Meeting Africa’s development challenges – Placing employment at the centre of the agenda

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The latest ILO statistics show that despite robust economic growth, the global employment situation improved only slightly in 2004. Employment creation remains a major challenge for policy makers. Decent work “deficits” still need to be eliminated especially in the growing informal economy in many developing countries, as well as achieving a fairer globalization and resolving the problem of high youth unemployment if the situation is to improve. In most African countries, unemployment, under employment and poverty levels have continued to increase or remained at extremely high levels despite considerable efforts to promote sustainable development by African countries and international development agencies over the last 30 years. This calls for the need to recognize the centrality of employment as one of the major means to alleviate poverty and empower people to be part of the social, economic and political processes.

African Union Summit on Employment and Poverty Alleviation
The first ever Extraordinary African Union (AU) Summit on Employment and Poverty Alleviation was held in Ouagadougou, Mali in September 2004. The summit was attended by 20 African leaders, including Nigeria’s President Olusegun Obasanjo, acting chairman of the AU, his South African, Senegalese and Kenyan counterparts Thabo Mbeki, Adoulaye Wade, Mwai Kibaki, as well as African Commission President Alpha Oumar Konaré.

The Summit was preceded by a Social Partners Forum that brought together 80 representatives of the Pan-African Employers Confederation (PEC), the Organisation of African Trade Union Unity (OATU), the African Regional Organisation (ICFTU-AFRO) and the Democratic Organisation of African Workers’ Trade Union (DOAWTU) as well as observers from about a score of non governmental organisations (NGOs). The central theme of the Social Partners Forum was precisely “Decent jobs in the service of the development of Africa.” The outcomes from the forum informed the discussions by the heads of state.

In his opening remarks the ILO Director General Mr. Juan Somavia, stated that the Summit has focused new light on “a fundamental point – poverty reduction won’t succeed without jobs”. He called for greater policy coherence on growth, investment and employment creation from the international community in efforts to fight poverty and unemployment in Africa.

The Summit was also addressed by Alpha Oumar Konaré, African Commission President and Mr. Benjamin Mkapa, President of Tanzania.

2 The ILO concept of “Decent Work” encompasses work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity, emphasizing that only decent work fosters justice and serves as a route out of poverty.
EDITORIAL

It was with some trepidation that I agreed as the newest member of ASIST to write this article. Visions of me sucking my pen while staring blankly but intensely at some far distant horizon, seeking divine intervention or even a little inspiration proved correct. Numerous starts were made equalled only by the number of stops and the waste paper bin gradually overflowed. As the potential negative impacts of my scribal efforts on the ozone layer, global deforestation, the English language and my blood pressure mounted, a chance glance around my new office focused my eyes on a rather tattered copy of the Declaration of Philadelphia of 1944, (“The Declaration”) hanging rather forlornly on the wall. What unseen hand had led me to look in that particular direction?

Could this document, that was published sixty years ago and long before there was ever mention of Employment Intensive Investment Programme, PRSPs, MDGs, Poverty and employment summits, ASISTs, political correctness and even the UN, be a source of inspiration?

Statements such as “The war against want requires to be carried out with unrelenting vigour...Lasting peace can only be established if it is based on social justice...” struck a chord not only because of the inspiring language but also because the statements are as true and relevant today when in spite of massive strides in technology and vast growth in the global economy, there is even more disparity between the rich and poor.

Is there a connection or some form of continuity with the lofty ideals and obligations declared at a time when most of the world was still embroiled in yet another war to end all wars and this little programme here in Africa? How can we as a relatively small actor play our part within the organization of the ILO and with other development partners in this unrelenting war against poverty in the 21st century? How can we within our very limited operational resource base ensure that the full potential of the tools that have been developed during the life of this programme are brought to bear on the challenges of unemployment and poverty.

The answer is simple. Firstly we must revisit our roots. We must do what the early pioneers of the ILO, the Employment-intensive Investment Programme (EIIP) and ASIST did. We must be imaginative, questioning, willing and brave enough to challenge some of the sacred cows, the accepted beliefs and the status quo within and outside of our organization. To do this effectively we must endeavor “with unrelenting vigour” to maintain the cutting edge in terms of our collective and individual competencies by continuously exposing ourselves to the challenges of the rapidly changing environment in which we work.

Whether this occurs when we are trying to create jobs building roads, irrigation schemes, reforestation, etc, or assisting people to start their own business or sitting down with villagers to plan an activity or with the World Bank or a government to influence a national public investment programme or a PRSP is not really important. The issue is that we must do it as best we can “with unrelenting vigour” (I love that phrase) and keeping in mind that the ultimate raison d’etre for this organization, this programme and our individual work is to improve the lives of people and specifically poor people.

Now as I get completely carried away and start singing the “Internationale” a slightly blurred but recognizable vision of ASIST is gradually emerging and the picture I see is something like this.

A programme that is maintaining and developing its core competencies in employment intensive investments in terms of sectors and scale, focused on EIIP but with a broad vision that recognizes the need and encourages, facilitates and ensures closer operation and integration with other ILO programmes and the ILO Sub-Regional Offices so as to maximize the impact on poverty reduction. A programme that in many ways will become the vanguard, the entry point for the entire gamut of ILO programmes, principals and obligations. A programme with a greater presence on the ground inspiring, identifying and more directly involved in the implementation of employment initiatives.

In the uncertain times in which we live, a programme that is more willing and equipped to engage in countries emerging from armed conflict or those suffering humanitarian disasters and to provide timely and effective support to other UN agencies, Department of Peace Keeping Operations (DPKO) and local administrations thus ensuring that employment is placed on the response agendas early in the reconstruction planning process.

In the particular case of Africa, strengthening partnerships with existing national partners and emerging regional bodies, contributing to PRSPs, national development plans but most importantly being at the cutting edge of ILO’s efforts in employment related responses to the Ouagadougou Declaration (see lead article).

So this is my very personal slightly blurred vision. Time, effort, the support of a motivated team, will help clarify the vision until it hopefully emerges as a shining and practical example of how employment, the ILO and its decent work agenda can address the poverty crisis in Africa with unrelenting vigour (that phrase again!).

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The objective of making employment a development agenda was raised after the Ministerial Meeting held during the 25th tripartite session of the then Organization for African Unity (OAU) Labour and Social Affairs Commission, in Burkina Faso, in April 2002. It was decided that a Ministerial Meeting on Employment and Poverty Alleviation be organized. This was followed by a Stakeholders meeting on the Jobs In Africa Programme which took place in Addis Ababa, in February 2003, recommending that the “Employment creation agenda should be placed at the highest level of the state”. A decision by the African Union (AU) Heads of State and Government in Maputo, in July 2003, to convene a first of its kind Extra-Ordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government on Employment and Poverty Alleviation in Africa, in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, in September 2004, in collaboration with the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), the ILO and other partners and stakeholders.

Major outcomes of the Summit

The Ouagadougou AU Summit adopted a Declaration, a Plan of Action and a Follow-up Mechanism. These documents underline the commitment of Member states to achieve the objectives of the Constitutive Act of the African Union and its New Partnership For Africa’s Development (NEPAD) programme. The Summit placed employment at the centre of economic and social policies and committed itself to promote the decent work development agenda of the ILO.

In the Declaration, the Heads of State and Government raised a multiplicity of concerns related to widespread poverty in Africa, notably:

- the inability of Africa to attain the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs);
- the fragmentation of social and economic policies and lack of employment creation;
- child labour and trafficking;
- increasing youth unemployment;
- lack of access to education, training and health facilities;
- HIV/AIDS;
- lack of social protection;
- gender inequality;
- debt relief and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) flows.

The Summit committed itself to address structural constraints to investment and entrepreneurship, to promote social dialogue and partnership among governments, social partners, civil society and the private sector, at the enterprise, sectoral, national, regional and continental levels. It also resolved to support the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) and the Labour and Social Affairs Commission of the AU as principal fora for discussion and partnership building.

The Heads of State and Government at the Summit espoused initiatives on employment creation and poverty alleviation as indicators in the NEPAD African Peer Review Mechanisms (APRM). Importantly, the Member States also committed themselves to the implementation of the recommendations of the World Commission Report, “A Fair Globalization, Creating opportunities for all”.

A Plan of Action with eleven priority areas with objectives, strategies and recommended actions was adopted as guidelines for Member States to develop national action plans. The 11 priority areas are structured at three levels of intervention, namely national, regional and continental. Member States are called upon to utilize the Plan of Action to develop and implement their own short, medium and long-term National Action Plans and mechanisms to create jobs.

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1. This programme is the African Union’s socio-economic renewal programme, and was adopted in July 2001.
2. The primary purpose of the APRM is to foster the adoption of policies, standards and practices that lead to political stability, high economic growth, sustainable development and accelerated regional and continental economic integration through sharing of experiences and reinforcement of successful and best practice, including identifying deficiencies and assessing the needs for capacity building.
3. The World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization was established by the ILO, to address some of the daunting challenges facing today’s world.
and eradicate poverty based on their own needs specificities in close collaboration with relevant stakeholders. Among the priority areas, the major focus is on youth employment, taking into account that approximately 65 per cent of the population in sub-Saharan Africa is below 24 years, of which 20 per cent are between the ages 15-24 years, according to latest available ILO sources. This group is hardest hit by unemployment, poverty and other vulnerabilities such as HIV/AIDS, ethnic conflicts and civil wars.

Over 100 representatives of Workers’ and Employers’ organizations participated in a Social Partners’ Forum in Ouagadougou from the 3rd to 4th September 2004 before the Extraordinary Summit. The conclusions of the Social Partners’ Forum and the Message of the Social Partners to Heads of State and Government on a wide range of employment and labour issues are expected to inspire the action plan of the social partners.

Role and contribution of the ILO
The ILO was fully involved in the preparatory process leading to the Summit. The Director General set up an “ILO Preparatory Team to the African Union Extraordinary Summit”, to steer the process of consultation, manage the ILO contribution to the organization of the Summit and to ensure office-wide involvement including regional field structures, in the process and in the follow up.

As part of the preparatory process sub-regional consultations were organized within the framework of the five Regional Economic Communities, namely Arab Maghreb Union, (AMU), the Economic Community of Western African States (ECOWAS), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and East African Community (EAC). National consultations based on the ILO Director General’s Report “Working out of poverty” were organized in 13 African countries. The preparatory process produced Sub-regional Policy Papers, Country Briefs and Success Stories.

The preparatory phase of the Summit created an opportunity for the multilateral agencies to achieve greater coherence of policies. To facilitate this process, the ILO in conjunction with leading United Nations organizations and the Bretton Wood institutions drafted an Issues Paper identifying priority policy issues and practical initiatives based on each Agency’s experience and expertise. The Issues Paper was one of the official background documents for the Summit. It was circulated widely to Governments, regional institutions, social partners, NGOs and other relevant stakeholders. Furthermore, following a request from the AU, ILO assisted in finalizing the draft official documents that were to be discussed during the Summit.

ILO follow-up support
The ILO strategic and operational support to the follow-up of the AU Summit, is now enshrined in a “Guidance/Orientation Note”, focusing on (i) the promotion of Decent Work as a global goal and a tool for policy coherence; (ii) employment as central to working out of poverty; and (iii) fair globalization as a conducive environment. The Guidance/Orientation Note was further discussed with the Africa Group of the Governing Body of the ILO, during the March 2005 Session of the ILO Governing Body, as well as at the 3rd Session of the AU Labour and Social Affairs Commission, in April 2005. Each of the ILO Sub-Regional Offices is developing and reviewing its action plan for 2005 using the Guidance/Orientation Note and its annexes as a framework and in discussion with its constituents.

The Decent Work Agenda guides the ILO support. It is centred upon strengthening its knowledge-base and the labour market information systems, enhancing capacity-building, the development of partnerships with development partners and social partners, and through realignment of its field structure, programme and budget in support of African countries’ commitments and efforts to place Decent Work at the centre of their development policies. The ILO intervention strategy will be accompanied by an ILO joint action plan that will be elaborated as a Decent Work Country Programme, a mechanism to be used as the basis for all ILO activities at the national level.

Employment-intensive growth framework
Importantly, an African Decent Work Strategy for poverty reduction will rest squarely on an employment-intensive growth framework taking into consideration the following elements:

- a favourable policy environment for promoting investment;
- employment and productivity growth, especially in agriculture, housing, ICT and infrastructure sectors;
- policy coherence and effective interaction at the micro, meso and macro levels;
- linking stabilization policies to employment growth outcomes;
- growth patterns and sources focusing on those sectors where the poor work;
- active and right-based labour market and supporting institutions;
- gender equality mainstreaming;
- review of incentive structure to enhance employment growth in the informal economy, especially in the rural and urban small and medium enterprises; and
- strengthening capacities of employers’ and workers’ organizations to contribute to employment policy.

