

South Africa and the ILO team up to promote public employment and community work programmes

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PRETORIA (ILO News) – With an official unemployment rate of 25 per cent, the South African government knows that employment creation cannot be left to the private sector alone. There is a huge gap between the jobs that are needed and the jobs that the market can generate. The State has the responsibility to fill that gap.

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This idea is fully shared by International Labour Organization (ILO), whose 2009 [Global Jobs Pact](#) called for “using public employment guarantee schemes for temporary employment, emergency public works programmes and other direct job creation schemes which are well targeted, and include the informal economy”.

South Africa's Community Work Programme

The ILO and the South African government have just held a seven-day international workshop aimed at sharing knowledge and experiences on innovations in PEPs, and addressing information and capacity building needs of its Community Work Programme.

The CWP creates access to a minimum level (2 days per week) of regular and predictable work opportunities targeting areas of high unemployment while supplementing existing livelihood strategies without disrupting or displacing them. The CWP was recently (April 2011) integrated as a fully- financed government programme of the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA).

The CWP was significantly scaled up between April 2010 and March 2011, with a total of 89,689 work opportunities created across all nine South African provinces. The plan, as confirmed by CoGTA, is to reach 237,000 people by 2014.

Mr. Reckson Luvhengo, Executive Manager of the CWP, said the programme is community-driven and has the potential to strengthen the interface between local government and communities.

The workshop

The workshop¹ was hosted by the South African government and brought together key stakeholders of the CWP. During seven days, more than 70 participants compared notes in the design and delivery of PEPs,

¹ The course was based on the international course on “Innovations in Public Employment Programmes”, developed and run by the Employment-Intensive Investment Programme of the ILO (EIIP) in collaboration with the

their own experiences with CWP's, and also carried out a work-design exercise covering work-identification, work-planning as well as various management-related issues.

The workshop included field visits to different rural communities in South Africa, including Tjakastad, Nhlazatshe and Bushbuckridge, allowing direct interaction with the workers and beneficiaries.

One of the groups that visited a local clinic in Bushbuckridge heard from Sister Malibeye, the senior nurse who had been doing house visits to people on tuberculosis (TB) medication. She said that "CWP's work has brought down the TB infection rate and helped eliminate the incidence of Multiple Drug Resistant TB in the area."

Meanwhile, other CWP participants were working in the vegetable garden, growing food which is given to patients on TB and Antiretroviral medication. Two other CWP participants were performing administrative work for the clinic, and two more have been trained to collect data. In the past, nurses were doing this work. Now they can focus on health outcomes.

One of the keynote participants of the workshop was Ms Amita Sharma, former Joint Secretary of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme of India, who highlighted the importance of including PEPs as part of an inclusive growth national strategy, and emphasized the need to reinforce decentralization at the local level as a way of ensuring participatory approaches, enabling policy innovations and pushing towards higher transparency and accountability.

On the issue of affordability, she said: "Fiscal space can be created through innovative investment approaches and their multiplier effects, policy cohesion and programme rationalization".

According to Ms Mito Tsukamoto, Employment Intensive Investment Policies expert from the ILO, "the workshop has contributed to creating an enabling environment and better appreciation of the range of policy and operational issues and to learn about existing innovations in PEPs and CWP's".

The workshop included the participation of the National Treasury, the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA), the Department of Local Government and Housing (DHLG), as well as several non-profit implementing agents, including Trade and Industrial Policy Strategies (TIPS), the Seriti Institute and Teba Development, and other development partners.

For more information, please contact the ILO Department of Communication and Public Information on +41 22 799 7912, email: communication@ilo.org.

International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization (ITC-ILO). The next international open course is planned for 12-30 September (12-25 September distance learning / 26-30 in ITC-Turin, Italy). For further information, please contact s.ouine@itcilo.org.