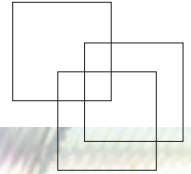




International
Labour
Office

Towards the right to work

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



Guidance note 6-2 Ensuring gender equity in PEPs

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Guidance note 6-2

Ensuring gender equity in PEPs

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Guidance note 6-2

Ensuring gender equity in PEPs



Objective

The objective of this note is to provide information and insights into public employment programmes¹ (PEPs) and employment guarantee schemes (EGSs), paying particular attention to issues of gender equality. It is hoped that it will stimulate discussion, provide the necessary dialogue tools for ‘en-gendering’ job-creation initiatives, and increase awareness of how gender equality can be promoted within government public employment initiatives.

Introduction

Public employment programmes and employment guarantee schemes are government-funded initiatives that offer a minimum-wage job to those who are ready and willing to work but who are unable to find work. Such initiatives have been largely used to ameliorate the sudden surge in unemployment caused by financial and economic crises, and by natural disasters. In these instances, the state acts as the ‘employer of last resort’ (ELR) by providing work security when all else fails. However, lack of readily available jobs – in sufficient quantity to match the number of people seeking paid work – is not only a problem in times of crisis. For example, large segments of the world population could not find predictable and decent work even prior to the onset of the current global economic upheaval.

¹ M. Lieuw-Kie-Song; K. Philip; M. Tsukamoto; M. Van Imschoot: *Towards the right to work: Innovations in public employment programmes (IPEP)*, ILO Employment Working Paper No. 69 (Geneva, International Labour Organization, 2011).

Why consider implementing a public employment programme now?

While for some people the current global economic crisis marks a setback from the path to prosperity, for many others it is accentuating poverty, inequality and social exclusion. According to the ILO, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank the last two years (2008–2009) have witnessed reversals in developmental gains. There is much reason for concern: approximately 50 million more people are predicted to have joined the ranks of the unemployed and, on a world scale, combined with the fuel and food price spikes of 2008, over 150 million more people than predicted prior to the onset of the crisis have been trapped in poverty.²

Sudden declines in aggregate demand have always had serious repercussions for employment and income. Furthermore, if history can be of some guidance, the evidence from previous financial crises shows that despite the stabilization of gross domestic product (GDP) growth, employment recovery in the aftermath of crises lags behind other economic indicators by five to seven years. In the aftermath of the 1997 Asian financial crisis, Indonesia never recovered to the pre-crisis level, while the Philippines and Thailand took nearly a decade to decrease unemployment rates to the pre-crisis levels.

Yet, the lack of employment opportunities is not a problem exclusive to times of crisis. Many people working in the informal sector, for example, suffer from underemployment and unpredictable spells of unemployment; most rural workers only have access to seasonal agricultural work and, therefore, despite distress migration the uncertainty of a job is daunting; own-account workers also depend on diversification of sources of income, as their earnings from

² See the following publications:

M. Ravallion: *Bailing out the world's poorest* (Washington, DC, World Bank, 2009).

C. Shaohua and M. Ravallion: *The impact of the global financial crisis on the world's poorest* (2008). Available at: <http://www.voxeu.org/index.php?q=node/3520> [accessed 19 May 2011].

World Bank: *Rising food and fuel prices: Addressing the risks to future generations* (Washington, DC, 2008a).

World Bank: *Global economic prospects* (Washington, DC, 2008b).

The figure of over 150 million is based on World Bank (2008a) estimates: "There are converging estimates on the global increase in the number of poor due to the food crisis, averaging between 3-5 percentage points in global poverty rates and equivalent to around 100 million people". In 2009, Ravallion reported between 53 and 79 million people falling below the poverty line of 1.25 US dollars (US\$) and US\$2.00, respectively (see Footnote 2).

M. Buvinic: *The global financial crisis: Assessing vulnerability for women and children, identifying policy responses*. Commission on the Status of Women, Fifty-third Session, New York, NY, 2–13 Mar. (New York, NY, 2009).

sales are highly volatile.³ In addition, there is structural unemployment. In South Africa, for example, structural reasons have for over a decade and a half prevented about 25–30 per cent of the population from gaining access to work opportunities, with women experiencing on average higher rates of unemployment and some socioeconomic groups, i.e. black urban poor women and men, double the rate.

Whether the economy is expanding or contracting or whether unemployment is seasonal, cyclical, or structural, the impact of joblessness, especially among the poor and among women, is the same: it causes material deprivation, hopelessness and social exclusion and exposure to increased violence. The high price of joblessness and the frequency with which it strikes makes a strong political argument for public employment programmes and employment guarantee schemes, as does their important contribution towards strategic developmental goals.

What is a public employment programme policy?