Note:
7 ILO Memorandum: Support to AU/LSAC/NEPAD, REC’s and Member States as follow-up to the Extraordinary Summit on Employment and Poverty Alleviation in Africa, 4 February 2005.
A multi-tier approach towards poverty reduction

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Introduction

Improved rural accessibility and the management of natural resources are essential prerequisites to improving the standard of living of the rural people in Malawi. The Government of Malawi (GoM) is undertaking a four-year safety net Public Works Programme to alleviate poverty. The programme covers nine districts in the Central Region of Malawi. The overall objective is to contribute towards poverty alleviation and food security, while targeting overall socio-economic improvements by:

- Improving accessibility in rural areas to reduce transport costs and ensure access to markets, the main road network and other social services. This facilitates movement of agricultural inputs and produce, stimulates agricultural production, reduces food insecurity and raises household income. It also stimulates other socio-economic and income generating activities.
- Improving management of communal forest plantations to develop sustainable fuel wood and timber supplies, which generate revenue for the communities while protecting the environment.
- Improving dry season gardening through irrigation schemes which reduce the food deficit and generate income from high value cash crops.
- Providing needy communities with an alternative to food handouts through projects and activities that enable the communities to achieve longer-term food security.

Programme approach

The programme’s multi-tier approach addresses both immediate and long-term poverty alleviation and food security concerns. The components include rural access road rehabilitation and maintenance, forestry and irrigation. The employment created through the access road rehabilitation ensures an immediate injection of cash, while the village based road maintenance system ensures long-term income generation in the rural community. The forestry component generates immediate income through the performance payments, while the future wood supplies ensure long-term benefits. The irrigation component generates immediate food supplies as well as long-term income and food prospects.

Rehabilitation and maintenance of rural feeder roads

This component aims at ensuring that all rural feeder roads are in good accessible condition to enable access to markets and other social service centres, and to contribute to income generation and the improvement of living conditions through temporary employment creation. It comprises labour-based rehabilitation of low-volume rural feeder roads, drainage improvement works and the replacement of existing timber bridge decks with concrete decks.

Construction standards were set to ensure durability of the infrastructure assets. The programme aims at rehabilitating 2,481 km of roads over the four-year period in the nine selected districts. Once rehabilitated, the roads are maintained by the programme, with a gradual phasing-in of the National Roads Authorities (NRA) / District Assemblies (DA’s) towards the end of the programme.

The length-man system is employed for maintenance. Village clubs consisting of members from villages close to the road are responsible for annual maintenance of particular sections of road. Payments are made monthly into the club account and are performance based i.e. for the maintenance activities carried out to an acceptably standard.
Capacity building and training are provided through compulsory Tender Information Meetings, formal and informal on-the-job training during construction. Appropriate skills are imparted to all involved from the contractor and his foremen, down to the local labourers.

By the end of September 2004, 25,800 people had been provided with temporary employment, and it was estimated that over 2,100,000 person-days of employment were created. This works out to an average of 2,400 person-days for bridge works and 900 person-days per kilometre of road rehabilitated.

Participation of women in the road rehabilitation contracts was 42%, (which exceeded the target of 40%) and 27% in bridgework contracts. In some districts participation of women was low due to hard soil conditions and the onset of rainy season gardening activities.

The total cost of the road works was approximately US$ 4.5 million with more than US$ 1.4 million paid to communities in the form of wages. The average cost of rehabilitation is approximately US$3,300 per kilometre and on average 14 to 16 people were employed per kilometre of road rehabilitated for a period of three months. Each person engaged on rehabilitation contracts earned approximately US$ 50 per contract and the income per village was approximately US$ 560. Routine road maintenance created fewer job opportunities but for a longer-term. Some 239 maintenance clubs were established with a total of 2,056 members benefiting. The cost of road maintenance is approximately US$250 per kilometre per year, with 85% of the cost going directly to labour.

The roads and bridges constructed using labour-based methods are of the same quality as those constructed conventionally. The quality of roads completed to date is testimony of this.

Status of roads component as of September 2004:
- Roads rehabilitated and under maintenance: 2,089 km
- Road rehabilitation in progress: 392 km
- Bridges completed: 64 no (675 m)
- Bridges in progress: 9 no (151 m)

Establishment of village forestry funds, nurseries and tree planting
This component involved the identification of villages with sufficient communal land for tree planting, the supply of nursery inputs, establishment and management of nurseries, out planting, forest management training and supervision of all forestry activities. Upon identification the participating villages are trained in nursery site identification, nursery fence construction, seed pre-treatment and sowing, and nursery management to ensure high standards. Training and reference materials used during the training are left with the villages for future use. Each village receives an input package of consumables including an average of 9,000 polythene tubes, tree seeds of their preference, and a construction package including blades, slashers, panga knives, watering cans, balls of string, out planting rope and nail clippers.

By September 2004 the project had achieved the following:
- 23,240,000 trees were planted: Fourteen different tree species were planted for poles and fuel wood i.e. eleven indigenous species and four exotic. In addition to the species raised for poles and fuel wood, *Faidherbia albida* seedlings were raised to improve soil fertility. These are systematically inter-planted with crops to enhance soil fertility and improve crop production.
- 18,729 fruit trees were planted.
- 76,100 villagers involved – 34,000 men and 41,000 women. While these men and women were directly involved in the actual process of seedling raising, future benefits in the form of fuel wood, poles and income from sales of the same will be distributed amongst the communities.
- 1,552 nurseries were established (2004/05 season).
- 2,445 villages were involved and 1,693 forestry clubs were established.
- USD 400,000 had been paid out as village investment funds.

Approximately USD 530,000 had been paid out for the planting and management of the trees. Payments are based on the survival rates and the general management of the established plantations.
The long-term nature of the forestry component is such that substantial monetary benefits will be realized after at least five years from the sale of poles. However, within the first three years the communities can obtain fuel wood from thinning and pruning.

**Establishment of small scale irrigation schemes**

The irrigation component aims at eliminating food deficits for the targeted communities and generating income from crop surpluses within the first year of operation. The component has three main activities:

- **Treadle pump irrigation**: This activity targets groups of individuals organised into clubs. Members pay a deposit for their own treadle pump. They are trained, provided with tools and seed to establish a dimba (low lying fertile ground) garden of sunken beds with earth channels. The treadle pump supplies water to the channels from where it is directed to each bed. The activity covers 4,908 farmers, grouped into 605 clubs and it provides them with adequate food and financial security during the dry season.

- **Stream diversion and channel construction**: Water collection points or small dams are created from perennial streams by blocking to raise the water level from the stream. The water is carried in earth channels along the contour by gravity to provide a water supply for irrigated gardens of sunken beds run by individual farmers. The activity targets 1,200 farmers grouped in 124 clubs.

- **Holding ponds**: Water is collected on higher ground in reservoirs during rainy season for later use. From the holding ponds individual farmers construct feeder channels to their own gardens. The activity targets 270 farmers grouped in 27 clubs. The holding ponds are also populated with fish.

All the participating farmers receive an input package that includes 1 kg of maize seed, 4 packets of vegetable seed, tools, as well as basal and top dressing fertilizers to enable them to plant at least 0.1 ha of both maize and vegetables. Provision of inputs ensures that farmers are able to start production on receiving their pumps and to earn an income from which pump repayments can be made. Farmers have been able to procure more seed and fertiliser using proceeds from the first crop.

Training is provided to the farmers on utilization and maintenance of pumps, compost manure preparation and proper agronomic practices. The program also ensures that a farmer continues to receive technical advice for up to two years.

The benefits from these small-scale irrigation practices have reached at least 27,600 family members. Each irrigation farmer has the capacity to produce adequate maize during the September-October harvest to feed at least 15 people during the four months hungry gap *i.e.* December to April. Up to 98,640 people can benefit from this extra availability of food.

Farmers have also used their produce as payment for labour to prepare their land for rain fed agriculture. Since they produce a combination of maize and a variety of vegetables and pulses they benefit from an improved diet that has increased the nutritional status of their families.

With a production of 22 maize cobs per basin, the total maize plant population on the land currently under cultivation is approximately 11.79 million fresh maize cobs, with a value of US$ 873,000. The vegetables’ average value of US$ 1.75 per basin translates to US$ 486,500. The total potential value of crops currently in the ground is therefore approximately US$ 1,359,500. These irrigation schemes give the farmers a regular income from sales and food throughout the year.

The progress of the irrigation component up to the end of September 2004 was as follows:

- No. of treadle pumps issued: 4,859
- Length of channels constructed: 46 km
- No. of holding ponds constructed: 37
- No. of beds constructed: 814,500
- Area under irrigation: 407 ha
- No. of farmers involved: 6,576
- No. of irrigation clubs established: 653

![Forestry club with their seedlings](source: A. Lwanda)
**District Assembly (DA)“Cash for Assets” Projects**

This component seeks to utilise and expand the existing project implementation capacity at the DA level, and use this to implement projects in support of the decentralisation drive. The emphasis has been on small projects with high impact on employment creation and food security that can be implemented within a short period with the available resources at DA level. Projects carried out include fish holding ponds, land conservation, road rehabilitation, and irrigation.

The DA projects in the first five districts were completed by the end of October 2003, with significant impact in the area of implementation. More than 50% of the project funds were paid to the communities in the form of wages.

This component demonstrates that despite existing capacity gaps at the DA’s, they can successfully implement projects.

**Conclusion**

The multi-tier implementation approach and combination of activities work in a coordinated and unified manner to build upon, compliment and reinforce each other. The approach addresses both immediate food security concerns and long-term impacts on the livelihoods of the poor people in rural Malawi.

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Some major challenges facing the implementation process

The implementation of the follow-up of the Summit outcomes calls for a strong political commitment in terms of coordination of policies and activities, the availability of resources and capacity, and the effective follow-up mechanism. To this end, the AU has set up a follow-up mechanism composed of National Follow-up Institutions, Regional Follow-up Institutions and the Commission of the African Union to assess and evaluate progress made in the implementation of the Declaration and Plan of Action. Some of the major determinants for the effective functioning of the ILO support to the follow-up include:

- the coordination of the ILO response;
- the quality of the ILO knowledge base;
- the capacity of the field structures to respond and ensure ownership of the activities by the constituents,
- the establishment of linkages between national action plans, Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and Decent Work;
- UN agency partnerships through United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAF) as mechanisms for resource mobilization.

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The employment-intensive infrastructure – local economic development approach in Somalia

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With the return to peace in Somalia after a 15-year civil war, the country is faced with the immense challenge of nurturing stability and beginning the process of reconstruction and economic recovery. Millions of internally and internationally displaced persons as well as thousands of ex-combatants and demobilized militia are without a means of livelihood. The dilapidated social, economic and institutional infrastructure is incapable of meeting the demands placed upon it to sustain and revive the nation’s social and economic viability.

The ILO, along with other United Nations, is currently involved in supporting the Somali people to revitalize their nation. The ILO has had much experience in supporting countries coming out of crisis caused by either conflict or natural disaster. ILO assists countries to come to grips with the immediate needs and challenges of re-construction, creating decent employment and promoting socio-economic re-integration. It facilitates the development of strategies and mechanisms for linking immediate short term needs to medium–long term development and for building capacities to mitigate and respond to potential future crisis.

The approach is based around the fundamental fact that rehabilitating socio-economic and institutional infrastructure and creating a sustainable means to generate livelihoods are the most pressing challenges faced countries coming out of crisis. The approach seeks to optimize the employment potential of the immediate investments channeled into the infrastructure reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts, through the use of labour-based technologies. It also promotes a local economic development (LED) process for identifying sustainable economic activities to rekindle livelihoods and revitalize the destroyed economies. Maximizing the job creation potential of infrastructure investments, affords crisis-affected communities the opportunity to return to work (or work for the first time) and earn an income. This helps restore their dignity and promotes peace and stability that enables the restoration of the local socio-economic fabric of the society. Building capacities and skills of those involved in the works, as well as rebuilding the local institutions and providing them with tools and mechanisms to plan and manage future development, helps ensure sustainability. This short-term strategy is designed and implemented in ways that are linked into medium-long term development.

Creating livelihoods in Somalia

In Somalia, ILO commenced activities through the Promotion of Economic Recovery Project in Somalia (PERPS) in April 2002, with initial funding from the Italian Government and later from the European Commission and Danida. The project is designed around a post-conflict model successfully used in other conflict-afflicted countries including Mozambique and Cambodia. It seeks to address obstacles to economic recovery through effective capacity building, employment promotion and enterprise development, while rehabilitating and reconstructing economic and social infrastructure damaged during the war. The project included involved two key components described below.

