

**An evaluation of the theory behind the South African Expanded Public Works
Programme**

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Declaration

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Abstract

This thesis evaluated the theory behind the South African Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) during its first phase from 2004-2009. The research examined how sound the EPWP theory was which explains the logic that links programme objectives and programme activities and resources. The data for this study comprised of government departmental documents on the EPWP, the context of the EPWP and the policies that informed it.

Evaluation of the EPWP theory revealed that the programme was based on a sound theory if focusing solely on projected objectives, activities and resources. However, the evaluation also revealed deficiencies in the programme theory with regard to the EPWP reaching its larger policy goals. The theory construction and evaluation framework by Rossi, Freeman and Lipsey (2004) is an evaluation tool that was used to evaluate the EPWP. More theory based approach evaluations would add value to the lack in theory based programme evaluations in South Africa.

In brief, the problem of unemployment is structural in South Africa and requires long term solutions. The policies and policy programmes should thus be designed with permanent employment measures in mind. However, employment through one of the largest policy programmes in South Africa, the EPWP, was short term. It is therefore recommended that this method of programme evaluation be utilised in more studies prior to implementation of a programme, because if the logic behind a programme is sound, its chances to succeed could be improved.

Opsomming

Hierdie tesis evalueer die teorie agter die Suid-Afrikaanse Uitgebreide Openbare Werke Program (UPWP) tydens die eerste fase van 2004-2009. Die navorsing ondersoek hoe grondig die teorie die logika tussen program doelwitte en program-aktiwiteite en hulpbronne verduidelik. Die data vir hierdie studie bestaan uit departementele dokumente oor die konteks van die UPWP en die beleid wat die program ingelig het.

Evaluering van die UPWP-teorie het aan die lig gebring dat die program gebaseer is op 'n grondige teorie, met die fokus uitsluitlik op geprojekteerde doelwitte, aktiwiteite en hulpbronne. Die evaluering van die UPWP-teorie het ook die gebrek met betrekking tot die bereik van groter beleidsdoelwitte aan die lig gebring. Die teorie konstruksie-en evalueringsraamwerk deur Rossi, Freeman en Lipsey (2004) is 'n evaluering instrument wat gebruik was om die UPWP te evalueer. Meer teoreties-gebaseerde evaluering sal waarde toevoeg tot die gebrek van teorie-gebaseerde program evaluering in Suid Afrika.

Ter opsomming, werkloosheid is n strukturele probleem in Suid Afrika en vereis langtermyn oplossings. Die beleide en die beleid programme moet dus ontwerp word met permanente indiensneming geleenthede in gedagte. Indiensneming deur een van die grootste programme in Suid-Afrika, die UPWP bied egter kort termyn indiensneming. Dit word dus aanbeveel dat die teorie-gebaseerde benadering van progamevaluering in meer studies gebruik word voor die implementering van 'n program, want as die logika agter 'n program grondig is, is die kanse van sukses verhoog.

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List of Acronyms

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ANC	African National Congress
BCEA	Basic Conditions of Employment Act
CBPWP	Community Based Public Works Programme
CETA	Construction Education Training Authority
CPSI	Centre for Public Service Innovation
DOE	Department of Education
DoH	Department of Health
DOL	Department of Labour
DORA	Division of Revenue Act
DPW	Department of Public Works
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EPWP	Expanded Public Works Programme
GEAR	Growth, Employment and Redistribution
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HSRC	Human Science Research Council
MIG	Municipal Infrastructure Grant
NPWP	National Public Works Programme
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
PIG	Provincial Infrastructure Grant
PTE	Programme Theory Evaluation

RDP	Reconstruction and Development Plan
SMME	Small, medium and micro enterprises
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
USA	United States of America

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

South Africa is a middle income country with a labour market characterised by high unemployment and few job opportunities. In 1999, unemployment and poverty was listed as the most threatening aspects to South Africa's five year democracy as 40% of the working age population were unemployed (Woolard and Woolard, 2006:1). In 2001, unemployment varied from 0, for skilled workers, and up to 50% for unskilled or low skilled workers (Woolard and Woolard, 2006:1). In terms of the strict definition of unemployment¹, 4.6 million people were unemployed and 8.3 million in terms of the broad definition (Phillips, 2004).

