposes, crumble. For instance, in South Africa expenditure was cut on social services in education, healthcare and infrastructure (Peet, 2002; Visser, 2004). Similarly, the advent of neoliberal policies in Argentina saw mass factory seizures and other grassroots projects coming to an end and resulting in mass job losses (Zadra, 2017: 70).

The flaws of neoliberal development policies, their heavy weighting on market fundamentalism, and the major obstacles they imposed on ordinary people in developing countries were met with much hostility bringing this policy position into disrepute by many critics and states alike (Samson et al., 2004; Wehner, 2000; Zadra, 2017). Due to this and the growing knowledge of empirical evidence from the East Asian Miracle ¹⁷, the concept of a development state started to capture the imagination and discourse of decision-makers in government and various sectors of society (Seekings, 2015).

In South Africa, enthusiasm for the developmental state emerged in the early 1990s, resurfaced in the mid-2000s and re-emerged again in 2007. At its 52nd National Conference in Polokwane the ANC committed to building a developmental state that will strategically lead in overcoming

¹⁷ The East Asian Miracle is centred around the social and economic success experienced by East Asian countries for rejecting neoliberal style policies by completely relying on well organised state backing. This brought about massive economic growth, improved human welfare and more equitable income distribution in East Asian countries (Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan) . These countries were able to stabilise their economies with sound development policies that lead to fast inclusive growth (Stiglitz, 1996; Zadra, 2017)

underdevelopment by: directly investing in underdeveloped areas, directing private sector investment in areas where it will address the problems of unemployment, poverty and inequality, accelerating economic growth and tackling the skewed patterns of ownership and production (*ANC 52nd National Conference: 2007: Resolutions, 2007, 19*).

The change in narrative highlighted the governing party's focused stance on adopting developmental policies to bring about economic growth while simultaneously addressing the social challenges facing the country. As quoted at the conference: 'Whilst acting effectively to promote growth and productivity, the developmental state must be equally effective in addressing the social conditions of the masses of our people and realising the economic progress for the poor' (*ANC 52nd National Conference: 2007: Resolutions, 2007: 18*). As Ferguson (1990) states, the discourse around development policies have the effect of expanding and strengthening bureaucratic state power, where the state uses various development apparatus, such as projects, to play politics. In such cases, the projects aimed for development fail to achieve their stated objectives as they are more of a disguise to silence disgruntled citizens than about development.

Despite the emphasis and staunch stance on development, more than ten years post conference and twenty years of ANC rule, much of the stated policies aimed at development have not come to effect. Growth has remained sluggish and non-inclusive, the poor have increased and are becoming poorer, unemployment has increased exponentially, and ownership and production are still skewed with the white minority owning much of the economic capital, wealth and the land. Predating the conference, South Africa has had a mix of both neoliberal and socialist policies and ideologies. However, critics assert that the developmental state model is so far a superficial one in South Africa and that the country has been an ineffective developmental state due to the lack of technical and implementation capacity (W. M. Gumede, 2007; Seekings, 2015). Added to this, it was only recently in 2012 that the

state adopted a long-term development plan (*National Development Plan 2030 - Our future make it work*, 2012); where previously the country only had a medium-term planning strategy for development.

This narrative holds true of the country's developmental discourse. Although the government states that its focus is on being a developmental state, there are still elements of its policies that are entrenched in neoliberal ideologies. This 'dabbling' between policies certainly has an effect on the country's development trajectory. It is only through the correct capacities and measures that the county can ensure that human development is improved and social equality becomes a reality for all South Africans.

To contextualise, South Africa would need to broaden some of the already existing characteristics of its development policies. Experts have stated that the government would need to expand the provision of social grants to those who cannot support themselves (including unemployed youth and women) or their dependents. The government would need to work closely in collaboration with the private sector to grow the labour market, provide free basic and higher education and further expand and reconceptualise the public works programmes (Moeti, 2014; Narsiah, 2002; Natrass, 2003; Samson et al., 2004; Seekings, 2015; Wehner, 2000).

Indeed, the EPWP has potential to grow and achieve transformative results, it is already part of the major discourse around transformation and development. The government should explore how changes in its design and scope can help the country reach its stated outcomes by being inclusive and fair. Currently, EPWP's are implemented and handled as 'bullshit jobs' that promote precarity. If the country is to be a meaningful developmental state it aspires to be, much reform and redress need to take place.

