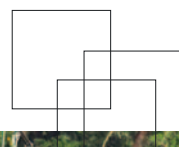




International  
Labour  
Office

# Towards the right to work

**A GUIDEBOOK FOR DESIGNING INNOVATIVE  
PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMMES**



## Guidance note 15 Impact of PEPs

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# Towards the right to work

A GUIDEBOOK FOR DESIGNING INNOVATIVE PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMMES



## Guidance note 15

### Impacts of Public Employment Programmes

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## Guidance note 15

# Impacts of Public Employment Programmes



### Objective

*The objective of this note is to provide policy-makers and practitioners with an overview of the various key issues related to the potential impacts of public employment programmes (PEP) and to understand the nature and complexity of conducting a comprehensive impact assessment. This Note also provides a selection of results from past impact evaluations and provide an overview of the type of results that have been obtained at times to highlight some of the implications for designing programmes to maximize their desired impact.*

### Introduction

Public Employment Programmes (PEP) have a wide set of impacts because of their multi dimensional nature and the multiple outcomes they create. This Guidance Note focuses on impacts, and the project outputs and outcomes of PEPs, while Guidance Note 14 on Designing monitoring and evaluation systems in PEPs highlights the different steps that exist within an overall monitoring and evaluation framework. All PEPs should create employment, generate income for participants and create assets / and or provide services. All of these in turn should generate a set of impacts at the individual, household and community-level and depending on the scale of the programme at the local, regional or national level.

Assessing all the impacts that PEPs have is therefore an elaborate and complex task. Because of this most PEPs do not manage to have a comprehensive impact assessment conducted, and instead tend to focus on some key impacts linked to the primary objectives of the programme. Furthermore some outcomes like the creation of employment has implications and impacts in various areas and dimensions simultaneously.

Because of this complexity and the shortage of PEPs that have had all impacts assessed in a comprehensive manner, there exists some controversy about the impacts of PEPs or the lack of data to assess them. Some academics question for instance why governments continue to implement PEPs even though they believe that the evidence base of their impacts is limited<sup>1</sup>. In addition it is also recognized that PEPs can have negative impacts if not properly designed and monitored leading to

<sup>1</sup> See for example some of the work of ODI and McCord (2013)

unintended consequences and it is important that that this is also taken into account when discussing the impacts of PEPs. Some argue that PEPs, and especially public works (PWP), are a form of social protection measure offering only temporary employment in times of crises (financial, natural disaster, post-conflict, etc.). Others will counter argue that PEPs can be used as an efficient way to provide productive employment using for example national infrastructure investments in a more efficient way by optimizing their employment content. We believe that both aspects are valid in in each of their contexts.

This Guidance Note starts by mapping out, as comprehensively as possible, the potential impacts PEPs can have. The second part of the note provides a selection of results from impact evaluations conducted on past and current PEPs. These results provide an overview of the types of results that have been obtained in practice, but they are not meant to be a comprehensive review. The third part of the note draws on some conclusions based on some results of evaluations as well as the ILO's experience and highlights some implications for the designing of programmes to maximize their desired impacts.

This guidance note does not discuss the various methodologies that can be used to assess the various impacts. Some of these are discussed in Guidance Note 14 “Designing monitoring and evaluation systems” but many of these methodologies are well established and readers are encouraged to refer also to other existing literature.



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**Box 1: Past Reviews of the impacts of PEPs**

Given the long history of Public Employment Programmes, there have been various studies and reviews done in the past to understand the impacts of these programmes and how these impacts can best be assessed. This Guidance Note complements this existing work and focuses on work done more recently. For those interested in engaging in depth and detail on the questions of what kind of impacts PEPs can have and how to assess these and some of the challenges encountered in doing the following reviews are recommended:

**Of Nets and Assets, Effects and impacts of employment-intensive programmes - A review of ILO experience** by Willem Keddeman, ILO Geneva Available on: [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed\\_emp/@emp\\_policy/@invest/documents/meetingdocument/wcms\\_asist\\_6866.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_emp/@emp_policy/@invest/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_asist_6866.pdf)

**Employment for Poverty Reduction and Food Security**, edited by Joachim von Braun, IFPRI 1995, Washington DC Available on: <http://www.ifpri.org/sites/default/files/publications/oc32.pdf> Impact evaluation of labour-based housing construction in Nicaragua ([http://white.oit.org.pe/osra/documentos/modelo\\_simulacion\\_impacto\\_macroeconomico\\_en\\_nicaragua.pdf](http://white.oit.org.pe/osra/documentos/modelo_simulacion_impacto_macroeconomico_en_nicaragua.pdf))

A case study of the impact of selected access intervention in two rural districts of Zimbabwe (<http://www.ilo.org/public/french/employment/recon/eiip/countries/africa/zimbabwe.htm>)

“L’Approche HIMO et les Investissements Routiers: Perspectives pour la Création d’Emplois et l’Economie de Devises à Madagascar”, SETP no. 3 ([http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed\\_emp/@emp\\_policy/@invest/documents/publication/wcms\\_asist\\_6847.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_emp/@emp_policy/@invest/documents/publication/wcms_asist_6847.pdf))



## 2. Mapping out of the impacts of PEPs

This mapping out can be done in the form of a set of ‘hypotheses’ about the potential trajectories through which the PEP impacts on individuals, households and communities, in social, economic and environmental terms. These dynamics are complex and interlinked; in particular since human development is at the core of both social and economic development, but also both greatly impact the environment. The mapping out is done in the form of a matrix and is provided in the table below. It is not intended to suggest a clear ‘boundary’ between the various impacts, but to enable the exploration and elaboration of these different dimensions of impact. It is anticipated that in order to reflect these kinds of linkages and interdependencies, impact assessment research will also have to straddle these boundaries – and in practice, this translates into some repetition between the three columns. Assessing these impacts generally requires a combination of quantitative and qualitative assessments. Common qualitative assessments include interviews, focus group discussions as well qualitative assessments of the assets created and services provided. Quantitative analysis include macro analysis on public spending on PEPs, sectoral data research as well as analysis of labour force, household surveys, longitudinal and cross-sectional studies, random control trial, peer group studies, etc.

