

**SOUTHERN AFRICA LABOUR AND
DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH UNIT**

**Labour Intensive Employment
And Social Development:
The Working for Water Programme
in the Western Cape Province**

Jaqui Goldin & Michelle Adato

Saldru Working Paper No. 89

Cape Town

April 2000

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ISBN 0-7992-2016-7

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank warmly the following individuals for their continuous assistance during this research process. Guy Preston, Christo Marais and Desmond Stevens and all the staff at the Fynbos Office who are always so welcoming, helpful and friendly, as well as Simone Nomdoe, Ben van Staden, Clayton and Jenny McGregor. Thank you for providing so generously of your time and knowledge, for facilitating meetings with staff and workers to facilitate this research, and for the documentation which you provided. My deep appreciation is expressed too to the staff of the Projects: supervisors, project managers, steering committee members and workers who were so transparent and open in their interviews providing real insight into project level issues. Thank you too to the staff of Saldru for their support for me during this research – particularly to my dear colleagues and companions Dudley Horner, Francis Wilson, Lynn Woolfrey and Brenda Adams. Thank you especially to Michelle Adato for providing me with so much information and guiding me through this process and giving me so much of her own work experience.

This paper is dedicated to my children Blaise and Maximilian, my true inspiration and support through my life. Thank you boys, you are the best!

Jaqui Goldin

In addition to the above-mentioned individuals, Michelle Adato would like to thank Lawrence Haddad of IFPRI for his guidance over the course of the wider public works research project of which the research presented in this paper was a part, and for assistance with analysing the quantitative data. Appreciation is also expressed to the U.K. Department for International Development, the Rockefeller Foundation and the International Food Policy Research Institute for providing the funding that made the research possible.

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Labour Intensive Employment and Social Development
The Working for Water Programme in the Western Cape Province

1. INTRODUCTION¹

The Working for Water Programme, (WfWP) an initiative of the National Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF), aims to tackle two of South Africa's most pressing socio-economic problems -- unemployment and scarcity of water resources. Like the country's other public works programmes, it aims to create short- and medium-term jobs, while simultaneously improving productive assets, indirectly creating long-term jobs through training, and increasing the capacity of community-based organisations and local government.

The WfWP involves the clearing of alien invasive plants – those that are not native to South Africa and which consume more water than their indigenous counterparts – from water catchment areas. The programme clears large areas of alien vegetation through integrated mechanical, chemical and biological control on both state and private land. The purpose is to increase the water supply to local communities and dams and enhance river flow. The programme aims to bring social and economic empowerment to local communities through the creation of jobs, job training and other social programmes.

This clearing, and various other activities that support the clearing efforts (such as transportation of material or workers) have created many jobs. WfWP is one of the two largest public works programmes that the post-1994 government has put in place. It has

¹ This paper is based on a study of public works programmes in the Western Cape, conducted by the Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit (SALDRU) and the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). The WfWP research was conducted as part of this broader study of public works programmes in Western Cape Province, taking place over a two year period, from September 1996 through August 1998. This research covered 101 projects in the seven programmes defined as "public works" in the Western Cape, eight case studies and a survey of 193 former project workers (see Adato, et al. 1999).

produced approximately 42 000 jobs, defined as person-years of employment created, since 1996. Nevertheless, data collected in the Western Cape reveals that the Working for Water Programme has created far more jobs than any of the other six public works programmes undertaken since 1993. In a 15 month period between November 1996 and January 1997, Fynbos Working for Water Programme (FWfWP) in the Western Cape created 3156 person-years of employment, compared to 444 for the Western Cape's Community Based Public Works Programme (including the sub-component, the Community Employment Programme or CEP) of the national Department of Public Works, and 1623 person-years for the province's four other job creation programmes combined (Adato et al 1999).² At present, the FWfWP is providing 3,500 jobs for one year, with 6 month extendible contracts (interview: D Stevens).

Relative numbers of jobs created are in part a function of the size of programme budget, however, so Rand cost per job created is a more useful comparative indicator. The FWfWP produced jobs at a cost of R40 per job, as compared to R183 for the CBPWP (not including the CEP) and a mean of R119 for all seven programmes (Adato et al 1999). However, this relatively low cost must be viewed within the broader framework of public works objectives: the CBPWP and four of the other programmes create infrastructure -- roads; stormwater drainage; water delivery pipes and taps; sanitation systems; multi-purpose community centres, parks, sports fields, schools and clinics. Material and capital costs thus consume a substantial portion of project budgets, and though fewer jobs are created per Rand, one must take into account the economic value of the assets created, and the short- and long-term material benefits generated. For example, a clinic provides health benefits, a road provides access to markets and a community hall provides former project workers access to new construction job opportunities.

² These four programmes were those carried out between 1993-1997: the Western Cape Economic Development Forum projects, the Clean and Green Programme (national Department of Public Works), the RDP Transport projects (Western Cape Department of Transport and Public Works), and the Pilot Projects (national Department of Public Works)

This paper focuses on the WfWP, and primarily the FwFWP, reviewing a wide range of issues confronting this programme in particular, and public works programmes in general: management systems, roles of communities and local government, wages and labour issues, skills training, targeting, environmental impacts, social problems, and medium/long-term impacts. We argue that the Working for Water Programme is the country's most ambitious in terms of scale in job creation, and the efforts to build in a vast range of social development impacts. Though there are many objectives yet unmet and problems encountered in the process, these reflect the scope of the vision embodied in the programme and the challenges that they present.

2. METHODOLOGY

This paper is based on fieldwork conducted with the Fynbos Working for Water Programme in the Western Cape Province. It draws primarily on the data collected by in-depth case studies of two projects in the Cape Winelands region outside of Stellenbosch (referred to as the Kylemore and Kaya Mandi projects³), additional interviews with programme officials at provincial and national level, as well as quantitative data collected on fourteen FwFWP projects that started in 1996-1997 (the FwFWP's first phase). The case studies involved indepth interviews with managers, supervisors, a workers committee, community-based committees, and other key informants. They also involved Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) workshops, including focus groups, with project workers from the two case study projects.⁴ This data was collected over approximately six-months, from March through August 1998.

In spite of extensive interviews with programme and project stakeholders, the intricacy of the issues confronting a complex social programme in an even more complex social

³ The project is referred to mainly as the "Stellenbosch project" by the programme. The majority of the workers from the project come from Kaya Mandi, a formerly-designated "African" township outside of Stellenbosch. We mainly refer to it as the Kaya Mandi project for clarity, since Kylemore is also outside of Stellenbosch.

environment leaves us feeling that our understanding is still inadequate. There is always that nagging feeling that an important idea or explanation may have eluded capture. As Clifford Geertz aptly observes:

Cultural analysis is intrinsically incomplete. And worse than that, the more deeply it goes the less complete it is. It is a strange science whose most telling assertions are its most tremulously based, in which to get somewhere with the matter at hand is to intensify the suspicion, both your own and that of others, that you are not quite getting it right (Geertz: 1973:20)

By interviewing most of the key stakeholders identified, we attempted to minimize the chance of missing vital pieces of information. By asking each person the same or parallel sets of questions, we attempted to get the widest possible range of perspectives on the issues investigated. We nevertheless know that there is much we still do not know. With this risk in mind, and armed with the belief that it is "not necessary to know everything to understand something" (Geertz 1973:20) we will present our observations and analysis based on the research we conducted.

The research questions covered issues confronting public works programmes at the level of managing institutions, projects, and communities. They were shaped initially by literature reviews of national and international public works programmes in order to identify potentially important questions. Phase One of the research involved the collection of quantitative and some qualitative data in order to construct a detailed database of 101 projects, with over 40 categories of data on each project. Some of the variables included: implementing and funding agents, costs and labour costs, wage rates and payment systems, incidence of strikes, workdays generated for men and women, type of training, among others Geographic Imaging Software (GIS) was used for mapping project characteristics with socio-economic data for targeting analysis.

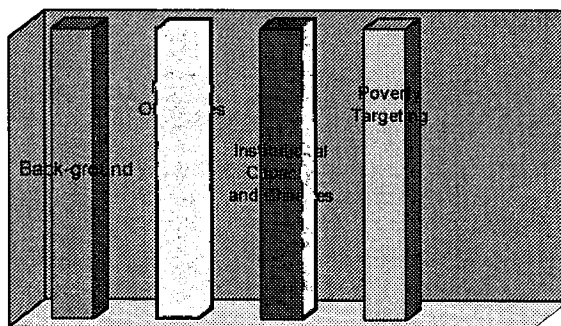
⁴ Although interviews are cited for direct quotations, findings in this paper are based on these stakeholder interviews and focus groups unless otherwise cited.

The results of the full study of 101 projects and eight case studies are reported in Adato et al. 1999.

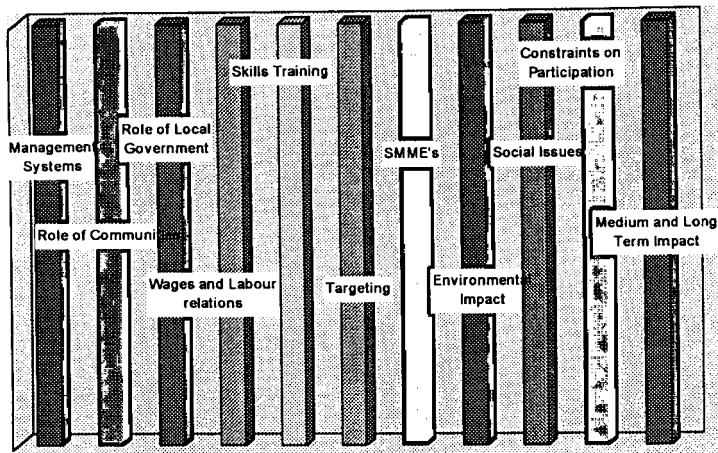
This process of data collection also allowed us to identify the salient issues for the qualitative research to be conducted in Phase Two. This involved the structured and semi-structured interviews, focus groups and PRA workshops mentioned above. A survey was also conducted with former project workers in one of the two projects.

The case studies examined the issues identified in Figure 1 and 2.

PROGRAMME LEVEL (Figure 1)



PROJECT LEVEL (Figure 2)



3. PROGRAMME LEVEL ISSUES

3.1 Background to the Working for Water Programme

The clearing of invasive alien plants has a long history in South Africa prior to the Working for Water programme, with the then Departments of Agriculture, Forestry and Environmental Affairs (usually through provincial agencies) all undertaking somewhat independent initiatives. The valuable work done by these departments was largely undone by lack of partnerships and continuity (interview: G. Preston).

The clearing of alien invasive plants had been an activity of the parastatal Cape Nature Conservation (CNC) and the National Department of Water Affairs and Forestry. All alien vegetation is not considered invasive and efforts to clear aliens have been mainly

focused on Port Jackson, black wattle, rooikrans, hakia and pines. Conservationists and environmentalists had experience with this clearing process and knew that it demands intensive inputs of manual labour.

There is increasing recognition that alien vegetation invasions are a serious threat to the natural resources of South Africa. Current rates of infestation, and particularly the potential for the future spread of this infestation, pose serious problems for water security, habitat protection and bio-diversity, protection of agricultural land, and aesthetic degradation, with consequent economic, social and environmental implications of such degradation on our natural resources [interview: Christo Marais].