Throughout the last century, many countries undertook what is variably known as ‘employment guarantee schemes’, ‘public employment programmes’, ‘food for work’, ‘public works programmes’, and ‘employment of last resort’ programmes. These countries include Argentina, Australia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Chile, Ethiopia, France, Ghana, India, Korea, Peru, South Africa, Sweden and the United States. All have intermittently adopted public-service job creation policies that have rendered the government effectively, yet in most cases only *temporarily*, the ‘employer of last resort’. In order to avoid labour market dislocation (i.e. substitution of existing jobs), and achieve effective self-selection (so that the better-off did not become programme beneficiaries), remuneration was set at or around the minimum wage.

Despite their common aim of job creation, each country went about the task differently. In Argentina, for example, the *Jefes y Jefas de Hogar* was

³ See the following publications:
 J. Ghosh: “New research questions in the Decent Work Agenda, a view from Asia”, in G. Rodgers and C. Kuptsch (eds): *Pursuing decent work goals: Priorities for research* (Geneva, International Labour Organization, 2008).
 International Labour Organization: *Global employment trends* (Geneva, 2010).
 E. Kalula: “The Decent Work Agenda: An African perspective on research needs and priorities”, in G. Rodgers and C. Kuptsch (eds.): *Pursuing decent work goals: Priorities for research* (Geneva, International Labour Organization, International Institute for Labour Studies, 2008).
 J.A. Ocampo: “The Links Between Economic and Social Policies: A Conceptual Framework”, in G. Rodgers and C. Kuptsch (eds.): *Pursuing decent work goals: Priorities for research* (Geneva, International Labour Organization, International Institute for Labour Studies, 2008).
 R. Antonopoulos: *Policy brief – macro-micro impacts of employment guarantee programmes* (New York, NY, United Nations Development Programme, 2008). Available at: http://www.undp-povertycentre.org/paper-seminar/IPCseminar_Rania_Antonopoulos.pdf [20 May 2011].

introduced immediately following the 2001 financial crisis. Part-time, year-round employment was offered to anyone in need as long as they were heads of households – with dependent children – at a little below the minimum wage. As the crisis eased, the programme was gradually phased out starting in 2003. Korea's experience in the context of the 1997 Asian crisis was similar. On the other hand, in Bangladesh and Ethiopia, public works initiatives have been used during years of severe drought in order to increase food security and enhance rural productivity. Their common characteristic is their temporary nature.

However, PEP and EGS programmes do not need to be temporary. As discussed earlier, the underlying reasons people need to diversify their sources of income are many. There is a view, therefore, that holds such programmes to be useful and indeed imperative as a *permanent* part of the economic policy toolkit.⁴ Hyman Minsky proposed an employer of last resort policy, i.e. a universal and permanent programme, as the most practical solution. Although he is much better known for his seminal work on financial instability, he put forward the idea that ELR can function as a redistributive automatic stabilizer. Eliminating 'forced' idleness, he argued, is a key to domestic (labour) resource mobilization, which leads to a more inclusive path of development. Examples of asset value thus created include the construction of new roads, maintenance of public structures

© ILO/Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme



⁴ See the following publications:
 J. Drèze and A.K. Sen: *Hunger and public action* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1989).
 P. Tcherneva and L. Randall Wray: *Public employment and women: The impact of Argentina's Jefes program on female heads of poor households*, Working Paper 519 (Annandale-on-Hudson, NY, Levy Economics Institute of Bard College, 2007).
 D.B. Papadimitriou: *Promoting equality through an employment of last resort policy*, Working Paper 545 (Annandale-on-Hudson, NY, Levy Economics Institute of Bard College, 2008).
 H.P. Minsky: *Stabilizing an unstable economy* (New Haven, CT, Yale University Press, 1986).

(such as bridges), rural land development, flood control works, reforestation, and environmental clean up. The benefits to society and communities are multiple and, depending on the specifics of project selection, they can result in better quality of life, enhanced productivity and livelihood options, as well as lead to crowding in of private investment.

In this context, two country experiences deserve special mention. The first is the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act⁵ (MGNREGA) in India, which is a *permanent* public works creation programme. Introduced to generate employment for members of poor rural households during the agricultural off-season, MGNREGA became part of the Constitution of India in 2005, making the state the guarantor of the 'right to work'. It provides 100 days of work per year to households located in any of the poor rural districts throughout the country. Currently, there is discussion regarding the expansion of this policy so that it: (a) reaches the poor in urban areas; and (b) extends the entitlement to 150 days per annum. Work projects so far have been selected with the explicit aim to improve rural infrastructure, increase agricultural productivity, and enhance livelihood options. This is a unique initiative in many regards, including the simultaneous passage of the Right to Information Act, which serves to enhance the transparency and accountability of civil society's oversight in monitoring the programme. The cost of the programme, which by now reaches over 40 million households, is less than one per cent of GDP.