In addition, while the impact areas are stated in positive terms, it is recognized that the actual impacts in each area may in fact be neutral or negative. The purpose of impact assessments is to evaluate the effectiveness of past programmes in order to improve them in the future, but also evaluate and compare the potential impact of future programmes. The impact will be measured in detail, meaning by target groups, and different types of effect, direct, indirect and induced effect, as well as short to long term effects – including the potential for unintended and/or negative consequences. Often, macro models are combined with micro information provided by concrete PEPs.

In this sense, determining the impacts is an empirical question and there are limitations to the extent to which a theoretical framework can be used to predict the consequences of a PEP. For this reason, the results from impact assessments should be treated with caution. A clear understanding of the assumptions made is required and where impacts could potentially be negative various assumptions should be tested to see if the model can account for these.

Furthermore, depending on the programme objectives and design, as well as the local economic and social contexts, it may be expected that some impacts will be greater or more important than others. Particular impacts may therefore be prioritized for more intense and rigorous monitoring and evaluation, while others may be monitored and tracked to only a limited



degree. It is useful however to try as much as possible, to monitor a wide range of impacts as there may be unexpected or unintended impacts that become more important than expected as the PEP progresses.

For instance, PEPs may have impacts on local wage rates and working conditions which may not be a stated objective of the PEP, but can turn out to be an important impact that stretched beyond those directly employed by the programme (Ghose 2011).

The elements captured in the matrix below are drawn from experience on various PEPs and represent the current set of possible (and plausible) 'hypotheses' about the kinds of impacts a PEP can have ; but these are not exhaustive and may well be expanded and/or adapted in response to specific programme design features and monitoring and research outcomes.

The matrix examines social and economic impacts of PEPs. The impacts are grouped along the three main areas of outcomes of PEPs as well as a fourth area of impact on institutions. They are

- The impacts of participation in work
- The impacts of the income earned
- The impacts of the assets and services delivered
- The institutional impacts of the programme.

When it comes to the assets and services delivered, there is a third dimension of impact assessment, which is the environmental impact. Although partially integrated here it will also be addressed as a separate cross-cutting issue.

Also when one considers the number and range of possible impacts, the difficulty with trying to assess the **total** impact of PEPs becomes apparent. While such an approach has been advocated in the past (Keddeman 1998, Chipika 2005), no practical way for doing so has as yet been developed.



## Towards an inclusive growth and sustainable approach: assessing social, economic and environmental impacts

	A. Potential social impacts	B. Potential economic impacts/ impacts on LED / labour markets	C. Potential environmental impacts
<p>Potential Impacts of participation in work:</p>	<p>Impacts on the individual:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Offers work experience</li> <li>● Employment effects               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Skills transfer enhance employability (both formal and informal)</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Participation contributes to structure, hope, purpose, forward planning, time use etc.</li> <li>● Creates access to social networks:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Enhances access to information</li> <li>— Enhances ability to access other government services</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Strengthens dignity, self-efficacy – ‘self concept;’</li> <li>● Gender effects: eg               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Increased labour force participation of women;</li> <li>— Impacts on masculinity and affirmation of male provisory role</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Impacts on the household:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Strengthens household's dignity, and ability to reciprocally 'transact' within social networks.</li> <li>● Reduced substance abuse</li> <li>● Facilitates access to social networks:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Enhances h/h access to information</li> <li>— Enhances h/h ability to access other government services</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Impacts on the community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Impacts on working conditions and rights at work</li> <li>● Contribution to social cohesion</li> <li>● Reduction in crime (often major a inhibiting factor to informal self employment)</li> </ul>	<p>Impacts on the individual / household:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Lower un(der)employment rates</li> <li>● More market access</li> </ul> <p>Impacts on the community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● More productivity</li> <li>● More investment in land and assets</li> <li>● Reduction in crime</li> </ul>	<p>Impacts on the individual / household / community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Could have negative effects if not properly designed and monitored</li> <li>● Could have positive effects in creating climate resilient infrastructure, assets and services</li> </ul>