These problems of poverty and unemployment experienced by the majority of the population are commonly attributed to the legacy of apartheid (Deegan, 2001: 115; ANC, 1994: 2). The fifty years of economic policy favouring a white minority had a part to play in the conditions South Africans endured after democratisation. When looking at the education system, the disadvantage is still located within former African schools and white workers are generally much more educated (Bhorat and Oosthuizen, 2004: 17). However, after more than a decade of democratic rule, the official unemployment rate was at 26%, which was more or less the same as in 1994 (Arora & Ricci, 2005).

Different policies and programmes have been developed to address the problems of poverty and unemployment in South Africa. These policies and programmes are reflective of the needs the country reflected at that time. For instance, the development of the Reconstruction and Development programme (RDP) in 1994 was focussed on eradicating the last remnants of apartheid and building a democratic, non-racial and non-sexist society (ANC, 1994: 1). The RDP was short lived and in 1996 the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) policy was introduced (Deegan, 2001: 119). With GEAR the focus was economic growth and

¹ "The requirement of a strict definition is that an individual must have taken steps to find employment for four weeks prior to a given point." (du Toit, 2003: 6)

redistribution, through exports and investment, and employment outside of agriculture (Deegan, 2001: 119). GEAR was intended to pull the country out of its recessionary slump, but failed to enhance significant economic growth. GEAR was expected to create 1.35 million jobs from 1996 to 2000 (Weeks 1999 and DOF, 1996 in Mbuli, 2008: 138), but 1.3 million new jobs did not materialise as planned and over a million formal sector jobs were lost (Weeks 1999 and DOF, 1996 in Mbuli, 2008: 138).

Enhancing economic growth was apparently not the best way to address the problems of poverty and unemployment as the lack of success by the RDP and GEAR demonstrated. The focus thus shifted and the next strategy entailed skills enhancing education and training. This transition saw three acts introduced between 1998 and 2000 (Mbuli, 2008: 141). The first act was the Further Education and Training Act of 1998 which projected to ensure that learners and out of school youth acquire education relevant to the work place (Mbuli, 2008: 142). The second act was the National Skills Act of 1998, aimed at developing the skills of the South African work force, promoting self-employment and encouraging employers to provide opportunity for new entry level workers (Mbuli, 2008: 142). In 2002 the Adult Based Education and Training Act was introduced, which aimed to establish public and private adult learning centres (Mbuli, 2008: 142). However, there is wide spread agreement that there is still a large skills shortage in South Africa in spite of all these acts and policies (Moola *in* Centre for Development and Enterprise Round Table, 2010).

In 2002 during the African National Congress (ANC) policy conference, they reached the consensus that the solution lies in expanding the construction labour sector (Altman *et al*, 2004:9-63; du Toit, 2005: 661). The purpose was to develop employment whilst improving the infrastructure for service delivery. (du Toit, 2005:662) The Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) was thus introduced by former President Thabo Mbeki in the beginning of 2003 (Altman, 2004: 63). The EPWP was officially launched in 2004 as a five year programme. It was a big government initiative to address unemployment and poverty. They planned to use labour intensive technologies to build and maintain infrastructure while simultaneously providing skills

development and employment to the unemployed (Woolard and Woolard, 2006). In theory, the individuals taking part in the programme would be empowered and their standard of living might be improved as they are able to earn a salary and possibly create a sustainable living.

The acts and initiatives mentioned above were not very successful in catering to the needs of the labour market and in turn creating more employment and addressing poverty. In March 2004, it was found that there were approximately 500 000 vacancies in South Africa (Mbuli, 2008: 143). This was attributed to a large amount of the population still remaining unskilled or only possessing basic skills. These were and are not the skills required by the South African labour market at the time (Abedin, 2004 in Mbuli, 2008: 143).

All these programmes and policies mentioned, aimed at unemployment and poverty had required large amounts of funding to implement programmes and projects. South Africa, in relation to other poorer countries displayed a high level of government expenditure, but was less successful than many of its counterparts in meeting basic needs (United Nations, 2002: 7). These policy programmes and projects were thus primarily funded through public funds, but development aid from foreign countries was also employed (United Nations, 2002: 7).