The second is the 'Expanded Public Works Programme' (EPWP)⁶ in South Africa, which is also not a temporary initiative, although its coverage is much smaller. It has a medium- to long-term horizon and is a labour market policy programme. Introduced in 2004 with a five-year target to create a million work opportunities, the programme is now in its second phase and aims to double that target. In order to alleviate the extraordinary problem of chronic and structural unemployment that has averaged about 25–30 per cent in the post-apartheid era, the mandate of the EPWP was to utilize public sector budgets to provide short- to medium-term employment opportunities to unskilled, unemployed workers from poor and ultra-poor households. The programme remained relatively small during its first phase, but is now scaling up its ambition to create two million additional full-time jobs. When compared to other similar international programmes, the EPWP is quite innovative in that it provides work opportunities not only in infrastructure, but also in the social sectors of the economy – of particular importance for gender equality, which is the issue we turn to in the remainder of this policy brief.

⁵ Government of India. Ministry of Rural Development. *National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005*, <http://nrega.nic.in/netnrega/home.aspx> (accessed 19 May 2011).

⁶ See web sites: Government of Zambia, Department of Public Works. *Welcome to the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP): Phase 2*, available at: <http://www.epwp.gov.za/> (accessed 20 May 2011); and Economists for full employment, available at: <http://www.economistsforfullemployment.org> (accessed 20 May 2011).

PEP and EGS: Ensuring gender equality in job creation

The employment of unskilled manual labour in PEPs and EGSs is meant to promote social inclusion of marginalized groups and supplement the incomes of those in vulnerable employment. Though not the case in every country or locality within a country, the majority of the world's 1.3 billion poor are women. They comprise the majority of the population in vulnerable employment,⁷ have lower labour market participation rates, and experience higher rates of unemployment.⁸ It is important, therefore, to explore how PEP and EGS can best serve the interests of the many women who stand to benefit from them. Much insight can be gained by addressing two key issues:

- **Issue 1: How to ensure that women also have access to PEP and EGS jobs?**
- **Issue 2: How to ensure that the benefits of selected projects reach women as well?**

Before turning to the issue of ensuring gender equality in job creation, it should be pointed out that for women, PEP and EGS policies are often thought of as competing with conditional cash transfers (CCTs). In creating job opportunities, these two programmes deliver income protection to all participants, including women. A public employment programme is an employment insurance policy and also, a *productive* social safety-net system because, in addition to income, assets are created that yield public and private benefits. Moreover, though not always a stated objective, the benefits to PEP participants also include the acquisition or upgrading of skills, and the enhancement of livelihood options and employability. In this regard, they may be complementary to, but are also quite different from CCTs in their aim and scope. For example, Brazil's *Bolsa Familia* and Mexico's *Oportunidades*, deliver income to women on condition that their children's health and educational needs are being met.⁹ The focus of a PEP and EGS is somewhat different. It addresses women as workers, not as mothers. Therefore, *all* women are entitled to participate, independently of marital status and care responsibilities to school-aged children, i.e. unmarried women, widows without children, and those whose children have entered adulthood are all eligible. In other words, in addition to being an income policy, PEP and EGS have an intrinsically transformative paid-work potential for women.

⁷ Vulnerable employment is a combined employment category of own-account work and unpaid family work.

⁸ ILO: Global employment trends (Geneva, 2010): Key Indicators of the Labour Market (KILM 8–13).

⁹ The monthly income payment is transferred to the recipient mother (primary carer) upon proof that the child has remained enrolled in school and attended regular doctor's appointments.

■ Issue 1: How to ensure that women also have access to PEP and EGS jobs?

Much like women's participation in the labour market, PEP and EGS programmes must take into account existing inequality patterns in the division of labour between men and women, including long-standing biases. If properly identified, entry barriers, job assignment segregation, and other asymmetries to which women are subjected, can be remedied at the design phase. For the most part, PEP and EGS job opportunities have typically been created in the construction and maintenance of physical infrastructure assets. From a practical and, therefore, policy point of view, four aspects deserve special mention.

First, women's equitable access to jobs is predicated on addressing the gender-differentiated supply of labour constraints. Unlike men, women's world of work includes the dedication of a considerable amount of their time to unpaid care work. These tasks include not only household maintenance, sanitation and food preparation but also the collection and transportation of free goods, wood for fuel and water, especially among poor households. Furthermore, female family members' traditional responsibilities to nurture and care for all household members, especially for young children, constrains the time they can devote to participating in remunerated work activities.

Bearing in mind the hard and unfair choices women have to make between caring for families and young children and being gainfully employed, India's Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) provides an excellent solution. It mandates that: (a) all MGNREGA worksites assign workers to providing and maintaining crèches, shade and water for children; (b) time off be available for lactating mothers to feed young children; and (c) work projects be within a relatively short distance from women's dwellings with an asset within five kilometres (km). The case of Argentina's *Jefes y Jefas de Hogar* is another case in point. Although the programme did not have any formal stipulations, in parallel to their other project work assignments the women requested and organized on-site crèche facilities and the establishment of communal kitchens for meal preparation. Also, in Argentina's case, jobs offered were, by design, for half-a-day, allowing more time for carrying out of domestic responsibilities. Perhaps this in part



