INSTITUTIONALISING PRO-POOR LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THROUGH EXPANDED PUBLIC WORKS IN THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT OF CAPE TOWN.

Susan Parnell, Shirlane Douglas and Jacqui Boulle

1. Introduction

Local economic development, public works and poverty relief have been major issues on the urban policy agenda for some time. Typically, these issues are dealt with as discrete subjects in the academic literature and as separate policy process within government. The international material on local economic development tends to focus on ways of stimulating the formal rather than the informal economy. It has however included an emphasis on the growth potential of SMMEs, an issue that is more dominant in the South African literature (DCD and Isandla, 1998; 2000; Maharaj and Ramballi 1998; Nel, 2001; Rogerson, 2001). In South Africa there is growing attention to the issue of what constitutes pro-poor LED beyond SMMEs. Local economic development and public works are among the suite of initiatives designed to address the rising levels of urban poverty in post apartheid South Africa which are being employed (www.SAcities.net).

The massive problem of unemployment and jobless growth in South Africa has placed, what in Presidential discourse is known as the ‘second economy’, into sharper focus. One of government’s major initiatives to bridge the jobs gap has been to emphasise the opportunities for public works, not just as low skilled temporary job creation with a focus on infrastructure. The wider interpretation – of what is now formally referred to as an extended public works programme (EPWP), draws from and gives practical meaning to the integrated development
literature's focus on the multiple meanings and experiences of poverty (Wratten, 1995). This new poverty agenda pushes the idea that income transfers alone (either through subsidies, short term jobs or transfers) will be inadequate to address the multiple underlying drivers of poverty and inequality, especially in cities (Beall, Crankshaw and Parnell, 2002). In this regard public works, the traditional solution to mopping up high unemployment, is gaining increasing profile (Mc Cord, 2003). In South Africa implementation of public works programmes has broken from the narrow job creation thrust to encompass wider developmental strategies as an integral part of the work based development projects referred to as expanded public works.

President Thabo Mbeki formally announced the Expanded Public Works Programme in his State of the Nation Address in February 2003 and Cabinet adopted it in November 2003. The EPWP is one of government’s short-to-medium term programmes aimed at creating work opportunities and enhancing skill levels through the delivery of essential services. The programme involves reorientating line function budgets and conditional grants so that government expenditure results in more work opportunities, particularly for unskilled labour. Under direction from the Department of Labour four EPWP sector plans have been developed namely:

- Infrastructure plan – focusing on roads and civil work
- Environment plan – focusing on coast, alien and fire clearing
- Economic plan – focused on developing SMMEs
- Social sector plan – focusing on early childhood development and home community based care.

These EPWP plans are to be implemented by national, provincial and local government. To guide EPWP implementation, following lengthy negotiations at NEDLAC (the National Economic Development and Labour Council), the Minister of Labour Gazetted a Code of Good Practice for Special Public Works...
Programmes in 2002. This allows for special conditions to facilitate greater employment on Public Works Programmes. In exchange for exemption from Labour Legislation, it is mandatory to provide higher levels of training than people would normally obtain. The City of Cape Town has not yet formally developed its EPWP implementation plan. However, the two case studies of existing projects in the city, one operating outside of the EPWP Code and one in the Code, offer two models and lessons for how a municipality might approach its EPWP strategy. The Cape Town experience also offers more general lessons on how to approach EPWP in the urban context.

The formalisation and large scale roll out of the EPWP shows that the notion that poverty is the cumulative result of lack of economic, social or environmental capacity and capital has moved it from academic conceptualisation to state driven programmes. Poverty relief projects have moved away from just meeting the income needs of the poor, to the development of their own social networks, skills or highlighting the non-monetary value of a job for self esteem and social inclusion. But the practice of ‘post income poverty’ or ‘integrated development’ approaches is much more complex in government than it is at the project scale where NGO’s have long advocated a more holistic or livelihoods approach to urban poverty reduction (Rakodi, 2004). Rolling out anti-poverty programmes at scale – even just at the city scale – requires that much more careful attention be given to the development of an institutional architecture that can deliver on the more complex goals demanded by the ‘income plus’ or ‘jobs plus’ strategies that are advocated under the new poverty agenda. Problems encountered by government in addressing the institutional challenges of post-income poverty-relief measures lie at the heart of the developmental state.

Cape Town provides a very useful location from which to explore the importance of the institutional imperatives that are necessary for implementing a broad
based anti-poverty strategy that espouses the human development philosophies that dominate the development literature. The City has an established political commitment to poverty reduction in its broadest sense (Turok and Watson, 2001). This position is has not only been clearly articulated in the Integrated Development Planning (IDP) process, but also in a number of further city wide policies (c.f. Van Rynerveld et al 2003). Cape Town is also the birth-place of the new generation of South African public works programmes, with the Working for Water Programme being the catalyst of the thinking behind the national roll out of EPWP across government as a key antipoverty measure. Finally, in Cape Town job creation has not been dominated by the traditional infrastructure projects, but has been located in other sectors, notably the environment, where there are secondary benefits beyond the job-days generated by the public works projects.

In the conclusion general lessons from two case studies are set against a very general discussion of the impact of pro-poor interventions in the city. We argue that authoritative assessment of EPWP outcomes are not possible as the City has no effective monitoring and evaluation of poverty relief. That said, there is much of value in Cape Town and the use of the urban environmental sector as a domain of broad based poverty relief offers particular scope.