According to a recent Water Research Commission study, alien invaders occupy a total area of approximately 10 million hectares (6.8%) of South Africa and Lesotho. The area covered is considerably greater than that covered by commercial forestry. Throughout the provinces, extensive invasion of riparian zones is found, giving rise to particular concerns with regard to water management issues. The rate of spreading varies from species to species, but estimates suggest that the area covered will double within 15 years unless proper clearance and maintenance programmes are put in place (Preston 1998).

The same study estimates the annual use of water by terrestrial, woody, alien invaders across the whole country as around 3 300 million cubic meters, or around 6,7% of the estimated Mean Annual Runoff for the country - and that excludes the considerable impact that invading alien plants are having upon our invaluable groundwater reserves. The study estimates the cost of clearing alien infestation as R600 million per year over a period of 20 years. It further estimates that these costs will escalate by 55% if clearing is postponed for 10 years. It estimates that on-going maintenance costs of the programme will be in the region of R30 million per annum (*ibid*).

Guy Preston, Director of the National Water Conservation Campaign (NWCC) and then-Advisor to Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry, Kadar Asmal, and Christo Marais, an

environmentalist and conservationist working for CNC, recognised the labour intensive component of this work and saw in it the potential for job creation and poverty alleviation. Alien invasives soak up scarce water resources, affecting river flows and strangling Fynbos, one of the most extraordinary plant kingdoms in the world. Fynbos, indigenous only to the Western Cape, is a rich bio-kingdom and acts as a sponge, retaining moisture and releasing it into the ground during times of water scarcity. It is a remarkable biosystem. A programme that would marry two objectives – labour intensive job creation and eradication of alien invasive plants – was proposed to Minister Asmal, given the green flag by the Ministry and launched in 1994, with Preston as Project Leader based at the National Water Conservation Campaign, and Marais as Regional Manager of the Western Cape Fynbos Office. By 1999, 250 projects were running nationally, 22 of which were Fynbos Projects.

3.2 The WfWP Objectives

Public works programmes generally have the following characteristics:

- they create or upgrade infrastructure for poor communities, or improve the environment.
- they use labour intensive methods, employing people rather than machines where economically and technically feasible
- they involve short term job creation
- they set wages below market wages to avoid drawing people away from other employment, and to attract the poorest of the poor

The WfWP generally follows these principles, with their focus on the environment rather than infrastructure. However, as do the other post-1993 public works programmes, the WfWP has wider objectives. As with these other programmes, some of these objectives reflect and advance the principles of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (the

RDP), the 1994 government's social development policy. Specifically, its objectives are defined as follows:

3.2.1 Primary Objectives

1. To enhance water security through regaining control over invasive alien plants in South Africa.
2. To restore agricultural capacity and security, as a component of the Land Care initiative.
3. To improve the ecological integrity of our natural systems through the removal of these plants.
4. To maximize the social benefits that are possible as a community-based public works programme.
5. To develop the economic benefits (from land, water, wood and people) from clearing these plants.
6. To demonstrate that partnerships across line-functions and a spectrum of interests can work.

3.2.2 Secondary Objectives

7. To promote the quest for equity, efficiency and sustainability in the supply and use of water.
8. To derive the physical benefits of the removal of invading plants (eg, countering abnormal fires, soil erosion, flooding, scouring of rivers, siltation of rivers, dams and estuaries).
9. To promote the appropriate use of land that is cleared of invading alien plants.
10. To protect and restore biological diversity by reducing the competition by invading alien plants.
11. To assist in the government's drive to eliminate poverty.
12. To invest in the most marginalized sectors in South African society.
13. To support the Masakhane Campaign ("Let us build together") actively and effectively.

14. To develop secondary industries and resource beneficiation, for long-term economic growth.
15. To empower non-government organisations, tertiary institutions and other deserving partners.
16. To empower democratic structures in the implementation of the programme.
17. To promote regional and international practices that further the Working for Water programme.

(source: Preston 1998)

The sheer number of objectives, as well as the difficulty of achieving those that involve the complex challenge of social development, indicates the enormity of the undertaking that DWAF has embarked upon. In evaluating what has been achieved and how the process has gone thus far, the magnitude of the ambitions and the knowledge that achieving these objectives is inevitably a slow process, is always a backdrop to our critiques. However, one area of our research asks the following questions: Are projects being loaded with too many simultaneous objectives in the light of current capacities? What are some of the obstacles to achieving these objectives? What additional type of support is needed to achieve them? What is the nature of the trade-offs between objectives (labour intensity to maximise employment opportunities, job training, community empowerment, achieving the technical task reasonably efficiently)? Should the programme attempt all these objectives, or could some be achieved elsewhere, instead of under a single programme?

Three years into the programme, leadership is re-evaluating these objectives. There is no doubt that the first objective, the clearing of invasive alien plants, has been successful: 220 884 hectares of alien invasive plants have been cleared (see Figure 3).

Hectares cleared and follow-up since October 1995

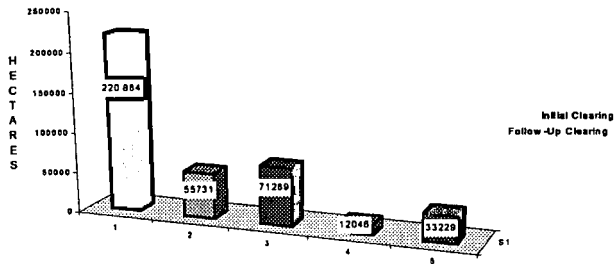


FIGURE 3

(The Working for Water Programme: 1997/98 Annual Report)

This has resulted in increased water flow, contributing to the preservation and conservation of this scarce resource and saving government funds by limiting or delaying the construction of expensive dams. In the pursuit of this conservation objective, another very important stated objective, job creation, is also achieved. Nationally, the WFWP has created about 10 000 jobs per year on average over three years, peaking for a few months at the end of 1997/98 at 42 000 jobs. The types of jobs are discussed in section 4.5 on labour issues below. Taking these two main objectives alone, the programme could be considered successful. However, an ambitious social development programme such as this will encounter problems, and the remainder of this paper identifies and analyses a variety of issues confronted in the effort to achieve these objectives and others that are less straightforward to achieve or measure.

3.3 Institutional Capacity and Institutional Changes

One area of the research set out to ask the following questions: What are the key institutional constraints currently affecting programme implementation, and staff

commitment to the programme objectives (staff capacity, nature of the job; insufficient understanding of communities among implementing staff, insufficient understanding of programme objectives)? What administrative systems need to be improved (project selection, transfer of funds; technical support; systems for monitoring, information management and accountability with respect to expenditure of funds and achievement of project goals, communications and transparency between National, Regional and Project level interactions)? What strategies and protocols are necessary to facilitate such improvement?

3.3.1 Organizational Structure and Lines of Responsibility

The WfWP is implemented within a complicated and changing institutional structure, and institutional problems must be understood within this context. The National Water Conservation Campaign (NWCC), of which the FWFP (also referred to as the "Fynbos Office") is a part, began in 1995 by the Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry to create an awareness of the challenges facing a water scarce country such as South Africa. The NWCC operated closely under the wing of the Minister but fairly independently of the National and Regional offices initially. As the projects within the NWCC grew in capacity and number it became apparent that better integration was desirable and that full co-operation from both National and Regional offices was required. It took several years, but eventually a new Chief Directorate (Water Use and Conservation) was created within DWAF's National Office in mid-1998, within which all the activities of the former National Water Conservation Campaign were absorbed, and integration of all its activities now fall within the orbit of DWAF.⁵ Due to the fact that a major part of WfWP budget comes from foreign funding sources, coupled with the fact that the majority of the staff are appointed on contract, many of the functions of the programme are carried out outside of the Directorate of Catchment Management. (a directorate within DWAF).

⁵ There are 4 Directorates: Catchment Management which holds the DWAF component of WfW funding 2) Water Conservation 3) Water Utilisation 4) Water Quality Management

This integration is by no means complete, however. Fragmentation interferes with good management. Budgets are tight and initiatives taken within branches at decentralised levels are stifled. At times the Fynbos office has had some exciting initiatives that could not be carried out because of bureaucratic demands and processes of approval both at provincial and national levels, frustrations expressed by the Programme Leader and Regional Director.⁶ Confusion is generated by the fact that there are three different offices where decisions are made: the NWCC office located close to the Ministry in central Cape Town; the Regional Offices of DWAF located in the city of Bellville (where the newly appointed Institutional and Social Team are based); and the Fynbos Office led by Christo Marais (Western Cape Regional Leader) and Desmond Stevens (Deputy Leader), and their staff, including six newly appointed Development and Training Officers and 16 training officers, five of whom are located mainly in the Southern Cape and Grabouw. Fynbos Office staff are not always clear as to where they stand in relation to the National WfW Programme located within the NWCC. The regional Fynbos office is dynamic, and some autonomy has enabled it to explore possibilities within the programme which have not been followed through on a National Level. However, initiatives on the part of the Programme Leader and Deputy are inhibited by the fact that this office has limited freedom and is accountable to the National WfWP. In short, the line functions are sometimes blurred and there is some tension between National and Regional offices. Funding and communications are centralised through the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, National Office based in Pretoria. Cape Nature Conservation is the implementing agent in the Western Cape but in some provinces Department of Water Affairs extension officers have been allocated this task.

Managing in a post-apartheid socio-political environment brings a unique set of challenges to managers, who have to try and disentangle what are good management practices from what are legacies of apartheid. For example, one of the black programme managers found it difficult for his community to accept that he had become part of management, seeing

⁶ The fact that the Fynbos Office is linked to its implementing agency Cape Nature Conservation also inhibits dynamic and fast decision-making processes.

him as "selling out" and it becomes difficult to be a tough manager in these cases. On the other hand, the other Afrikaans programme manager found it even more difficult to be a tough manager, overcompensating for his identity and not taking disciplinary action in cases where it was clearly warranted; for example, in one case not firing someone caught driving under the influence of alcohol. The Programme leaders have matured and learned in the process and many of these teething problems have been smoothed out. This has been part of the capacity building process of both management and workers.

Further institutional constraints are related to the multiple objectives which crosscut the responsibility of other line departments. The establishment of crèches for the children of workers is not a line function of DWAF and could better be located within the Department of Health and Welfare. Training initiatives could be undertaken in partnership with the Department of Labour. DWAF officials have had little exposure to the complexities of functions that have previously been located within other departments. The multiple objectives as laid out above go far beyond anything that the DWAF has had to deal with in the past. Plans have been discussed for a Secretariat as a possible solution to this problem, with a view to formalising links between departments and mobilising co-operative efforts. Whether the programme takes this turn or whether it remains a programme wholly owned by DWAF has significance in terms of accountability and budget allocations. It is central to the Department's planning and the extent to which it pursues or cuts back on its multiple objectives. Interdepartmental links forged through the establishment of a Secretariat could go a long way towards minimising costs, avoiding duplication and encouraging co-operation and mutual understanding between line departments, thus encouraging integrated developmental processes within the broad framework of reconstruction and development in South Africa. Interdepartmental committees could be less encumbered by bureaucracy and manage more readily the tasks ahead. Interdepartmental committees would resolve the dynamic and complex issues raised through a programme which has set multiple objectives going well beyond the line function of the Department in which they are located.