With the growth in funding and limited success of past policy programmes, a greater need for accountability, monitoring and evaluation developed. Former President Mbeki emphasised the need for monitoring and evaluation in his state of the nation address in February 2003 (The Presidency, 2003). In addition, the Mbeki administration has repeatedly called for more accountability and transparency with the spending of public funds (The Presidency, 2003). The need for policy programme and project evaluation in South Africa was clearly a necessity.

Against this backdrop, the problem that this study aims to address is presented in section 1.2 below. The problem statement includes the notions that the field of programme evaluation is still

young in South Africa and there is a lack of theory based programme evaluations. This section will be followed by the purpose of this study which is to apply a theory based approach to evaluate the EPWP. A chapter outline will then be given from chapters' two to six in order to provide an outline of the rest of the thesis. Finally, this introductory chapter will be concluded with a summary of the chapter.

1.2 Problem Statement

The field of programme evaluations is still fairly young in South Africa (Louw, 1998, Potter, 1999, Potter and Kruger, 2001 *in* Abrahams, 2004: 2). The development of programme evaluation followed a different course from that in the USA and the UK (Mouton, 2010: 181). Programme evaluation in these first world countries originated within government and formed a top down approach. Programme evaluation in South Africa grew as a result of donor funding and came from the bottom up (Mouton, 2010: 181).

Prior to 1994 donor funding came with few if any strings attached. The only conditions were a report or financial audit occasionally (Mbuli, 2008: 143). However, post-1994, donors in support of the new democratic government increased and funds were now channelled through government. The increase in donor support was accompanied by stricter regulations for accountability mechanisms which included monitoring and evaluation (Mbuli, 2008: 143). Programme evaluation was only institutionalised when the public sector adopted it ten years later in 2004.

Programme evaluation has become a professionalised field in South Africa. However, the application of programme theory evaluation is still neglected (Louw, 1998: 264; Mouton, 2010: 125). The programme evaluations commonly conducted in South Africa focus on the summative purpose of evaluation. Programme evaluations are thus conducted to assess how good the programme was after it has been implemented and if it can be improved. The theory based approach studies the assumptions that informed the programme and evaluates these in the context of the environment, conditions and target group it will be directed at.

The EPWP mentioned in the introduction of this chapter is the case study to be used in this research. Following the trend of programme evaluation research in South Africa, this programme has only been evaluated by looking at summative value and the interest of the stakeholders or clients. A theory based approach has not been applied to evaluate the EPWP. The research will therefore address the following question: *How sound was the theory behind the South African Expanded Public Works Programme?*

The thesis aimed to do a theory based evaluation of the EPWP evaluations are normally conducted at the end of the life of the programme by weighing up the results against the objectives set initially. This type of evaluation is therefore focussed on the outcome of the programme, but in this study the thought process behind the mechanisms of how the programme will work will be evaluated. Louw (1998: 264) states that it is important to study ‘why a programme should work and the causal process which mediates the relationship between input and output’.

This thesis reiterates the notion by Pawson (2003: 471) that social programmes are underlined by theories. I use this as the basis to apply an alternative approach of evaluating the EPWP. This approach proposed to study the assumptions behind the decision making of programme inputs, activities, target group and other factors. The evaluation of the programme will thus be focussed on how sound the thinking behind the construction of the programme was. In order to review the different views that formed the theory, one needs to focus on the problem that the theory addresses.

This is an interpretive study, because it looks at the theory underlying the programme in terms of the meanings that people bring to them. The approach of evaluation will therefore be done by using an approach from Rossi *et. al.* (2004). The EPWP theory will be evaluated by the application of Rossi’s evaluation questions. This framework forms an integral part of the thesis, because it is the tool that was used to evaluate the theory underlying the EPWP.

The reasoning behind the choice of this approach is the fact that construction of the theory underlying the programme reveals expectations and perceptions regarding the programme that mainstream evaluations might not. For example, mainstream evaluations would not pay attention to the notion that the programme was expected to address gender inequality in the work place by making women part of the main target population. For mainstream evaluation the focus would be on the results the programme has delivered in terms of the amount of persons employed. Applying a theory based approach to evaluation facilitates learning prior to a programme being set in motion. In addition, the study could add value to the gap of theory based evaluation in South Africa.

1.3 Research objectives

In the aim of conducting a successful theory based evaluation of the EWP, there are certain research objectives that need to be reached. These objectives will address the problem statement discussed above and address the research question accordingly.