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explains the very high levels of female participation (over 70 per cent) in the programme.¹⁰

Second, the gendered nature of work assignments may exclude women from some jobs. Construction jobs in infrastructure have traditionally been carried out by men. Physiological characteristics may be part of the explanation. Yet, as such work entails a variety of coordinated tasks, some requiring more strength than others, this does not account for the highly segregated nature of the industry. Responding to this challenge, some PEP and EGS programmes have explicitly included targets for women. For example, during the first phase of the EPWP in South Africa, the overall participation target per annum mandated that 55 per cent of workers be women.¹¹ In India, MGNREGA mandates a 33 per cent participation rate for women. There is immense variation across programmes. Yet, the existing evidence shows women overwhelmingly wanting to enroll in employment guarantee infrastructure projects.¹²

Another critical issue is the under-representation of women in semi-skilled categories of public works and their low participation rates as subcontractors and supervisors of projects. In some cases, the shortfalls may be an extension of normal labour practices prevailing in the rest of the economy. But when appropriate training is warranted, it must be made part of PEP initiatives. Public employment programmes and employment guarantee schemes can play a crucial role in this domain. A good example in this regard comes from Peru (see Box 1).



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- ¹⁰ P. Tcherneva and L. Randall Wray: *Public employment and women: The impact of Argentina's Jefes program on female heads of poor households*, Working Paper 519 (Annandale-on-Hudson, NY, Levy Economics Institute of Bard College, 2007).
- ¹¹ In South Africa, the EPWP, influenced by the national labour standards set by the Code of Good Practice targets, also mandates that at least 40 per cent of workers be youth and three per cent of workers be disabled, to be scaled-up over time.
- ¹² S. Devereux and C. Solomon: *Employment creation programmes: The international experience*. Issues in Employment and Poverty, Discussion Paper 24 (Geneva, International Labour Organization, 2006).

Box 1. Quotas matter in Peru

The Rural Roads Maintenance Programme in Peru (2003–2006) increased female participation from 3.5 per cent to 24 per cent by setting a female participation quota of 10 per cent in microenterprises, combined with a gender training programme for the different actors and levels of the project. Improved participation in decision-making roles in 284 microenterprises were directly linked to the targeted training. The programme also found that women could undertake all maintenance activities, and had performed better than men in activities such as surface presentation, forestry, signalization and control of tasks.

Source: Gutiérrez, M.T. 2005. *Relaciones de género en un proyecto de infraestructura vial: Medidas afirmativas en pro de la inclusión de la mujer en el espacio laboral*, PUCP [Gender relations in a transportation infrastructure project: Affirmative action in favour of including women in the workplace (PUCP)] (Lima, Ministry of Transport and Communications, Provias Rural MTC Perú).

As well as giving women the chance to participate in less traditional occupations, the skills acquired in a PEP programme can expand livelihood options, and there are many lessons learned.¹³ For example, research in Argentina found that women beneficiaries who asked for and received training in carpentry, were able to take on independent contracts in their community shortly afterwards.¹⁴ In a rural area in the outskirts of KwaZulu Natal, South Africa, a women's cooperative that was formed within the EPWP for mushroom production (a high value added agriculture product) became self-sustaining. In Limpopo, also in South Africa, extension services combined with the EPWP in the social sector led to the development of vegetable gardens that benefited not only programme workers but also non-programme community members. In the State of Hidalgo, Mexico, during initial planning discussions for a pilot programme, potential women beneficiaries passionately argued that with some support they could learn how to be plumbers and carpenters, and how to drive, so that all work contributions could be provided by them.

Skill enhancing services, adapted to local needs and conditions, can often be leveraged from within local and national government processes and budgetary allocations already in place. In the case of rural PEP programmes (such as the MGNREGA), extension services and marketing training for cooperatives is not new. Also, from the very beginning, the EPWP in South Africa introduced a skills upgrading component, allocating one day a week

¹³ The information in this paragraph is based on personal observations of the author during on-site visits.

¹⁴ M. Tepepa: *Community development and ELR: A gender perspective on the Jefes y Jefas de Hogar*, UNDP-LEVY Conference on Employment Guarantee Policies: Responding to the Current Crisis, Promoting Long-Term Development Goals, 22–23 Jun. (Annandale-on-Hudson, NY, Levy Economics Institute of Bard College, 2009).

for this purpose, resulting in proper accreditation and certification by the local authorities. However, for this component to work, coordination across departments (labour and education) is needed.

Equitable wages and equal pay for comparable work must be safeguarded.