2. The Anti-Poverty Agenda Of The City Of Cape Town

The physical beauty for which Cape Town is internationally acclaimed is undermined by two harsh realities. It is a city of immense poverty, with 20% living below the household subsistence level of R1 392 per month, unemployment of 19.7% and swathes of informal settlements where a degraded natural and physical environment houses a population that is ravaged by tuberculosis, child asthma and HIV/AIDS (CCT, 2001; Wilkinson, 2000; 2004). The city is also the centre of World Heritage Site and is a biological ‘hot spot’ meaning that biodiversity is severely threatened and that the rate of species loss is unduly high. Unsurprisingly, especially given the importance of tourism to the local
economy, both social and environmental concerns are prominent in official policy commitments of the two major local public agencies responsible for managing the area - the City of Cape Town and the Table Mountain National Park. As in many cities in the global South, proponents of social justice typically view environmental issues with scepticism. This is the case in Cape Town where traditionally the middle class was the primary beneficiary of the extraordinary opportunities afforded by the urban proximity of the mountain, sea and flora of the Cape. In poor areas, located on the flat, windswept plain between mountain ranges, poor services like electricity connection, waste collection and the absence of street trees have compounded the inhospitable lived environment. Understandably poor people in Cape Town have not always been deeply interested in the environment. They have had no reason to look to it as an area of social or economic opportunity, but this is changing, in part because of a recent focus on the environmental sector as an arena for expanded public works programmes.

Apartheid not only bequeathed a socially divided, but also an environmentally divided city to the democratically elected government of 1994. Over the last decade there has been innovate effort to integrate poverty reduction and environmental protection and enhancement under the guise of integrated development within the new mandate of local government (Sowman, 2002). This paper briefly reviews the official commitment to reconstruction and integrated development by outlining the Cities’ position on local economic development, environmental management and service provision. Against the clearly reformed policies, that make overt commitments to the role of the developmental state in poverty reduction and environmental enhancement, the next section of the paper looks at how these ideals are being implemented. Two case studies of environmentally based public works initiatives, one in the area of community based waste collection and the other in fire protection through vegetation.
clearing, are explored. The final section of the paper draws out lessons from the Cape Town experience for city scale poverty reduction through EPWP s. In this regard, particular attention is given to two themes for making anti-poverty strategies effective and sustainable that were highlighted in the Cities’ own policy frameworks. Remarkably early on in the implementation of developmental local government, Cape Town had identified the importance of addressing the multi-dimensional nature of poverty and of looking beyond income based solutions. It also stressed the imperative of establishing effective and sustainable institutional structures for anti poverty relief measures.

Progressive policy is a necessary, but not sufficient condition, for pro-poor action by government. The City of Cape Town, like the South African government nationally, has a reputation for sound policy documents that espouse the developmental role of the state. Though in many instances implementation of policy lags substantially behind and too many poor households are still excluded from the post apartheid state’s delivery (c.f. Oldfield, 2002; Jaglan 2004). The progressive nature of state policy in Cape Town is clear. This is true especially in the environmental field where a large and historically well capacitated group of officials drove early city scale State of Environment Reporting (CMC, 1998) and quickly introduced a social message to its environmental management agenda in line with the position of national government on sustainable development. Similar commitments to social relevance are evident in the policy frameworks of the National Park that lies wholly within the World Heritage site of the vynbos biome. This pattern of progressive rhetoric or policy is also evident in the economic and service areas. Taking a lead from the Constitution and from national water policy the City introduced free basic water and initiated an indigent policy to ensure that the needs of the poor for basic services were met (van Rynerveldt et al 2003). The City was also the first municipality in the country after democratic elections in 1994 to develop a local economic development framework (CMC, 1999a) and
has since then developed its policy on local area implementation of community based economic development (CCT, 2003). It is in the economic policy documents that the City’s position on poverty reduction is most clearly articulated, and this therefore provides the focus for our discussion.

Despite the substantial political and institutional turmoil in the City associated with the establishment of non-racial local government structures following the end of apartheid and the change in the party political control of the City, there has been consistency within its economic policies on three things. First, the interconnected relationship between poverty reduction and growth and the imperative of fostering shared growth, second, the City has long endorsed a post income or multi-dimensional definition of poverty and third there has been a consistent focus on the importance of mainstreaming and institutionalising anti-poverty actions. A brief overview of the major points made in the 1999 and in the 2003 Economic Development policies is useful at this juncture. In the 1999 Economic Development Framework (EDF) the City made a simultaneous commitment to poverty reduction and economic growth as two sides of the same coin, this was in clear contrast to the then ubiquitous GEAR policy of national government that implied growth followed by redistribution. Second, the EDF understood poverty as a multidimensional experience and noted the lack of jobs, the lack of service and environmental degradation as key aspects of poverty that could be addressed by a developmental state at the city scale (Figure 1). Third, in the last of a series of background papers commissioned for the preparation of the Economic Development Framework (CMC, 1998b) effective implementation of the framework was seen to involve integration of poverty reduction projects into the core activities of local government as well as the development of monitoring and evaluation capacity. The criteria of integration included budgets, integrated development plans (IDPs), project appraisal, databases, staff training, performance management systems and all institutional transformation projects of the local authorities. In other words the City saw itself as either the driver or the
implementer of poverty reduction projects and it was clear that a firm institutional location and driver were critical elements of successful anti-poverty action.
Figure 1: Five fields of action towards poverty reduction (CMC, 1999c, p.8)