<p>Impacts of the income earned</p> <p>Disaggregate for gender and age where possible/applicable.</p>	<p>A. Potential social impacts/impacts on poverty</p> <p>Impacts on the individual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ability to engage in wider work seeking</li> <li>● Increase in savings</li> <li>● Track expenditure to inform potential impacts.</li> <li>● Reduction in anti-social behavior (prostitution, crime)</li> <li>● Health outcomes: eg treatment adherence</li> </ul> <p>Impacts on the household</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Wider work seeking by others in the household</li> <li>● Changes in the division of labour/resources/time</li> <li>● Nutrition of children (and adults)</li> <li>● Resilience of the household</li> <li>● School attendance (fees, uniforms) and outcomes</li> <li>● Gender and age impacts – incl. conflict and power dynamics (intra household dynamics)</li> </ul> <p>Migration dynamics</p> <p>Impacts on the community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Stronger relations of reciprocity.</li> </ul>	<p>B. Potential economic impacts/ impacts on LED / labour markets</p> <p>Impacts on the individual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Track expenditure to inform potential impacts.</li> <li>● Employment effects             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Confers resources to access labour market or engage with labour migration</li> <li>– Enables the acquisition of productive assets for employment (formal or informal)</li> <li>– Supports acquisition/upgrading of reproductive assets (housing, sanitation)</li> <li>– Provides capital to support informal self employment / economic activity (seed and operating capital)</li> <li>– Provides inputs that facilitates food production (subsistence agriculture)</li> <li>– Potential improvement in health outcomes (and therefore labour productivity)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Impacts on the household</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Employment effects             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Confers resources for h/h members to access labour market or engage with labour migration</li> <li>– Enables the acquisition of productive assets for h/h members employment (formal or informal)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>C. Potential environmental impacts</p> <p>Impacts on the individual / household / community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Could have negative effects if not properly designed and monitored</li> <li>● Could have positive effects in creating climate resilient infrastructure, assets and services</li> </ul>
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	A. Potential social impacts/impacts on poverty	B. Potential economic impacts/ impacts on LED / labour markets	C. Potential environmental impacts
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Supports acquisition/upgrading of reproductive assets (housing, sanitation)</li> <li>– Provides capital to support h/h informal self employment / economic activity (seed and operating capital)</li> <li>– Facilitates inputs that h/h facilitate food production (subsistence agriculture)</li> <li>– Potential improvement in h/h health outcomes (and therefore labour productivity)</li> <li>– Impacts on allocation of other grants received by the household.</li> </ul> <p>Impacts on the community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Rise in aggregate demand in the local economy:</li> <li>– Impacts on inputs into local food production</li> <li>– Impacts on food purchases</li> <li>– Impacts on local retail services</li> <li>– Impacts on local production</li> <li>– Impacts demand for savings and investment instruments (formal and informal)</li> <li>● Impacts on level of capital circulating.</li> <li>● Impacts on local labour markets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– On supply/demand for labour</li> <li>– On wage levels</li> <li>– On gender pay differentials.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Enabling forms of coops: consumer, marketing, supply.</li> </ul>	



<p>Impacts of the assets and services</p>	<p>A. Potential social impacts/impacts on poverty</p> <p>Impacts on the individual / household / community: <i>Impacts of infrastructure constructed, rehabilitated or maintained on</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Access to school and health care</li> <li>● Basic services: access to clean water, sanitation and energy</li> <li>● Environmental services</li> <li>● Quality of life in communities (recreation, safety)</li> <li>● Food security</li> </ul> <p><i>Impacts of services on improved</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Home based care for sick and elderly</li> <li>● Care of orphans and vulnerable children</li> <li>● Early childhood development</li> <li>● Schools support</li> <li>● Environmental services</li> <li>● Youth recreation</li> <li>● Crime prevention</li> </ul> <p><i>Some examples of outcomes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● On health outcomes</li> <li>● Care outcomes</li> <li>● Nutrition outcomes</li> <li>● School attendance and performance</li> <li>● Access to services</li> <li>● Crime levels, domestic violence;</li> <li>● Substance abuse.</li> </ul>	<p>B. Potential economic impacts/ impacts on LED / labour markets</p> <p>Impacts on the individual / household / community: <i>Impacts of infrastructure constructed, rehabilitated or maintained on productive capacity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Access to water for agriculture</li> <li>● Agricultural productivity overall through production and/or restoration of productive capacity of lands (For example reduced soil erosion)</li> <li>● Access to markets and employment: Reduced transport and travel costs (including time)</li> </ul> <p><i>Impacts of the assets and services on the local economy; improved ability to trade and produce locally due to improved infrastructure</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Improvements in productivity</li> <li>● Eg agriculture</li> <li>● The environmental impacts of assets created</li> <li>● Biodiversity rehabilitation or protection</li> <li>● value of ecosystem services</li> <li>● value of environmental risk mitigation</li> <li>● Improving economic linkages</li> <li>● Catalyzing wider economic activity</li> <li>● Enabling emergence of forms of co-op and other forms of enterprise.</li> <li>● Investment in private assets</li> </ul> <p>Increased agricultural activity</p>	<p>C. Potential environmental impacts</p> <p>Impacts on the individual / household / community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Could have negative effects if not properly designed and monitored</li> <li>● Could have positive effects in creating climate resilient infrastructure, assets and services</li> </ul>
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<p>Institutional Impacts</p>	<p>A. Potential social impacts/impacts on poverty</p> <p>Impacts on the individual / household / community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Increased public participation in decision-making and local government processes</li> <li>● Strengthening of local implementation skills over time;</li> <li>● Institutionalization of mechanisms of accountability limit patronage and corruption Increased social cohesion</li> <li>● Increased civil society activity and participation</li> <li>● Opportunities for patronage and corruption</li> <li>● Enabling delivery of other government services.</li> </ul>	<p>B. Potential economic impacts/ impacts on LED / labour markets</p> <p>Impacts on the individual / household / community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Local organization building, planning and contracting mechanisms an institutional asset for community and market development, particularly in weak fragile communities coming out of disasters and conflicts</li> <li>● Enabling delivery of other government services</li> <li>● Strengthening forms of economic cooperation eg savings clubs, marketing and supply co-ops; consumer co-ops;</li> </ul>	<p>C. Potential environmental impacts</p> <p>Impacts on the individual / household / community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Promote inter-ministerial / inter-agency collaboration (planning, environment, public works, labour, etc.)</li> </ul>
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## 2.1 The impacts of participation in work

Participation in work is one important reasons for the implementation of PEPs. The impacts of this can be important, especially where there is chronic un(der)employment and where there are many people who have never worked, held some type of job or are discouraged workers no longer seeking a job. In general however, most of these impacts are difficult to assess and quantify.