3.3.2 Changing mandates and institutional character

One of the important tensions that has been encountered in this process of institutional change relates to the redefinition of mandates. DWAF historically has been a department with essential functions related to the delivery of water and the management of water resources and forestry. The staff has been largely technical – engineers, soil scientists, conservationists, hydrologists, environmentalists, experts in sanitation and waste management and water service delivery. A new programme with ambitious social, economic and environmental objectives was bound to meet with some resistance. DWAF did not see itself as an instrument of economic development and social upliftment and sidelined social issues as being outside their ambit. Preston, however, saw the potential of clearing of alien vegetation to be not only “a water solution but a peoples solution.”

This is work that is going to have to be done anyway. The sooner you do it, the cheaper its going to be and we can do it with bulldozers and fire control, or we can do it in a way that maximises the social benefits. Clearing had been done in Hout Bay. Philip Ivy had started working here on Table Mountain with a pilot project, Cape Nature Conservation and the Department of Agriculture had been clearing alien invasives for years and they knew that it was labour intensive (interview, July 1998: Guy Preston.)

CNC was the driving force in setting up what was called the Fynbos Forum and invited the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and others to participate in this initiative, linking the alien vegetation clearing explicitly to concerns about water. Those initially involved were people dedicated to issues of conservation -- those with an environmental science background and without much experience with social development issues. Preston and Marais, though with a technical background themselves, approached the issue mainly from their social development interests.

Although DWAF had previously defined itself as primarily a department with a technical mandate, it is significant that what influenced the Minister to buy into the programme with a major investment was the social side: the possibility of creating jobs and contributing to the alleviation of unemployment and poverty, and its wider principles of social upliftment

that followed those of the RDP. The programme, in fact, was initially supported with RDP funds. The fact that it was from its inception conceived as an RDP programme with a social upliftment agenda - and that it was supported largely on this basis - is important in light of current tensions in the department that need to be resolved: these tensions are between those in the department who embrace DWAF's new social development agenda, and those who do not see this as DWAF's responsibility or comparative advantage; this they see simply as water conservation. As mentioned above, there are trade offs between the multiple objectives of the programme: for example, funds spent on skills training, consultation with community-based committees or the building of a crèche for workers' children means fewer funds for direct conservation measures. Giving jobs to large numbers of unskilled, unemployed people also means that training is necessary, although the job could be done by skilled teams of regular employees. Preston represents a new mindset being fostered in the department that sees government's responsibility as including social development:

If you clear 80 hectares instead of 100 hectares in a particular project because you're diverting some of that money to the sustainability of what you're trying to do, that is what an RDP programme should be doing, training and enhancing social benefits, then that's where the tensions arise with the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry because I'm saying this is a government programme, it's not strictly a Water Affairs but Water Affairs needs to run with it because of the incredible spin-offs it has for water in our country⁷ (interview, G. Preston).

Arguments against spending DWAF funds on a social agenda also have to be reviewed in light of the more recent fact of large amounts of foreign and private sector funding being contributed to the programme - funds that would not be forthcoming if the programme's thrust was not focused on creating employment.

⁷ The Western Cape has saved R15 million on a proposed dam by increasing water flows

The programme has played an important role in changing the mindsets of professionals within DWAF. Its high profile nationally and internationally has been built largely through its ability to impact on poverty, training and community upliftment and its production of 42 000 jobs. This high profile and the attention its success has brought to DWAF has not been lost on departmental officials. It is significant that the programme has been absorbed into DWAF through the establishment in early 1999 of a Directorate. This integration is symbolic of an acceptance within the Department of the social component of the WfWP objectives. In turn, the programme itself has accelerated a process of institutional transformation. DWAF officials, who have been mainly disciplined in engineering, conservation, ecology and forestry, have now been exposed to unfamiliar processes involving the upliftment of poor black communities. Eyes have been opened in both communities. Departmental professionals have had to accommodate the demands, needs and cultural and political *modus operandi* of community members and activists. There has been a mutual exchange of views as departmental officials and community members rub shoulders in the process of project development and implementation. Community members, on the other hand, have had to meet the demands of engineers and accommodate the rigour and scientific objectivity demanded by such exchanges. Interviews on both sides of this divide have revealed that this interaction benefits both sides. Some of those in the department who have not been able to adjust to the changes have left their jobs, but more have remained and have been enriched and excited by the process of change within their department.

It has been incredible to see how people have changed. Some have come to me and said that they have never had such job satisfaction as now and they are enjoying their job more than ever before (Interview, June 1998: Desmond Stevens)

It has been therefore to the credit of this programme that community people, DWAF officials and the implementing agents have worked together to further common goals. In the FWfWP, forestry expertise is the driving force behind the programme. This is supplemented by environmentalists, conservationists, botanists. Some engineers with water resource management skills, pulled in from private sector consultants such as

Ninham Shand or from DWAF, advise and plan. CSIR is responsible for the business plans and determines part of the strategic planning process. Social and economic development skills have been in short supply within the programme at national, regional and project levels. This has affected the training content and the budget for training priorities has been readjusted to assure more attention to social and economic aspects of the communities. In January 1998 the Institutional and Social Development Team was established with the brief to address the burning social/development issues on a National Programme Level.

Another challenge in this process of institutional and personal transformations in the department relate to managing in a post-apartheid socio-political environment.

3.4 Poverty Targeting

Public works programmes are usually located in regions with high levels of poverty. Geographic poverty targeting means that those areas that need projects most, having the highest levels of unemployment or other poverty-related criteria, receive the highest share of projects. In all the Western Cape public works programs in their first three-year phase, geographic poverty targeting was used loosely in the sense that projects were placed in black communities where people are poor. However, it was not done according to any identified criteria, i.e. placing projects in areas with relatively higher levels of poverty indicators. In the FWfWP, geographic selection did not take into account poverty indicators; instead projects were located in areas where there were high levels of alien invasive plants. Although within a given area poor individuals were employed (see below), a more rigorous effort to target those areas where poverty is highest, while also choosing areas with high levels of alien plants, would be more effective in terms of reaching the poorest of the poor. This could be done using certain selected variables or the Human Poverty Index⁸. GIS maps can be used to map poverty indicators for use as a spatial targeting tool.

⁸ The Human Poverty Index (HPI) attempts to operationalise Sen's capability concept which defines poverty as the 'denial of choices and opportunities for a tolerable life'. The HPI focuses on those groups whose choices are heavily constrained in each of the three areas used in the Human Development Index.

The new contractor development programme that WfWP is launching on a large scale, whereby small contractors bid for clearing contracts (see section on training below) means that the project selection process will be based around bidding criteria. It will become difficult to overlap poverty profiles with the contracted areas as the market becomes the main determinant of project location. Attention will need to be given to this problem if the programme is to continue to move in the direction stated in the primary and secondary objectives above. If the poorest of the poor are to be targeted, then care must be given to ensure that the projects are not only driven by profit/money making objectives, but that it remains guided by the social objectives so clearly embedded in the vision. Project selection criteria will inevitably shift to some degree with the contractor programme, but socio-economic criteria can still be made top priorities in accepting bids. As with other aspects of the programme as it grows much bigger, WfWP management need to be vigilant in the pursuit of socio-economic benefits if this programme is to fulfil its ideals of poverty alleviation and community empowerment.

4. PROJECT LEVEL ISSUES

The sections that follow deal with project-level issues within broad categories that are not easily compartmentalized. The themes are cross-cutting and the interaction of social, environmental, and community issues is complex. Community-level issues are particularly complex. The case studies of the FWfWP projects at Kylemore and Kaya Mandi shed light on some of these issues, and suggest areas for programme improvement as well as new research.

The HPI is made up of 5 weighted components: 1) The percentage of people expected to die before the age of forty 2) The percentage of adults who are illiterate. 3) The percentage of people with access to health services. 4) The percentage of people with access to safe water 5) The percentage of children under five who are malnourished. Aspects of human poverty that are excluded from the index due to lack of data or measurement difficulties are lack of political freedom, inability to participate in decision-making, lack of person security, inability to participate in the life of the community and threats to sustainability and intergenerational equity (UNDP 1997).

4.1 Management Systems

Each FWfWP project has a project manager hired by DWAF. Although that manager has a role in conflict resolution, the interface between the community and the project manager is important. Many black communities in South Africa have had a history of community involvement in political action and development initiatives (non-state) and thus do not sit back and ignore a new project involving their community, particularly one that involves a significant injection of resources. Communities such as Kaya Mandi (the Stellenbosch project) have seen the FWfWP project as a RDP initiative. As an RDP initiative, the community has a sense of ownership, both of the planning but also of the problems arising within the project. The community would like to see these problems settled within the confines of the community itself, rather than isolated and dealt with by supervisors or the project manager at the project site. Problems arising around poor definition and protocol around ownership issues caused real conflict in Kaya Mandi. It is not only community dynamics that impact on the management of the project. Institutional arrangements between the Programme and project have caused confusion. Tensions between community and project manager as well as department and project leader (and both due to lack of protocol) have caused frustrations and impacted on performance on the job.

There are several factors that affected the ability of the Kylemore project manager to perform her job well. In her own words, DWAF had 'thrown her in the deep end' (interview, Kylemore project manager). The roles and responsibilities of the project manager and other role players were not clearly defined, frameworks for delineation of responsibility had not been developed, so one "feels one's way" and relies heavily on one's own capacity. In the case of Kylemore, where the project manager was very dynamic and self-motivated, the lack of protocol did not inhibit her achievements (although with an enabling environment she would have achieved them with less personal stress and strain). In the case of Kaya Mandi with a less experienced project manager, it was a greater problem. The project manager was also affected by community dynamics, and the relationship with the steering committee, supervisors and workers committee. In Kaya Mandi in particular, there have been problems with accountability and transparency.

Mistrust around the allocation of funding, around decision making processes have impacted on relations, negatively affecting productivity as poor interactions plague key role players in the project.

In Kylemore the interface between project level role-players and management was also problematic. The project manager reported a lack of frankness and openness in communications between herself and the supervisors and her assistants, commenting that she would have valued their appraisal or criticism in order to improve her performance. The lack of communication and animosity between them took a high emotional (and eventual physical) toll on her. However, the problem came from both directions. This strong project manager made many decisions unilaterally, excluded the facilitating committee and abolished the workers committee who she felt obstructed progress rather than facilitated it. A great deal of resentment had built up around the decision-making process, the lack of representation of workers, alleged nepotism and other accusations that had accompanied her 'success' -- Kylemore became known as a model project, with much of its success attributed to the project manager (aspects of this success are described later in this paper). How many of these allegations are true is not clear. Far more important, however, is what this tells us about the relative benefits and costs of a strong project manager (which may involve authoritarian tendencies). Her strength enabled her to think up and push through some important initiatives. For example, some of the initiatives of the Project Manager included establishment of incentives through prizes, employment of a social worker, and most notably real representation and dedication to the needs of the disabled-- her project remains the only project to have employed disabled workers to any significant degree. On the other hand, the same strengths led her to block other actors in the projects from playing potentially valuable roles, and to interpersonal tensions that became unsustainable for the project and ultimately her. This case reveals insights into these costs and benefits, and it is important for DWAF to consider how different management styles fulfil or detract from the goals of the WfWP.