The five fields of action for poverty reduction include:

1. Social safety net – in this we include ‘indirect’ income, for example through subsidies and welfare to prevent absolute destitution
2. Infrastructure – both physical (housing, electricity, water and sewerage) and social infrastructure (like clinics, schools, training facilities, amongst other)
3. Space – this refers to locational issues relating to access to employment and other social opportunities. Space also refers to the poor’s exposure to environmental degradation in terms of both ‘green’ and ‘brown’ environmental considerations
4. Employment – both formal and informal jobs
5. Livelihood strategies – these are the social and cultural responses through which the poor help themselves and support associational/network activities
Five years later, after substantial institutional restructuring and a change in political leadership, the view of the Economic Development and Tourism Directorate remained clear:

_The current challenge is to ensure inclusive economic development that provides both growth and poverty reduction, based on the dynamic relationship between the two. In the past, many municipalities had parallel and even competing strategies in place, i.e., a market-led approach focusing on business development, together with a market-critical or demand-led approach focusing on community development. Increasingly, however, there is recognition that the two approaches need to be integrated. In line with this new thinking the City of Cape Town believes that growth and poverty reduction are interdependent. To achieve this integration requires a fundamental shift in thinking and the mainstreaming of economic development._ (CCT, 2003, p3)

What had changed in the five years, was that the Directorate had a much clearer understanding of what it was that a developmental local government could actually achieve by way of economic development. The tools the City identified for economic development included creating an enabling policy and regulatory environment; encouraging local business growth; encouraging new enterprises; improving the local business investment climate; promoting inward investment; investing in hard and soft infrastructure; cluster and sector development; area targeting and regeneration strategies (Figure 2). But the City now also argued that while initiatives such as these might help the poor indirectly, overt poverty reduction strategies were also necessary. The 2003 policy, dubbed the Local Area Economic Development Framework (LAED), therefore sought to highlight the importance of sub metropolitan strategies (that would reach all parts of the city not just the core) and of job creation and infrastructure development as priority economic interventions. Like the earlier EDF, the LAED document placed a very strong emphasis on institutional location, effective planning, funding and
evaluation of LED projects. It moreover highlighted the importance of the activities of the Council itself as an entry point for LED action, especially as the Council enjoyed a presence across the geographical area of the city that would have a chance of reaching poor and marginalised areas.

**Figure 2: LED activities at a community scale**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic Development Intervention</th>
<th>Programmes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1 Creating an enabling policy and regulatory environment | • Making the City administration more user-friendly  
• Broadening access to procurement through information, advice and targeting |
| 2 Encouraging new enterprises | • Entrepreneur development |
| 3 Encouraging local business growth | • Business information  
• Business counselling  
• Facilitating partnerships between large and small enterprises  
• Research into economic trends and markets  
• Informal trading policy, infrastructure provision, services and capacity building |
| 4 Promoting investment | • Foreign Direct Investment  
• Inward investment in targeted areas  
• Joint Marketing Strategy  
• Market research and trade information  
• Facilitating partnerships |
| 5 Investing in hard infrastructure | • Infrastructure needs-identification and provision for:  
  o basic services  
  o tourism |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic Development Intervention</th>
<th>Programmes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o businesses e.g. hives and markets)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Invest in soft infrastructure</td>
<td>• Building the skills base of the unemployed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Training survivalist businesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Identifying training gaps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Ensuring the quality of services provided</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In line with the City IDP reducing poverty was seen as the mandate of every directorate in the City, some sections took this up directly and others indirectly. Within the Economic Development and Tourism Directorate the development of the LAED framework was a specific response to the needs of poor community and the de facto recognition of the developmental capacities of the state to direct resources. Curiously, public works, or even labour intensive strategies were not discussed, even though as we will see, the other directorates in the City and other agencies in Cape Town were adopting these approaches at this time. The Economic Development and Tourism Directorate was never intended to drive or implement all LED in the City, but rather to provide the political and strategic leadership on economic questions. The question is then how other parts of the Council adopted and applied the principles on which the EDF and LAED were founded so as to embedded the developmental actions of local government. It is to this issue that attention now shifts though examination of specific projects undertaken in the Cape Town area.

In addition to being job creation initiatives there is a strong environmental logic to both projects we have selected for review. This is significant in that both projects embrace the spirit of the EDF and LAED conception of poverty as being more than just a lack of income. This philosophical departure found so strongly in the City documentation was reinforced by national government’s introduction of an
expanded public works strategy. Indeed, funding for one of the projects was at least in part from national coffers dedicated to Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP). The selected case studies also provide a lens on the second major issue identified as important by the EDF and LAED – that of institutional anchoring. In both the cases discussed below the City was not the instigator of the project, but has come to play a critical role associated with making innovative projects sustainable and applicable at scale across the city. The first, the more successful of the two, is an ongoing community waste scheme that is driven by the City but outsourced to contractors. The second is a fire mitigation programme that, despite high success in many indicators, closed in 2005 following the inability of the City or the National Park to negotiate the complex institutional politics or to integrate the programme within a single host organisation. The function of the programme – that of fire break preparation and alien vegetation clearing on the urban edge is however a local government competency and is thus an area of work it would be reasonable to assume falls within the City’s domain of control.