Impacts of participation in work are generally positive as they provide work experience, impart basic skills and enable participants to contribute positively to their environment. However in households with limited labour supply, they may lead to increases in child labour, whether on the programme or within the household (See Box 3 below). And they can be negative if work is experienced as abusive or exploitative. For example of task sizes are set very high, workers may have to work excessive hours in order to complete a task. Partial late or non payment of wages can also be detrimental to the impact of the participation in work as it further shapes perceptions of abusive employer-employee relationships.

At a broader level (community and beyond), participation in work can also have effects on working conditions and standards at work through a “spillover” effect. If working conditions and rights at work in the PEP are better than other forms of employment this can push up similar conditions elsewhere. For instance if working hours are fixed in the PEP or they are issued with contracts, they may demand such measures in other types of employment as well.

## 2.2 The impacts of the income earned

The income earned are generally the main motivation for participation in PEPs and for government to implement them. However the income can be used in several ways, and the amount, regularity, predictability and timeliness of the income are all important factors in determining the types of impacts the income will have.

Generally when assessing the impact of the income earned the focus is on how it is spent. Income is mostly spent on consumption (food and non-food), household investments, paying debt and bills, productive investments, schooling and health, savings. Splits vary, and depend on many factors amongst which wage level of the PEP, other income, when income is received, household composition.

Income also have aggregate impacts by stimulating local demand. If there are supply side constraints at the local level, and not addressed through the PEP, this increase demand may result in increased imports rather than increased local production. However if this increased demand can be met by local production and services, local impacts will be even greater through



local multiplier effects. This increased local demand may in turn increase local labour demand and further increase local employment – the positive spiral of domestic market expansion much sought to feed global demand today.

## 2.3 The impacts of the assets and services delivered

The impacts of the assets and services delivered to the programme are generally local, but they may still benefit participants differently from non-participants. In particular investments in land and water may affect non land owners disproportionately. It is interesting to look at overall local impacts as well as the impacts on participants of the programme or the poorest members within the community.

Where programmes deliver and maintain infrastructure, the impacts can be assessed in the same way that infrastructure assets are generally assessed. The challenge with PEPs is that often many of the infrastructure assets invested in are of a small scale and it is not viable to conduct extensive impact assessment of such small projects. However investments in rural and small scale infrastructure that are accessible to and usable by the poor have generally been found to have both positive impacts on the poor and high rates of return. The key question for the impact of the assets created by most PEPs is therefore not whether or not these types of assets have a positive impact. There is ample evidence that investments in this type of infrastructure makes economic sense. The main question is rather whether the assets are completed to the required standards in a manner that is cost effective<sup>2</sup>.

While in general PEPs have focused on public investments, there are an increasing number of programmes that allow for investments to be made in private assets of the very poor. This opens a new avenue for investments that can make direct impacts on the poor. While there is potential for abuse, this can be limited if the rules of engagement and monitoring and auditing are clear.

There are also several ways to evaluate the potential impacts of PEPs, through for example the use of Dynamic Social Accounting Matrices (DySAM). In a recent study, the potential impacts of re/afforestation was modeled in Mozambique to enable policymakers to understand the range of social, economic and environmental impacts such a programme could have and weigh such an intervention against other policy options (Ernst and Iturriza 2011).

<sup>2</sup> In terms of cost effectiveness, it is also worth noting that in many PEPs it is justifiable to also consider the wage payments as an income transfer to the poor and not only as a cost for the delivery of assets. If this approach is taken, PEPs are a highly cost effective approach for providing assets of providing environmental services. See also Lieuw-Kie-Song 2009 for a discussion on this with regards to programmes that provide environmental services.

## 2.4 The institutional impacts of the programme.

The institutional impacts of the programme are generally not a specific objective but they can be substantial. They can create specific responsibilities along with budgets and activities for local government structures that often have only limited budgets and responsibilities.

Institutional impact comes through having to build the capacity to manage and implement the programme. At the same time they also require organization and capacity building in terms of demonstrating participatory planning and contracting, transparency, lack of corruption, financial management etc.

The institutional impact will also vary with the level decentralization of the programme. This will also depend on the size of the programme and the country where it is being implemented, but the importance of decentralization to make the programme responsive to local priorities and conditions is also an important increasingly recognized feature.

Interaction with other government programmes can also improve coordination and integration within government. This can also put pressure on delivery of other linked services, especially when PEP participants come to expect other linked services, but there are lacking behind. and can also create resentment and decrease the support for the programme.

On the negative side, these programmes can also increase the opportunities for corruption and patronage, as they create potential opportunities for abuse of programme funding and power to allocate work to individuals in return for political favours. However, the programme should also be designed in a way to reduce the potential for corruption (see Guidance Note 10).