Employment-intensive investment projects

Initially an employment-intensive infrastructure rehabilitation and job creation component is employed which...
acts as an entry point to the community, creates jobs that absorb conflict-affected groups including ex-combatants, Internally Displace Persons (IDPs) and others, and injects incomes which immediately impact upon the livelihoods of the these groups. This process has proved to be an effective first step to empower, energize and motivate communities. It helps to rebuild credibility and trust within and between communities, reduces social tensions, and revives or in some cases introduces the work ethic and in so doing provides a foundation for a wider economic recovery.

The EIIP approach is particularly applicable in Somalia where investments in infrastructure are necessary to rebuild damaged infrastructure essential to any further humanitarian or development work, and where there is high unemployment and there is a dire need to restore livelihoods of the communities. A number of employment-intensive works sub-projects have been carried out including rural road improvement works, urban low-cost housing and drainage works. The projects have involved the communities through a community-contracting model designed to build upon the strengths of the existing clan system and the localized nature of politics. The system seeks to ensure real ownership by the communities of the projects through the establishment of Village Development Committees (VDC). The VDC manages the allocated project funds and identifies or approves the NGOs that may be required to provide specific technical inputs. Both skilled and unskilled labour of both genders have been employed in the projects.

This community contracting approach has helped reduce the social stigma attached to manual labour found amongst Somali people – leading to more men being willing to carry out manual work within the context of joining a community effort rather than working as “hired labour” for a contractor. The participatory nature of the community contracting approach has also enhanced consultation and involvement of women in the identification of needs and priorities as well as in the works themselves. In addition, it has also been found that the men find it more acceptable for the women within the community to carry out manual tasks traditionally considered unsuitable for the women within this context.

All projects incorporate training and capacity building elements for the communities as well as for the supervisors and technical personnel from local institutions such as the Roads Authority in Somaliland responsible for supervising works.

**Local economic development component**

The Local Economic Development (LED) component focuses on revitalizing the economy of a locality through a participatory process. It brings together a forum of all stakeholders in a locality i.e. the community members, public sector, donor and other development agencies including NGO’s. The LED fora identify and assess the resources and needs of the locality and come up with priorities and plans for local economic activities best suited to the locality. Through the process, the capacity of the stakeholders to identify and plan local economic opportunities and interventions that will revive and stimulate the local economy is enhanced. It starts with a socio-economic analysis of a defined territorial area through the application of the ILO generic Territorial Diagnosis and Institutional Mapping (TDIM) tool. Information on the institutions, social dynamics and resources is gathered and analysed for a targeted locality. This information then forms the basis of determining which sectors have the potential to create employment and stimulate economic growth, what kind of interventions or projects are necessary to exploit these opportunities and overcome the constraints. The information is used for planning both long and short-term development activities and in monitoring resulting LED interventions.

The process has facilitated the sensitization of the local stakeholders and communities of the local assets, resources and entrepreneurial opportunities within their locality with potential to sustain their livelihoods. It allows the preparation at community level of a framework of actions and initiatives that address economically sustainable long-term employment needs and opportunities.

It has also helped stimulate linkages between stakeholders within a locality and between different localities, highlighting potential trade flows and how economic and institutional linkages can be developed. This has facilitated coordination of LED interventions by local authorities and the development agencies. A number of TDIM exercises have been carried out in Awdal, Hargeisa, Sanag and in the North East. The results of these TDIM are shared with local communities, authorities and development agencies to stimulate dialogue, and have been used in planning, implementing and coordinating economic activities. Through this work, the ILO has supported the implementation of various interventions that have been identified through this process such as brick making, bee keeping and low cost housing construction.

**Conclusion**

These approaches have enabled the ILO to demonstrate through the implementation of a number of sub-projects, a development strategy that places the issue of employment and local economic development firmly on the agenda of local administrations, other agencies and international donors. In doing so, it has provided Somalis and their development partners an
applicable tool that can provide a bridge between relief and development. The process ensures Somali ownership and lays the foundations for long-term local economic development and social dialogue.

A major achievement of the ILO’s work has been the development of a Somali LED model that is gradually being accepted to various degrees by local authorities, donors and implementation agencies as a viable means of supporting both short-term interventions and long-term development. On the ground, the approach has won the active attention of local authorities and other agencies who are now adopting these tools to implement projects while appreciating that the sub-projects are identified, executed with and in support of an LED process.

A key element of all projects implemented by the ILO has been the insistence on local participation and the emphasis on building local capacity and ownership both in terms of the individual capacity and that of the local institutions. While this may have delayed sub-project delivery in the short term, it has ensured local support at all levels, encouraged high levels of transparency and facilitated open dialogue. It has also resulted in providing the local communities and authorities with practical tools that enable them to plan, coordinate and channel the support of local and external development partners into priority areas and sectors that have the potential for economic growth and employment. These are considered as a prerequisite for the successful implementation of projects in a fractured post conflict society.

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Selected project activities to date

North West (Somaliland)
Baligubadle and Salahaley roads
The Baligubadle road was the location for the first training site for EIIP that was recommended by the Somaliland Roads Authority (SRA) in phase 1. The second phase involved road improvements works using labour-based methods and a community contracting model. Approximately, 18,000 workdays of employment has been created.

Kossar community
The Kossar Community consists of 1000 returnee’s families, the majority of whom living in tents in this windswept bare

North East (Puntland)
Eyl corridor
In 2003 the project identified the Eyl Corridor as a potential area for LED promotion for the future. At the request of the Puntland authorities, the project carried out a reconnaissance mission, detailed surveys prepared contracts and eventually entered into contract with the Eyl District Council Committee (DDC) for the rehabilitation of roads in the area of Dawad and Badle villages.

Jeriban district
Jeriban district is located within one of the most drought affected areas. It has a very strong and united local community with whom the ILO has been working with since 2003. This has facilitated entry to the community, and surveys and preparation of contract

--continued on page 15--
Innovative cost-effective approach to low volume sealed road construction

By Augustus Osei Asare, ILO Senior Municipal Roads Advisor, Gundu Lashu Programme, South Africa

The Gundo Lashu Programme was established in Limpopo Province of South Africa to train emerging contractors in the rehabilitation and graveling of low-volume roads. The lack of good wearing course material in the Province vis-à-vis abundance of excellent base course material required the innovative utilisation of the locally available base course materials, with stabilisation as required, and sealing of the roads using labour friendly bituminous seals. Although this entailed additional training of the emerging contractors, sealing of the roads as opposed to continuing with the unsustainable unpaved gravel road construction provided additional benefits such as:

- Substantial but un-quantifiable benefit from reduced dust pollution preventing dust and health hazards to communities served by road.
- Mitigating the rapid depletion of the gravel sources, which could be put to better use in other applications (e.g. base course for sealed roads) and environmental degradation.

A life cycle costing exercise carried out to justify the design change, in conjunction with the South African Center for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) determined the life-cycle costs are on par with or possibly lower than for gravel roads improving the overall cost-effectiveness. This exercise will be repeated in light of the experiences gained with actual construction costs using a refined analysis tool SUPERSURF that has been worked out by South Africa Bitumen and Tar Association (SABITA) in conjunction with CSIR and the Asphalt Academy.

The success of the innovative approach was contingent on stringent quality assurance during the construction of the road pavement. A complete overhaul of the traditional methods of labour-based gravel road construction was necessary. The revised method involved use of steel shutters to control the levels, crossfall (camber) and evenness of the layer works. When applied properly this method results in a top of base to within tolerance, in terms of the surface and compaction at the specified 98% Mod AASTHO (i.e. mixing to OMC, screeding off with straight edge to top of shutters and compaction to refusal with pedestrian rollers).

The construction steps used to achieve the required quality of the base layer are as follows:

1. Spot base material in required quantities at suitable locations for section to be constructed.
2. Place and secure shutters at centre line and shoulder break point at correct line and level.
3. Correct defects in sub-base and re-compact if necessary. Sub-base (sub-grade) should be at +/- 10mm from correct level at any one point and be flush with bottom of steel shutters.
4. Dry mix the soil with stabilising agent, if any, and add water to obtain OMC.

Cold Ashpalt sealing (mix produced on site) by labour based methods on Gundo Lashu Project, Limpopo Province, South Africa.

1 The contractors had initially been trained by Lesotho’s Department of Rural Roads in road rehabilitation and graveling.
2 Alternatives to Conventional Gravel Wearing Courses on Low Volume Rural Roads under Gundo Lashu by CSIR Transportek, South Africa May 2003.
5. Cart base material between shutters in ~1m strips across.
6. Screed off with straight edge.
7. Roll plastic sheeting on top of prepared base as construction continues.
8. When suitable section is completed, remove plastic and compact base to refusal.
9. Ensure adequate curing of stabilized layer. Apply prime if required.

The use of the shutters (with bulking rails to obtain various specified layer thicknesses) for labour-based pavement construction is in itself a method specification ensuring the desired quality in that:

- It ensures a uniform thickness of the layer and very smooth finished riding surface.
- Attached bulking rails are to the thickness of the allowed bulking factor, hence once compaction of the material is undertaken (at OMC) to the bottom of the bulking rails, it gives assurance that the required compaction density is achieved. Therefore testing by nuclear devices or other means is done only to confirm achievement of required densities.

Pavement materials investigations and design

The design of labour-based construction and upgrading of low volume sealed roads (LVSRs) should focus more on increased (innovative) use of in-situ materials for pavement layers than has traditionally been the case. Appropriate specifications should allow for this as it would drastically cut the costs by reducing or obviating the need to import pavement materials.

In our experience, pavement materials are most often sourced from old borrow pits without actually investigating the suitability of the in-situ materials within the immediate road vicinity for sub-base and base formation.

For low volume sealed roads with traffic levels up to 500 vehicles per day, a typical minimum strength requirement of >15%/>45% soaked CBR for sub-base/base layer respectively are adequate provided appropriate drainage is provided. Grading and plasticity are of minor importance in relation to strength for sealed roads.

However, inadequate materials investigations result in inappropriate designs and high project costs.

It has been observed on many labour-based sites that materials for layer works being hauled over long distances from borrow pits are almost of the same (if not inferior) quality to spoiled in situ material within some sections of the road formation.

It is therefore imperative to start the pavement material investigations and design of LVSRs with the strength and characteristics of the existing alignment in-situ soils with required improvements (through mechanical/chemical stabilization) to meet the minimum design specifications thus minimising importation of foreign material. The benefits of this are:

- Significant project cost reduction, up to 20% haulage cost, depending on the haul distance, is eliminated.
- Reduction or elimination of potentially useful material being excavated to spoil thus contributing to lower project costs.
- Potentially increased progress/outputs as road-building material is found next to the road, which could lead to faster completion of the project and hence overall savings.
- Reduction in environmental degradation caused by opening large borrow pits.

It is only in cases where very poor in-situ materials (CBR < 15%) and where treatment is very expensive, that materials for layer works should be imported. For purposes of realistic costing, detailed assessment of the identified borrow pits in terms of haulage distances, material quantities, extent of overburden to be removed and hardness/feasibility for excavation by labour should be ascertained.