4.2 The Role of Communities

DWAF envisioned the Facilitating Committee (FC) on each project to be a body which would assist with

recruitment, appointments, promotions, disputes between the community and the Fynbos Working for Water Programme, discipline, facilitation of community tendering and promoting social activities (interview, C. Marais).

Other functions were seen as advising on "social questions in the community" (interview D. Stevens). Discipline was an important function "to have a sense of an independent assessor sort of thing, that they become that disciplinary committee" (ibid).

The FC is the channel through which the community comes on board as part of the project, the mechanism for 'community participation.' A well-structured FC can act as watchdog for the Project Manager and can facilitate related community development initiatives such the establishment of crèches, resolving transport problems and involving the broader community in other ways that are beneficial to both the project and the community. This structure serves as a conduit between the project and the community, and is an essential structure in the process of building trust relations between management and community. A conduit between project and community goes a long way in extending benefits of the project beyond the workers themselves.

The FC was envisioned to be comprised of local government, an RDP Forum, the Workers Committee, and sometimes other CBOs. In many cases among the FWfW Western Cape projects, this was realized, at least in organizational structure. Facilitating committees were functioning to a greater or lesser degree across the FWfW projects but in the two case study projects they were ineffectual bodies, with members expressing frustration as to what their functions were supposed to be. One of the main problems identified was a lack of clarity as to what the role of the FC should be. Although roles were identified at the programme level, these definitions did not filter down to the project level. Furthermore, committee members did not feel that the roles that they were asked to play within the project were realistic. They were considered a kind of 'advisory body' but

they found this role obscure and difficult if not impossible to fulfil. Members were asked to give advice on issues with which they were unfamiliar because of limited involvement in the project. Coupled with this was the lack of definition as to what their authority should be and how they should interact with the project staff and workers:

The lack of a strategic framework for the facilitating committees also affected their ability to involve themselves in the project

We can advise that the social worker must work there or the supervisor must try to do that or so on, but we cannot be physically involved and I think they thought that the steering committee could take a lot of their responsibility which are not working now. So they should have thought about the things that are going to happen in the project and work out protocols, how we're going to handle some of these issues (interview, Kylemore FC).

A similar process of exclusion occurred as the Kylemore project grew in scale:

In the beginning when the project was small the Steering Committee felt that they had a handle on things. Once it grew so big they were overawed and retreated as they were not participating in the daily managing and didn't understand the issues arising from the project on such a large scale. The project manager also then did kind of 'crisis' management and didn't have time to bring a steering committee into meetings etc. (interview, Kylemore FC)

The lack of protocol affected the project manager as well as the committee:

I don't know where things went wrong, but it is my personal opinion that at the beginning the project was small and the project manager could handle and manage the project. When the project expanded the responsibility became more and there was not enough time for her to bring us all together to manage the project (interview, Kylemore FC)

This problem is again expressed clearly below, this time by the Kaya Mandi FC:

We don't know what we are supposed to do. We have never visited the project site and we are frustrated because when our people tell us about something we don't know what to do. They complain about the wages or the difficulties of working on the mountain but we don't know as we are not

called in by the manager and we don't feel part of the project. But it is an RDP project and the community must be involved. We don't know why we are never called to meetings anymore (interview, Kaya Mandi FC)

The FC at Kaya Mandi felt that there was no real integration of this body into the project. Attending meetings had become meaningless. They were not aware of the nature of the job, had never been taken to the sites, and did not understand the process involved in the clearing of alien vegetation. Relations of trust could not be forged between the FC and workers. They were alienated from the workers – who were also members of their community-- and their needs and could not provide meaningful assistance when called on to do so. They retreated and became dysfunctional as a body.

The experience at these two projects suggests that the actual function and structure of community participation, particularly the role of the FC, needs to be revisited and redefined with all the role-players, including DWAF, the project managers, supervisors, workers and the community. Monitoring and evaluating mechanisms should be ensured in order to isolate problems before members withdraw or become disinterested in the building process. The WfWP is operating on an increasingly large scale and introducing many innovative new economic and social development measures rapidly. This may make it more difficult to follow through each initiative. Without careful monitoring there is the risk that good ideas from both the community or the Department do not function on the ground and that problems arising go undetected or unsolved for some time (Adato, *et al*, 1999). The programme has begun to make progress in this area; a Strategic Framework for Steering Committees is in the process of being drawn up by the National Programme Institute for Social Development Team.

The active participation of the FC also depends on the levels of politicisation in the community. A more politicised and active community tends to have a more active facilitating committee, but a community wracked with political tensions can undermine the effectiveness of a committee. Also, they can become too involved and interfere unnecessarily, undermining the project. Kaya Mandi is a township historically fraught, with

many complex political divides, contributing to an ineffectual and 'absent' facilitating committee.⁹ The two members interviewed both commented that although they had lived in the township since they were little children, the fact that they were born in the Eastern Cape and not in Kaya Mandi itself, meant that they were never accorded full 'citizenship'. The town remains divided and community issues are not easily resolved. Kylemore appears to have a more homogenous community with strong community leaders, but dynamics here too are complex and some families seem to dominate, creating and benefiting from their power bases, and leaving others feeling non-represented and excluded (focus groups, Kylemore workers).

The FC members at Kylemore said that they were unclear about their role. However, the project manager at Kylemore felt that, despite the absence of a good strategic framework, there was a real lack of initiative on the part of the steering committee - as well as on the part of the supervisors. She felt that she had been thrown in the deep end and that she had been forced to empower herself, take decisions and make things work. She expressed frustration that this was not happening with other interested parties and that there was a pervasive apathy, lack of involvement and lack of initiative in the project on behalf of the committee members. The FC saw the problem differently: members felt that the manager saw the committee as an interloper, marginalising and eventually excluding it almost entirely.

The FC at Kylemore was most often seen in a disciplinary capacity. This role could be a productive one, if the FCs were otherwise more involved in the project. This would mean that they were familiar to the workers because they had been seen on site, and vice versa, rather than only appearing during disciplinary hearings, a role with which the FC at Kylemore said it was not comfortable. However, there are frictions around the respective roles of the project manager and the FC that require clarification. The project manager at Kylemore had problems with the FC because its members did not align themselves with

⁹ Although, as is clear from the quotes above this was not the only reason that the steering committee were 'absent'. It seems the main reason was the lack of protocol.

her decisions, and she felt that they undermined her authority in a way that was not to the advantage of the project. The FC on the other hand felt that the project manager had a preference for taking unilateral decisions rather than embarking on a consultative process.

A further complication arises when members use this forum to further their own ends, a problem that was reported at Kaya Mandi. A mechanism is needed to ensure the committee's commitment and dedication to the project. There is the potential for someone to seek membership on the FC to increase his or her political profile. In the case of the WfWP there are sometimes up to 2000 workers who are voters in a constituency and the importance of this cannot be underestimated when it comes to election time.

The need of committee members to be liked in their communities creates an additional problem. When the FC is intended to play a disciplinary role, members are wary of taking unpopular actions. The FC at Kylemore was ineffective in part because of their fear of taking unpopular decisions. The Project Manager at Kylemore said that the supervisors also fear being unpopular with the workers. She thus became the main person taking difficult decisions. Most of these problems outlined should be resolved once the roles of both project manager and facilitating committee are more clearly defined within the Programme. Training in leadership skills (as well as programme objectives and strategic priorities) for FC members and supervisors would increase the effectiveness of both parties and take some burden off the project manager.

4.3 The Role of Local Government

Local government has a number of interests in WfWP: 1) as a consumer of water with an interest in water conservation; 2) as a facilitator of local socio-economic development. For both of these reasons, communities would benefit from greater local government involvement in the programme, where local government plays a role in co-ordination and support.

Actual roles of local government have been weak, especially in the rural areas, reflecting the state of local government capacity. As in other public works programmes, local government involvement in the two WfWP case study projects was negligible. In some other WfWP projects the degree of involvement has been greater, but still limited.

It is important that councillors understand the importance of their role in canvassing officials. Councillors with this awareness and a commitment to social development, and who lobby for their communities, can contribute to cohesiveness within these communities. On the other hand, councillors can also contribute to community fragmentation. Local government can influence community dynamics. Workers are swayed by opinions of their elected representatives and productivity can be affected. This phenomena was particularly apparent as the 1999 elections approached. In many of the other public works projects studied in the Western Cape, conflicts between different political parties within a municipality (i.e. ANC and NP) has resulted in logjams in development projects (Adato et al, 1999). But a municipality made up of one political party alone can also have tensions (between different affiliations) which can also obstruct delivery, as is the case in the WfWP projects in George¹⁰. Commitment to the development process regardless of party affiliation, and the ability to identify and work with government and non-governmental organisations, is necessary for successful projects. As one Eastern Cape Transitional Local Council member wrote,

Councillors, who are usually aligned to one or other political party, must create healthy relationships with the other civic and political organisations in their wards. They should attend the meetings of these organisations when invited and should also ask the latter to join them when addressing the public on issues requiring mutual understanding (Faku 1995: 25)

Local government partnerships in WfWP projects may make or break them in the future, because of the way in which such partnerships contribute to long-term sustainability.

¹⁰ The Project at George in the Southern Cape has had ongoing problems that are linked to fraught local politics in that area. The ANC is divided and councillors from one constituency do not co-operate easily with those from another.

Partnerships can mean anything from making storage space available, to providing expertise and technical assistance, coming forward with funding initiatives, resolving conflict, and other types of support depending on needs at the project and local levels. Constitutionally, local municipalities are bound to concern themselves with local economic development, and partnerships with national programmes such as WfWP are a way to extend resources and build local government capacity at the same time.

The mindset of the old political system remains influential in many areas. Decisions are made unilaterally and processes of consultation are absent. Previously marginalised communities and interested and affected parties who should be included in development decisions are sidelined. There are conflicting views of the brief of a municipality, and some are not committed to social change and the transfer of skills, resulting in the obstruction of development initiatives. Others stand back without taking extra initiative. Local governments should be concerned with canvassing for the provision of better access roads for transport, a community hall, health clinic or crèche, rather than focusing their efforts on those in their constituency who already have access to resources and power.

Elected leaders in local government need to *own* a project and see it as an integrated development initiative. A "strong" local government is one in which its members understand and are dedicated to development goals. Rejection or acceptance of a development perspective filters down from local government to the community and project workers. Local authorities can play a role in making communities aware of the importance of owning development processes. As in the case of encouraging local residents to pay for services, local government can help forge a culture of rights and responsibilities in their communities. Local governments should be concerned with canvassing for the provision of better access roads for transport, a community hall, health clinic or crèche, rather than focusing their efforts on those in their constituency who already have access to resources and power

The WfWP will not be able to fulfil its objectives in the long term and remain sustainable unless it mobilises the resources that exist in local government. WfWP can provide training to local officials to enable them to assist with achieving certain programme objectives, rather than the programme taking on so many responsibilities itself. The programme started in haste and grew quickly. Vast resources were mobilised and the projects were set up without consulting municipalities. The first phase, in which the programme was finding its feet, did not devote much effort to incorporating local municipalities into programme planning processes. In the second phase (starting in late 1998), municipalities were asked to come on board and take ownership of the process. One can understand the political and logistical difficulties of bringing municipalities and local leadership on board. This process is not unique to the WfWP. Other public works and development programmes that started when local government either did not exist or was illegitimate or weak, are now trying to get local authorities to assume ownership.