## Box 2: Methodologies for assessing impacts

Given the wide range of possible impacts indicated above, there is no standard approach to measuring the impact of PEPs. The methodologies used are often similar to those used for the assessment of impact of other interventions such as infrastructure investments, social protection measures, active labour market policies etc. Guidance Note 14 provides examples on how to actually design evaluation systems and impact assessments.

The field of impact assessments is constantly evolving and in recent years some additional methodologies mentioned below have emerged to assess the impacts of interventions like PEPs to complement those already in use. In addition it is important to mention that there are ongoing debates about what kind of methodologies should be used for PEPs and there is no consensus on how these can best be approached. Practically all approaches have their advantages and disadvantages, they may reflect political preferences, and readers are referred to, for example Keddeman (1998), who discussed the importance of comparative studies of equipment and labour based approaches to assess cost effectiveness, before and after studies and with and without studies and Chipika (2005) who discussed Rapid Assessment of Poverty Impacts (RAPI) and proposes different approaches for project level assessments. Other methodologies that have gained popularity recently and are now being used on PEPs or aspects of PEPs are Value for Money (VFM) assessments (DfID 2011 and DfID 2013), Theories of Change and Random Control Trials<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> For more information and various publications on Theory of Change, go to [www.theoryofchange.org](http://www.theoryofchange.org), on Random Control Trials go to: [www.povertyactionlab.org](http://www.povertyactionlab.org) and <http://www.poverty-action.org>

### 3. Some selected results from impact assessments of PEPs since 2000

Programme	Summary of results	Notes
Jefes e Jefas de Hogar (Head of Households) (Argentina)	Reduces poverty and prevents households from falling into poverty ( <i>Galasso E. and Ravallion M 2003</i> ) Some of the benefits and impacts on women report are working in mother-friendly jobs, getting needed training and education, helping the community, and finding dignity and empowerment through work (Tcherneva and Wray 2007)	Large scale programme (2 million households in 2002) in response to financial crisis. Provided ongoing and long-term part time employment. A wide variety of work activities were allowed including services and training.
Cash for Work Temporary Employment Programme (Liberia)	The results showed a 21% decline in the poverty gap from the baseline on a yearly basis (31% for the squared poverty gap), indicating that, while participants were still poor after the programme, they were substantially less poor than they had been before it (Andrews et al 2011)	Small programme providing only once-off 40 days of employment per beneficiary (17 000 beneficiaries)
Productive Safety Net Programme (Ethiopia)	“Finally, some initial evidence was presented indicating that public employment programmes can reduce child labour, although it was stressed that this is an area where it is especially important to consider incentives relating to child labour in programme design.” (ILO World Report on Child Labour, 2013) Surveys and evaluations have indicated that the overall impact on households is positive and has resulted in increased food security, reduced distress sales of assets and so fulfils its safety net function. It also increased access to education and health services, and despite the low wages, some households have been able to use some of their income on investments rather than consumption (Gilligan et al 2009) It was also found to have no disincentive effects on participants in terms of labour supply and perhaps concerns around creating dependencies on the programme are exaggerated – participants remain equally eager to do work and explore opportunities to better their circumstances (Gilligan et al 2009) Evaluations also found that especially investments in soil and water conservation had very high benefit cost ratios of up to 6.5 (World Bank 2009)	Large scale programme (1.5 million households) that provides long-term, regular and predictable income and food transfers to improve food security. Assets focus on rehabilitation of natural resources
Workplaces and Stipends (Latvia)	The programme’s stipend mitigated the impact of job loss and, in the short term, raised participating household incomes by 37 percent relative to similar households not benefiting from the programme (Azam et al 2012)	Medium scale programme that created 110 000 jobs over two years



<p>Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act – MGNREGA (India)</p>	<p>“Initial evidence from Ethiopia and India indicates that public employment programmes can reduce child labour, at least among some groups of children.”(ILO World Report on Child Labour, 2013)</p> <p>“The income from NREGS made very significant contribution to children’s well-being such as reducing hunger, improving health and education” and “the study finds robust results on child labour. It reduces child labour for boys by 13.4 per cent and for girls by 8.9 per cent” (Dev S. M. 2011)</p> <p>In both Rajasthan and Kerala, fieldwork showed that many women have been persuaded to come out of the house for paid work for the first time in response to the NREGA programme. The main reasons cited for this were convenience of working close to home, no job search was needed and the government is a trusted employer (Sudarshan 2011)</p> <p>It would appear that MGNREGA in so far as it has involved redistribution of income from the well-off to the poor and has delivered a fairly large increase in money income to the rural poor, has indeed contributed to food price inflation. And the food price inflation, in turn, has robbed MGNREGS of much of its potential for poverty reduction (Ghose 2011)</p>	<p>National Employment Guarantee Scheme for 100 days of employment for every rural household per year (55 million households)</p> <p>Assets focus on rehabilitation of natural resources</p>
<p>Expanded Public Works Programme (South Africa)</p>	<p>The survey indicated that participation in both programmes (Zimbabwe and Gundo Lashu) had a beneficial impact on all the dimensions of poverty examined, whether measured by income, asset ownership, access to services, or the capabilities or psycho-social aspects of poverty. However, despite a higher wage, some benefits were marginal in the case of the Gundo Lashu programme, where the depth of poverty of the participants was less severe than in the Zimbabwe programme. Also, the benefits in the case of the Gundo Lashu participants were limited by the short duration of the employment (McCord 2004)</p> <p>The study revealed that the Community Work Programme has significantly expanded participants capability and hence their functioning. Furthermore, participants of the Community Work Programme appear to experience a mind shift; especially in their views about work; their socio-economic rights; their own contribution to the collective wellbeing of their communities, and the importance of living positive and healthy lifestyles. The regular income has allowed them to make judicious investment decisions which include investment in assets and savings products (Vawda et al 2013)</p>	<p>Zimbabwe is a rural road maintenance programme that provide ongoing part-time employment targeted at the poorest households. Gundo Lashu is rural road construction programme that provide temporary full-time employment for the rural unemployed. The Community Works Programme is an area based programme that provides two days of work a week. All the programmes and other form part of the EPWP, a multi sectoral programme with a variety of sub-programmes, some providing temporary short-term employment and other providing long-term ongoing work. (All programmes together create about 600 000 full time equivalent (FTE) jobs per annum)</p>