**Case 1: Community Based Waste Management System**

The Community Based Waste Management System consists of a community based refuse collection system and an area clearing system in informal settlements in Cape Town. It is one of a series of pilot projects based on the principles and practices of expanded public works. In other words, the project uses not just labour intensive methods, but is also a project aimed at skills development, social cohesion and job creation for vulnerable groups. This multi-dimension approach is typical of EPWP in South Africa and mirrors the underlying philosophy of the City of Cape Town’s EDF and LAED. Developed by an NGO in the mid-1990s as a pilot, the programme has since been integrated into the City as it was not possible for an NGO to run a municipal service or a parallel service in the medium to long term. It is a flagship for municipal environmental public works programmes and a model for City driven local
economic development (LED) programmes. It is difficult to determine the exact budget allocation for the programme as it is drawn from a range of budgets, however, estimates from officials put the programme budget at R40 million (McKinnon, 2005). A total of 24 companies provide refuse removal services to different informal settlements in Cape Town each employing approximately 1 person per 400 shacks. Currently 20% of the City’s refuse is collected by local community contractors (CCT, 2003).

The project rationale lies in the imperative of improving access to services to enhance the standard of living and the quality of life of citizens in Cape Town. By 2001, despite significant improvements since the 1996 census some 44643 households in Cape Town still had no regular refuse removal (Census 2001). Basic cleansing of the area makes it attractive for business and if waste collections services are delivered creatively this can both create employment opportunities and investment. The identification and provision of services is government’s responsibility and traditionally local councils have employed staff to carry out the function. In the last few years several municipalities have initiated a process of outsourcing service delivery. If done within the community rather than to a large contractor this ‘outsourcing’ can create a window of opportunity to use municipal resources to stimulate LED, empower community contractors and increase community ownership and support for the service.

The Community Based Waste Management System in Cape Town was borne out of a partnership between an NGO and government. Initially ‘Keep South Africa Beautiful’ aimed to create littering and dumping awareness amongst communities in informal settlements. The more the organisation tried to establish this awareness, however, the more it realised that its attempts were futile due to the lack of waste collection services in informal settlements in general. Up until then, informal settlements were only served by the provision of skips and it was expected that community members would dump their waste in them. This was a
highly ineffective system and resulted in severe littering in the informal areas. The organisation recognised the need for a refuse collection system in informal settlements as an essential precondition for littering awareness.

While committed to equity in service delivery, the City of Cape Town had experienced a range of problems in delivering its door-to-door containerised ‘wheely-bin’ services as provided in other parts of Cape Town. Most of the informal settlements are densely populated and inaccessible for the traditional garbage trucks. An alternative had to be sought. The City and ‘Keep South Africa Beautiful’ then teamed up. Funding was attained from the Department of Public Works and South African Breweries and the –Keep South Africa Beautiful launched a pilot programme in two sites in Cape Town, namely (1) the Brownsfarm, Guguletu, Nyanga and Crossroads area and (2) the Joe Slovo, Langa area. The pilot has now been expanded with around 20% of the City’s refuse collected now using the model.

The system works as follows: the City of Cape Town Solid Waste Department puts out tenders for service provision to different informal settlement suburbs. The tenders are subject to strict procurement conditions, emphasising black economic empowerment, which ensures that mostly emerging businesses and entrepreneurs are targeted. Before the tenders are advertised, visits are made to the community to introduce the system to them and to inform what services will be provided and about the tender process. Entrepreneurs are encouraged to apply for the tender. The Department holds “tender clinics” with the applicants and takes them through the tender documentation page-by-page.

A tender committee decides on who wins the tender. The tenders are allocated according to suburbs within informal settlements. Conditions of the tenders include that the minimum wage has to be paid to the labourers and the newly established company has to contribute to the Unemployment Insurance Fund.
and buy protective clothing and other provisions to employees. Tenders are allocated for a period of three years. Once the contract expires, the previous company and new entrepreneurs are allowed to tender for the next three-year period. Once the tender has been allocated, the entrepreneur has one month to set up his/her business and register the company. The City of Cape Town provides a small team of consultants to empower the newly established company during the first year of its existence. The consultants assist the company with the registering process, assist it with its tax returns and advise on how to do the company’s book-keeping.

The company also has to conduct a house-count of all the houses in the area that he/she has been assigned to service within the first month as the company is paid per shack serviced. House-counts are repeated every 6 months due to the expanding nature of informal settlements. Once the houses have been counted, the area is divided into zones of 400 shacks each. For each zone, the company contracts one labourer. For each 12 labourers contracted, one on-site supervisor is contracted.

The labourer is responsible for the servicing of the 400 shacks in his/her zone and an additional 100m around his/her zone. The labourer’s responsibility is to communicate with the residents of that area to determine one day per week on which the refuse will be collected. He/she also hands out black refuse bags for free to each household when he/she collects the refuse from the houses. The labourer uses a wheely bin to collect the bags and takes them to a collection point where the waste is stored and where city refuse vehicles can reach to take them to the landfill sites. Currently, old shipping containers are used for the collection of the refuse, which are locked at night to prevent animals accessing the waste and for safety reasons.
The labourer services 80 houses a day, five days a week. This occupies him/her for a several of hours a day and usually he/she will have completed collecting the waste by noon. The rest of the day is spent litter picking and cleansing. As mentioned above, the labourer is responsible for 100m beyond his zone, for example on verges, alongside roads or on open pieces of land. The reason for this is that many residents still dump their waste on the periphery of residential areas.