Again, the need to address gender-based inequities in wages is based on the concern that such programmes are likely to mirror practices and outcomes that prevail in the overall economy. On a world scale, women's wages lag behind men's. Although the underlying reasons are complex, and are beyond the scope of this note, there are many instances where differences in education, work experience, and other job-related qualifications do not explain the presence of gender wage differences. Norms, job segregation and overall labour market segmentation have perpetuated conditions of work that lead to gender-based discrimination. By setting identical wage 'floors' for men and women, PEPs and EGSs can effectively lead by example. Designing and organizing these programmes' work projects in ways that will enable women workers to secure decent work conditions and equal pay for comparable work is within reach¹⁵. The MGNREGA, for example, has introduced stipulations requiring women to be paid equal wages. In some cases, maintaining fairness in compensation has been based on time-motion studies (Box 2). The cost of such studies is minimal and, if properly designed, they ensure that compensation is informed by gender- and age-sensitive productivity norms.

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¹⁵ ILO's international labour standards provide guidance on the issues involved in wages equality. The three most relevant ILO conventions are C. 100, Equal Remuneration Convention of 1951; C. 111, Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention of 1958; and C. 156, Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention of 1958.

Box 2. Women workers and their perceptions of MGNREGA, India

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act participants, men and women alike, belong to the most disadvantaged groups and most were illiterate labourers (82 per cent in the case of women). These are some of the attractive features of MGNREGA, as reported by women workers. Many female respondents said the work provided under the MGNREGA was the only paid work opportunity for them (70 per cent). The wider acceptability of MGNREGA work derives from several factors: it is locally available; it is regular and the working hours are predictable; there is less chance of the working conditions being exploitative; the work is considered socially acceptable and 'dignified'. Lastly, it is better paid than other work: women received the same amount as men, 85 rupees (Rs) per day as compared to Rs 47 to 58 per day they would have received in unskilled agricultural and other casual labour.

Source: Based on Khera, R., Nayak, N. 2009. "Women workers and perceptions of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, India", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 44, No. 43, pp. 49–57.

Work for pay is important not only for survival but also for its value in recognizing the autonomous *social* value of labour.¹⁶ Autonomy and empowerment do not materialize automatically, simply because paid work becomes available. Such transformation is a complex process, but the direct involvement of women workers in deciding on work assignments and on the receipt of remuneration, instead of the decision-making being handled by other 'supervisory' household members (i.e. fathers, husbands, and mothers-in-law) is important. Given the traditionally unequal power relations in households when women are directly involved in these processes on an autonomous basis, their social positioning shifts: from their own perspective, from that of their families, and in the community as a whole. Real and effective control over decision-making for spending may take time and intra-household conflicts may at times be intense. Yet, testimonies and research suggest that, among poor households, when income ends up in the hands of women, spending patterns change with increases being registered in health, nutrition, and the education of children¹⁷. This calls for optimism, as it is evidence of the correlation

¹⁶ In that its value does not lie in the 'nature' of women's family duty, love or obligation. Instead, by being remunerated, its value rests in its income-earning ability. Of course, being engaged in work activities out of love carries many rewards for both the provider and the receiver. But the fact that it is women that disproportionately perform most of the unpaid work that sustains families 'naturalizes' this work and, in the end, renders it invisible, expected and 'woman's work'.

¹⁷ This has been termed the 'good mother thesis'. It is also known that even at low levels of income, women band together to form rotating savings groups (ROSCAS), whilst research has highlighted that men tend to allocate a larger part of the family income to their own needs, such as tobacco and alcohol.

between autonomous earnings and women's higher level of control over spending and decision-making.

■ Issue 2: How to ensure that the benefits of selected projects reach women as well?

A quote from the introductory passage of a recent ILO–UNDP joint publication¹⁸ aptly introduces the theme of this section: “We cannot confront social exclusion, inequality and poverty without at the same time and with the same energy dealing with women’s overload of work and their limited employment opportunities.” The thrust of the arguments concerns the need to redress the burden of unpaid care work placed on women who are the primary providers of care for children, the elderly and the handicapped. The publication’s many contributions include a call for social co-responsibility with the state taking a leading role in innovative thinking across its implementing departments and socioeconomic policies.

In creating jobs, a main concern of PEP and EGS programmes is that public funds are invested in projects that are socially useful. As many developing countries experience backlogs in basic physical infrastructure works, these programmes have traditionally focused on closing the gaps, mostly through the use of labour-intensive production methods.¹⁹ As workers and residents living in the areas in which projects are being carried out, women stand to benefit in much the same way as men do. Yet, there is space to enlarge the scope of employment-intensive works insofar as greater awareness of gender-differentiated priorities can provide guidance and insights to the implementing agencies. Project selection that bridges backlogs in social service delivery benefits community life, contributes towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (see Appendix 1), while narrowing gender-based inequalities in unpaid work.

In addition, physical infrastructure projects can be leveraged and prioritized to contribute to reduce unpaid work.

¹⁸ International Labour Organization (ILO)-United Nations Development Programme (UNDP): *Work and family: Towards new forms of reconciliation with social co-responsibility* (Geneva, 2009).

¹⁹ This is a field the International Labour Organization has been instrumental in providing technical support. Projects use a minimum amount of machines, thus maximizing the labour content of production. The Organization has advocated the use of such production methods for decades and several countries have undertaken their implementation – primarily in Africa, but also in Asia and Latin America. See ILO’s Employment Intensive Programme web site: <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/recon/eiip/about/index.htm> (accessed 20 May 2011).