It is important to recognize that there is a likely bias when considering the different results of different impact assessments. Because these assessments are costly, most detailed assessments are of large programmes. It is rarer to have detailed assessments of small programmes. Because of the different sizes of programmes, they have impacts which cannot be assumed to be similar.




**Box 3: Complexity of PEP impacts: Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNPP and Child Labour in Ethiopia)**

The quotation below from Woldehanna (2009) highlights how the impacts of PEPs are interconnected and complicated. This study focused on the effect of PSNP and child welfare and found a complex picture of both negative and positive impacts and concludes that they are positive in aggregate. However a study that only focused on the effects of PSNP on paid work by children may have come to very different conclusions.

*“Although the PWP component of PSNP increased the amount of time both girls and boys spent on paid work by 0.13 hours per day, it reduced the amount of time girls spent on child care and household chores by half an hour per day. The net effect is that children’s total hours spent on work are reduced. Moreover, PWP also increased the time girls spent on studying by 0.25 hours per day. In terms of child welfare outcome, the effect of the PWP of the PSNP is much better than that of its predecessor, EGS (Employment Generation Scheme). The positive impact of the PWP of the PSNP on paid child work (0.13 hours per day) is half of that of EGS (0.26 hours per day). Moreover, EGS did not reduce the amount of time boys and girls spent on childcare and household chores. Rather, it reduced boys’ time spent on schooling (0.36 hours less per day).”*

## 4. Learnings for programme design



This final part of the guidance note discusses some of the learnings for programme design that are emerging and some recent design innovations that can increase the impact of PEPs. The impact of specific measures is generally quite context specific. Care should therefore be taken in adopting some of these in other programmes – what might work well in one context may have unintended or negative outcomes in another. At the same time adapting and adopting some of these measures successfully can lead to significant improvement of the impacts of the programme.

### 4.1 General Learnings

Programmes that provide a short duration of employment tend to have a short-term impact on the income of participants. While this may seem obvious, it is worth restating it as one of the major criticisms that are targeted at these programmes by those who see them primarily as social protection instruments. So if programmes want long-term direct impacts on income of participants they need to provide longer-term employment. This should however be separated from the long-term impacts that the investments in assets or the provision of services through the PEP may have on the income of participants.

If a programme is to have impact on the poorest, it needs to reach the poorest by providing them with income and/or useful assets and services. And while PEPs can perform well in reaching the poor, this often requires deliberate efforts not only through targeting measures, but also through the removal of barriers such as lack of information or inability to participate in meetings, that can prevent participation of the poorest in work and decision making.

What is not monitored and measured tends to be ignored. For example where construction of assets is involved, the completion of the works and their quality are critical for achieving long-term benefits. Programmes that tend to focus on maximizing the short-term benefits often fail to properly monitor this and as a result the required quality is not achieved or projects are not completed.

While PEPs are often implemented in a context of an overall excess labour supply, this does not automatically hold for individual households. So the households of some of the poorest and most vulnerable can actually be labour constrained and this makes their participation in the PEP very difficult and ideally they would be targeted through other income support measures. PEPs can play a role in this context however by mobilizing excess labour in some households to support those that are labour constrained. Programmes that provide care to orphan headed households or that improve the agricultural land of labour constrained households are examples of this.

While many programmes aspire to have effective participation of the poorest and or local communities in various aspects of the programme, this can often prove to be difficult to achieve in practice and the desired participation is often reduced to tokenism of consultation only. One way to overcome this is through the engagement of neutral facilitators whose role is to create conditions that enable participation and create ability of the most vulnerable to influence outcomes.



## 4.2 Learnings on the impacts of the participation in work


Some measures that can assist in maximizing the impacts of employment are:

- Ensure that the working conditions and rights at work enhance the dignity of those working.
- Treat and respect the work done to ensure that the principle of a fair days work for a fair days wage applies and the work component does not degenerate into “make-work”
- Ensure that the programme supports formalization by for example, providing contracts, proof of employment, salary slips, and payments into bank accounts
- Ensure that there is no stigma attached to the programme so that it is not seen as a programme for the unemployable or for the destitute only. This may limit the possibilities of graduating from the programme or for some to enter into it
- Where PEPs have as one of its objectives “to support entry into the labour market”, it is important that they are designed in a way to facilitate:
  - Work to be relevant to the larger labour market
  - Work-related skills whether technical, workplace behaviour or life skills to be cultivated
- Links to public employment services and other active labour market policies are considered.