Although the tender contract is for the period of three years, labourers are contracted only for a period of 12 months. This is at the request of the community to circulate the opportunity for earning to other people. While no records have been maintained anecdotal evidence suggests that the economic mobility of people who have worked on the programme is enhanced and many of them have been able to find additional employment at the end of the 12 month period. With a recent renewed tendering process, an upgraded monitoring and evaluation system has been incorporated into the programme. Monitoring will be conducted in the areas once a week. The Solid Waste Department has established visual standards of cleanliness that are linked with a penalty system and monitoring system.

Set against the 1999 and 2003 policy visions for pro-poor economic development the Community Based Waste Management System has done well. Firstly, the programme has enabled the City to expand its service delivery and to provide an equitable service to people living in informal settlements. Secondly, the programme creates a responsibility amongst community members towards their own living environment through their involvement in the planning and delivery of the service. This has resulted in improved understanding of the trade-offs and costs of service delivery, increased payment of services and cleaner and more hygienic living conditions. Thirdly, the programme has enhanced the skills of labourers through the on-the-job-training provided. Skills development is one of
the key principles of the EPWP approach. The hope is that through workers' economic mobility, opportunities will be expanded through skills development. Fourthly, the company benefits as it is exposed to the assistance of the above-mentioned consultants who provide business support for a year, equipping them to develop as a SMME. Fifthly, as the programme is completely integrated into the City's service strategy it is both financially and politically sustainable. Finally, the programme is very cost-effective for the City. A dwelling can be serviced for R25/month, which is less than half of what refuse removal costs elsewhere in the City, though admittedly levels of waste production in low income households are well below the Cape Town average (Engeldow, 2005).

Translating policy into practice is never simple and even in this apparently successful programme there have been challenges. Initially the programme created a range of expectations that were difficult to manage. Communities in surrounding areas began demanding similar programmes even where the City had full time employees in its service. Managing the political terrain of unions around the complex issue of community based outsourcing remains a major challenge.

Potential pitfalls are not only between organised labour and the community. Given the high levels of unemployment there must be a clear strategy for distributing the opportunities. Limiting the duration of the contracts is one such strategy adopted in this scheme that seems to have worked reasonably well. This strategy has been driven by the communities involved thereby minimizing the inevitable conflicts over resources and opportunities. But it does not resolve the imperative of creating sustained job opportunities. Finally, the impact of the programme has not been adequately monitored from an LED perspective pointing to a need for great awareness amongst City staff of their LED role and how the City can use its resources to promote LED.
As reflected in the challenges earlier this programme is run by the City Waste Directorate. To date there has been no involvement of the Economic Development and Tourism Directorate outside of recognising the economic impact of the programme and flagging it as a case study in its LAED toolkit.

**Case 2: ‘Ukuvuka’ Operation Fire Stop Campaign Case Study**

The City of Cape Town is located within the fynbos biome, a fire dependant ecosystem. The relationship between fire and human settlement is never an easy one, as the frequent victims of shack fires in the city can attest. Over recent years the scale, severity and frequency of bush fires in Cape Town have increased due to the increased fire load (the bulk of plant material that can burn) associated with the presence of invasive plants. These big fires threaten plants and people. The Ukuvuka Campaign was set up after the devastating fires that raged over the Table Mountain chain in 2000. The January 2000 fire burned more than 23,500 acres (8,370 hectares). A post fire analysis by the Table Mountain National Park (the Park) management and relevant city officials in particular identified two broad areas of concern. Firstly, that there were major shortcomings both in terms of the structures for preventing and controlling fires on the Table Mountain chain and problems in coordination and communication between relevant agencies. Secondly, that the dense stands of invasive alien vegetation on the urban fringe in particular had meaningfully contributed to both the spread and intensity of the fires (Fowkes and Fowes, 2004). Fire, while an integral part of fynbos management, needed to be controlled, creating an opportunity for labour intensive clearing of the alien vegetation and the establishment of fire breaks. The interests of poverty reduction and biodiversity coincided neatly. With the backing of a local insurance company and newspaper group the ‘Santam/Cape Argus Ukuvuka Campaign and Operation Vuselela’ was initiated (Preston and William, 2003).
The format of a public works programme for Ukuvuka drew from the highly acclaimed Working for Water (WfW) Programme that was started in 1995 under the leadership of the then Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry Professor Asmal with a grant from the Reconstruction and Development Programme fund (Common Ground, 2003). Over the following ten years, the WfW programme developed into one of the flagship public works programmes in South Africa employing over 20 000 people, winning numerous awards and influencing the development of a Special Public Works Code of Good Practice. Working for Water sought to maximise South Africa’s scarce resources by removing the thirsty alien plants that greedily consume scarce water resources in the areas they are located. The same alien plants represent a major fire hazard, especially in the threatened fynbos. Three key elements within the development of the earlier and larger WfW programme had a significant impact on the original conceptualisation of the city scale Ukuvuka Campaign. These are institutional issues, the targeted public works approach and the importance of improving the labour market performance of participants. The later two concerns speak directly to the issue of the multi-dimensional nature of poverty raised by the EDF and LAED as well as the EPWP.