Physical infrastructure: The specific choice of work projects matters

The examples below are selected from a range of PEP projects undertaken at different times by different countries (or projects proposed for consideration). While benefiting communities in general, they improve women's lives by reducing the drudgery and time-consuming tasks related to sanitation, water and firewood collection, daily maintenance of living quarters, accessing free goods from public lands and cooking:


- construction of more durable housing (Argentina) and ecological latrines (South Africa);
- construction of small bridges and feeder roads, and paving of internal roads (India);
- construction of water-harvesting structures and improving traditional structures (India);
- regeneration of common lands, plantation and reforestation (Ethiopia);
- organizing the collection and distribution of water and firewood (India);
- construction of public-use ovens for meal preparation (Argentina);
- wasteland development and watershed development (Ethiopia and India).

Social infrastructure: Social service jobs should not be bypassed.

If social inclusion and human development is a key motivation of public service job creation interventions, physical and social infrastructure must be developed hand-in-hand. This requires job creation in both sectors. In this regard, there are plenty of 'hidden vacancies'²⁰ waiting to be filled. In many ways, they remain hidden because unpaid care is considered a 'natural' part of what women do for their households. Although they are important activities, they remain embedded in the secluded spaces of personal-familial benefits, and are unrecognized and under-valued socially.

For our purposes, such hidden vacancies can be identified in areas such as early childhood development, after-school programmes, home-based care, and assistance to the elderly and people with disabilities, and turned into paying jobs for a cadre of PEP and EGS workers. The complementarity of bridging gaps in physical and social infrastructure becomes transparent with a simple example. Encouraging educational attainment requires a

²⁰ R. Antonopoulos: *The right to a job, the right types of projects: Employment guarantee policies from a gender perspective*, Working Paper No. 516 (Annandale-on-Hudson, NY, Levy Economics Institute of Bard College, 2007).



suitable physical space for schooling. Yet, school attendance will fail if girls are required to help their families to take care of the chronically ill at home, as is often the case in households with people living with HIV/AIDS in many parts of the world and in sub-Saharan Africa in particular. There is compelling evidence that in under-served communities, deficits in income and services are compensated for by long hours of unpaid work. Women are already performing these tasks. Appropriate training would increase the quality of these services and remuneration would ascribe to them the deserved recognition of belonging to the realm of ‘work’.

There are examples that can provide information on best practices in gender-informed design of public works, including work presented in a recent seminar organized under the auspices of UNDP.²¹ South Africa’s Social Sector projects, which are a part of the overall Expanded Public Works Programme, provide a distinct example of gender-awareness: early childhood development and community and home-based care were identified at the programme’s inception as appropriate fields for job creation. In its current phase (phase 2), the Community Work Programme stands as an extension of the Social Sector’s efforts, but adds immense value in that it takes a comprehensive community-needs approach.²² Following a comprehensive assessment of local needs, public service job creation includes community policing patrols, garbage recycling, teacher aides, sports facilitation, home repairs and cleaning, and maintenance work for households headed by older people. Argentina’s *Jefes y Jefas de Hogar* is a programme that witnessed women’s participation swell to over 70 per cent and engaged them primarily in community upgrading projects, many of which were designed by the programme’s beneficiaries. In Korea’s post-Asian financial crisis programme, after expanding the eligibility beyond ‘heads of household’ and including public services and environmental projects, the share of women beneficiaries increased from 23 to 50 per cent (UN, 2009). Community-based project selection planning that includes the ‘voices’ of women and men who are providers and recipients of such services is important. Their active involvement in design, implementation and monitoring can provide inputs that ensure PEP and EGS programmes promote inclusive, community-based development.

Last, but not least, the argument for social sector PEP and EGS works can also be made from an efficiency standpoint. When public job creation takes place *on a large scale*, whether through physical or social sector projects, its impact reaches the entire economy through two channels. Firstly, income earned by PEP workers is spent in the economy. Secondly, each PEP project requires the use of PEP beneficiary labour as well as other types of labour and physical inputs. When these are acquired for use in PEP projects, new

²¹ Webcast, audio, and all documents are available at: <http://www.levy.org/pubs/UNDP-Levy/EGS.html> (accessed 22 May 2011).

²² UNDP: “Policy brief on gender equality and poverty reduction”, in *Employment Guarantee Policies; Issue 02*; Apr. (New York, NY, UNDP, 2010).

demand is injected into the overall system and workers and owners of small-, medium- and, at times, large-sized enterprises receive income. They in turn, will also demand new goods and services, and so on. The positive ‘multiplier’ reverberations show up at the macroeconomic level as growth in employment, output and, ultimately, in tax revenues at the province, state and national levels. Research findings²³, derived through models that link the impact of public works on the overall economy and on individual households indicate that the impact on new job creation, new income and the pro-poor distribution of that income, are stronger when investments are allocated in social services projects than in physical infrastructure.²⁴ These results have been also verified in the case of developed countries.