The first objective of the study was to construct the EPWP theory. This is the foundation on which the evaluation was based. The construction of the theory needed to be a rich source of information that the evaluation questions can be answered with. Constructing the theory required detailed description of the intended programme in order to identify the thoughts and plans on how the programme would reach its goals. All these details had to be compiled into a diagrammatical format to illustrate the theory from first interaction to intended outcome.

The second objective was to evaluate the EPWP theory through evaluation questions specifically formulated to evaluate programme theory. The evaluation of the theory aimed to establish how sound the EPWP was in theory to address unemployment in South Africa.

The third and final objective of the study was to draw certain findings from the evaluation of the theory and in doing so answering the research question. This objective was only attainable if the findings drawn from the evaluation questions were supported by enough information from the theory constructed in chapter four.

1.4 Limitations and delimitations of the study

The EPWP was launched in 2004 and the evaluation study was conducted in 2011. Abrahams (2003: 14) states that in programme evaluation there is always a concern with how evaluable the programme is. This is merely a concern if the programme has not been around long enough for it to achieve its set objectives. Fortunately with the theory based approach the study is focused on the pre-implementation phase. The focus of the study is on the thinking and planning that was invested into the formation of the EPWP. The time frame therefore does not play such an important role as it would in main stream programme evaluation focused on the achievement goals in relation to objectives of a programme.

Another limitation the study has incurred came about with the size of the programme. The EPW is a very extensive programme stretching over various sectors and implementation varies from municipality as well as which sector of the programme each project forms part of. The study was thus limited in the sense that the focus was too broad. If one particular leg of the programme to be implemented in a specific area was focused on, it could have made the study more detailed and the theory evaluation more focused.

1.5 Research design and methodology

A qualitative approach was used in this study as the focus was placed on the ideas and thoughts by various role players to construct the theory of the EPWP. The qualitative approach was more suitable to interpret these socially defined ideas and opinions (Firestone, 1987: 16).

The EPWP was evaluated as a single programme during a particular time frame using a specific source of data. A case study research design was therefore applied to best incorporate all these factors. The time frame focused on was the first phase of the programme from 2004 till 2009. The data collected was primarily programme and policy documents focused on the aspects of the

programme pre-implementation. It was found that studying programme documents and the policies that informed them was the best source of insight into the EPWP theory. It led to a broader understanding of the decisions made with regard to the focus of the EPWP on the infrastructure sector as well as the inclusion of all the other sectors of the EPWP.

The data collected for this study was analysed through thematic analysis. A six step thematic analysis framework by Braun and Clarke (2006) was applied in order to extract the themes which were vital in constructing and evaluating the EPWP theory. Thematic analysis also assisted in answering the evaluation questions more accurately and extensively.

1.6 Chapter outline

This thesis has six chapters. This introduction created the context in which the study is conducted by providing some facts on the South African employment market. In addition, it described the problem of the lack in theory based evaluation research of programmes addressing South Africa's chronic unemployment. This led into a short discussion of the purpose of the study which is to conduct a theory based evaluation of one of the largest employment programmes in South Africa, the EPWP. The last section of this introductory chapter provides an outline of the rest of the thesis.

Chapter two comprises a review of the literature on previous evaluation studies of the EPWP. The discussions in this chapter include the approaches taken to evaluate the EPWP debates in the subfield of programme evaluation and the alternative method of evaluation applied in this study. The literature on the EPWP is grouped by similar findings. The approaches to evaluation research include the main debates in the field between those in support of quantitative and qualitative methods respectively, empowerment and utilization focussed evaluation and experimental and theory driven evaluations respectively. The alternative approach to construct and evaluate the programme theory applied an approach by Rossi, Freeman and Lipsey (2004).

Chapter three describes the research methods applied in this study. It states that the study applied a qualitative approach. A case study research design was applied and data collection was done through a literature study of programme, policy and government documents. The data analysis is then discussed which was conducted by use of thematic techniques. The advantages and limitations of the document review and thematic analysis is also discussed in this chapter.

Chapter four dealt with constructing the theory of the EPWP. This was done by applying a framework adapted from Rossi *et. al.* (2004). The components in the framework are useful to extract the theory and forms the platform for the next chapter in which the theory will be evaluated. The framework required the discussion of programme objectives, activities and how these two logically link to produce the desired outcome of the programme.