The WfWP is at a stage of its development when it cannot afford not to forge lasting relations including local authorities. It needs to encourage economic and social spin-offs, promoting integrated development initiatives. The programme is now aimed at working with other directives from the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, coming out of the National Water Act. Integrated Catchment Management will go a long way toward bringing together development initiatives within a given geographical area and involve agents from many programmes and projects. Integration, synergy and the building of trust relations and partnerships are key to ensuring good governance of development projects.

4.4 Project Level Targeting: Worker Selection

Worker selection is a complex issue. In some of the projects, initially the programme selected the project manager who in turn selected the workers (the arrangement at Kylemore). In other provinces it worked differently; for example, in Kwa Zulu-Natal

where chiefs were involved.¹¹ In most cases the workers were chosen from a list of unemployed, though this was not always applied. In the Kaya Mandi project for example, all those who presented themselves in the Kaya Mandi hall were chosen for the job, with the process facilitated by the local councillors.

It is difficult to manage such a process in a community which is both fragmented and where there is competition for scarce resources. There are tensions over who gets hired and who does not, and there is pressure to get jobs for family or friends in need. Local politics is a factor in determining who gets selected or who does not. (interview, D Stevens) The fact that there are different powerbases in the Western Cape has affected the selection process, where there is pressure to select workers affiliated with the dominant political party in their community.

In spite of the potential for political influence, our research suggests that the best method is to involve community members in worker selection. Focus groups with workers revealed their awareness of social and economic dynamics in their communities. In discussions among workers as to who within their community should be given priority for jobs, there was heated debate. It was agreed that a single parent with children needed a job, and that disabled persons should also be given preference. There was some disagreement around whether an old man or a young person should be employed within a family. Some arguments follow (focus groups, Kaya Mandi and Kylemore workers):

A young person has his or her life ahead of them. The old man needs to work so that the family respects him. Otherwise he will just sit at home and drink and make things difficult for the wife and children...

An old man has had his life. If he cannot work that is his fault and the young person must be given a chance to learn and train and make something of his life...

¹¹ For example, in some areas "WfW employers worked through the chiefs who spread the word for any unemployed people to come to the tribal court..." (DRA 1999).

If the young person works and the old man is at home, then the children will not respect the old man as their older brother becomes the breadwinner and has the respect. This will make a lot of trouble in the family...

Although it was agreed that a disabled person qualified for the job, there was discussion around what disability meant:

A man who is blind is more disabled than a person with one arm. A person with one arm can still work. The job must be given to the blind man first...

There was often lively discussion around whether a single mother was as needy as a single father:

A single woman with children can just go and find another man. She does not need to be given a job...

A single woman with children is in a hard life. She must be given a job.

After disagreeing, there seemed some consensus that

A single man is not needy. He will find a woman to make food for his children and help him with cleaning the house.

Because there are conflicting perspectives within communities, and because different perspectives and biases can conflict with programme objectives such as targeting the poorest or women, the optimal method is a worker selection process whereby community-elected steering committees manage the process. This process should involve consultation with that community over selection criteria, education of the community around programme objectives to inform that consultation, and consensus over the procedures to be used. In selecting communities for projects the first step would be the establishment of a steering committee. Worker selection would take place after this accountable body is in place to facilitate the process.

There are other political factors that affect targeting of workers. South Africa's history of racial divisions and the divide and rule tactics of the apartheid system has left prejudice

and mistrust between people historically classified as African and Coloured. In the case of new social programme this is exacerbated by resource scarcity and limited opportunities, such as jobs. Most public works projects, because they are based within segregated communities and draw their workers from those communities, are composed of either a coloured or an African workforce. In the case of the WfWP, projects are located outside of communities and thus workers can be taken from across communities. The FWfWP takes workers from Coloured and African workers (Xhosa-speaking in the Western Cape) and consciously puts these groups into close working conditions so that they can get to know each other. The work teams are mixed, and there has been an effort in some projects to introduce elementary language classes so that the workers learn to greet each other in the other's language.

Nevertheless, the Xhosa-speaking people within the Kylemore project, which is predominantly "coloured" with a "coloured" Project Manager, felt marginalised and discriminated against.¹² This is an issue encountered at other public works projects and is something that needs to be addressed through workshops with workers and subsequent monitoring of team dynamics. The newly established Workers Committee at Kylemore is to pay careful attention to any racial discrimination on the part of management and supervisors. African and Coloured committee members have been asked to work closely together in an attempt to narrow the division between the two racial groups among the workers. The Kaya Mandi project is predominantly Xhosa, run by a Xhosa-speaking manager and issues of racial prejudice have not arisen.

4.4.1 Women

Women have been specified as a primary target group by all post-1994 South African public works programmes. The WfWP has done very well, achieving its goal and

¹² The African workers said that they were not promoted, they were marginalised in decision making processes and that they were discriminated against when it came to practical transport arrangements. They sometimes had to make their own way back home while other workers were provided with project transport (Focus Group: Kylemore)

employing over fifty percent women, as well as having fifty percent of managerial positions filled by women. Women presently constitute 54% of the labour force [WfW annual report 1997]. There is some skewing in relation to technical training, where few women have become chainsaw operators, a more skilled and higher-paying job. This is mainly related to the perception that carrying heavy chainsaws would be difficult for women. Training for women in chainsaw operation and other semi-skilled jobs such as drivers is now being given in an attempt to redress this imbalance. The programme has taken into account women's special needs by granting pregnancy leave of up to four months -- very unusual for a public works programme. However, since the leave pay is half the daily rate, women tend to stay on the job late into their pregnancy, with the incumbent health risks. The programme should consider requiring women to stop performing certain kinds of tasks after a specific stage of pregnancy, whilst continuing to employ them in other tasks so that they benefit from a full month's wages. With a medical certificate a woman is allowed to ask to be put on flatter terrain (rather than the normal slippery slopes). Women do the same work as men and are expected to meet the same task targets at the same wage.

In the Kylemore and Kaya Mandi studies, women expressed a range of gender-specific problems they experience in going to work. One of the main problems is leaving their children behind. Lack of adequate childminders make them anxious and this affects their work. The lack of housing was also a source of stress for women, who said they were worried about leaving their shacks as they might find them destroyed on their return. The shacks are not secure and the women are uneasy about leaving their possessions.¹³ One woman explained that:

I do not like to be on the slopes, far away, when my small child is at home alone. I am afraid what I might find when I return. Sometimes my home is burnt down or my child is not safe (focus group, Kaya Mandi worker).

¹³Houses were named by workers as the top development priority. There were some false expectations that houses would be delivered through the project and this did not happen. The Department of Water Affairs and Forestry is taking some care, through a small training manual, to inform the workers more explicitly of what they can expect from the job and what they cannot.

After housing, the need for crèches was identified by women workers as a top priority. While provision of housing is not a function of DWAF, provision of crèches could be, although there is currently a debate over whether DWAF should be in the business of building crèches. It is better for DWAF to support an existing or planned community crèche rather than providing one specifically for project workers, given that workers are already privileged in having the jobs, and because such an effort would unite the community in support of the WfWP rather than divide it. In addition to the initial capital costs for the infrastructure, there are also ongoing operational costs that require the support of the community and/or local government. There is potential for interdepartmental co-operation for instance with the Department of Welfare or Department of Public Works.

As with many other aspects of the programme, DWAF has the potential to pioneer in the area of labour policies that support working women, through initiatives involving crèches, maternity leave, job training, life skills and business skills. The high altitude team is a remarkable example of empowering women to perform demanding and highly skilled work (also dangerous work), which would normally be reserved for men. The programme as a whole has gone further than any other public works programme to date in its efforts to employ women and its focus on gender issues and initiatives. The emphasis on gender balance and empowerment has significant economic benefits. A study of the WfWP found that "the projects seem to show, in line with international experience, that women are less inclined to misuse income received and thus be a better mechanism for channelling assistance to the very poor." (interview: D Stevens)

4.4.2 The Disabled

The disabled are a second target group of the WfWP, with a target of one percent of the project workforce. Targeting the disabled has not been easy and almost all the projects are far from this goal. The project at Kylemore, however, has performed exceptionally well in this respect, meeting its one percent goal with a disabled team of 17 workers. The

team stands as evidence that disabled people can do demanding physical jobs well. This team is not marginalized, but rather is fully integrated into the workforce, hacking at plants and working on the terrain in the same way as other workers. Two of the disabled team, who cannot work in this way, work in the storeroom. However, national programme policy has not been consistent and problems arose at the project level at Kylemore. The Project Manager, sensitive to the fact that disabled workers were sometimes subjected to humiliating experiences through their disability and differences, strived to minimise occasions where these workers might experience such humiliation. For instance, project workers are transported in a truck to and from their homes and to and from the field. For a disabled person in a wheelchair, this means lifting the person off the chair and into the truck. This can be awkward and undignified and the Project Manager wanted to provide suitable transport. The Regional Office was slow in approving a request for an additional appropriate vehicle (a Toyota Venture) which could accommodate a wheelchair. After much pressure and initiative by the project manager, such a vehicle was procured. Project managers are asked to include the disabled but appropriate institutional support for this process is lacking. There needs to be consistency in the planning process to ensure that programme objectives can be realised at project level.

4.4.3 Youth

Youth are another of the WfWP's target groups, with a goal of youth between the ages of 16 and 25 making up 20% of each project workforce. The principle is good-- giving young people direction and skills training to prepare them for the labour market and reduce social problems. However, targeting youth has the potential to aggravate social problems within the nuclear family, such as violence and alcoholism that is caused by unemployment and poverty among adults. If the key breadwinner and other older family members are unemployed, it can be damaging to family cohesion if the son or daughter is employed. As expressed in the quote by a worker above, a father has already lost respect by being without work and now he is further disempowered as his young son becomes the breadwinner and acquires new status within the family and community. A similar problem related to employing women when their husbands are unemployed was pointed out by

government officials from the Community-Based Public Works Programme in various parts of the country (Adato et al 1999).

There have been problems with young workers. The project manager at Kylemore described how, in general, a 16 year old does not have a work ethic and how youth are disrespectful of the authority figures around them. Young people too have objected to the hard manual labour that the job entails.

On the other hand, criminal elements amongst the young, in particular gang related crimes, can be checked if the young person is taken off the streets and given a job. The Project Manager at Kylemore told of how she employed a young man who was a member of a gang:

I took a risk, but I said to him, any problems and you are out. He became one of my best workers and thanked me for giving him a new life (interview, Project Manager, Kylemore)

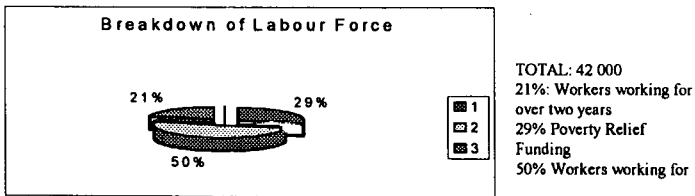
4.5 Wages and Labour relations

4.5.1 *Labour issues: the Challenge of implementing Public Works Programmes in the South African context*

South Africa has political-economic characteristics that make it difficult to implement a public works programme similar to those that have been used for poverty alleviation on a large scale in other countries across Africa, Asia and Latin America. Public works are theorized to be 'self-targeting'. Rather than spend scarce government resources on identifying the poorest of the poor and administering government transfer programmes only to those identified, public works programmes set wages below the market wage for unskilled labour, based on the concept that only the poorest of the poor - those who can not get or do not have jobs that pay market wages - will self-select for public works programmes. Below-market wage rates also mean that public works projects do not draw those who are already employed away from their jobs. However, in South Africa a

history of labour activism and standing up against exploitation means it is difficult to get workers to accept this low wage argument, particularly in urban areas, though in the Western Cape this has been true in rural areas as well.¹⁴ Policymakers have had difficulty choosing between asking workers to accept very low wages and the likelihood that without low wages, there would be no public works programme. One set of questions asked in the research was, how should public works programmes (and in particular the Working for Water Programme) relate to labour legislation, such as minimum wages, Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF), workers compensation and other elements of the new basic conditions of employment legislation (such as maternity leave)?