First, let us consider the institutional question. Both WfW and Ukuvuka were multipurpose activities whose obvious institutional home was not immediately apparent, making the issue of interdepartmental, intergovernmental and public private sector co-operation key (Haricharan, 2004). It was during the heart of the WfW’s contested institutional location debate that the Ukuvuka Campaign came into being, so it was set up as an independent agency and a public private partnership. The intention was to enable the fulfillment of public sector mandates in respect of wildfire management, invasive alien vegetation control and poverty relief in the form of a public works programme. This search for institutional independence helps explain why Ukuvuka was not located in either the Table

Mountain National Park or the City from its start. But as we shall see ‘independence’ came at the cost of institutional buy-in and long term sustainability.

Second, whereas there are effective and even cheaper biological and mechanical approaches to alien plant clearing, Ukuvuka - like WfW - adopted an extended public works strategy for the task of alien plant clearing. To reduce fire risk Ukuvuka therefore combined a technical initiative to combat invading alien plants and a developmental initiative that focused on the labour-intensive nature of the work and concomitant training and empowerment initiatives. Vulnerable groups were targeted for inclusion in a programme whose primary rationale was split between social and environmental objectives.

Third, the assumption made in the WfW programme was that public works employment, when coupled with training opportunities, would significantly enhance subsequent employment performance once a worker left the programme. Yet, WfW suspended its exit programme aimed at getting participants jobs because evaluations showed that the training aspect of the programme had not enhanced the labour market performance of former workers. The major constraint to improved labour market performance was not the WfW programme, but the fact that the available job opportunities were very limited. McCord reflects that:

“…while the Department of Public Works characterises post-Public Works Programme employment options as “graduating to employment under normal conditions”, the evidence from surveys suggests that workers may rather graduate to unemployment under normal conditions, returning to the status quo ante in terms of their labour market performance.” (McCord, 2003).

Seeking to learn from WfW’s mistakes Ukavuka sought to avoid this problem by adopting a different approach to skills development that emphasized small
business development as an integral part of the programme design. Unlike WfW that had taken a comprehensive approach to maximising water resources and so had cleared aliens on public and private land, Ukavuka recognised that all aliens presented a fire threat but sought to create a post public works niche for its programme participants by leaving some land uncleared. The Ukuvuka Campaign therefore took a policy decision at an early stage to work on public land in Cape Town area and to test out the legislation forcing private owners to clear their land of alien plants – thereby addressing fire risk while stimulating a demand for clearing. The idea in the programme itself was both to consolidate small business entities capable of subcontracting on clearing public land for public entities (the City, the Park etc) and also to create a market for invasive alien clearing beyond the City, the Park and other public bodies on private land.

The Ukuvuka Campaign was initially conceptualized as a four year Public-Private partnership to ensure improved fire management within the area. The Campaign would be a Non Profit Organisation mandated to work with the key public entities including the Table Mountain National Park, the City of Cape Town as well as other government departments and public entities like the University. Ukuvuka would have no line authority but would provide funding and technical support to the partners so that the EPW model would be understood and embraced. The total budget for the Campaign over the four years amounted to R63.5 million. Public partners included the City of Cape Town (R30 million contribution), Table Mountain National Park and Working for Water and Working on Wetlands (R7.3 million contribution). Private Partners included the insurance giant Santam (R20 million contribution), and the oil company Total (R5 million contribution). Donor partners included the Green Trust (R 4 million contribution). However, between 2001 and 2002, both Santam and Total substantially reduced their funding commitments to the Campaign. (Ukuvuka Final report, 2004). To meet the gap and ensure sustainability, proposals were made to the City of Cape Town to continue the Campaign for a further 3-years in 2005. These were not successful and the
programme closed in April of 2005, in part because it lacked a single champion or institutional base. Why did the programme fail?

Although the original Business Plan for the Campaign underwent many changes over its four year existence, and the original outputs identified verged on both the intangible and the grandiose, but there were some gains made. Box 1 highlights the achievements in relation to the public works aspects of the Campaign. In total, just over R35 million was directly spent on the public works output inclusive of wages, transport and equipment. It must be noted however, that these figures are approximations as the Summative Evaluation Report identified the lack of continuous and valid measurement of all objectives as a core problem area in the Campaign (le Ross, 2004).
Box 1: Achievements of Ukuvuka (Fowkes and Fowkes 2004)

- Approximately 5000 hectares of public land in the Cape Town area was cleared of invasive alien vegetation (including initial and follow up clearing operations),
- 230 kilometers of firebreaks were established.
- 25 contracting entities (334 persons) were sourced from surrounding impoverished communities resulting in 160400 person days of work.
- In 2004 alone there were 212 person days of training for the year.

The Ukuvuka Campaign also facilitated the agreements regarding fire management between two state agencies - the City and Table Mountain National Park that are in force today. The Campaign moreover enabled the involvement of other state agencies (the Department of Public Works and the South African National Defence Force) in taking responsibilities for clearing their land areas within Cape Town. The Department of Public Works partnership in particular has resulted in the invasive alien clearing functions being placed on budgets and management capacity developed. Significantly, the labour intensive expanded public works approach to alien clearing is now widely accepted in a city where fire control and access to water are critical and ongoing environmental concerns.