Chapter five presented the evaluation of the theory by applying the principles derived from the framework by Rossi *et. al.* (2004). The principles were presented as questions and will form the themes of this chapter (Rossi *et. al.*, 2004). This evaluation concluded in providing certain findings regarding the logic that lies behind the construction, initiation and implementation of the programme to address unemployment, service delivery and sustainable development in South Africa.

The final chapter provides a summary of the problem that the research aimed to address, the research question that informed the study and the major findings the study has produced. The final section of the conclusion offers some recommendations for further study.

Chapter 2: Theory based programme evaluation as an alternative approach to evaluating the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP)

2.1 Introduction

“Programme Theory Evaluation (PTE) consists of an explicit theory or model of how the program causes the intended or observed outcomes and an evaluation that is at least partly guided by this model” (Rodgers, 1983: 5). The focus is thus on the ideas regarding programme process that should lead to a desired outcome. The central aim of this chapter is to make the case for applying the theory based approach to evaluate the EPWP. This is done by discussing previous literature of evaluations of the EPWP, debates within the broader field of programme evaluation and the theory based approach applied to evaluate the EPWP.

Research on the evaluation of the EPWP is reviewed through the course of this chapter. The approaches to evaluation predominantly adhere to principles of mainstream approaches such as outcome and impact evaluations. They have followed the common approach to evaluation which is to make conclusions based on comparing outcomes to inputs.

The approach applied in this study will then be presented as an alternative method of evaluating the EPWP. The approach entailed constructing the theory underlying the programme and evaluating the theory. Worthen, Sanders, and Fitzpatrick (2004) identified programme theory based evaluation as one of the twelve emerging trends that will have the biggest influence in shaping the future of evaluation research. It has been viewed as a compass for decision making with regard to programme function, objectives and impact (Worthen, Sanders, and Fitzpatrick, 2004).

The first discussion in this chapter covers previous evaluation studies of the EPWP. This discussion was categorized according to similarities of the findings these studies produced. These findings included the insignificant impact the EPWP made on unemployment and poverty. Other studies found that improvement was made in some cases of the EPWP. There were also studies based upon the perception of the EPWP. The last category in this section discussed the disconnect that was found between the design and implementation of the EPWP.

The next section in this chapter brings the discussion closer to programme theory based evaluation by discussing the debates in the field of programme evaluation. These debates include the quantitative versus qualitative debate, the utilization versus empowerment focused debate and finally the experimental versus theory based programme evaluation debate. The last debate introduces the final section of this chapter which focused on the theory based approach to evaluating the EPWP in this study. The framework from Rossi, Freeman and Lipsey (2004) was applied to construct and evaluate the theory behind the EPWP. The components for the construction are discussed as well as the evaluation principles to evaluate the logic underlying the theory.

2.2 Evaluation research on the South African EPWP

Most of the EPWP evaluation studies used a qualitative approach (Altman *et. al.*, 2009; September, 2007; Kobokane, 2007; Phillips, 2004; McCord, 2005; McCord, 2007; HSRC, 2007). One quantitative study was reviewed, but this study also adhered to the elements of a mainstream approach when evaluating the impact that the EPWP had on job creation in the Zululand district (Khanyile, 2008).

These studies been grouped according to the similarity of findings. In the first category, the studies revealed that the EPWP has not had a significant impact on poverty and unemployment. However, a second set of findings showed that noticeable improvements have been made in certain areas of the programme in specific case studies.

There were also studies based on the perceptions of the EPWP. These studies projected that perceptions are not consistent (September, 2007; Kobokane, 2007; Social Surveys Africa, 2007). The last group of studies revealed a disconnect between the design and implementation of the EPWP.

2.2.1 The EPWP had an insignificant impact on unemployment

As with poverty, unemployment is believed to be one of the greatest needs to be addressed in post-apartheid South Africa (Human Science Research Council, 2007). Researchers disagree with regard to the goals surrounding unemployment solutions and the EPWP. Some studies indicated that the EPWP is not the solution to the unemployment problem in South Africa (Phillips, 2004). Other documents express the notion that the EPWP is large enough to have a sustainable impact on unemployment (HSRC, 2007). These authors believed that the EPWP could potentially make a contribution to the employment market, but the amount of employment created is small in comparison to the scale of unemployment in the country (Phillips, 2004; McCord, 2004).