Although not the only project selection criterion, investing in PEP and EGS social care projects delivers multiple policy objectives. While expanding services, it maximizes job growth, distributes newly created income fairly and promotes gender equality through social co-sharing of care-work responsibilities.

²³ See the following publications:

R. Antonopoulos and K. Kim: *Policy brief: Case study on South Africa* (Annandale-on-Hudson, NY, Levy Economics Institute of Bard College, 2008). Available at: http://www.levyinstitute.org/pubs/UNDP-Levy/South_Africa/Policy_Brief_EPWP_South_Africa.pdf [20 May 2011].

I. Hirway: *Policy brief: Case study on India* (Annandale-on-Hudson, NY, Levy Economics Institute of Bard College, 2008). Available at: http://www.levyinstitute.org/pubs/UNDP-Levy/India/Levy_Policy_Brief_NREGA_India.pdf [accessed 20 May 2011].

²⁴ See the following publications:

R. Antonopoulos: *Policy brief – macro-micro impacts of employment guarantee programmes* (New York, NY, United Nations Development Programme, 2008). Available at: http://www.undp-povertycentre.org/paper-seminar/IPCseminar_Rania_Antonopoulos.pdf [20 May 2011].

M. Lieuw-Kie-Song; K. Philip; M. Tsukamoto; M. Van Imschoot. *Towards the right to work: Innovations in public employment programmes (IPEP)*, ILO Employment Working Paper No. 69 (Geneva, International Labour Organization, 2011).

R. Antonopoulos: *Promoting gender equality and pro-poor growth through stimulus packages and public job creation*, Public Policy Brief No. 101 (Annandale-on-Hudson, NY, Levy Economics Institute of Bard College, 2009).

R. Antonopoulos et al.: *Why President Obama should care about ‘care’: An effective and equitable investment strategy for job creation*, Public Policy Brief No. 108 (Annandale-on-Hudson, NY, Levy Economics Institute of Bard College, 2010).

A. Simonazzi: “Care regimes and national employment models”, in *Cambridge Journal of Economics* (Cambridge, Cambridge Political Economy Society, 2009), Vol. 33, No. 2, pp. 211–232.

M.E. Warner and Z. Liu: “The importance of child care in economic development: A comparative analysis of regional economic linkage”, in *Economic Development Quarterly* (Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage Publications, 2006), Vol. 20, No. 1, pp. 97–103.

Incorporating ‘gender awareness’ into project selection, design and implementation²⁵

This last section presents a short list of practical recommendations. Perhaps the single most important aspect to note is that project design and implementation must take into account consultations with the women who stand to benefit from these programmes. Care must be taken to ensure that their voices and recommendations inform project selection.

Project selection

- Consult women and men separately. Initiate separate discussions on the types of projects they think would benefit: (a) the community; (b) their households; and (c) themselves. Ask them to prioritize. Keep in mind and discuss the possibility that the range can progressively be made wider.
- Consult with women about the types of jobs they can do and the jobs they would like to be able to do, exploring the boundaries of local male/female traditional division of labour.
- Analysis of time use data (collected through a small purposive sampling methodology in the target community) is highly recommended. The data will reveal that a gender-neutral approach in the selection of public employment works may unintentionally be biased against women, which will be useful knowledge for implementing agencies.

Project design

- Integrate a gender expert as part of the team, as well as female technicians, professionals and decision-makers, because public works policy-makers, civil servants and technical staff are sometimes gender blind.
- Define clear objectives and related activities targeting specifically women as (a) *workers* and (b) *beneficiaries*, with measurable gender indicators for monitoring progress (i.e. anticipated location of projects; means of transport to and from the worksite; gender-informed benefit incidence analysis).
- Ensure positive action for women workers is taken at three levels: access to jobs (crèche, location of the project, quotas), access to training and special training to ensure parities if possible (crèche, location of the project, quotas), and equal pay for work of equal value.

²⁵ ILO-FAO-IFAD: “Women in infrastructure works: Boosting gender equality and rural development”, in *Gender and Rural Employment Policy Brief #5* (Geneva, International Labour Organization, 2010).

- Consult potential women workers to see whether or not they would want women-only work teams.

Project implementation

- Undertake gender sensitization and capacity building of the project experts, implementing agencies and contractors on how to increase women's equitable participation in the public targeted works programmes, as well as the ILO's key guiding principles of equal rights at work.
- Ensure information reaches women so they know that they are eligible and can apply for jobs including construction jobs. This means going beyond radio announcements, visits to villages, pamphlets (what works locally must be clearly identified: enlist help from nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), religious centres, school teachers, and visit women in local markets).
- Ensure facilities are in place for child care near the worksite and allow regular breaks for nursing mothers.