So, the Ukuvuka Campaign had some successes, but this cannot mask major internal problems that speak to the difficulty of seeking to address the multiple aspects of poverty through a single programme design. The ambitious goals of Ukukuka generated implementation tensions, especially around cost effectiveness. In the Cape Town area Ukuvuka clearing cost R 7000 per hectare and an average person day cost R220, approximately two times more expensive than the WfW norms for similar clearing operations. Three contextual elements are key to
understanding this lack of efficiency. Firstly, as mentioned above, the original teams put in place were based on the ideas of ensuring post programme jobs. This meant outsourcing to small teams or independent contractors who would clear - first for Ukuvuka on public land and later in the open market on private land. But running an alien clearing small business is a complex and difficult task, often underestimated by project managers and supervisors as it includes executing task based methods, small business management and administrative support. It is not the typical public works approach that focuses on temporary and unskilled work. While backup to support small business development and entrepreneurship was available as part of the extended public works approach adopted by Ukuvuka, the support and training were often haphazard and not of sufficient quality to guarantee the level of skills development needed for sustainability (Douglas, 2003).

Secondly, while the Ukuvuka Campaign recruited the workers for the public works aspects of the programme and played a direct role in the development of the teams and team members, the Campaign staff had no implementation authority over the actual work performed. Instead, Ukuvuka subcontracted the key public partners in particular the Table Mountain National Park and City to contract and manage the operations. Clear institutional relationships, coherent planning, administrative synchronicity and shared vision with these frontline partners was essential to the efficacy of the Ukuvuka goal. Unfortunately, despite the policy commitments to poverty reduction, public works and environmental improvement cited above, problems in respect of these criteria dogged the programme throughout its tenure and impacted negatively on the number and consistency of jobs created as well as the quality of the development of the contracting entities (le Ross, 2004). For example, the Table Mountain National Park, although a primary partner of the Campaign, employed all its own contractors (in and out the Ukuvuka Programme) using standard procurement procedures that did not allow for the developmental aspects of enabling emerging businesses. A lack of systematic planning, haphazard training
opportunities and supervision and mentoring within the Park, the City and Ukuvuka resulted in a lack of a consistent work environment for the contracting teams and thus a poor productivity rate and high worker turnover. All of which undermined the struggling new businesses and in many cases saw contractors running at a loss despite the expensive support available.

Thirdly, the Campaign, while using the national EPWP Guide or national Code of Good Practice for Special Public Works Programmes, especially with regard to the recruitment of workers from impoverished areas and the emphasis on the gender balance, deviated from the EPWP policy in a number of respects. Wage levels were negotiated and therefore pitched at a far higher level than the normal public works rates and training opportunities were not formalised as per the code. This raised overall costs and ultimately undermined the project's viability.

Early signs of the problems that would ultimately sink the programme were noted. In June 2003, the Ukuvuka team itself recorded that:
“the campaign has not fulfilled its objective in creating employment opportunities and poverty relief, accredited training has not yet taken place, no proper evaluation had been done to assess the efficacy of training and emerging contractors have not had access to micro finance” (Fowkes and Fowkes, 2004).

A plan was then put in place to intensify work on contractor support through other means, including organising training based on the identified needs of participants and providing bridging finance to all contractors for the purchase of new alien clearing equipment and personal protective equipment. The belated and intensive training programme was too little too late. Despite claims made that 80% of the contractors set in place by the Campaign were registered as service suppliers with the City, The Public Works Department or the Western Cape Provincial Government most of these entities have dissolved post the closure of the Campaign (Fowkes and Fowkes, 2004).
While much work was achieved, the Ukuvuka Campaign neither prepared the partners for instituting state-regulated public works programmes, nor did it grasp the opportunity for innovation that its privileged position as a Non Profit Organisation with large amounts of state funding afforded. As a result, the four-year public works programme initiated by Ukuvuka was not successfully integrated into either of the two main state partner bodies. Once Ukuvuka collapsed the Park obtained poverty relief funds to continue their alien clearing and firebreak work for 2005/6 based on adherence to the Code of Good Practice and had to essentially begin the process of establishing a public works programme from scratch. The higher wages that were paid to the contractors in the Ukuvuka phase contrasted with the state regulated wages and generated dissatisfaction among the new cohorts of workers. Meanwhile in the City of Cape Town, adequate funds had never been allocated to the tasks that fell under local government responsibility but that had been covered by Ukuvuka. Faced with new legislative imperatives to tackle invasive aliens (Biodiversity Act) and proper fire management (National Veld and Forest Fire Act) the Council approved a R30 million special project budget allocation that would have given 3-years of support of the Ukuvuka Campaign to perform its invasive alien clearing functions. But, in 2005, the Mayoral Committee decided against the continuation of the relationship with the Ukuvuka Campaign citing the need for the City to build its own capacity to perform the requirements. The timing of the City’s decision and the associated stop in financial flows has inadvertently created a gap in employment opportunities for the poor in alien clearing in Cape Town.

The Ukuvuka Campaign certainly popularised the issues of alien clearing and fire prevention within the South Peninsula with high profile media campaigns and excellent relationships with local press and radio. In addition, it funded the extensive clearing of alien vegetation on the urban edge in the South Peninsula and was key in assisting the establishment of the South Peninsula Fire Protection Association.
3. Conclusion

There is much to be gained by reflecting on the anti-poverty policies and EPWP practices in Cape Town at the most general level that it is easy in theory and much more difficult in practice to adopt a holistic approach. Table 3 sets out some specific observations and lessons from the City informed by lessons from the two case studies. Overall the Cape Town experience reflects a conducive policy environment for pro-poor LED. The EDF and the LAED were strongly committed to a wide and comprehensive understanding of poverty – a view later embraced and given political and financial muscle by national government’s endorsement of the EPW approach. The record on implementation is somewhat more ambiguous.