In relation to the problem of unemployment, McCord (2005: 580) found that many of the participants of the programme return to the unemployment pool after exiting. The proposed long term goal of sustainability of the programme is thus brought into question, because the provision of a temporary monetary wage only provides immediate relief to the dire circumstances of participants. The length of the training is approximately six months and this does not suffice as sustainable job creation, because the labour market is not expected to provide such large scale employment (McCord, 2007: 9).

The short term nature of the EPWP and other programmes like it is attributed to a society facing social and political crisis, because it provides temporary relief to the marginalised (Altman, 2004: 7). This could be problematic as it addresses unemployment and poverty which are structural problems, with short term programmes when long term solutions are required. The

Human Sciences Research Council (2007) thus pointed out the inadequate focus on the exit strategy of the programme. McCord (2007) confirms this notion and states that the exit strategy needs to be thought through with the capacity of the labour market in mind when constructing programme objectives.

2.2.2 Improvement in some sectors of the EPWP in certain areas

Studies were conducted by focus on a particular sector within the EPWP. This selection of a certain element of a programme has been termed as interactive evaluation (Owen, 1999) and is normally directed at a specific social ill. The Centre for Public Service Innovation (CPSI) conducted a study on the environmental and infrastructure sectors and found that in the case studies conducted in various areas, visible improvement was observed in both these sectors (CPSI, 2004). Roads were improved which meant access for emergency vehicles to rural areas. In addition an increase in job creation and overall living conditions were observed (CPSI, 2004).

Another study presented the Early Childhood Development (ECD) sector as a vehicle to address poverty (September, 2007). The study found that the ECD sector plays a crucial role in poverty reduction and therefore needs a better coordinate systematic and organized place in the EPWP (September, 2007: 23). The study done by Kobokane (2007) was also focused on poverty reduction through the environmental sector of the EPWP. This study found that the EPWP was effective in involving the public in conservation while aiding them in meeting their basic needs. It was also found that the EPWP projects need to be more strategically planned. A problem addressed by the EPWP that is not always mentioned in studies is that of service delivery. A study conducted by the CPSI (2004) depicts the infrastructure and environmental sectors of the EPWP attending to this issue nationally. The study found that a higher standard in infrastructure and service delivery can be maintained through labour intensive practices as applied by the EPWP (CPSI, 2004).

2.2.3 Perceptions were different pre and post implementation of the EPWP

Studies showed that key role players of the EPWP had positive expectations prior to implementation of the programme (September, 2007; Kobokane, 2007; Social Surveys Africa, 2007). Respondents of the studies done by September (2007) and Kobokane (2007) regarded the project as a positive step toward addressing the concerns of poverty and improving the lives of the local community (Kobokane, 2007: 59). However, “the perception of the supervisors of the project, including the manager, co-ordinator and field team leaders is that there is very little progress when considering the goals of the project” (Kobokane, 2007: 62). The limited progress was attributed to bureaucratic red tape and delayed implementation (Kobokane, 2007: 62).

In addition, perceptions changed post implementation and many agreed that one of the biggest concerns with regard to implementation of the EPWP was communication and the lack thereof within governmental and non-governmental bodies involved in the program (September, 2007; Social Surveys Africa, 2007). A break in communication was found in another study analysing governments attempt to reduce poverty through biodiversity conservation through the environmental sector of the EPWP (Kobokane, 2007; Social Surveys Africa, 2007). This study found that goals were not made clear to participants (Kobokane, 2007). These participants were thus working in ignorance of the objectives they were meant to achieve. This can contribute to negative results from programme implementation as well as a negative impact on overall work ethic. Social Surveys Africa (2007) thus emphasized the notion that logistics related to the implementation of the programme as well as coordination and communication between role players are very important for the success of a programme.