Make special efforts to develop women's capacities and skills to take on more technical or supervisory functions. Many projects report that women respond very well to training opportunities and that training has allowed them to take on more challenging and better paid functions, achieve higher degrees of self-confidence and pride and, in some cases, to establish their own enterprises and become subcontractors for maintenance works.



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Appendix 1. Public employment programmes, employment guarantee schemes and the Millennium Development Goals





MDGs	Public works and employment guarantee schemes can deliver
<p>MDG 1: Eradicate extreme hunger and poverty</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wage income benefit to PEP/EGS workers (beneficiaries) • Enhancing food security through agricultural land development, water harvesting and other environmentally sustainable interventions • Ensuring accessibility to services and markets through small public works
<p>MDG 2: Universal primary education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in need for unpaid work results in higher enrolment and completion rates of girls • Training work/education options for adults • School construction/maintenance can lead to increased school enrolment, in particular, of girls
<p>MDG 3: Promote gender equality and empower women</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PEP/EGS can lead by example: gender equality in recruitment, equal pay for comparable work • Benefit of wage income combined with gender targeting design – enhancing women’s economic empowerment and autonomy • Training/accreditation courses draw women into the labour force • Reduction on unpaid work via better infrastructure and services • Water and crèche provisioning for beneficiaries and by beneficiaries • Early childhood development workers and centres for ages 0–4 • Home-based care workers alleviate unpaid care burdens • Female beneficiaries participate in the design of projects









MDGs	Public works and employment guarantee schemes can deliver
<p>MDG 4: Reduce child mortality</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wage income benefit for extension workers and community workers in early childhood development • Early childhood development (ECD) centres for ages 0–4 • Beneficiaries receive training in extension health services and certification to operate centres • Infrastructure for clean water, latrines and crèche is developed
<p>MDG 5: Improve maternal health</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wage income benefit for maternal health-care, education programme for health extension workers • Education/training certification programmes • Beneficiaries can be engaged in auxiliary community care activities
<p>MDG 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home-based and community-based care worker development in • education/training programmes • Beneficiaries are engaged in providing auxiliary community care services while reducing unpaid work burdens for women and girls • Improved sanitation and drainage are highly important in the fight against water-borne diseases • Increasing awareness outreach to contractors and PEP/EGS workers for HIV/AIDS prevention at worksite
<p>MDG 7: Ensure environmental sustainability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage beneficiaries in environmental remediation, reforestation, development of ponds, traditional irrigation systems, water projects and ecological latrines
<p>MDG 8: Develop a global partnership for development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South-South cooperation: Learning from the international experiences of job creation programmes • Coordination of UN agencies for “Financing for Job creation”














Further reading

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Checklist

Main indicators for gender mainstreaming in the project cycle of public works investments		
Stage of the project cycle		
1. Identification:	YES	NO
Were women as well as men consulted?		
Was a gender analysis undertaken establishing the prevailing gender relations i.e.: a] work women and men are engaged in; b] resources which women and men utilise to undertake their work?		
What opportunities exist for strengthening women as well as men's participation? What are the constraints?		
2. Design:	YES	NO
Does the proposed intervention have an objective that influences gender relations in any way? Does it contribute to reducing or increasing the gender gap?		
Does the design respond to women as well as men's needs as identified i.e. separate toilet facilities, child care facilities, maternity and paternity leave?		
Is there affirmative action for women i.e. designing women specific activities, outputs and objectives through for instance instituting of quotas in employment		
Does the design consider breaking gender stereotypes in assigning tasks and themes of training for women and men?		
Does the project document include gender sensitive indicators for project monitoring and review; for instance time poverty (or use) and home-work site distance issues?		
Does the project document provide for gender capacity building of implementing staff?		
Does the budget respond to the gender responsive actions identified during the planning process i.e. separate bathroom facilities, child care, employment of sociologist, gender awareness creation, community mobilisation, participatory planning, implementation and planning?		



Do the contract documents explicitly incorporate the relevant gender issues		
3. Appraisal:	YES	NO
Was a gender appraisal undertaken?		
Does the project document reflect gender risks and mitigation measures?		
4. Implementation and monitoring:	YES	NO
Do the implementers have the necessary capacities to execute the project in a gender sensitive manner?		
Do the prequalification and bidding documents indicate a preference for gender sensitive consultants/contractors and other service providers?		
Is gender incorporated in project implementation? Gender awareness creation in the community, fair recruitment of both women and men, equal pay for equal work done, flexibility in the execution of the work i.e. use of task base system, flexible working hours.		
Is the work site gender friendly i.e. separate bathroom facilities, child care, zero tolerance of sexual harassment, use of gender sensitive language i.e. “works in progress” instead of “men at work”?		
Have gender stereotypes been identified prior to tasks assignment or execution?		
Is the target and achievement data disaggregated by gender?		
Is gender sensitive language used in the monitoring reports?		
5. Evaluation	YES	NO
Do the ToRs explicitly require assessing the gender impacts of the project?		
Does the evaluation team have the capacity to assess the gender impacts?		



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