8.6 Recommendations

Despite the many challenges it faces, the EPWP has a direct impact on the lives of unemployed able-bodied people (women and youth especially) who otherwise might not have access to an opportunity that provides work experience while providing an income stream through wages. The EPWP is:

- Allowing money to flow into the homes of the poor who are not covered under current social protection measures.
- Introducing new forms of agency at the community level and changing gender relations in households
- Delivering unanticipated forms of transformation and systemic change (education, nutrition, ownership for people who once had no access)

These positives can be built on if the right measures are put in place. The main intention of the study was to explore the lived experiences of trainees on the EPWP. Therefore, the following recommendations are put forward from the findings of this study:

Recommendation 1 – EPWP and Lived Experiences

It is recommended that government should consider reconceptualizing the EPWP as a part of the country's extensive social security programme for the poor able-bodied unemployed. The lived experiences and the politics of personhood play an incremental role in the decision to participate in a programme. As a country that is still engrossed in apartheid's legacy of inequality, poverty and mass unemployment, the state needs to be intentional about the programmes it employs to redress these lingering effects that are affecting the previously disadvantaged.

Recommendation 2 – EPWP, Unemployment and Labour Market Performance

SA's unemployment is a structural, and not a cyclical problem, therefore, to effect any lasting reform, policies need to address the type of unemployment which exists in the labour market. It should be duly noted that in trying to address unemployment, the design of the EPWP training strategy is not flawless and is in need of critical rethinking. The problem of structural unemployment for which EPWP is supposed to address is that it is broad and will not be tackled by, merely, a social policy intervention with no consideration of the demand for high skills needed in the country. This can, perhaps, be addressed through industrial policy interventions that seek to re-engineer and re-imagine the structure of the economy and its ability to provide jobs to people trained through the EPWP, or employing a high, skills intensive training programme for qualifying youth.

Added to this, EPWP programmes should be designed as part of a comprehensive public-private partnership which brings together government, business, higher education and training institutions. In this way, the training offered to participants would be in line with the labour demands of specified industries, thus, giving the programme direction and gravitas.

For the programme to have a significant impact on the labour market performance of participants, the narrative needs to be changed. Currently, it is suggested that the programme provides temporary work for the poor and unemployed. However, South Africa's mass unemployment has meant that people from different economic, skills and educational levels join the programme. Labelling the programme as a skills development programme for citizens, across the board, would change the direction of the programme and participants would gain confidence in the programme experience and what is offered.

Recommendation 3 – EPWP and Skills Training

Training on the programme should be standardised, with more in-depth content, according to sectoral and industry needs. It should be intensified and the duration should be increased. Training should seek to provide the technical skills that are in demand in the labour market.

Apart from the programme efforts, the quality of the education system needs to be improved to ensure that the skills development process begins at school so that youth can already be equipped with skills for which there is an unmet demand for labour. If implemented correctly, this would render the EPWP a training upskilling programme instead of a skills development programme.

Secondly, the programme should be implemented as either a learnership opportunity or a talent acceleration programme where vocational skills are gained and an official qualification, recognised by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), is received once training is complete. This would give the programme credibility.

Recommendation 4 - Second Phase Measure for EPWP

Currently, the EPWP is premised on a one-size-fits-all concept. When standardizing the programme (as suggested in recommendation 3), it is very important to factor in the profiles and experiences of participants. Programmes should be aware and take into consideration the diversity of the participants it employs (trains). By doing so, the programme would be able to gauge the different education and skills levels of the participants, thus, placing them in positions that are beneficial for their development and the project/implementing partners progress.

Following this, a second phase measure should be considered for the already highly skilled or experienced participants. For instance, trainees who have qualifications could be considered for the annual government internships instead of the EPWP. Their qualification and experience in the programme, if re-designed, would put them in the right position to grow from other opportunities.

Recommendation 5 – Monitoring and Evaluation of the Overall Programme

EPWP programmes must be designed and implemented with standard monitoring and evaluation mechanisms appropriate for the scope of the programme. This would ensure that the ‘personal’ interests of the implementing partners do not undermine and override the skills development goals of the programme. This would also allow programmes to be assessed against set objectives so that implementers can easily identify areas of improvement across the board, meaning that the programme will become more focused and cost-effective.

8.7 Concluding Remark

Human societies are driven by the dynamism, agency and creativity that are manifest in various ways as the power of labour. Whenever people have transformed their worlds, whenever there have been breakthroughs in social progress and in human well-being, the power of labour in its various forms has been an essential ingredient. Yet in contexts of unemployment, this societal resource is effectively squandered (Philip, 2013: 16).