## 4.3 Learnings on the impact of the income earned

Some measures that can assist in maximizing the impacts of the income are:

- Ensure that those who worked are able to collect and have control over wages and income
- Ensure that payment is provided on time at clearly agreed upon time and place

- 
- Especially for longer-term programmes structure payments so that they are regular so participants can plan their expenditure
  - Also make the income predictable by ensuring that people know when they will be offered work and when they will be paid for that work
  - Why would the income benefit able bodied people more than disabled people?
  - If work opportunities are limited, from amongst those who are able to work, target the poorest who will be able to benefit the most
  - Consider building linkages to financial inclusion such as payment through bank accounts and post offices and facilitating access to credit
  - Minimize the cost of collecting payment: reduce travel time, limit waiting, avoid surcharges and deductions if using third parties to make the payments

#### 4.4 Learnings regarding the impacts of the assets and services delivered

Some measures that can assist in maximizing the impacts of the assets and services provided are:

- Ensure that projects are completed and meet the required quality standards so that they are functional and produce the desired outputs
- Empower communities to select the most impactful assets: not only providing the structures and processes to have the community make such decisions, but also through providing the technical knowledge to make sure that these decisions are technically sound and consistent
- Confirm that systems are put in place to ensure that assets are maintained. This requires capacity at the local level, as well as available resources and / or incentives. The assumption that communities will voluntarily maintain assets has too often been over ambitious, especially when the benefits of an asset are not equally shared. It is rare for communities to be able to maintain a system on voluntary maintenance
- Create space in the programme to enable it to adopt new ideas from communities for work and projects. This may require the ability for some negotiation on material / labour ratios and project choices and also requires a high degree of community participation to ensure that these ideas have wide support within the community
- Allow for investments on private land and dwellings of the poorest or those of the target group. While this potentially opens up the

programme to possibly diverting work to benefit the most influential in the community rather than the poorest; where such investments do reach the land of dwellings of the poor, the programme can increase its impact by providing two types of direct benefits to a specific target group.


- While assets and projects that benefit the poor generally increase the overall impact of the programme on the poor, there is a legitimate question as to what extent the assets and services should focus exclusively on the poor and that in order to ensure political sustainability, programmes should consider spreading these benefits<sup>4</sup>. Some have argued that there are also other political considerations, to factor into this equation.

#### 4.5 Learnings for overall and aggregated impacts and multipliers

- Select assets and services that support the local economy and enhance productivity or efficiency
- Consider the environment and natural resources rehabilitation and / or protection, and potential assets that could be better maintained and / or made more climate resilient to withstand future natural disasters
- Procure programme inputs such as materials, tools, food and services locally as much as possible so that the local economy is stimulated through increased demand from the programme
- Build organizational capabilities at local level; community organizations and participatory planning, contracting, monitoring / auditing systems
- Build linkages to other relevant programmes and interventions such as small enterprise development, micro credit, agricultural extension services etc

<sup>4</sup> Dev (1995) argues for instance that one reason the Maharashtra Employment Guarantee Scheme ran for 30 years- continues as part of the national employment guarantee scheme NREGA, is that the rural rich supported the programme because they also benefitted from the assets created by the programme.

## 5. Concluding remarks



Impact assessment of PEPs is essential to make them more relevant and more effective meaning that they reach their target groups and improve their livelihoods. Impact assessment tools can be used to evaluate past programmes or to show the potential impact of future programmes and therefore improve the design phase of PEPs.

It can perhaps not be emphasized enough, that in many cases the key impacts are those on the participants of PEPs and their households. For this reason, it is important that impact assessments actively involve participants of the programmes. The purpose of this participation should not be limited to getting a better understanding and measure of the impacts, but should also include receiving feedback that can inform how these impacts can be deepened or improved through better programme design and implementation.

In order to make these assessment tools more relevant, it is therefore useful to include micro data collected at the project level into the macro framework for calibration. It is crucial to understand the inter-linkages between macroeconomic policies, its implications at the sectoral level and its effect at the micro level on groups of workers and households.

Finally as was mentioned earlier, one important reason for the limited number of comprehensive and detailed impact assessments is the cost and the complexity associated with these. Even though the cost may be moderate when compared with the total cost of a large PEP, the costs and associated technical expertise required are still substantial and not easily mobilized. Added to this, are some of the complexities and uncertainties associated with these assessments as mentioned above as well as the need to measure some aspects over a longer period of time, often years. The combination of these factors makes it difficult to mobilize sufficient resources for a comprehensive impact assessment.

There has been increasing criticism about the need to show evidence in the impact of public employment programmes especially of “public works”. Such assessments would most likely require collaboration among donors and research institutions in order to mobilize both the financial and technical resources to make such assessments possible, and a concerted effort among those with interests in such assessments to collaborate on such comprehensive assessments would most certainly be welcomed.