Problems encountered

The transition from the methods for gravel road construction as practised in this and many programmes throughout Africa and elsewhere, to construction of high quality pavement layers as required for sealed roads, is not without problems. A lot of re-training had to be carried out, of both consultants and contractors, to ensure that the revised methods were properly applied. Apart from this, specific problems encountered were:

- Some seal aggregate suppliers had difficulties obtaining the required grading necessitating inspection and approval at source before delivery.
- Faulty bitumen tankers/spreaders that inevitably caused problems for the contractor when the fault is only discovered once the tanker is on site and ready to spray.
- Hot bitumen seals require long stretches of base for spraying with bitumen tanker. If not adequately protected from traffic, the base will deteriorate and require costly and difficult repairs before sealing.
- Contractors not ensuring proper curing of cement stabilised layers resulting in carbonisation of the top layer and the need for remedial actions to be taken before sealing to ensure adequate bonding between seal and base.
### Types of Bituminous Seals appropriate for LVSRRs

The table below summarises the types of labour-friendly bituminous seals applied on the programme, specifications/average costs, observed advantages and disadvantages:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seal Type</th>
<th>Specifications</th>
<th>Costs (US$)</th>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Otta Seal1      | Binder – MC 3000 cutback bitumen or 150/200 Penetration grade 135 - 180 °C @ spray rate of between 1.8 - 2.0 litres/m² (depending on properties of aggregates used) Graded Aggregates: 16mm - 2mm | 2.0 - 2.3/m² (single seal, excl prime) | - Durable (+/- 14mm compacted thickness, proven 9 - 11 years service life with single sand cover seal).  
- High labour content.  
- Does not require priming (except to prevent base damage by traffic).  
- Same day re-open to traffic (at controlled speed) helping compaction.  
- Relaxed aggregate strength, grading, dust content, particle shape, binder adhesion requirements. Accommodates use of locally available natural aggregates. | - Hot bitumen poses potential health & safety hazard. Use of emulsion (successfully applied in Zimbabwe) would reduce this risk.  
- Application requires bitumen tankers (see comment above).  
- Requires long stretches of formed base which may be damaged by traffic.  
- May be looked upon as inferior seal during 1st four months of construction due to unappealing look (use of natural gravel appears as dirt road). |
| Grav Seal2      | Binder – Semi-Priming Modified Binder consisting of 80/100 pen bitumen blended with styrene butadiene styrene (SBS) 120 °C @ spray rate of between 1.6 - 1.8 litres/m² Graded commercial Aggregates: 13mm - 2mm | 2.0 - 2.2/m² (single seal, excl prime) | - Durable (+/- 14mm compacted thickness).  
- High labour content.  
- Does not require priming (except to prevent base damage by traffic).  
- Same day re-open to traffic (at controlled speed) helping compaction. | - Hot bitumen poses potential health & safety hazard.  
- Application requires bitumen tankers.  
- Requires long stretches of formed base which may be damaged by traffic. |
| Sand Seal       | Binder - Cationic spray grade emulsion (65% bitumen and 35% water) sprayed at 60 °C @ spray rate of 1.6 litres/m² Sand with grading between 6.7 and 0.15 mm @ 0.007 m³/m² | 1.3 - 1.5/m² (excl prime@ 0.6/m²) | - High labour content.  
- Seal as you go with small plant & machinery.  
- Cheaper where sand is abundant locally. | - Single sand seal not very durable.  
- Requires priming at additional cost.  
- Can only be opened to traffic after about one week. |
| Cougar Cold Mix Asphalt | Binder - Road Grade Bitumen 60/70 modified with 8% (min) liquefied rubber, pure bitumens, UV stabilisers and antioxidants.  
- Net bitumen 5% (min) of nominal mix by mass.  
- 3% (max) aromatic hydrocarbon solvents  
Graded aggregate (4.5/6.7mm stone plus quarry dust).  
Mix proportions:  
- For 30kg mix (equal to 1 m² at 20mm thick compacted to +/- 18mm):  
  - 23kg crusher dust  
  - 7 kg 4.5/6.7mm stone  
  - 2.6 litres binder | 3.8 – 4.2/m² (excl prime@ 0.6/m²) | - High labour content.  
- Seal as you go with small plant & machinery (no damage to base).  
- Suitable for steep sections.  
- Self-sealing of cracks.  
- Durable (thicker layer +/- 18mm compacted).  
- No priming required (except on steep sections and to prevent base damage by traffic).  
- Minimal health hazards.  
- Open to traffic same day. | - High initial costs (compensated by thicker layer). |

Notes: It should be noted that for all the above seals, concrete quality stone can be used for the aggregate instead of road quality stone since none of seals rely on the quality of the stone for the quality of the finished seal, unlike traditional chip-and-spray seals.

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4 Source - COLAS, South Africa.  
5 Source - Cougar Tar Maintenance, South Africa.
Conclusion

It has been shown that high quality low volume sealed roads can successfully be constructed using labour-based methods of construction. With the adoption of more appropriate design specifications and locally derived techniques for the use of locally available resources, construction of low volume sealed roads can be more cost-effective and certainly more sustainable than re-gravelling of unpaved rural roads.

A recently completed cost comparison study\(^6\) based on data from the Gundo Lashu programme and comparable machine based projects has shown that, even with the relatively high cost of labour in South Africa\(^7\), labour-based methods is on par with machine-based methods of construction in financial terms. In addition, they have significant advantages over machine based methods in economic terms.

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\(^6\) Draft 3 - Limpopo Province Labour Intensive Rural Roads Maintenance Programme (Gundo Lashu) – Cost Comparison Report (Gary Taylor, Anna McCord & Dirk Ernst van Seventer, December 2004)

\(^7\) Statutory Minimum Wage - US$8, Gundo Lasho concessionary daily wage rate under SPWP – US$5.

documents. A contract for road maintenance and repairs was issued to Jeriban District Development Council (DDC) for the main Galkayco Jeriban/Garad road. An average of 80-100 people was employed on a daily basis.

Garowe waste collection

In Garowe town the project involved the formation of the Garowe Waste Management Committee (WMC) and establishment of a sustainable waste collection system. It came about following a submission by the Mayor of Garowe for the project to finance the collection and disposal of the backlog of garbage that was causing a serious health hazard in the town. The works involved removal of tons of solid waste dumped within 1 km of the town center. Through their own resources Garowe WMC has now purchased a truck with a Hibab crane, built a number of steel containers and has commenced a self-financing collection system that employs an average of 30 people (20 women) per day.

The LEDAT Centre

The first Local Economic Development and Appropriate Technology (LEDAT) Centre has been established in Hargeisa. It is open to the general public and provides reference information, documentation, manuals etc on appropriate technology and LED that can be borrowed on deposit of a nominal fee.
The Declaration and Plan of Action of the African Union Extraordinary Heads of State Summit on employment and poverty held in Ouagadougou last year bears witness to the fact that African Heads of States recognize employment as a key route out of poverty. And further to this that employment-intensive growth in key sectors is the only viable means to improve the livelihoods of their people.

ASIST–Africa has been advising governments and their development partners, and implementing programmes and initiatives to promote and mainstream employment-intensive approaches in infrastructure. ASIST target countries have passed various milestones, from demonstration and validation of the approach, to adoption on sectoral basis; to policy, legislative and institutional reform to support the approach; to full scale nationwide implementation across sectors.

Building upon successes, experiences and lessons of several years of working with national governments and their development partners, ASIST Africa has a new programme strategy—“Targeting Investments for Working out of Poverty” (TIWOP) that focuses on employment-intensive infrastructure investments as a route to meeting employment and poverty targets of national partners (see following pull-out centrefold for more details).

Funding
The programming phase, 2001 – 2003, which received core funding from the Governments of Denmark, Great Britain, Norway and Sweden, has been extended through funding from various sources to maintain activities as core funding for the new strategy is sought from existing and potential donors. With the increasing clarity within the ILO of the relevance of the programme in addressing the regions’ employment and poverty challenges, funding from the ILO’s core budget has recently been allocated through the ILO Regional Office for Africa to extend the programme to the end of 2005.

Botswana
The Government policy (National Development Plan 8 and 9) on poverty calls for the creation of meaningful employment, involvement of the private sector in the building of the economy and greater use of locally available resources as well as the application of labour-based methods, where economically and technically feasible. In line with the policy, the Roads Department carried out demonstration projects to find out how labour-based methods could be applied in the construction and maintenance of roads using the private sector. Experiences were gathered through the demonstration projects and based on this experience, the Department has rolled out the routine maintenance program through labour-based contracts covering 433km in 2002 which increased to about 545km in 2004. In the 2005-2006 financial year the program will cover more than 800km. Based on the above experiences, the Roads Department held a workshop in May 2005 to share information on the use of labour-based technology in routine maintenance of roads with various stakeholders.

South Africa
The USD 3 billion Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) developed with ASIST support to contribute towards the government’s fight against poverty and unemployment through the delivery of essential infrastructure became operational from mid-2004. The programme is funded through a realignment of national public investment allocations. The National Department of Public Works (NDPW), as national coordinator, has developed various tools including planning, procurement and reporting tools and technical guidelines for use by implementing agents. The department has allocated over 800 learnerships to raise the skills level towards the project requirements.

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Working out of Poverty
Targeting Investments in Africa

The Challenges

Poverty on the rise
Without change in current trends, Africa will not achieve the overarching Millennium Development Goal to halve the population living in extreme poverty by 2015. Significant impact on poverty will only be achieved if poor people can participate in the growth for example through employment. Over 140 million jobs need to be created in Sub-Saharan Africa by the end of the decade to lift half of the poor out of absolute poverty.

Sustaining peace and rebuilding crisis-torn countries
With peace returning to many countries torn apart by decades of war including Angola, Congo, DRC, Somalia, Sudan and Sierra Leone, comes the task of reconstruction, reintegration and socio-economic recovery. Investing in development, growth and job creation is essential to the prevention and/or relapse into violent conflict.

Rapid urbanization
Rapidly growing urban populations outpace the capacity of cities and towns to provide basic needs such as work opportunities, housing and infrastructure services. Around 72% of urban dwellers in Africa live in slums and are in need of decent jobs, food, housing, clinics, schools and other services.

Youth unemployment
Escalating youth unemployment brings disillusionment and unrest that destabilizes peace and security. The number of young people seeking employment is expected to increase by 28% i.e. by about 30 million people, in the next 15 years in sub-Saharan Africa.

Africa’s new resolve
African governments now recognize the centrality of employment as one of the major means to alleviate poverty and empower people to be part of the social, economic and political processes.

African Union Heads of State resolved in September 2004 to, among other things, “place employment creation as an explicit and central objective of their economic and social policies at national, regional and continental levels, for sustainable poverty alleviation and with a view to improving the living conditions of their people.”

They further resolved to increase the allocation and mobilisation of resources to invest in high potential employment creation sectors including infrastructure, agriculture and rural development, environment conservation and transport among others.

African Union Ministers responsible for transport declared in April 2005, to improve access to inputs, markets and employment opportunities by halving the proportion of the rural population living beyond 2km of an all-season mode of transport by 2015.

The Commission for Africa Report – Our Common Identity, March 2005, identifies investment in infrastructure, particularly in agriculture (i.e. rural access roads and irrigation), rural development, urban upgrading and natural resource conservation as essential components for poverty reduction. The Commission recommends an additional investment of US$ 20 billion a year in infrastructure. It further notes that public sector investments i.e. in road building, slum upgrading and irrigation have positive effects on employment that can be integrated into national poverty reduction strategies.

“An important element of this programme is a large-scale expansion of the use of labour-intensive construction methods to build, upgrade and maintain the social and economic infrastructure in all the underdeveloped rural and urban areas of our country that do not have such infrastructure.”

Thabo Mbeki, the President of South Africa at the launch of the Expanded Public Works Programme, 18 May, 2004
ASIST-Africa provides solutions that place employment creation at the centre

The ILO’s Employment-Intensive Investment Programme (EIIP) through the ASIST-Africa has for many years been working with African governments on approaches that put employment creation in the centre of investments in infrastructure, which account for up to 60% of public investments. There are many clear indicators of the success of these approaches, both in terms of direct employment created through labour-based technology, and through the multiplier effect on the opportunities for local resource based support industries and the investment of the income earned into other ventures and local consumption. Such interventions have, in many instances, been the mechanism to kick start local economic activity and have proved to have important income distribution effects and impact on poverty reduction.

Looking to the Future…

Targeting Investments for Working out of Poverty

The ASIST Programme has reoriented itself to respond more effectively to the challenges in the region. The Programme’s new strategy “Targeting Investments for Working out of Poverty 2005-2007”, builds upon years of experience, knowledge and partnerships gained from past years of the programme.

The strategy responds to current needs and calls to action against poverty made collectively by the African Heads of States and Ministers under the auspices of the African Union and NEPAD.

It leverages the Programme’s comparative advantage of being uniquely designed to respond flexibly to provide integrated employment-focused interventions that target investments for better impact on poverty reduction. The strategy aims at reducing poverty by:

- Optimizing the employment creation potential of investments in infrastructure.
- Early intervention in post-crisis situations to link recovery with long-term development policies and programmes.
- Broadening the application of local resource based employment intensive approaches across other infrastructure sectors including slum upgrading, irrigation, environmental conservation in both urban and rural environments.
- Emphasising integrated and employment-focused local resource based planning approaches in investment planning and service delivery.
Implementation of the new strategy will involve:

• Supporting national and local governments, regional economic communities and bodies and their development partners to place employment at the centre of national and regional infrastructure development, employment and poverty reduction goals. For example, technical advice will be provided to the US$3 billion South African government funded Expanded Public Works Programme; the US$6.3 million Taking Labour Based to Scale National Programme in Tanzania, and to NEPAD through the recently formulated framework of agreement, which delineates areas of policy development, local resource optimization, entrepreneurship development, post crisis reconstruction and economic recovery.