There have been two different components to the WfWP which are important to distinguish. One is the short-term Poverty Relief programme, which funded projects for a maximum of six months duration, and in some cases as short as two weeks, without renewable contracts. These have been funded from a separate stream of funding given to several departments by the Finance Department for special short-term poverty relief programmes.¹⁵ Although official numbers are as high as 42 000 employed nationally and 8000 for the Western Cape, some of these people were employed only for very short periods of time. In the second type, the main WfW programme, workers have been employed since the inception of the programme or shortly thereafter, with renewable yearly contracts. The issue of renewable contracts raises concerns with organised labour, which sees that workers are no longer 'temporary' wage earners but do not qualify for UIF or other worker benefits.



¹⁴ See Adato et al. 1999 for comparisons of urban and rural wage rates across 101 public works projects in Western Cape Province.

¹⁵ R800 million was budgeted nationally for Poverty Relief Funding and WfW bid for some of this funding (Interview, Brian van Wilgen, CSIR)

4.5.2 *Wage rates*

The wage rates across all public works programmes in the Western Cape ranged from R21 to R44 per day, with the average for all programmes at R31 (Adato et al 1999). The WfWP had a wage of R 33 per day for an unskilled labourer and R55 for semi-skilled workers (supervisors, chainsaw operators and herbicide applicators). Workers in the two case study projects explained the hardships caused by these wages. They were too low to buy more than food for the family, too low to invest in a small business enterprise and thus did not permit a break from the cycle of poverty. The programme pays wages at half-level during maternity leave, and women described how they would work on the hillsides until the 'last minute' in an attempt to maintain the wage, however small, which put them in danger.

With an unemployment rate in the Cape Winelands region of 12% (a very conservative estimate, "probably an underenumeration of the actual level of unemployment" (Wentzel 1997), people are likely to accept work at this wage. In this sense, the self-targeting system is working, as the programme follows the principle of self-targeting the poorest of the poor through at or just below market wages for unskilled work. Whether this amount is too low to be humane or lead to an exit from poverty is a debate that will have to be taken up at a policy level across public works programmes, bearing in mind the trade off between wage rates and scale in government employment creation programmes. The main factor relevant to setting the wage rate for a public works programme is the level of wages for unskilled labour in the area, which in the Winelands region is farm labour, domestic work, factory work (e.g. clothing industry, canning and bottling works) and the service industry. Of these, the main source of competing employment for WfWP workers is farm labour in the fruit and wine industry. These workers are among the most marginalised and poorly paid in the country. A farm labourer's wage in the Western Cape averages about R20 per day for men and R16 per day for women.

Because the wage is higher for the FfWP than it is on the farm, in some cases workers left the farms to join the projects. The projects also had the added attraction of providing

work year-round rather than seasonally. Furthermore, the programme provided transport to the job, which most farmers do not. However, some workers who leave the farm lose their access to housing. The WfWP has a policy that prevents taking a worker back once he or she has left the project and returned to the farms, though this has not always been followed. The issue of competition with farm labour is an important one in the programme, which cuts two ways. On the one hand, public works economic logic asserts that drawing people out of the labour market has a negative effect that should be avoided by lowering wages to the point where the competition no longer exists. However, a higher public works wage can also have the effect of putting upward pressure on local wages. A berry farmer near Kylemore raised the seasonal wages as a response to the WfWP.¹⁶ A valuable area for future study is the wages rates for unskilled work in the Winelands region (and elsewhere) over time, to see the effects of the programme on area wages by sector.

The views of trade unions toward public works programmes is a more significant factor in South Africa than it is in public works programmes around the world. The WfWP is the public works programme that has worked the most closely with unions, bringing actual union representation on the projects. With regard to public works programmes in general, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) has taken a position of support for public works programmes.¹⁷ It has reached agreement on below-negotiated formal sector wage rates, on certain conditions: that the infrastructure benefits the communities where the workers come from, that training be given and that basic safety measures are met. COSATU would like to see a greater role for the trade unions in public works projects, taking their place too as members of community-based committees, with commitment to overseeing projects and ensuring that these agreements are kept by all parties (interview F. Gona).

¹⁶ Seasonal labourers who had been involved in the WfWP were no longer satisfied with the low farm labourer wages.

¹⁷ See the New Framework Agreement for Labour Intensive Construction in Civil Engineering: Criteria and Guidelines, 1996.

Unlike National Public Works Programme projects which do not have any union representation, WfWP workers are union members. Close to 3000 workers on the Fynbos Projects are members of the National Education Health and Allied Workers Unions (Nehawu). Nehawu has been part of a national debate on wage rates for public works projects. In the interest of job creation and the creation of community infrastructure and assets, the union has agreed on a daily minimum rate of as low as R18 in Mpumalanga and as high as R33 in the Western Cape for unskilled labourers.

Conditions of employment have been a source of discontent in the FfWP. There was some dissatisfaction at the beginning of the project, when DWAF promised Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) as part of the package but did not come through with this. Weekly working hours are from 7.30 am to 4 pm which includes a half hour lunch break and two tea breaks of 10 minutes each. A worker injured on the job has hospital or medical costs paid but does not receive Workers Compensation. Workers believe this is unfair and have taken up the issue with Nehawu. There are no additional benefits.

The main grievances have been around conditions of labour for women, especially pregnant women working on the slopes, absence of crèches, and safety on the job. The terrain on which alien vegetation is removed is often steep and slippery. Workers are provided with one pair of boots, which get drenched in the rainy season. Part of the problem is getting used to the nature of the work involved: workers at Kylemore in particular, complained: that "our people are not used to working out in the bush, and we don't like getting our hands scratched and our feet wet" (Focus Group, Kylemore workers).

A major concern of management has been reported rape cases. The workers work in an unusual environment where they are in isolated places for long hours. Supervisors have been known to abuse their power position and harass women workers. Cases of rape have been reported and are taken very seriously by DWAF, but initially there was no institutional framework to deal with this issue. The same basic employment conditions

legislated within DWAF applied to all workers on the WfWP. However, labour conditions were programme specific and a special framework agreement was necessary to ensure that serious disciplinary measures could systematically follow were there to be reported instances of sexual harassment in any form. But reported instances were not easily dealt with in the absence of formal legislative procedures. Disciplinary coded procedures are now in place.

The issue of safety on the job was brought up as well by the town councillors involved in the Kaya Mandi project. They were concerned that conditions in the field were not safe and that workers were exposed to various hazards. Transport was inadequate and the trucks were often overloaded and drove on very risky roads. These issues have been taken up with management and are seen as high priority. Training and education programmes are being introduced and include issues around safety on the job, questions of rape and other issues raised by the workers committees, labourers themselves and councillors. Presently, regional managers, development and training officers, unions, project managers, workers committees and other role-players are working through some of the issues raised above. These need to be constantly and consistently monitored and evaluated in order to assure that workers are able to conduct their work in safe conditions.

Job insecurity is another issue that has been raised with Nehawu, since the contracts are short term. Given the length of employment and the possibility of renewed contracts, WfWP workers have much better conditions of employment relative to those in other public works, although they do not get skills training in construction that could increase their opportunities for future employment. FwWP workers expressed their desire for brick laying and construction skills to be included in the training priorities (focus group, Kaya Mandi workers). Workers feel that they should have benefits such as UIF if they have been on the job for more than 2 years and now have skills. Instead, they do not qualify for government benefits that other government workers receive who are not part of special programmes.

One of the dilemmas faced by the WfWP is that after two years of employment the government is required to hire workers as permanent government workers. Because this is not currently feasible given the state of the South African economy (and it would by definition no longer be a public works programme) DWAF is put in the politically awkward position of having to terminate employment before two years even if it would prefer to extend workers contracts. In certain projects, six month contracts have been renewed for as long as 3 years. They are working around this problem through turning workers into private contractors, through the Contractor Development Programme, a dimension of the programme discussed below.

One issue on which Nehawu has intervened is ensuring that workers have fair representation in the projects. Each WfWP project is supposed to have a Workers Committee, but not all projects have them. Kylemore project did not have such a committee after the Project Manager dissolved it. According to the workers, the then Workers Committee members were promoted to the status of supervisor (focus group, Kylemore workers), shifting their identification from that of a worker to that of a manager – and shifting with this their loyalty and accountability from workers to management. This issue created deep-seated resentment of the Project Manager and eventually workers organised around the issue of fair representation and formed a new Workers Committee with the assistance of Nehawu. However, workers are not entirely happy with their alliance to Nehawu. Many of them feel that that they are paying R8 of their monthly pay to be members but that their plight has not improved. According to some at Kylemore, Nehawu is “taking our money and not doing anything for us” (focus group, Kylemore workers). This is at least partly a reflection of the limits to conventional trade union demands and worker entitlements in a public works programme context.

4.5.3 The Task System

Public works projects were envisioned to increase productivity and income-earning opportunities through task-based payment systems, where workers are paid not by the day but by the amount of work they accomplish, sized for example, by the length of pipe laid

or trench dug. However, only 18 out of the 101 public works projects in the Western Cape actually used this system (this does not include any of the WfWP projects which had not yet started with the system). This was due to problems in sizing tasks, and resistance from workers who either did not understand the system or objected to unfair practices in its implementation (Adato et al 1999). The WfWP experienced difficulties in implementing task work but has none-the-less pressed on with implementing the system in most projects nationwide. In this programme, a task is a measured area of land to be cleared. (factors which come in to play in measuring the task are density of vegetation, size of land, slope of land).

The wage structure in the programme moved into piecework by the end of 1997. Piecework upped productivity by 40% in some of the projects in other provinces¹⁸ The workers at Kylemore and Kaya Mandi, however, were extremely dissatisfied with this new development. There were several problems with the use of the system. First, workers objected to task work on the grounds that that they would "sweat blood" in an attempt to increase their daily wage, but on inspection the task assessment team found reasons not to give workers the payment they believed they were owed (focus group, Kaya Mandi workers). One dimension of this problem was that the task assessment was understaffed. Supervisors cannot act as assessors because they are too close to the working teams. Often workers had to wait a few days before the task assessor would measure the work done, and then the assessor often found fault with the quality of the job and did not pass it. Workers thus ended up taking home the same pay though they felt they had worked much harder.