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## Checklist

IMPACT OF PEPS	
<b>Respond to the following questions</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Many public employment programmes (PEPs) are multifaceted, but what is the main priority, the secondary priority, etc? (e.g. increasing employment content, social protection coverage and income security, asset creation or budget-based)	
What were the main reasons for developing a PEP? (e.g. as part of an employment strategy, part of a social protection strategy, to complement and intensify employment component in national public investment programmes (PIPs), to better respond to recurring crises, to climate change and environmental protection)	
Has the programme been designed properly to have impact on the poorest through not only targeting measures, but also through the removal of barriers such as lack of information or inability to participate in meetings, that can prevent participation of the poorest in work and decision-making?	
What are the intended social, economic, and environmental impacts (e.g. increased job creation, income security, asset creation, community and social works environmental rehabilitation and protection, livelihoods)? Map out the impacts.	
PEPs and potential impacts of participation on work on the individual / household / community.	
Ensure that the working conditions and rights at work enhance the dignity of those working.	
Treat and respect the work done to ensure that the principle of a fair days work for a fair days wage applies and the work component does not degenerate into "make-work".	
Ensure that the programme supports formalization by for example providing contracts, proof of employment, salary slips, and payments into bank account.	
Ensure that there is no stigma attached to the programme so that it is not seen as a programme for the unemployable or for the destitute only. This may limit the possibilities of graduating from the programme or for some to enter into it	
Where PEPs have as one of its objectives "to support entry into the labour market", it is important that they are designed in a way to facilitate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work to be relevant to the larger labour market</li> <li>• Work-related skills whether technical, workplace behaviour or life skills to be cultivated</li> </ul>	





PEPs and potential impacts of income earned on the individual / household / community	
Ensure that those who worked are able to collect and have control over wages and income	
Ensure that payment is provided on time at clearly agreed upon time and place	
Especially for longer-term programmes structure payments so that they are regular so participants can plan their expenditure	
Also make the income predictable by ensuring that people know when they will be offered work and when they will be paid for that work	
If work opportunities are limited, from amongst those who are able to work, target the poorest who will be able to benefit the most	
Consider building linkages to financial inclusion such as payment through bank accounts and post offices and facilitating access to credit	
Minimize the cost of collecting payment: reduce travel time, limit waiting, avoid surcharges and deductions if using third parties to make the payments	
PEPs and potential impacts of the assets and services delivered on the individual / household / community.	
Where construction of assets is involved, the completion of the works and their quality are critical for achieving long-term benefits. Programmes that then to focus on maximizing the short-term benefits often fail to properly monitor this and as a result the required quality is not achieved or projects are not completed	
Ensure that projects are completed and meet the required quality standards so that they are functional and produce the desired outputs	
Empower communities to select the most impactful assets: not only providing the structures and processes to have the community make such decisions, but also through providing the technical knowledge to make sure that these decisions are technically sound and consistent	
Confirm that systems are put in place to ensure that assets are maintained. This requires capacity at the local level, as well as available resources and / or incentives. The assumption that communities will voluntarily maintain assets has too often been over ambitious, especially when the benefits of an asset are not equally shared. It is rare for communities to be able to maintain a system on voluntary maintenance	



<p>Create space in the programme to enable it to adopt new ideas from communities for work and projects. This may require the ability for some negotiation on material / labour ratios and project choices and also requires a high degree of community participation to ensure that these ideas have wide support within the community</p>	
<p>Allow for investments on private land and dwellings of the poorest or those of the target group. While this potentially opens up the programme to possibly diverting work to benefit the most influential in the community rather than the poorest, where such investments do reach the land of dwellings of the poor, the programme can increase its impact by providing two types of direct benefits to a specific target group</p>	
<p>While assets and projects that benefit the poor generally increase the overall impact of the programme on the poor, there is a legitimate question as to what extent the assets and services should focus exclusively on the poor and that in order to ensure political sustainability programmes should consider spreading these benefits. Some have argued that there are also other political considerations, to factor into this equation</p>	
<p>PEPs and potential institutional impacts of the programme on work on the individual / household / community</p>	
<p>Select assets and services that support the local economy and enhance productivity or efficiency</p>	
<p>Consider the environment and natural resources rehabilitation and / or protection, and potential assets that could be better maintained and / or made more climate resilient to withstand future natural disasters</p>	
<p>Procure programme inputs such as materials, tools, food and services locally as much as possible so that the local economy is stimulated through increased demand from the programme</p>	
<p>Build organizational capabilities at local level; community organizations and participatory planning, contracting, monitoring/auditing systems</p>	
<p>Build linkages to other relevant programmes and interventions such as small enterprise development, micro credit, agricultural extension services etc.</p>	
<p>Were there any unexpected or unintended impacts? Any lessons learned from previous programmes and any findings that could be considered in the new programme design?</p>	



<p>Given that there is a wide range of possible impacts and no real one standard approach to measuring the impact of PEPs, consider whether if any other impact assessments, such as on infrastructure investments, social protection measures, active labour market policies, etc could be more relevant.</p>	
<p>Is the programme expected to only provide short-term impact on the income of participants, and is this programme being used primarily as a social protection instrument?</p>	
<p>Or, is the programme expected to have long-term direct impacts on income of participants? If so the programme should to be designed to provide longer-term employment.</p>	
<p>PEPs could also have impact on the income of participants through the long-term impacts that the investments in assets or service provisions could have.</p>	
<p>Have the beneficiaries been actively involved in the design of the impact assessment? The purpose of their involvement should not be limited to getting a better understanding and measure of the impacts, but should also include receiving feedback that can inform how these impacts can be deepened or improved through better programme design and implementation.</p>	
<p>Has micro data collected at the project level been included into the macro framework for calibration? It is crucial to understand the inter-linkages between macroeconomic policies, its implications at the sectoral level and its effect at the micro level on groups of workers and households.</p>	









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