• Expanding the evidence base to support the employment-intensive approach and demonstrate its impact on poverty reduction through joint research and study initiatives with national policy and economic research institutions, other research bodies such as the Transport Research Laboratory (TRL) and the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), as well as academic institutions.

• Leveraging knowledge sharing and learning, essential for the development of institutions and skills. The programme will partner with national training institutions and existing initiatives such as the Region’s Transport Technology Transfer Centres, International Forum for Rural Transport and Development (IFRTD), Transport Knowledge Partnership (TKP) and the International Focus Group for Rural Road Engineering (IFG).

• Creating awareness, promoting and advocating local resource based employment-intensive strategies to ensure the uptake, impact and mainstreaming of the approach; and to build a groundswell of demand and support for the approach.

• Integrating more effectively with other ILO units and programmes. Employment-intensive interventions provide an entry point in many circumstances for the introduction of initiatives or dialogue around issues of decent work, i.e. fair working conditions, fair wages, gender equity, prevention of child labour, etc.

• Strengthening existing and building new partnerships such as with the African Union, the
African Development Bank, regional economic bodies, and other United Nations agencies to bring to bear the full impact of joint efforts and resources of partners on the fight against poverty.

**Target group**
The ultimate beneficiaries are the poor women, men and youth in the countries covered by the Programme.

The direct beneficiaries are national and local governments, regional economic communities, private sector enterprises and community groups, as well as national, regional and international development partners.

The ASIST programme team has years of collective knowledge, skills and experience to bring to bear in realising the full potential of investments in infrastructure.

ASIST has well established networks of national and regional partnerships that have been developed over time, providing it a vantage point from which to leverage and optimise resources. Knowledge of countries, their needs and capacities provides invaluable mileage in getting interventions going.

We work to ensure the positive effects of employment and infrastructure are integrated into national poverty reduction strategies and have a meaningful impact on the lives of the poor.


5. *ASIST - Africa* is a regional programme for Africa providing Advisory support information services and training


We gratefully acknowledge the core funding of the programme by the governments of Denmark, Great Britain Norway and Sweden.

For more information on the ASIST-Africa Targeting Investment for working out of poverty contact:

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The ASIST supported Gundo Lashu programme in Limpopo Province has been up scaled in line with the objectives and targets set by EPWP. Under the new programme, the experiences and methodologies will be expanded to cover roads under the responsibilities of municipalities and districts, and employment issues will be incorporated in the delivery of other infrastructure. The programme will also assist the provincial government to establish a suitable training center that is capable of providing both theoretical and practical training on the application of employment-intensive approaches in the delivery of infrastructure.

**Tanzania**

The programme “Employment creation in municipal service delivery in Eastern Africa – improving living conditions and providing jobs for the poor”, became operational in January 2004 and covers Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda. The ILO Small Enterprise Development (SEED)/ASIST supported programme promotes public-private partnerships (PPP) to help local governments address the twin challenge of creating jobs for the poor while ensuring adequate basic infrastructure and services. The programme outcome will help in validating and disseminating a pro-poor approach to service delivery systems at municipal level which ensures job creation, social protection and adequate representation of poor women and men, while improving the urban environment. Current interventions have facilitated an increasing engagement of Community-based Organisations (CBOs) and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in service delivery (i.e. solid waste collection) in partnership with the municipalities. The CBOs and SMEs are provided with necessary technical and entrepreneurial skills training. To date 140 service providers have been trained in four Municipalities. More than seven municipalities in Tanzania have engaged in the PPP approach, which has created more jobs for the poor communities and improved environmental cleanliness. For example, Mwanza City, which adopted a PPP approach by partnering with CBOs in May 2004, has managed to increase waste collection rate from 28% to 47%. The city is now third cleanest of the cities municipalities in Tanzania. The programme seeks to improve the living conditions of the urban poor, which encompasses vulnerable groups such as old women, widows and unemployed youth. The partnerships have created more than 120 new jobs. A recent study done by the programme revealed that more than 52% of employees in the CBOs and SMEs engaged in solid waste collection activities are women ranging from 20 years to 65 years who are mostly widows, taking care of orphan grandchildren and/or old with no external assistance. 75% of those engaged could not find any other employment/job and their education level is below primary level.

The programme is well supported by stakeholders and the demand for training and capacity building is very high. With the PPP approach in service delivery being emphasized in the current National Strategy for Growth and Poverty Reduction in Tanzania, the opportunity to expand is wide even in other sectors. This also facilitates the sustainability of the whole process of employment creation through service delivery.

**Regional research on the increased application of labour-based methods in roadworks**

This research is now being carried out in six countries, Ethiopia being the latest addition. Fieldwork in Lesotho and Mozambique is progressing well and data is being collected twice a year whereas work in Ghana, Uganda and Zimbabwe is nearing completion. The preliminary findings from Ghana and Zimbabwe country components have been discussed at workshops organized in the respective countries. Participants of the workshops were selected from different government departments, consultants and contractors. Following the inputs made by participants of the workshops, the first draft country reports will be made available soon. Guidelines on quality control of road works using labour-based methods are also being developed.

**Staff news**

Joe Connolly joined the ASIST-Africa Programme as Principal Technical Adviser in January 2005. Joe’s most recent ILO assignment was as Chief Technical Adviser for the ILO’s economic recovery project in Somalia where he successfully implemented a post-crisis economic recovery programme with employment-intensive infrastructure acting as entry point to wider local economic development initiatives. Prior to this Joe has had years of experience in establishing and implementing employment-intensive infrastructure programmes in several countries in the region including Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.

*Source: A. Ishengoma*
ASIST – Asia Pacific News

By the ASIST Asia Pacific (ASIST AP) Team

Since the last issue new activities have been initiated and technical components better integrated, providing an even more comprehensive approach to rural infrastructure development as a strategy for poverty reduction and employment creation.

Programme evaluation

The Department for International Development (DFID), UK and ILO, carried out a joint evaluation of the Programme in October 2004, which culminated in a donor meeting in London organized by DFID in February 2005 to discuss the results. The Programme was evaluated as a highly efficient and effective example of technical assistance, with a clear policy message and good opportunistic approach that was relevant to their circumstances. It was found to have proven influence on policy and practice and potential to increase impact. The ASIST AP team were encouraged to continue to develop the programme in Asia and the Pacific and to look for further opportunities to collaborate with Governments and donors in promoting the use of rural infrastructure development as a means to reach the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs).

Funding

The Swedish Agency for International Development (Sida) recently approved additional core funding to ASIST AP. This very welcome contribution will enable ASIST AP to consolidate and strengthen its ongoing programme in a number of selected countries, and provide additional support to the Tsunami affected areas in Indonesia and Sri Lanka (see page 20).

Cambodia

Progress under the Asian Development Bank (ADB) funded Northwest Rural Development Project (NRDP) is good. Both, World Bank and ADB, are in the process of approving additional funding to expand project activities and include additional provinces. The project recently completed a Training Needs Assessment (TNA) and a study on participation in Integrated Rural Accessibility Planning (IRAP).

India

ASIST AP has finalized a study on rural road maintenance in Madhya Pradesh (MP) and is now planning for a State workshop to discuss the findings and identify follow-up action to improve rural road maintenance in MP.

The work on Integrated Rural Accessibility Planning (IRAP) in Orissa is nearing completion. ASIST AP and the State of Orissa are now discussing how the IRAP activities can be scaled up and mainstreamed. A State workshop was held to introduce and discuss the procedures with local governments and receive feedback on its usefulness and effectiveness. A proposal to up scale the work to be submitted to DFID is presently under consideration by the State Government.

Indonesia

The Sustainable Rural Infrastructure Development Project (SRIDP) was successfully completed in December 2004. SRIDP brought rural infrastructure for poverty reduction and employment creation back to the development agenda in Indonesia. The project assisted the Government to develop a national mechanism for coordination and technical assistance to the local governments and prepare guidelines and technical manuals. In addition, a local University Network to assist local governments in rural infrastructure development has been established. ASIST AP is discussing options to up scale this work in connection with a national initiative to utilize part of the national savings resulting from a recent reduction in fuel subsidies for poverty alleviation schemes (including rural infrastructure development).

More recently, the work in Indonesia has focussed on the Tsunami response. Details of this are summarized in the following article.

Laos

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved the proposed ASIST AP labour-based rural road construction and rehabilitation training inputs into its Smallholder Development Project. The approach has been negotiated and agreed upon with the Laos Ministry of Agriculture. ASIST AP will field one of its Labour-based Equipment...
Supported (LBES) training experts in Champasak Province in Southern Laos and a senior consultant will provide occasional inputs.

ASIST AP is discussing further collaboration with the Local Road Division in the fields of participatory planning, contracting and maintenance.

**Nepal**

ASIST AP provided input to the preparation of the Rural Access Improvement Project (RAIP) to be funded by the World Bank. ASIST AP will continue to provide technical inputs to this project primarily in the fields of LBES training and planning.

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has sole-sourced ASIST AP for the implementation of an institutional strengthening component of the Department of Local Infrastructure and Agricultural Roads (DoLIDAR). This component will piggyback on a larger investment loan.

The IRAP guideline and technical modules are now complete and awaiting DoLIDAR approval. This will enable IRAP to become an official planning tool for rural infrastructure planning.

**Philippines**

ASIST AP’s support to the Infrastructure for Rural Productivity Enhancement Project (InFRES) is now focussing on LBES rural road maintenance. ASIST AP fielded a team of local consultants to study maintenance procedures and practices at local government unit (LGU) level. Twenty LGUs have been included in this study, which should result in recommendations for improving rural road maintenance and a capacity building process for LGUs to be implemented under InFRES.

IRAP activities are ongoing and over 100 LGUs have been trained to use IRAP procedures in the identification of sub-projects.

**Sri Lanka**

In August 2004, the Sri Lanka Institute of Local Governance (SLILG), Ministry of Provincial Councils and Local Government, carried out a TNA of the decentralized government agencies responsible for rural road infrastructure. The training needs of the SLILG with respect to providing technical support to the decentralized agencies were also assessed. ASIST AP provided support while the ILO country programme provided the funding.

Local consultants have prepared training materials for labour-based road rehabilitation and maintenance. The first training of trainers was delayed because of the Tsunami disaster but this has now taken place.

The World Bank has asked ASIST AP for support in the preparation of the rural roads component of a major road sector project. The TNA links into

**Vietnam**

Upon the request of ADB, a one-day IRAP workshop for the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) took place in October 2004. The workshop aimed at advocating for the inclusion of an IRAP component in a forthcoming project.

More recently, ASIST AP carried out a study on private sector involvement in the Road Network Improvement Project (RNIP) on request of the World Bank. The Bank wishes to increase the involvement of the domestic construction industry in periodic maintenance of the main road network and has requested ASIST AP to provide support.

ASIST AP is discussing options for support to the rural road sector in Vietnam with DFID and the World Bank.

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**Public private partnerships for urban poverty reduction - Interregional workshop**

*International Training Centre of the ILO - Turin, Italy 27-29 July 2005*

An increasing number of local initiatives to upgrade basic infrastructure and services are being referred to as “public-private partnerships”. The interregional workshop is intended to complement and reinforce existing efforts on PPP’s that benefit the poor. It will bring together staff in policy and programme development of UN and bilateral development agencies, as well as of other relevant actors active in this field.

Programme will cover:
- Public Private Partnership for Urban Poverty Reduction: Current Approaches
- Legal and regulatory frameworks
- Employment and local enterprise promotion
- Financial aspects of PPP’s
- Capacity building and knowledge sharing: existing tools and programmes
- Improving exchange and collaboration for larger impact

**Cost/Fees:** Participants are expected to cover all costs associated to their participation, including travel, board and lodging.

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Response to the Tsunami disaster

By the ASIST Asia Pacific (ASIST AP) Team

After the tsunami struck, the Swedish Agency for International Development (Sida) was quick in approving additional funds for ASIST AP, which enabled the initiation of activities in Indonesia and Sri Lanka. The Sida funds, together with some of ILO’s own funds, are being used to establish small local teams on the ground in both Aceh, Indonesia and Sri Lanka. The teams have identified immediate needs and are developing proposals on how to respond to these needs, both in terms of planning and implementation of rural infrastructure and the mechanisms through which the real needs of the people can be integrated in future infrastructure works. The main objectives here are employment creation, restoration of livelihoods and the reconstruction of infrastructure assets.