A second problem was lack of communication, education and information around task work. This caused initial problems for workers, supervisors, project managers, task assessment teams and regional managers. Training prior to introduction would have

¹⁸ In the Northern Province and Mpumalanga the system of piecework took off much more easily than in the Western Cape (interview Stevens). An interesting area for future research would be to cross compare and assess what factors contributed to the acceptance and integration of task payment as opposed to wages in these provinces and what factors hindered adoption in the Western Cape.

assisted all role-players in taking the system on board. Workers were initially enthusiastic at the prospect of earning more money but soon became despondent and cynical, as the system did not work to their advantage. A third problem was shortages of tools, so that when the workers had finished one task and were ready for another one, there were no tools and they wasted time waiting for them. A fourth problem identified was lack of fairness in the measurement of task sizes. The density, level of slope, age of alien invasives and other variables were not adequately assessed, and workers said that often they worked in very difficult conditions, but were paid the same as another team working in far easier conditions where it was possible to work faster.

Task work has not therefore been embraced enthusiastically within the teams. However, the progression from wages to task work is a necessary step in the formation of independent contractor teams as part of the Contractor Development Programme (CDP). DWAF started the CDP in order to 1) keep workers employed while avoiding the obligation to hire all the workers full time; and 2) give workers skills in managing a small business and opportunity to earn profits that can be invested and lead to a way out of poverty. DWAF needs to provide skills training so that the contractor has the ability to measure task sizes, i.e. time and quality in relation to work done, and to put in tenders and ensure that they are able to carry their costs if they get the contracts. It is thus essential that the CDP process be accompanied by a training programme, as well as communication and education programmes for workers who might not necessarily become contractors. DWAF had hoped that by March 1999 all teams would be on the CDP (see below). Contracts for the workers ended in March but have been extended until September 1999.

4.6 Skills Training

Training is an essential means by which the WfWP can improve the social and economic conditions of its workers. The stated objectives of the programme are to (1) Provide training around specific tasks to ensure that the workers can effectively perform their tasks on the job; and (2) Improve workers skills so tasks are performed with increased competence and productivity in mind. Although these objectives focus on the quality of

their performance on the job, the spin-off is the acquisition of skills and work habits that increase the opportunity of entering into the labour market. Table 1 shows the training priorities of the programme.

Table 1: Training given by the WFWP

Technical training	General Training	Contractor Development Programme training
Chain-saw and brush-cutter usage and maintenance	First Aid	Task-based competencies
Herbicide application	OHSS	Entrepreneurial skills to optimise opportunities in the SMME sector
GIS	Advanced Driver	Life skills (e.g. financial life skills)
Plant selection and treatment	Store management	
Environmental	Supervisory skills	
	Financial management	
	Labour relations	

In practice, training is not always systematic in all areas. Initial training programmes at Kylemore had two environmental components. One ensured that workers could identify alien invasive plants. The second part dealt with water scarcity and how the programme was designed as an important water conservation effort. For new recruits, training in plant identification continued as this was essential to doing the job, but the water conservation component was not done systematically. Some workers from the case study projects said they were not aware of water conservation issues, nor that their job was part of a wider mission in this regard. Some felt that the programme had thrown issues at them that were not their concern: they wanted to do their job and earn a wage. The total absence of environmental education was evident also from the extensive littering, breaking of fences or harming of animals (taking nests out of trees, killing snakes etc). Workers did not understand that they were working on a conservation project and that protecting and respecting the environment was an essential element of conservation. The need for more intensive and focussed environmental training initiatives cannot be underestimated.

Many workers, on the other hand, said they had a sense of pride and belonging to a water programme and were proud of working for the Minister Kader Asmal and Guy Preston. The job had given them a sense of dignity and pride, increasing their job satisfaction. These statements indicate the value of initial training where workers develop an understanding of the meaning of the programme on a regional and national level.

Technical training for chainsaw operators and herbicide applicators was more successful, although training for herbicide application needs to be much more thorough and the process requires ongoing monitoring and evaluation. The importance of using protective clothing at all times must be stressed, as the chemicals used are extremely dangerous. In the Kylemore and Kaya Mandi projects, supervisors were given training but only for a period of two weeks and this was not monitored or assessed. There were no follow-up training sessions. The Project Managers were not given training, nor were members of the steering committee or workers' committees.

The Fynbos WfWP has a training agenda which is over and above the national training priorities listed above¹⁹. This includes additional life-skills, conflict resolution, first aid, literacy, numeracy, health awareness and environmental education. Consideration needs to be given to the extent of training necessary to make it worthwhile to give any training. For example, first aid training given at the Kylemore and Kaya Mandi projects was reported to be superficial and could not be used in practice. The workers also expressed the desire to learn first aid and other life skills²⁰ which would enhance their opportunities to find jobs once they left the project.

¹⁹ These are not exclusive to the Fynbos programme as many of these skills are part of a national vision even though they have not yet been systematically implemented.

²⁰ Other skills that were considered of value were pruning and brick making. Elsenberg Agricultural School, Stellenbosch has expertise in agricultural skills which could be put to good use for this aspect of project training. Considering that housing was mentioned as the most desired 'development' in their area, brick-making skills increase people's potential to build their own homes or be involved in housing initiatives.

However, workers and other role players, both within management and at project level, have strongly criticised the adequacy of the training. In response to criticism of the limited nature and ineffectiveness of training, a training audit has been undertaken and the improvement of training has been given high priority. The services of Cape Nature Conservation have been engaged to undertake an environmental education programme. Other new training programmes have been initiated. Debate is currently taking place around how much of this training should be out-sourced. The Fynbos office has brought on board as part of their core staff 18 Development Training Officers (DTOs) who are responsible for overseeing this process. External specialist training agencies are used primarily for the task-specific technical training, in particular where accreditation is necessary. Where appropriate, the general training programme will be managed in-house by small core teams which operate at provincial level and liaise with the Fynbos DTOs:

Opportunities for optimising the development of skills within the teams through train-the-trainer programmes are encouraged. Partnerships are critical, particularly with government departments whose line function is to provide training, as well as with existing service providers such as NGO's, the private sector and financial institutions. Each project is required to develop a strategy, which is reflected in an Annual Plan of Operation or matrix for the implementation of Training programmes. These are developed on a structured and phased basis informed by the age and the stage of the project. In general, training programmes initially focus on skills specific training. Shifting over time towards entrepreneurial training. (Training Audit: Jenny McGregor: 1998)

Technical training should be extended to supervisors as well as the workers, and unless already well-trained, to the project manager:

You know, when a worker comes to me and says my chainsaw is broken and I cannot work today then you cannot say what is wrong with it. Maybe it is a very small matter that could be settled in 15 minutes. But you cannot know that because you know nothing about the problem. Also it is better to know about the dangerous chemicals so that we are able to protect our workers from damage (interview Kylemore supervisor).

The question of extending training to people in communities not directly employed in the programme, particularly training around water conservation issues, needs to be addressed at the National Programme Level, along with its obvious budgetary implications.²¹ It was envisioned that workers will teach others about water conservation but it is not clear whether this is happening at all. Aside from the fact that some workers have not absorbed the training themselves, to many it is 'just a job' and taking on these issues after official working hours is not a high priority.

Skills development is a fundamental stepping stone along a path out of chronic poverty cycles. Years of deprivation and poverty have eroded the social fabric of South African society and the social and economic debts incurred impact on all development initiatives. Worker productivity and wider economic development cannot be divorced from these cycles.

4.7 Social Problems

The significance to the programme of the enormous social problems resulting from chronic poverty and unemployment cannot be underestimated. Alcoholism-- rampant among farmworkers with its origin in the dop system²² but also found among people who did not work on farms-- and substance abuse are very serious problems among project workers. These problems affect both their performance on the job and – perhaps more importantly – their ability to benefit in the long run from their new economic opportunities. Related problems are domestic violence and crime. The WfWP cannot solve these problems, but it can contribute to their solutions. The opportunity to earn income and develop work habits (lost by the chronically unemployed) is an important start. Skills training and environmental education can help to develop a sense of pride and purpose that can contribute to people trying to turn their lives around.

²¹ Partnerships with other line department such as Ministry of Education could forge productive links and benefit communities: 2020 Schools Programme is such an initiative.

²² This is a system whereby historically farmers have paid their farmworkers either entirely or in part in wine rather than wages, encouraging alcohol dependency and thus labour availability. This system is illegal now and is far less prevalent but it does still exist, as does the alcoholism that it fostered.

In the Kylemore project, they took this a step further by employing a social worker who was paid, and provided services 3 days a month. This was an idea proposed to the central WfWP offices, but in waiting for a long approval process the Project Manager brought in a social worker on her own initiative. The Project Manager sees the benefit of this intervention and we recommend that this be considered seriously as a programme-wide component. However, the services of the social worker were terminated – a decision made by the Regional Office. It was decided that the services of social workers could become integrated within the programme but that this decision should not be taken by the Project Manager without consent and approval of the Regional Office.

4.8 Medium and long-term Impacts

South African public works programmes are unique among public works programmes around the world because of their attempt to create sustainable development impacts at the community and individual levels. This means that rather than just providing a daily survival wage, the programmes create productive assets, human resource capacity and organisational capacity that contributes to ongoing income generation or other forms of social development.

In the WfWP (as in the other programmes), the medium and long-term impacts, or second-round effects as they are often referred to, are difficult to measure and monitor. Training has enabled workers to acquire skills, such as chain-saw operation and herbicide application, which could be used in the labour market after they leave the project. However, in the two case study projects, there is no evidence yet that such medium-term benefits have resulted. Our research included a survey of project workers to determine whether they obtained employment after their project employment finished. In the Kylemore project few workers had left the job at the time our survey was done, but at the Kaya Mandi project many workers contracts had ended and among those surveyed, none

had acquired a job related to their project training.²³ Workers have suggested that other skills be included in the training programmes, such as pruning, tree identification and nursery skills so that they might become more marketable. Accreditation is an essential part of the training programme. This means that the training programmes themselves must be monitored and evaluated carefully.

The programme has the potential to create sustainable jobs. Table 2 shows the number of jobs in a range of areas where a hypothetical group of 100 workers could be placed following their employment on the project:

Table 2: Estimates of WfWP post-project job creation potential (Source: Interview, C. Marais)

Maintenance of cleared terrain	20
Firebreaks	20
Footpaths	5
Environmental Management (including jeep tracks)	5
Tourism (trail guides)	2
Tourism (huts and maintenance)	5
Flower Industry	15
Woodlots management, fuel (sale of wood, coal)	20
Education	1

With regard to local economic development, community-level surveys should be carried out to determine whether or not the programme has had any impact on economic indicators within the community. For example, has there been an increase in activity in local markets such as grocery stores or services? Have there been any new small businesses opened, home improvements initiated or increased banking or lending activity? Workers in the workshops said that the wages they earn in the project have been too low

²³ Our survey was a thirty percent sample so it is possible that some of those not surveyed had found some related work.

to allow them to do anything beyond buying food and basic household supplies, e.g. none had been able to invest in a small income generating activity. However, second-round effects take a range of forms and it would be valuable to assess this systematically.

There may also be negative second-round effects. For example, people with small but new cash available are tempted to purchase items such as home furnishings that require extra money obtained on credit. Low-wage job creation projects are thus sometimes accompanied by increased loan shark activity: "We are very concerned that our workers are getting into debt. They must have training about managing money and avoiding this situation" (interview, D. Stevens).