2.2.4 There was a disconnect between design and implementation of the EPWP

The studies which touched upon the design of the programme found that implementation was not done according to the blue print of the programme (Phillips *et. al.*, 2009; McCord, 2004: 2; Kobokane, 2007). It was also found that the implementation of the EPWP faced a delay as the programme was still not active in all provinces (HSRC, 2007). In some provinces the EPWP was relabeled under existing programmes not having to adhere to the guidelines of the EPWP (HSRC, 2007: 27). Only two out of the nine provinces were found to be satisfactory in this

regard and very few municipalities had attempted at reporting on their implementation (HSRC, 2007: 27). In addition the EPWP was not taking priority in many municipal departments (HSRC, 2007: 27). A large part of the implementation process was related to training of participants. The quality and approaches to training was widely questioned as the short duration of the EPWP jobs does not allow for valuable skills development (HSRC, 2007: 27). In the 2007 study by the HSRC it was found that the assumption with regard to the adequacy of SETAs and other NQF training providers were substantially over estimated. On the contrary the SETAs and NQF training providers were found to be weak in delivering required services (HSRC, 2007: 25). This resulted in high proportions of unaccredited training within the EPWP (HSRC, 2007: 25).

The following cases demonstrated that the plans projected during the planning of the programme were not necessarily executed accordingly. A case study of the EPWP conducted in Zululand found that training performed there was often not accredited as stated in programme design (Khanyile, 2008: 4). The aim of addressing skills shortage was thus not attained, because participants left the programme with no proof of skills obtained (HSRC, 2007). The study done by Kobokane (2007) affirmed this with findings indicating that the infrastructure was improved in the Eastern Cape area where the programme was applied, but it showed little improvement of living conditions. He emphasised the notion that the problem arose during the implementation phase with weak communication between government and local municipalities (Kobokane, 2007).

Disconnect between the design and implementation of the EPWP, was also identified between the objectives and the context of the programme. The programme aims to reduce poverty, address skills development, create short and long term opportunities, SME creation and improve service delivery (HSRC, 2007). In relation to the public works programmes internationally, the EPWP is reaching far above its capabilities (McCord, 2007: McCord, 2003). The HSRC stated this to be a factor in reducing the likelihood of the programme achieving long term goals like the reduction of poverty (HSRC, 2007).

Prior studies on the EPWP revealed that the programme did not have a significant impact on unemployment in South Africa, because a lot of the participants would return to the unemployment pool after exiting the programme. However, some studies did indicate improvements in the infrastructure and environmental sectors of the programme. Like these results, perceptions with regards to the programme pre- and post-implementation were different. The design of the programme thus created certain expectations from the outcome of the programme. The studies found a disconnect between the design and implementation which resulted in negative reviews and outcome post implementation of the EPWP.

In this thesis, the evaluation approach that is applied can be implemented prior to implementation and during the design process. It thus lessens the prospects of a disconnect between design and implementation. In order to understand the context of this approach to programme evaluation, the debates in this subfield are discussed below.

2.3 Debates in the subfield of programme evaluation

Programme evaluation is a subfield in the field of evaluation research. Theories on programme evaluation have been established through the consensus reached between theorists concerning the logic and practice of evaluation research (Alkin and Christie, 2004). One of the most basic agreements they have come to is the notion that evaluation is to be used for solving social problems (Rossi *et. al.*, 2004:8; Weiss, 1972). In addition evaluators imply that their practice is an improvement on informal means of evaluating. The subfield of programme evaluation is also enriched by debates between scholars. The debates to be discussed in this section include qualitative versus quantitative evaluation, utilization focused versus empowerment focused evaluation and the experimental versus theory based evaluation.

2.3.1 Qualitative versus Quantitative evaluation

One of the biggest debates in programme evaluation is between qualitative and quantitative researchers. Even though the study of programme evaluation in South Africa is fairly new (Potter, 1999; Potter and Kruger 2001 in Abrahams 2003: 2), the debate between qualitative and

quantitative approaches has been as vigorous as internationally (Louw, 1998: 263). This debate was strengthened by authors like Fetterman (*in* Louw, 1998) who advocated for the qualitative approach and Lipsey (*in* Louw, 1998: 263) who emphasized the merits of a quantitative approach to programme evaluation.

Quantitative methods express the notions of a positivist school advocating that behaviour can be explained through objective facts (Firestone, 1987). This method maintains that it prevents bias and error in research. The quantitative approach produces data that can be analysed and aggregated to identify and predict certain relationships (Mark, Henry and Julnes, 2000: 280) between variables or factors. This is mainly attributed to the notion that a quantitative study can assess the magnitude of a relationship or in this case, evaluation more precisely (Firestone, 1987: 19).