Labour is an important element of the social fabric in the world; people should at least be afforded the experience to be active members that have the prerogative to choose what type of labour forms they are a part of for the betterment of their lives and communities. The EPWP has the potential to transform the lived experience of participants and their families. If it is ever re-imagined, the world

will be surprised by what it can do. In the meantime, it is important to recognise and emphasise people's own agency to make and re-make their economies in the context of persistent economic, social and political hardships – this has been one of the central messages of this study. More research needs to be carried out to explore in depth, the people's lived experiences to inform policies and expand development discourses. For example, more research needs to be done on peoples socio-economic embeddedness and the strategies employed to survive and overcome them. In addition, research needs to be conducted on how these strategies influence their reception of and interaction with employment and skills development opportunities.

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10 Appendix A

Interview Schedule for Previous Trainees of the EPWP

My name is Tshepang Mabusela, Masters Student at the University of Pretoria. I would like to ask a few questions about you and your involvement in the Extended Public Works Programme (hereafter EPWP). I would like to ask some questions about your background, education and some personal and professional experiences you may have had in your life. I hope to use this information to understand the impact that your lived experiences have on your participation in and perception of the EPWP. The interview should take about 10 to 15 minutes.

1. Let me begin by asking you some questions about you.

1.1 How old are you?

1.2 Where do you live?

1.3 How long have you been living there for?

1.4 How many family members do you have living with you at home?

1.5 Could you please estimate your family income?

1.6 Do you contribute to your family income?

1.7 Do you have any dependents if yes how many?

1.8 What were you doing before the EPWP programme?

1.9 How long have you been doing this activity for?

2. I am now going to ask questions about your education

2.1 What is the highest qualification you have completed?

2.2 When did you complete your highest qualification?

2.3 Which career did you want to pursue after completing your qualification?

2.4 If you were unable to pursue this career what do you think is the reason for that?

- 2.5 Are you currently busy with or pursuing any form of education while you are in the EPWP training?
3. I would like to move on to our next set of questions about the EPWP.
- 3.1 How did you hear about the EPWP?
- 3.2 Why did you apply for the EPWP?
- 3.3 In your opinion, why were you selected to be a part of the programme?
- 3.4 What was your reason for wanting to join the EPWP?
- 3.5 For how long did you train in the EPWP?
- 3.6 Why did you join the EPWP?
- 3.7 Did you receive any stipend while being a part of the EPWP and how much is it?
- 3.8 How has the overall EPWP experience been for you?
4. I will now ask questions about the skills which you feel are important for one to have in order to find employment and explore your expectations for the future
- 4.1 What skills would you say you possessed before entering the EPWP?
- 4.2 Since being a part of the EPWP have you learnt any new skills? If so please name them?
- 4.3 What type of skills do you think are important in the workplace?
- 4.4 Do you feel you possess any of the skills you have mentioned?
- 4.5 What are you currently busy with?
5. Lastly, I am interested to find out your overall view of the EPWP and your living circumstances
- 5.1 How difficult/easy was it for you to get to work every day?
- 5.2 What did you mostly use the stipend for?
- 5.3 If you have dependents who takes care of them while you in training?
- 5.4 Do you think being part of the EPWP has put you in good standing to receive more permanent employment opportunities?

It has been a pleasure finding out more about you and your experience in the EPWP. I should have all the information I need. I do, however, hope that you will not mind taking my call should I need further clarity and explanation on any of the answers you gave to the questions. Thank you for your time.

11 Appendix B

Interview Schedule for Programme Administrators of the EPWP at TLF

My name is Tshepang Mabusela, Masters Student at the University of Pretoria. I would like to ask a few questions about you and your involvement in the Extended Public Works Programme (hereafter EPWP). I would like to ask some questions about your background, education and some personal and professional experiences you may have had in your life. I hope to use this information to understand the impact that your lived experiences have on your participation in and perception of the EPWP. The interview should take about 10 to 15 minutes

I am going to ask a few questions about the EPWP at TLF, more specifically, how it is run and past and present trainees of the EPWP

1. How was TLF chosen as a provider of the EPWP?
2. What is the operating procedure for the EPWP?
3. How does TLF choose its trainees?
4. What type of skills do you look for in trainees?
5. What pre-training screening do they go through (e.g.: interviews, tests)?
6. How many participants have you trained to date?
7. What is the governments (Public Works) expectation with regards to the running of the programme?
8. Are there quotas you must meet?
9. How are the familial/household circumstances of most trainees of the EPWP?
10. Can you give a general sense of the average age and level of education of trainees?
11. What are the trainees' usual expectations from the programme?
12. In your opinion, what skills do the participants gain during EPWP?
13. Are there any trainees who are retained and employed on a more permanent basis?
If yes, how many have been employed and what distinguished them from the rest?
14. How is their prospect for promotion once they are employed?
15. In your opinion, do you think additional training/programming needs to be included in the EPWP training? If yes kindly name a few.