These Tsunami funds are being used and programmed for the following activities:

• development and implementation of a crash course on concrete works and masonry (skills training) in Indonesia;
• development and implementation of a course for supervisors in labour-intensive debris clearing in Indonesia;
• finalisation and translation of training materials for Labour-based Equipment-Supported (LBES) rural road works in Sri Lanka;
• participation in local and national task forces associated with infrastructure rehabilitation and reconstruction;
• reproduction of existing manuals and training materials;
• assessment of the current small-scale contracting capacity and the development of a strategy for strengthening the private sector to participate in reconstruction efforts in Indonesia;
• organization and conduct of a local workshop on sustainable rural infrastructure development in Indonesia;
• development of partnerships with Government for rehabilitation and reconstruction works;
• establishing an inter-ministerial group on labour-based reconstruction in Sri Lanka;
• development of labour-based policies and components for World Bank, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and government strategies and master plans;
• formulation of rural road reconstruction and rehabilitation projects;
• demonstration of rural road reconstruction work in two districts of Sri Lanka.

Key challenges
The key challenge in the disaster-affected areas is providing the support through an appropriate combination of advice, training and demonstration, to re-build and strengthen the capacity of local governments, community groups and small contractors to implement the needed infrastructure works using local human and physical resources. Both, infrastructure rehabilitation and reconstruction needs and capacity building and training needs are gigantic.

Follow-up proposal
A follow-up project proposal is under preparation to further contribute to the rehabilitation and re-construction of rural roads, the strengthening of the capacity of local governments, communities and small contractors, and the generation of employment and income. This proposed project will scale-up and extend activities initiated with the Sida support. It will link the assessments, strategies and training to actual physical works in the rural road sector. The main components under this proposed follow-up project are:

• participatory infrastructure planning in the disaster areas;
• training and capacity building related to labour-based technology;
• strengthening of small-scale contractors and local governments to undertake the reconstruction works and further actual implementation on a demonstration basis.

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Employment Intensive Investment Programme (EIIP) – Latin America News

By Serge Cartier van Dissel and Raul Fajardo, ILO/EIIP, Latin America

Following the end of the Danida-funded EIIP projects in the Andean countries, support for EIIP activities is now provided through the Regional and Sustainable Employment Project (PRES) and the ILO Sub-regional Office for Andean countries through its regular budget to meet demand for support in EIIP related activities. National governments have expressed a willingness to cover the costs of specific support from national budgets, especially regarding road maintenance.

Further to a series of regional workshops on service delivery and job creation with UN-HABITAT, efforts are now underway to replicate these on a larger scale in collaboration with other programmes e.g. the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP PPPUE1) programme, focusing on municipalities, municipal associations and training institutes as main beneficiaries.

Serge Cartier van Dissel is now backstopping activities in the region from ILO headquarters in Geneva. Activities in the Andes countries are still coordinated by Emilio Salomon, and in Nicaragua, Raul Fajardo manages the Pro-Empleo project.

The Spanish language publications of the EIIP developed over the past year, are now available on the Spanish website of the programme, under the page on recent publications (www.ilo.org/eiip).

Ecuador
As part of the workshop series on “Better Services, More Jobs” organised with UN-HABITAT, the International Training Centre of the ILO and AGFUND2, a workshop was held in Quito in August 2004. Participants, including government, worker and employer representatives, as well as NGO’s and local authorities, agreed on the need for better use of public investments for employment generation and to facilitate the access of micro and small enterprises (MSE) to public contracts.

Bolivia
Further to a range of studies on involving Micro and Small Entreprises (MSE’s) in public procurement contracts, discussion workshops were undertaken in collaboration with the PRES project focusing on i) subcontracting to MSE’s; ii) access of MSE’s to public procurement contracts, and iii) promotional legislation for MSE development. This resulted in the identification of remaining barriers to MSE access to public contracts, in spite of Bolivia’s past efforts on MSE promotion and employment generation.

Honduras
Labour-based methods in infrastructure provision have been incorporated into the Rural Infrastructure Project (PIR), as a result of support from the EIIP during the preparation process. The Danida PAST3 project in Nicaragua also provided support throughout the process. The World Bank has approved funding for an initial phase of the PIR, which will focus on the labour-based component. The ILO was requested by the Government of Honduras to submit a proposal for technical support to the project, which is currently under negotiation.

Nicaragua
In July 2004 an evaluation was undertaken of the Pro-Empleo project, 30 months after starting operations. The conclusions show that the immediate objectives had largely been achieved or surpassed, with most planned activities completed, even as the project had another 12 months to go.

Municipalities involved in the project now prioritise the use of employment-intensive methods, and are able to plan, design and execute these themselves. Support has also been provided to national programmes and universities to create the necessary capacity in line with the increasing demand for training and technical assistance in the execution of labour-based works.

The project has carried out 22 sub-projects, linking up with infrastructure investments in other projects, resulting in the creation of 1,245 temporary jobs, equivalent to a total of 90,446 workdays. The cost of the works has been lower than equipment-based alternatives.

The project has achieved the incorporation of the employment-intensive approach into local-level strategies for development and poverty reduction. At national policy level, the

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1 PPPUE = Public Private Partnership in Urban Environments
2 AGFUND = Arab Gulf Programme For United Nations Development Organizations
3 PAST = Programa de Apoyo al Sector de Transporte
EIIP News

Re-organization of the Employment Sector

In February 2005, the Director General announced a reorganization of the Employment Sector, reducing the number of Departments in this Sector from four to three:

i. The Employment Strategy Department (EMP/STRAT) – where EMP/INVEST now falls, will work on employment and labour market analysis, data collection and analysis of employment trends, employment intensive investment approaches and provide employment policy support to member States.

ii. The Skills and Employability Department (SKILLS) - will deal with skills development policies and programmes, as well as with services, policies and programmes for the disabled and disadvantaged groups.

iii. The Job Creation and Enterprise Development Department (EMP/ENT) – will be responsible for work on small enterprise development, cooperatives and local development, multinational enterprises, corporate social responsibility, social finance and crisis response. CRISIS now forms part of this department.

The Employment Strategy Department now consists of four units:

(i) Employment Analysis and Research Unit (EMP/ANALYSIS), (ii) Employment Policy and Advisory Services Unit (EMP/POL), (iii) Employment Trends Unit (EMP/TRENDS), and (iv) Employment-Intensive Investment Unit (EMP/INVEST). Terje Tessem has been designated as Chief of the Employment-Intensive Investment Unit.

New EIIP website

The EIIP website has been revamped to improve its navigability. The English version of the new site can be found at www.iolo.org/eiip; and Spanish and French translations are under preparation. The site forms the gateway to the regional programmes (ASIST) for Africa and Asia-Pacific web pages, as well as to ASISTDOC, the bibliographic database of key publications on employment-intensive approaches and a variety of digital full text documents.

EIIP policy meeting

The principal objectives of the EIIP Policy Meeting, held in Geneva in December 2004, were to agree on coherent strategic priorities, and to commit to collaborate on common products (including resource mobilization). The meeting found that there is a strong demand for EIIP services, both from inside and outside the ILO, but that this demand does not automatically translate itself into more resources for the programme. It was concluded that there is an urgent need to better communicate the objectives and results of the Programme and to create a more individual and collective commitment to resource mobilization and the building up of partnerships. Other conclusions related to better knowledge sharing among EIIP staff in the different offices, as well as between the EIIP and the rest of the ILO, and the incorporation of the EIIP approach into Decent Work Country Programmes, PRSPs and other national strategies. In general, the meeting recommended that the EIIP should improve its image as a global programme, resulting in a single identity for the EMP/INVEST team in Geneva, the EIIP Specialists in the Sub-Regional Offices and the ASIST programmes in Africa and Asia.

The meeting report is available from the ILO and can be viewed at the EIIP website.

Talks to the donors on future “core funding” for the EIIP

The recent emphasis on placing employment as a priority for poverty reduction strategies in ILO Governing Body discussions and the African Union Heads of State Summit on Poverty and Employment in Ouagadougou further reinforce the relevance of the EIIP and its programmes. In addition, the ASIST Asia-Pacific Programme was recently evaluated by one of the main donors, DFID, as an excellent technical cooperation programme. The EIIP has been engaged in intensive dialogue during the first quarter of 2005 with key donors on the recurring issue of securing “core funding” to maintain its programmes, particularly ASIST Africa and Asia. Several proposals have been submitted in the context of ongoing and new donor/ILO Framework Agreements. In the meantime, the ILO African Region has agreed to provide bridging funding for ASIST Africa.

approach has been incorporated into the National Development Plan as well as the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). Through these efforts the project is establishing conditions for upscaling and institutionalisation of the approach.

With the project ending in July, a next phase is currently being negotiated

with Luxemburg, where the upscaling and institutionalisation will be a core element, as well as the creation of an enabling environment through the identification of suitable systems and procedures at different levels.

A notable achievement since the evaluation has been the creation of a programme with the National Engineering University on the incorporation of the employment-intensive and local resource-based approach into their engineering and architecture curricula and research work.
Sub-Regional Seminar on Labour-Based (LB) approaches in Central Africa

Mainstreaming the labour intensive approach in public or community investment programmes

By Claude Yao Kouame, EIIP Specialist, ILO Sub-regional Office for Central Africa

A sub-regional seminar on labour intensive approaches in public or community investment programmes was held in Douala, Cameroon from 27 to 29 April 2005, under the auspices of the ILO Sub-Regional Office for Central Africa. The seminar brought together representatives from seven countries: Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo and Gabon.

The seminar discussions covered:

i. an overview of labour-based (LB) approaches;

ii. the private sector in the execution of LB works;

iii. decentralized operations and community contracts;

iv. normative aspects in LB approaches;

v. prevention and industrial safety in the construction sector;

vi. the conclusions of the African Union Heads of State Ouagadougou Summit on Poverty and Employment;

vii. institutionalization of the LB approach, and

viii. the results of a comparative LB equipment-intensive study in Cameroon.

The following projects – ongoing or planned – from a number of countries were presented including: (i) A project for the promotion of technologies for local materials development through decentralized technologies transfer centres in Cameroon; (ii) Job-creation and income-generation programme in the Democratic Republic of Congo; and (iii) The River Saher floodwaters drainage programme in Chad.

The participants, who will act as country focal points in labour-based technology, adopted the following resolutions:

• Each country focal point will prepare an assessment report of relevant projects and programmes in his/her country where local resource-based approaches could be applied.

• At the initiative of the focal points, and with ILO support, an awareness drive will be undertaken at country-level.

• A national network of project and programme investment partners, including civil society and professional organizations, will be established by the focal points.

• The focal points will help in the design of support schemes for existing projects and programmes by focusing on training of actors (enterprises, consultancy firms, Government services, etc) concerned with LB projects. Work demonstration sites will be a common feature of this training.

• A databank of ongoing projects and programmes in countries will be created by the respective focal points. It will comprise data related to the cost of works and operations, the project impact on jobs, compliance with labour standards and the technological processes used.

• A sub-regional network for the promotion of the LB approach in Central Africa will be created to share useful information on labour intensive projects using local materials during public and community investments projects. This network will be piloted for a one-year period by a coordinator. Mr Ngolle Albert from Cameroon’s Local Materials Promotion Authority (MIPROMALO) was unanimously designated as the coordinator of this network. He will disseminate information on the updated assessment by country; publish a quarterly newsletter on LB approaches and projects, and promote the use of local resources in the various countries of the sub-region.

The participants agreed on the implementation of a minimum programme for each country to be initiated by the focal point i.e. an updated assessment of projects and programmes; the holding of a sensitization workshop; the creation of a forum (national network) and the crafting of a capacity enhancement project to support programmes that are ongoing or in the pipe line.

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Participants from central Africa at seminar

Source: C. Kouame
New Publications

**Contractor’s Handbook for Labour-based roadworks**

Andreas Beusch and Tomas Stenström

Ministry of Works and Supply, Roads Department, Roads Training School, Zambia. August 2004

This simply written handbook is aimed primarily at small-scale contractors and covers all relevant and important aspects of labour-based road works in Zambia. It is useful for site supervisors involved in labour-based road works. Certain modules will also be useful for other contractors working in construction. The handbook provides practical tables, guidelines and recommendations in a concise format for use on site. However, it is not a training manual and assumes readers will already have some training in road works.

**Cities at work - Employment promotion to fight urban poverty**


Unprecedented urbanization in most developing countries is changing the face of poverty: increasingly, poverty is manifesting itself in cities. Millions of jobseekers, men and women, are resorting to the urban informal economy, where they earn just enough to survive, without any form of social security. Most cities cannot cope with this growth in population, basic infrastructure and services are underdeveloped and/or in a bad state of maintenance and often do not reach the poorest neighbourhoods. The urban poor are thus exposed to health hazards due to bad drainage, waste accumulation, lack of sanitary facilities and so on.