Table 3: Overall conclusions from the Cape Town case studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>10.1 Overall pro-poor orientation and impact of the municipality</th>
<th>Policy is overtly pro-poor and developmental. It has a nuanced understanding of poverty and the relationship between poverty reduction and economic growth more generally.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10.2 Degree to which initiatives broader than in-house LG activities are having an impact in the case study</td>
<td>The new national EPWP draws much from the Cape Town experience and now provides a formal framework for projects through the EPWP Guidelines or Code.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.3 The relation between pro-poor LED initiatives and outcomes in the case study</td>
<td>Where the theory was addressed in detail, in giving attention to institutional anchoring, there is a good match.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.4 Cost effectiveness of directly-funded LED activities</td>
<td>Cost effectiveness cannot be measured as enough data has not been collected, but poor cost effectiveness was one aspect of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>Coherence between overall LED strategies and pro-poor activities of the municipality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>Coherence between activities of LG and other actors (and partnerships)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>Type of LED being used in the case study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>Implications of the case study for the M&amp;E framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>How LED is being used as part of a response mechanism to socio-economic change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.10</td>
<td>Key lessons from this case study for policy and practice in SA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**10.5 Coherence between overall LED strategies and pro-poor activities of the municipality**

Unsustainability for the fire project. Environmental costing might shift this calculation.

**10.6 Coherence between activities of LG and other actors (and partnerships)**

Pro-poor activities seen as a small part of the LED whole.

**10.7 Type of LED being used in the case study**

Expanded public works programme.

**10.8 Implications of the case study for the M&E framework**

M and E frameworks must relate to the project, but must also be appropriate to the City (not just departmental) scale. Relating project goals to wider city objectives might shift indicator selection. Job days are no the sole or even primary indicator of successful EPWP.

**10.9 How LED is being used as part of a response mechanism to socio-economic change**

The environmental based EPWP provides a way of addressing the immediate needs of the poor, especially for jobs, but also for skills and improvements in quality of life. This is not seen as the solution to the long term structural inequalities of Cape Town that have to be solved through wider developmental interventions.

**10.10 Key lessons from this case study for policy and practice in SA**

A conductive policy environment is a major advantage, but not enough to secure action. Institutional mechanisms are key to sustainability. Environment offers significant scope as a sector for anti-poverty action in cities.
The new poverty agenda implies that ‘good’ poverty reduction programmes are not one dimensional, for example focussing simultaneously on income from short term work plus skills development and environmental enhancement or hazard reduction. In addition ‘good’ poverty reduction programmes are those that can be rolled out at a scale that will make a dent on the urban poverty problem and that can be sustained through time. Implied in this is that government will be able to embrace and drive such anti-poverty projects. On the former criteria of multi-dimensionality, in both cases the Cape Town projects achieved more than unskilled job days. In the case of the community waste programme the City’s service has been extended, small contractors have emerged and neighbourhood cleanliness has been improved. In the case of Ukuvuka there were short term gains beyond job days including hazard mitigation and skills development. However, failure to address the imperative of institutional grounding and sustainable budgeting meant project closure leaving uncertainty over what seemed to present an ideal opportunity for integrated social, economic and environmental gains. It was not just the potential beneficiaries who lost out. Because alien control is a legislated requirement, the City, Park and other stakeholders will have to go back to the drawing board on the task of fire protection. In contrast, the lesson of institutional grounding was well taken in the case of the waste project where the project lives as an integral part of the City’s service delivery strategy. The waste project provides jobs, makes a contribution to improving living conditions and public health. Of course there are other ways that these objectives could be achieved, but without much more detailed data comparative costing is hard to compile. What is clear in both the waste project and the fire reduction project is that a straight economic costing would be insufficient to measure poverty reduction benefits and full social, economic and environmental assessments of EPWP should be prepared. If projects are to be rolled out at scale then the monitoring and evaluation system needs to be part of
a wider City scale assessment of the impact of its poverty reduction efforts, especially as projects may well be located in different Directorates.

Even without comprehensive assessment tools available what the two projects highlight is that there already a commitment to post-income poverty reduction and an awareness of creative opportunities for mainstreaming initiatives within the work of the Council itself. Moreover, there is a significant awareness within the City of what post-income poverty interventions need in order to do to be sustainable, though the organization appears not always to practice what it preaches. What is clear is that attending to the institutional questions, especially the demands of integrating non traditional or new activities into the everyday bureaucratic structures of budget, procurement and evaluation, demands focused attention to ensure that the demanding aspirations implied in post income projects like the EPWP can be fulfilled. Further caution should be noted in setting the criteria of success for anti-poverty actions like the EPWP. Cape Town LAED made clear that the goals of the City should include sustained growth and effective reduction in inequality. Specific poverty reduction action was a small part of this larger whole, and the plight of the poor cannot hinge on success in specialist interventions like the EPWP alone. Rather, wider economic development, redistribution and equitable development, along with targeted programmes provide a sustainable basis for pro-poor city development.

REFERENCES


DCD (Department of Constitutional Development) and Isandla Institute, 1998: *Linking Local Economic Development to Poverty Alleviation*, Pretoria.


Engeldow, S., 2005: The impact of curbside recycling as a tool of integrated waste management in Cape Town, Unpublished MSc, University of Cape Town.


McKinnon, C. 2005: Interview February, City of Cape Town.