Training programme life skills components should thus include education around borrowing options and hazards, encourage saving accounts, planning of budgets and prioritisation of expenditures. Otherwise, the programme may create social problems greater than the temporary benefits provided.

The national WfWP envisioned the creation of long-term secondary industry such as eco-tourism and carpentry. The clearing of invading alien plants produces a great deal of wood that can be used for a variety of purposes – charcoal, woodchips, poles, firewood, drop-poles, crafts, furniture, erosion control, building materials (Preston 1998). Many of the Western Cape projects did involve selling of poles and firewood. However, one of the problems has been that the wood has been sold outside of the project and sales from benches and other carpentry initiatives have not benefited workers. The market is prosperous and benches made out of alien invasives are sold at competitive prices in up-market Johannesburg boutiques. Although it is good that there is such a market for the furniture, under current arrangements the greatest share of the benefits is not going to workers or their communities.

One solution would be to train workers to produce these goods themselves on-site or in the community. Trained programme employees producing the work on-site could provide

a model to other workers, who would then have a greater sense of ownership of the product, benefit from some of the training and gain creative inspiration for their own trade potential. Rooikrantz (a type of alien vegetation) is being sold as barbecue wood, but once again workers have no connection to this part of the process. Labelling, where products sold carry a clear message about the programme to the consumer, is one way of feeding back benefits to the programme through public education and publicity. Also, people are often more willing to buy a product with a label identifying it as part of a development project. A percentage of the sales involved in woodwork or braaiwood could be fed directly back into the project, and added as a bonus to workers' salaries.

In some projects (though not at Kylemore or Kaya Mandi) some skilled workers have been trained as high altitude workers. These teams are responsible for clearing alien invasive plants on inaccessible slopes and acquire very specific and highly skilled training. These acquired skills could be integrated into Disaster Management Teams. There are examples where these workers have assisted in crisis management with mountain rescue teams. These initiatives should be encouraged and formal relationships forged between other similar rescue workers. Some workers have been trained in fire control. This training should be expanded to more of the teams so that they can assist with fire control around and within their communities. The maintenance of paths and tracks can become part of the projects with dedicated teams assuring good quality environmental maintenance. Cape Nature Conservation is understaffed and cannot (nor should it) be solely responsible for providing adequate maintenance and other forms of environmental conservation. This ongoing task could be assigned to certain teams within the projects, or former project workers could be given the necessary support to enable them to take on these tasks as a government job. Training could also be given in the areas of tour and trail guides for national and international tourists.

One second-round effect of the Kaya Mandi project (mentioned earlier) was the willingness of farm owners to increase wages to compete with the wages of the WfWP. Following the example of the FWfWP as well, some farmers have also for the first time

provided protective clothing as well as transport for their workers, thus improving working conditions on the local farms. Research is needed to evaluate the extent and impact of these changes.

The contractor development programme offers entrepreneurial opportunities in the following areas:

- Development of secondary industries based on the waste work, e.g. charcoal production, craft production, cut flowers etc.
- Building on other conservation-related down-stream opportunities e.g. eco-tourism ventures, building of trails/path maintenance, fire control.
- Social forestry and Reclamation Programmes.

This offers an exciting new direction for the programme and plans are underway to assure that these initiatives are encouraged and given the necessary support.

There have been lost opportunities in the area of support for second-round income generation. In the Kylemore and Kaya Mandi projects local entrepreneurs were not encouraged to participate in the project. Cars were rented from commercial car-hire companies. These vehicles could have been hired through local owners. Leather boots too were ordered from a well-established shoe factory at Wupperthal²⁴. Initiatives to train and contract local shoe makers were therefore missed. Protective clothing could also have been contracted locally.

²⁴ Wupperthal is a successful 'community owned' leather factory. Leather artisans from Wupperthal could be used to mentor artisans from the Stellenbosch area in order to become 'expert' shoe makers and supply goods for the local workers).

These issues were contentious: steering committee members at Kylemore had proposed these initiatives, but the regional offices did not follow through. More recently, there has been a greater attempt to employ local contractors at Kylemore where the services of seamstresses from Pniel (where many of the workers originate) have been engaged to sew clothing. Some trucks have been hired from local entrepreneurs as well. Project management has shown commitment to the promotion of local trade and enterprise. This commitment has not always been facilitated by the Regional Office. Hopefully in the next phase of the programme these commitments will be followed through in formal protocols to ensure that local small and medium enterprises (SMME's) are involved, giving an economic boost to the local communities.

5. CONCLUSION

Capacity building is the key to the success and sustainability of the WfWP projects. One of the serious consequences of chronic unemployment, poor education, health and housing, as well as alcohol and substance abuse, is the absence of a work ethic. Communities need to learn to work again, and to commit to a long, slow process of change. Good quality, meaningful training programmes with follow-through can go a long way to encourage this process.

In the first two years of the programme, officials concentrated on getting the technical system running efficiently, and the administration of projects with a large new unskilled workforce. Training and social development aspects of the programme took a back seat. Now that much experience has been gained, the system is working and has expanded to encompass new and challenging social issues, and -- most importantly -- lessons have been learned that point to solutions and new directions, it is time for the programme to turn the spotlight on the social aspects: better job training, environmental education, better community representation, more attention to gender-specific problems such as child care, far greater promotion of local economic spin-off opportunities, and finding solutions to social problems.

It should be kept in mind, however, that these are heavy burdens to place on a programme which is now older and stronger. In spite of the fact that the programme has a budget from government, as well as foreign and private sources that go beyond what anyone imagined at the outset, there are still budget constraints. The technical issues of where to remove the vegetation, how to ensure that the work is done effectively and consistently, what techniques are best and how best to introduce and integrate the Contractor Development Programme need to be put in place. The Programme has recognised the importance of setting parameters for functioning institutional arrangements, labour issues and the achievement of other priorities (e.g. facilitating committees, autonomy of projects, wage and worker benefits, contracting for training programmes etc). The interface between policy and implementation is crucial here. As the first phase of the programme has shown, policies and strategic frameworks can be defined but unless effective systematic training and real capacity building initiatives follow on the ground, good intentions will be thwarted. The gap between policy and implementation requires careful monitoring and evaluation of all strategies and protocols. Facilitating Committees and project management, together with representatives from Workers Committees, should be seen as vital players in linking policy strategies with follow-through on the ground. There will be trade-offs between objectives or between how well different objectives can be achieved. The success of the programme may be measured by one objective, all of them, or some combination. How many objectives and their relative priorities are questions that need to be made part of an explicit policy debate.

It is, however, unlikely that the high level of work required to resolve these problems will take place without one co-ordinated programme ensuring the development of synergy between government departments and of course within DWAF itself. It is very strongly suggested that a national, inter-departmental programme for alien vegetation clearance prioritise and integrate into its core budget, an integrated social development agenda, to which it has shown tenacious commitment, rather than attempting to rely on individual departments to fulfil line function responsibilities in isolation. This means that the onus is on the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry to create the necessary infrastructure and

to impact on existing mindsets (and therefore budget allocations) rather than to rely on other Departments (such as Health, Agriculture etc) to take on board this vision. This does not mean that partnerships both within the state structures as well as with business and the NGO sector should not be encouraged. What it does mean is that the onus is on DWAF to drive and ensure that this process is given the place it needs. The programme could go a long way to setting a model for co-operation and integration across line departments and within its own confines. Such co-operation will determine its sustainability in the long run and increase spin-offs, consistent with the emphasis on integrated, sustainable poverty alleviation and development that South Africa is boldly pursuing.

5.1 Recommendations and Future Research Orientation

- Local government should keep a roster of SMME's and play a role in connecting these economic activities to the WfWP for the mutual benefit of both
- Local government should be involved in maintenance of rivers and slopes
- When setting the frameworks for Facilitating Committees, diligent efforts should be made to make these committees as representative of the community as possible.
- Western Cape local government is stronger than that in other provinces. Good examples of local government initiatives and involvement in the programme should be documented and circulated among provinces. A worker exchange programme might enhance performance.
- Future planning should emphasise monitoring and evaluation.
- New administrative systems should be developed to facilitate new kinds of partnerships (e.g. interdepartmental committees) for integrated development.
- Government departments are territorial; the WfWP could set precedents of co-operation.
- Old officials in the new government should not be allowed to obstruct innovative development initiatives.

- There is little community participation in Western Cape. The fact that local government is stronger in the Western Cape than elsewhere poses the danger that community members and organisations are excluded. This should be monitored.
- The WfWP should continue to monitor and evaluate its progress or lack thereof in relation to its social objectives
- The role of the private sector in the WfWP should be defined.
- Some public works projects and programmes have been more successful than others in implementing meaningful community participation. WfWP should look at these examples and use lessons learned.
- Workers get in debt from short-term job creation. Research should determine the extent of this phenomenon and communities should be monitored for loan shark activity, and for the effectiveness of business, banking and financial skills in training programmes.
- More work should be done to establish the link between poverty relief projects and sustainable jobs - how many jobs for how long, and what are the spin-offs? Is Poverty Relief Funding appropriate for WfW projects where infrastructure and assets are not of immediate benefit to communities?

6. REFERENCES

[ALL REFS WITH * BELOW NEED FULLER CITATIONS, PUBLISHER, ETC.]

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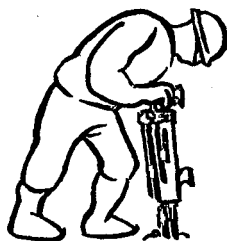
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SOUTHERN AFRICA LABOUR & DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH UNIT

To anybody interested in what is happening in Southern Africa at the present time, it is clear that an understanding of changes taking place in the field of labour is crucial. The whole debate about the political implications of economic growth, for example, revolves very largely around different assessments of the role of black workers in the mines and factories of the Republic. Many of the questions with which people involved in Southern Africa are now concerned relate, in one way or another, to the field generally set aside for labour economists to cultivate. The impact of trade unions; the causes of unemployment; the economic consequences of different educational policies; the determination of wage structures; the economics of discrimination; all these and more are matters with which labour economists have been wrestling over the years in various parts of the world.

At the same time there are many who would argue that these issues are far wider than can be contained within the narrow context of 'labour economics'. These issues, it is pointed out, go to the heart of the whole nature of development. In recent studies, commissioned by the International Labour Office, of development problems in Columbia, Sri Lanka, and Kenya, for example, leading scholars have identified the three crucial issues facing these countries as being poverty, unemployment, and the distribution of income. Thus the distinction between labour and development studies is becoming more blurred as economists come face to face with problems of real life in the Third World.

It is here too that an increasing number of people are coming to see that study of the political economy of South Africa must not be done on the assumption that the problems there are absolutely different from those facing other parts of the world. Indeed it can be argued that far from being an isolated, special case, South Africa is a model of the whole world containing within it all the divisions and tensions (black/white; rich/poor; migrant/nonmigrant; capitalist west/third-world; etc.) that may be seen in global perspective. Be that as it may, the fact remains that the economy of Southern Africa (for the political and economic boundaries are singularly out of line with each other) is one of the most fascinating in the world. It is one on which far more research work needs to be done, and about which further understanding of the forces at work is urgently required. It is in order to attempt to contribute to such an understanding that SALDRU is issuing these working papers.



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Division of Research

School of Economics

University of Cape Town

7700 Rondebosch