It has been a pleasure finding out more about you and your experience in the EPWP. I should have all the information I need. I do, however, hope that you will not mind taking my call should I need further clarity and explanation on any of the answers you gave to the questions. Thank you for your time.

12 Appendix C

LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT

Dear Participant,

Re: Invitation to participate in a research project

I am inviting you to participate in a qualitative research study, titled *The Impact of Lived Experiences of Trainees on the Extended Public Works Programme: A Tshwane Leadership Foundation Case*. The details of the research are provided below. However, if you would like additional information about the research, kindly contact me. You may also contact my supervisor.

Researcher:

Tshepang Mabusela (Masters Candidate: Development Studies)

Department of Anthropology, University of Pretoria,
South Africa Cell: +27 (0)71 086 3735

Mail: tshepang.mabusela@gmail.com

Supervisor:

Dr Sihle Moon

University of Pretoria

Tel: +27 (0)12 420 6272

Mail: Sihle.Moon@up.ac.za

Background and purpose of the study:

This study is designed to explore the impact of lived experiences of trainees on the Extended Public Works Programme at the Tshwane Leadership Foundation. The research forms part of my Master's study and is being conducted to find out more about how the everyday lived experiences of EPWP participants affects their interaction with and opinion of the EPWP. I am specifically looking at the trainees everyday lived experiences, particularly the family life and educational background since it is an area that has not been studied in much detail previously. Ultimately, the aim of the research is to explore a way towards aligning EPWP to the needs of the participants.

Explanation of procedures:

Participation in the study will involve a face-to-face interview that comprises questions relating to your involvement and experience of the EPWP. The interview will be conducted by me, recorded and consequently transcribed in order to analyse the data. The interview will be conducted at a time that is suitable for all parties involved. The aimed completion date of the data collection is by March 2017

Participants involved in the study:

The participants who will be consulted for purposes of the study will include the facilitators, CEO as well as trainees of the EPWP. As mentioned above, as a participant, you will be engaged primarily by means of interviews.

Benefits of the study:

The anticipated benefit of participation for you as a participant is the opportunity to discuss feelings, perceptions, and concerns related to the experience of the EPWP, with a view to have your voice heard on the topic. From my perspective as the researcher, the Master's thesis aims to contribute to current academic research on the topic by distributing new knowledge. Another benefit of my research may be to encourage more widespread dialogue about the impact that everyday social realities, namely lived experiences have on participants and how they affect the overall EPWP.

Risks involved in the study:

There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts anticipated by your participation in this study. However, should you feel that there any questions during the interview that may pose a risk, you may decline to answer any or all questions.

Participants' rights:

Participation in this study is on a voluntary basis. Therefore, you are free to withdraw consent and terminate your involvement at any time should you choose to.

Confidentiality:

The information gained from this study will be stored securely at the University of Pretoria for a period of fifteen years from the time of submission of the Master's thesis. Your name and any other identifying details will not be published in this study without your permission and you can be assured of confidentiality and privacy in this regard. Nonetheless, the coded results of the research may be published because the dissemination of the knowledge obtained from this

study may be of great value in guiding researchers, scholars and other government when implementing employment and poverty alleviation policy interventions.

CONSENT

I, _____, have read and I understand the provided information and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and without any implications. I understand that I will be given a copy of this consent form. I voluntarily agree to take part in this study.

My name and other identifying details may be included in the study. ___ Yes ___ No

Signed at: _____ on this date: _____.

Signature of participant: _____ Signature of researcher: _____

If:

- (a) you would like a copy of your interview transcript once it is available
- (b) you are interested in information about the research findings and/or
- (c) if you would be willing to be contacted again in the future for a possible follow-up interview, please provide your contact information below:

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Tick those that apply:

___ I would like a copy of my interview transcript

___ I would like information about the research findings

___ I would be willing to be contacted in the future for a possible follow-up interview