Yet, cities are also places of opportunity. Improvements in infrastructure, including shelter, and services can directly and indirectly improve the lives of large numbers of people. But such improvements can hardly be sustainable if not supported by the simultaneous promotion of decent employment opportunities. This publication argues that employment generation should be a top priority for urban planners, managers and decision-makers and that deliberate policies are necessary to promote employment for the urban poor. It highlights the convergence between the Millennium Goal of poverty reduction, the ILO’s Decent Work agenda, and the objective of sustainable development recognized at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development. It is hoped that “Cities at Work” will contribute to the appreciation of the central role of employment in urban poverty reduction, and strengthen the capacities of national and local stakeholders to consistently build this into their policies and strategies.

**Reducing the decent work deficit in the infrastructure and construction sectors - The experience and proposals of ILO’s Employment Intensive Investment Programme**


The ILO has been advocating employment-intensive growth strategies, workers’ rights, social protection and dialogue for several decades, for reasons directly related to its historical mandate, in particular social justice and growth with equity. The Report of the ILO Director-General to the International Labour Conference of 2001, entitled: “Reducing the Decent Work Deficit - A global challenge” drew the attention to decent work deficits that continue to prevail. It highlighted the shortfalls that exist with regard to policy and decision-making institutions and to the organisational and negotiating capacities of the public and private stakeholders. The report called for comprehensive and better-integrated approaches to bring down these deficits and improve the effectiveness of the governments, social partners, and the entire world of work in taking up these challenges.

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Forthcoming events

Seminars and Conferences

11th Regional Seminar for Labour-based Practitioners

Hosted by: Ministry of Roads and Public Works, Kenya in collaboration with ILO/ASIST - Africa

Theme: Integrated labour-based approach for socio-economic development

Dates: 2nd – 7th October 2005

Venue: Mombasa, Kenya

Details: The seminar seeks to encourage sharing of knowledge and experience on the innovative application of integrated labour-based approaches for socio-economic development. To enable focused knowledge sharing and deliberation on the theme the following sub-themes have been selected:

- Policy and up-scaling
- Sustainable financing and resource allocation
- Community participation
- Performance-based contracting
- Impact monitoring and evaluation
- Environmental sustainability
- Training, research and development


Contact: Seminar Technical Organising Committee

Ministry of Roads and Public Works
PO Box 30260-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
Tel: +254 2 2727449; Tel/Fax: +254 2 2733004
Email: regsem11@roadsnet.go.ke

Conference details and registration form are available at www.kroadsboard.go.ke/regsem11

2nd Africa Transport Technology Transfer Conference

Hosted by: Kwa Zulu Natal Department of Transport Technology Transfer Centre

Theme: Transport technology transfer for Africa’s renaissances

Dates: 21st – 23rd September 2005

Venue: Pietermaritzburg, Kwa Zulu Natal, South Africa

Details: The conference will serve as a forum for the exchange of experiences and ideas relevant to the transfer of road transportation technologies. Papers will be presented on the following four broad themes:

- Theme 1: Technology Transfer Centres – challenges and opportunities
- Theme 2: Socio-economic aspects in transportation
- Theme 3: Integrated transport planning and management
- Theme 4: Appropriate innovations in transportation

Fees: SAR 2500 for South Africans; USD 500 for the rest.

Contact: Dr. Simon Oloo
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Conference Details and updates are available on the official conference website at: www.kzntransport.gov.za/africaT2Conf

COURSES

International course in labour-based road construction and maintenance

Dates: 10th October – 19th November 2004

Venue: Kisii Training Centre (KTC), Kisii, Kenya

Details: For engineers and managers of labour-based roadworks. University degree is a requirement. Covers choice of technology, all aspects of planning, implementation and management of labour-based construction and maintenance roadworks including the use of contractors.

Fees: USD 5900 (covers course and subsistence; excludes travel)

Contact: The Resident Instructor Kisii Training Centre (KTC)
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Kisii, Kenya
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The ILO’s Employment-Intensive Investment Programme (EIIP) supports member States in their efforts to develop comprehensive policies and operational approaches to link public investment policy, employment policy and decent work in the infrastructure and construction sectors. This Working Paper attempts to show the relevance of these policies for employment generation and the reduction of the decent work deficits in these sectors, as well as the policy linkages that can and should be taken up.
The ILO Employment Intensive Investment Programme (EIIP) started activities in the Andes countries through a DANIDA funded project “Employment intensive technology promotion in public investments in Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru”.

The project started in January 1998 with awareness creation activities for a wide range of stakeholders, and the identification of areas in which the greatest impact could be achieved. Familiarity with the employment-intensive concept varied between the countries. In Peru, a similar project already existed, the Programa de Caminos Rurales\(^1\) (PCR) of the Ministry of Transport and Communication financed by the World Bank and the IADB\(^2\), whilst in Ecuador and Bolivia such programmes were non-existent.

Through a series of studies, workshops and seminars conducted in the three countries, the project was, towards the end of 1998, able to determine the role it should fulfil in order to be effective i.e. to:

1. Focus on the road sector with emphasis on the promotion of rural road maintenance using microenterprises in those countries where experience had not yet been developed.
2. Promote the EIIP approach within governments, donors and financing organisations.
3. Promote national government policies aimed at facilitating access to public contracts by small businesses.
4. Put the issue of employment on the agenda of governments.
5. Disseminate information and training material relating to employment intensive experiences.

**Pioneering work**

Between 1999 and 2001, the project promoted road maintenance using microenterprises through pilot projects in Ecuador and Bolivia. These involved training staff of the agencies responsible for road management and arranging visits to Peru to enable them to witness the advantages and difficulties of working with microenterprises, as well as to observe the impact achieved in the communities.

Technical assistance was provided to government departments and projects in the three countries. Noteworthy is the Programa de Inversión Intensivo en Empleo designed for the municipality of El Alto in Bolivia, which served as a model for replication in the five largest cities in the country.

Various studies were also carried out in all three countries. In Ecuador, a study was carried out on the legal barriers to small business access to public procurement contracts. In Peru a case study revealed the financial limitations of municipalities to funding road maintenance activities. This study was subsequently replicated at national level by the PCR.

Training of trainer’s courses on Improve Your Construction Business (IYCB - MESUNCO) were conducted for contractors’ associations in the three countries to develop the capacity of the private sector.

In May of 2001, in coordination with the EIIP Geneva and with support from the World Bank and the IADB, the project organised a workshop for high-level consultants from eight Latin American countries. The objective being to build the capacity of the consultants to develop and evaluate programmes with high levels of employment, and to design and implement training activities on employment intensive approaches for national counterparts. The region now has a group of local experts that are positively influencing the generation of projects and programmes with an employment intensive focus in the region.

\(^1\) Rural Road Programme.
\(^2\) Inter-American Development Bank.
Reorientation
Towards the end of 2001, the concept of road maintenance using microenterprises was widely accepted. The governments of Ecuador and Bolivia had incorporated this into their own agendas and were taking on projects of this type. This achievement is largely attributable to the project.

Building on this success and the institutional relationships established, and in consideration of the limited resources available, the focus of the project was shifted towards two main lines of action:
1. Providing training and technical assistance to government programmes and projects with the aim of intensifying the employment aspect of infrastructure works.
2. Intervening in the formulation of employment intensive policies at national and municipal level.

New activities, new counterparts – 2002 - 2004
A study was carried out in the three countries identifying legal barriers faced by small businesses to formalisation, registration and access to public contracts. It also identified best practices and recommended strategies for improvement. The study was followed by several workshops, some of which formed part of the ILO-HABITAT project More Jobs, Better Services3.

Following the workshops on legal barriers, assistance was provided to the Ecuadorian Office of the Attorney General on amending the public procurement legislation to allow greater access to public contracts to small businesses. The workshops also discussed the need for a special procurement law on micro-and small-enterprises as exists in Peru.

Assistance was also provided to the Inter-ministerial Commission for Employment, that had the responsibility of developing a government policy on generation of employment and improvement of working conditions and income levels in Ecuador.

In Bolivia, where the government was focusing on employment and the decentralisation process was underway, a national employment intensive programme proposal at municipal level was formulated. The Ministry for Municipal Development took the proposal on board, but due to political instability in the country, this has yet to be implemented.

In Peru, following a request from the Vice Ministry of Labour and Employment Promotion, a proposal was developed for a policy on employment intensive public investments. This was subsequently presented to the Inter-sectoral Commission for Employment involving various ministries.

In light of the decentralisation process in the region, special attention was given to public contracts for services and infrastructure at municipal level, and on municipal associations in the three countries. The ILO Regional Programme for Sustainable Employment (PRES), active in Bolivia and Peru supported the promotion of employment intensive technologies and local level contracting.

During the project, the Social Investment Funds in the three countries requested technical assistance and training on employment intensive methods as well as enterprise and community development. Towards the end of 2003, a regional seminar was held in which all three Social Funds exchanged experiences and created mechanisms for horizontal cooperation. The event also enabled discussion on the EIIP approach in relation to the policies of the Social Funds on employment and sustainability of their investments.

The Ecuadorian Minister of Labour, inaugurated the seminar and the Presidents of the three Social Funds and Directors of Public Investments participated. The seminar was closed by the President of Ecuador, in the presence of Ambassadors from the three countries and other high-level government staff. The participants drew up a Declaration stating the objective of the Funds is to combat poverty and unemployment through investments in basic infrastructure, with a focus on the creation of jobs with decent working conditions and respect of basic human rights at work.

Publication
The experiences from the road maintenance pilot projects and existing EIIP documents (that were translated from English to Spanish) were used to compile a series of manuals and guides on road maintenance and rehabilitation by micro and small enterprises. Publications focusing on labour policies and practices, contractor and community development, contract administration and supervision, and a guide on Integrated Rural Access Planning (IRAP) were also produced in Spanish.

The future
The termination of the project in March 2004 affected the operational capacity of EIIP programmes in the region. However, the high demand for technical assistance from the three countries, has led the ILO to continue providing support for the approach through its regular budget and the PRES project. The future of EIIP support and the upscaling of the achieved results in the region depends largely on whether or not a new project can be developed. The governments in the three countries appreciate the support received from the project, and have expressed an interest in funding future support to specific activities.

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See also under countries at www.ilo.org/ieiip

This article was translated and modified by Serge Cartier van Dissel, ILO/EIIP Geneva.

3 Co-funded by AGFUND.
Peru has a population of nearly 27 million, with over 9 million living in rural areas. Over half of all Peruvians live in poverty, although this figure rises to nearly 80% in rural areas. One in four Peruvians lives in extreme poverty, but in rural areas, this is true of every other Peruvian. It is estimated that an income rise equivalent to 13% of the basic food basket is required to lift the urban poor out of poverty, whereas for the rural poor this requirement is estimated to be at least three times as high. To elevate the poor out of poverty over four times more effort is needed in rural areas than in urban areas, and for extreme poverty nine times more effort is required. Raising rural people out of poverty is estimated to be twice as hard as lifting them out of extreme poverty.

A steady growth of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) alone is unlikely to significantly help those living in (extreme) poverty. An estimated growth of 9.6% is needed just to absorb the 2.4% annual growth of the economically active population. These figures have led the Peruvian government to adopt a series of public employment programmes aimed at helping elevate large masses of Peruvians out of extreme poverty.

Rural labour markets
In the rural areas, agriculture is the main activity in terms of labour absorption and income generation, around which other non-agricultural activities are centred. Non-agricultural activities generate over 30% of rural employment, and over 50% of rural income, and are quickly overtaking agriculture in terms of importance.

Other important aspects of the rural labour market are the seasonal nature of workday duration and of labour availability as a result of the crop cultivation cycles, and the absence of a well developed labour market for job seekers.

A Trabajar Rural
The A Trabajar Rural programme, implemented by the Peruvian Social Investment Fund (FONCODES), was initiated to generate income for the rural (extreme) poor through the creation of temporary employment in infrastructure development in the short term. In the medium and long term, the programme sought to impact on poverty through the provision of infrastructure and stimulation of the local economy as a result of cash inflows from incomes earned.

The poor are targeted through selection based on a poverty ranking of districts using the poverty map developed by the Ministry of Economy and Finance. The programme only intervenes in the poorest districts. The projects are identified by communities together with the municipalities and presented to A Trabajar Rural.

The programme funds the construction and rehabilitation of schools, health centres and clinics, drinking water systems, sanitation systems and latrines, tracks and (foot) bridges, dams, jetties and sidewalks.

Communities are required to organize themselves into a Nucleo Ejecutor, a form of community-based organisation representing the wider community. The Nucleo Ejecutor consists of a President, Treasurer, Secretary, and a Director from the community, as well as a legal representative from the municipality.

Once the project has been financially and technically approved, the funds are transferred to the bank account of the Nucleo Ejecutor, which is subsequently responsible for the execution of works and the contracting
of workers and foremen. Technical support is provided by a technical and an administrative inspector.

Although the Nucleo Executor has no legal status, under a special law it is able to enter into contracts with public institutions and receive public funds for the duration of the project. Using this associative modality, FONCODES has funded over 50,000 works in social and economic infrastructure in rural areas in Peru.

A “relatively low” salary is used as a means of auto-selection of the poorer workers from the community. A further control mechanism is the involvement of the communities in the identification of the most needy community members. In addition, workers in the programme have to be head of household, between 18 and 65 years of age, live in the vicinity of the works and not have any job known to the community.

Employment
The objective of the programme was to create 160,000 jobs of six months duration for unskilled workers, and over 36,000 jobs for technical personnel. Labour costs of the programme were estimated to be 59% of total direct costs, with the rest spent on materials and tools. The programme’s aim was to create 68,571 jobs of six months duration by May 2003, but this was surpassed with 77,363 jobs actually created through 1,612 projects resulting in over 33,000 works. Approximately three quarters of the works carried out involved the rehabilitation and improvement of infrastructure not constructed by FONCODES. Investments in social and productive infrastructure were about equal. Male workers far outnumbered females, although this improved in the second phase with 87.3% male in the first phase and 76.8% in the second. The great majority (over 80%) of workers of either gender were over 25 years of age, and more than 40% over 40 years old.

A Rapid Household Survey carried out in 2003 in a sample of rural localities showed that, of the households that participated in the programme 83% were classified as poor, of which 66% were extremely poor, showing a very low filtration of non-poor into the programme.

Although the salary offered was below the average rural market rates and the majority of workers were poor or extremely poor, there was an oversupply labour. This indicates the magnitude of rural poverty and the crisis suffered by the agricultural sector in Peru. The communities applied a rotation scheme, enabling different people to work for periods less than the six months originally planned.

In a visit to the field office in Ayacucho early 2002, the FONCODES team had the opportunity to meet with the leaders of a community and to discuss the issue of job rotation, based on a concept of distributive equality, very much part of the Andean countryside. One of the leaders of the community remarked: “…if you had ten children and only two plates of food, would you give those plates to only two of your children, or would you redistribute the food in equal parts to all?”

In terms of direct project costs, 60% was spent on labour, 5% on foremen and 55% on non-skilled workers, i.e. 42% of total project costs. This implies that an equivalent of USD 2.40 is necessary for each dollar transferred to the “poor”. Of the remaining direct project costs, 33% was spent on materials and 7% on tools.

Training
In the first phase, the rotation of workers created a problem in the training. FONCODES staff provided the training at the beginning of the first six months period, but the rotation of workers during this period resulted in workers coming into the project without training. In the second phase, the foremen were made responsible for training, ensuring the training was continuous and of benefit to all.

Furthermore, the FONCODES trainers were generally engineers resulting in some communication difficulties with the trainees. Whereas the communities viewed the foremen as people of their own level, but with a higher skill level and therefore related better to them.

As a result of the training, works were of better quality and participating communities now have skilled workers that can be involved in the maintenance of the works. The training offered was the aspect appreciated aspect by the communities, as it helped improve their level of employability.

Incomes and assets
In a national household survey carried out by the National Information and Statistics Institute (INEI), nearly 15% of households participating in the programme indicated that their assets had increased from 2001 to 2002, compared to 11.8% of non-participating households. Interestingly, approximately 23% of participating households attribute the improvement to the programme, as do 11.6% of non-participating households, indicating an indirect impact of the programme on non-participating households.

With respect to income, 17.4% of participating households indicated an increase compared to 10.7% of non-participating households, with 31.6% and 8.8% respectively attributing the increase to the programme.

Over 21% of workers indicated that food consumption levels had increased in their households, compared to 11.1% of non-workers, with 26.4% and 8% respectively attributing this improvement to the programme.

3 Ley de FONCODES No. 26157, Decretos Superemos No. 057-93-PCM, No. 015-96-PCM and No. 020-96-PRES.
4 10 soles per day (US$ 3).
5 76% of total project costs.
Impacting poverty through integrated local level rural accessibility planning in Malawi

By Camilla Lema, Senior Technical Advisor, ASIST - Africa

Since the seventies the Government of Malawi in collaboration with development partners has taken various initiatives to improve the rural accessibility and mobility in the country. Among them was the Pilot Integrated Rural Transport Project (PIRTP, 1991-97) through which the Integrated Rural Accessibility Planning (IRAP) tool was field-tested in a step-by-step approach in Dedza District. This process enabled the development and publication of “A Guide to Integrated Rural Accessibility Planning in Malawi”, by Rob Dingen, ILO/ASIST, 2000.

Currently, an initiative, namely the “Rural Access and Mobility Pilot Activity (RAMPA)” is being implemented in Ntchisi District within the framework of the Road Maintenance and Rehabilitation Programme in Malawi. The Malawi Rural Travel and Transport Programme in the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLG&RD) is overall in-charge of the implementation of RAMPA, with technical support from the Management Consultants (IT Transport Ltd., UK and Chapita Consultant, Malawi).

RAMPA activities to date
RAMPA commenced in July 2004 to run for eighteen months. Its main objective is to strengthen the planning capacity of the MLG&RD and the District Assembly through the integration of the IRAP tool into the current District Development Planning System in support of the decentralisation policy. Data collection has been accomplished and a data bank established in the District Assembly to provide information for investment planning in various sectors. District staff, NGOs and extension workers in the District have been trained in/and participated in the data collection. Access profiles are being prepared to enable prioritisation of access interventions and integration into the District Development Plans. Small-scale contractors have been identified for training in rural access infrastructure works and promotional activities are ongoing for the introduction of appropriate Intermediate Means of Transport (IMTs) in the District.

The RAMPA was subject to mid-term review in March 2005 and to an external evaluation September 2005. Based on the mid-term review, the strategy for replication or scaling-up of the RAMPA initiative in other districts will be developed.

Benefits of integrating IRAP
The initiative by the Government of Malawi to re-introduce IRAP in the country through RAMPA is commendable. It is likely to have very positive impact in enhancing decentralization reforms and the District Development Planning System. The first District Development Plans (DDPs) were produced three years ago and are due for updating this year. The planning process is also under review to make it more investment oriented. In the formulation of the DDPs three years ago, the Ministry through the Decentralisation Secretariat supported all assemblies come up with the DDPs through a consultative process. However, these DDPs are more like shopping lists, and were produced on the basis of secondary data. Secondly, the level of community participation in the process was inadequate, which made the implementation of identified projects difficult since most priorities had to be changed after consulting the local communities. Hence, the reintroduction of the IRAP process comes at a critical time and will facilitate bridging the gap on data availability and the development of quality databases by the District Assembly, which can be updated periodically enabling the updating of the DDPs on a timely basis. This will also ensure a system that does not require huge investments and donor support every time the local assemblies have to update the DDPs.

The participatory approach taken for information and data collection in Ntchisi District has enabled a shift of focus from the provision of infrastructure per se towards the understanding of the travel and transport demand characteristics of the target groups. This is key to addressing the real needs of the target communities, and also for enhancing human capacities for development, as well as unveiling opportunities for optimization of local resources in the implementation and maintenance process.

The IRAP process has also contributed towards consolidating the decentralisation policy through capacity building and skills developed in the District Assembly and effective participation of the local communities in the development of the DDPs. It has also brought in a multi-sectoral planning perspective at local level, which is essential to enhance coordination and positive impacts of development initiatives among different sectors. Specifically, the process has provided ground to link infrastructure investments with productive

1 ASIST – Africa is providing technical advisory inputs to RAMPA.
employment and income generation opportunities, which would not necessarily happen without engaging in a participatory and integrated planning at local level. Due to various constraints, even where the rural access infrastructure works have provided direct wage employment to the target beneficiaries, the benefits have not always been sustained. However, with an appropriate planning process, beneficiaries become better prepared to tap into both the benefits of short-term cash injections in the local economies and those accruing from efficient use of improved infrastructure.

The quality data generated during the IRAP process is not only necessary for effective planning, but also provides a basis to measure the effectiveness and the overall impact of access interventions in the short and long-term, and informs the designs of similar initiatives.

From the foregoing, the long-term benefits of investing in appropriate local level planning cannot be overemphasized. These benefits cannot be realistically measured against the short-term physical outputs, as the latter will always outweigh the former in a situation of scarce resources. This is however at the expense of long term sustainable outcomes, possibilities for replication of initiatives and the overall contribution to policies and strategies. The tendency in various Sub-Saharan African countries has been to pilot rural access programmes and projects for more years than is necessary, resulting in ad hoc planning due to the lack of data and quality information, loss of past records and consequently the loss of institutional memories and planning capacities.

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Integrated Rural Accessibility Planning (IRAP)

IRAP is an integrated local level, multi-sectoral planning tool that defines the access needs of rural households in relation to the basic social and economic services that a household requires. It examines and prioritises interventions to address these needs. It is a co-ordinated and integrated planning methodology that has been developed over recent years and successfully applied in Asia and Africa.

IRAP integrates:
- rural households’ mobility needs, i.e. the ease or difficulty with which people and goods move from one point to another;
- the siting of essential social and economic services; and
- provision of appropriate transport infrastructure.

The tool:
- considers all aspects of household access needs for subsistence, economic and social purposes;
- involves communities in different stages of planning procedures;
- is based on a thorough but easy to execute data collection system;
- is undemanding in terms of the resources needed;
- uses households as the focus unit of the planning process;
- includes gender issues in its analysis; and
- gives high priority to the protection of the environment.

The IRAP methodology involves a series of steps over approximately six months for a Province and three months for a District and results in:
- comprehensive information on the location, condition and use of rural infrastructure and services; and
- defined and prioritised investments for access interventions that address the needs of rural communities.

IRAP emphasises the building of local capacity and the use of local resources (material and human) in the implementation and maintenance of locally initiated projects. The application of appropriate technologies and labour-based methodologies that maximise local resource utilisation are therefore key features in the implementation of this approach.

IRAP is a valuable local level planning tool. Its multi-sectoral scope facilitates an integrated approach to planning for the infrastructure and services required at local level. The IRAP methodology entails local authorities working with rural communities to:
- identify the access problems of the communities;
- prioritise problems and identify appropriate interventions; and
- formulate programmes of action to address prioritised access problems.

Useful references on IRAP
- Cartier, S. 2004. Integrated Rural Accessibility Planning (IRAP) Modular Training Package. ILO/ASIST
- Donnges, C. 2003. Improving access in rural areas - Guidelines for Integrated Rural Accessibility planning. ILO/ASIST

Lastly, approximately 20% of workers confirm an increase in farm and household production, compared to 13% of non-workers, with 17.3% and 7.1% respectively attributing this change to the programme.

In all aspects participating households appear to score higher, indicating a positive impact of the programme on the livelihoods of the poor. Over half of those interviewed from participating and non-participating households expected improvements for the next year, indicating confidence in the programme.

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Advisory Support Information Services and Training (ASIST)

ASIST is a programme providing advisory support, information services and training on employment-intensive strategies and local resource utilisation in the provision of sustainable infrastructure. It is a programme of the Employment-Intensive Investment Branch (EMP/INVEST) of the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

The goal of the programme is to reduce poverty by mainstreaming employment-intensive strategies in the provision of infrastructure and services for improved and sustainable livelihoods and local economic development.

ASIST currently comprises two regional support programmes in Africa and Asia working within the framework of the EIFP. Their objective is to increase the use of cost-effective employment-intensive local resource based strategies in the provision of sustainable infrastructure, and in so doing create employment with fair working conditions for men and women.

Advisory Support
ASIST provides comprehensive policy, planning, and technical advice. ASIST advises on project and programme design, co-ordination, monitoring, and review of urban and rural employment-intensive infrastructure programmes and local resource utilisation.

Information Services
ASIST actively gathers, synthesises and disseminates relevant published and unpublished information on and related to employment-intensive approaches for infrastructure development and local resource utilisation. ASIST provides a Technical Enquiry Service to respond to specific requests for information. ASIST maintains a database of persons and institutions working towards the reduction of poverty through employment creation in the provision of sustainable infrastructure and services.

Training
ASIST supports capacity building essential for the mainstreaming of employment-intensive strategies in infrastructure provision through a wide spectrum of training activities including: training needs assessments, curricula and training programme development, training material and technique development, as well as the evaluation of training activities. ASIST also supports and facilitates workshops, seminars and conferences to stimulate information sharing and networking.

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