Others who support the use of quantitative methods argue that this method is more appropriate for evaluation, because it produces data that can be measured and analysed (Garbarino & Holland, 2009; Mark *et. al.*, 2000:280; Herman, Morris and Fitz-Gibbon, 1987). One of the main criticisms of qualitative data is that is not robust across researchers or academia, yet in turn the same can be said of quantitative data where various methods of outcomes can be chosen from which can deliver contradicting results to different researchers (Mark *et. el.*, 2000: 280).

When applying a qualitative approach to programme evaluation, a programme is studied in a context-specific setting (Patton, 2002). The programme will thus be studied in association with the geographical, social and economic environment it is implemented in. The findings from qualitative programme evaluation are not derived from statistical or numeric data, but mostly from fieldwork and observations (Strauss and Corbin, 1990 *in* Yuksel, 2010: 79). The evaluator applying the qualitative approach spends time in the setting of the programme to observe changes, conduct interviews or analyse documentation (Yuksel, 2010: 79).

The qualitative approach also expresses the notions of an inductive paradigm which holds that there are multiple realities that can be socially defined (Firestone, 1987; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Qualitative methods are used to explain the dynamics of these relationships and contextual differences between them (Firestone, 1987; Meriam, 2002: 8). Without these qualitative methods evaluators can make interpretive leaps based purely on measured data. This will provide a limited account of the programme and its effects.

Certain scholars argue that a qualitative approach best serve evaluators in most cases (Herman *et. al.*, 1987; Garbarino & Holland, 2009). Qualitative research is able to use socially constructed frameworks to analyse data and identify patterns and trends, it therefore not only focuses on the static outcomes, but the process leading to the results (Garbarino & Holland, 2009). With an important focus of this approach being on the process of the study, the perspective of those in the process forms part of the data (Firestone, 1987: 20). The method provides detailed accounts of events and variables not measurable by quantitative methods.

The qualitative approach contextualize and explain the relationship between variables and the contextual differences they might have, adding depth, detail and meaning to empirical data (Herman *et. al.*, 1987; Garbarino & Holland, 2009). The results from qualitative studies especially with regard to evaluation research can be quite case specific, but certain elements can be applied to other studies as well. Qualitative data has an equal footing with that of quantitative data. It is able to produce sophisticated, timely and reliable data in evaluation studies (Herman *et. al.*, 1987; Garbarino & Holland, 2009).

One of evaluation research's distinct present day qualities is its openness to various methods and approaches, understanding the importance of gathering information and creating understanding above the notion of adhering to a particular approach or theory (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). It is also important to note that in the field, evaluators do not adhere to a strict form of research methodology or theoretical view. In spite of the disagreements amongst those engaged in

evaluation research, a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods has been advised by some (Kaplan & Douchon, 1988: 582; Dennis, 1994). These two methods could complement each other and respectively add value to a study (Kaplan & Douchon, 1988: 582).

2.3.2 Empowerment focused versus Utilization focused evaluation

The empowerment versus utilization debate centers on the purpose of the evaluation process. Some authors advocate that a programme should be evaluated based on its usefulness to address the problem (Patton *in* Stufflebeam, Madaus and Kelleher, 2000: 406). For instance, if the job training programme manages to improve the economic status of its participants as planned it should be viewed as successful. Other authors support the notion that the value of the programme should be judged based on whether it has enabled evaluators to perform evaluations independently (Fetterman, 1994; Zimmerman, 1992).

Empowerment evaluation is described primarily by its function, which entails the use of evaluation concepts, methods and results to cultivate self-determination (Fetterman, 1994; Zimmerman, 1992). It aims to elevate the probability of programme success by providing stakeholders with the tools to assess and evaluate their own programmes (Fetterman, 1994; Zimmerman, 1992). This method of evaluation has many supporting elements including, training, facilitation, advocacy, illumination and liberation (Stufflebeam *et. al.*, 2000: 395). This approach to evaluation thus promotes sustainability, because when the initial project is done, others can be done by the stakeholders or organization itself (Rossi *et. al.*, 2004). This in turn increases the possibility that results will be found credible and recommendations will be implemented.

Empowerment focused evaluation is stated to be versatile in its ability to adapt to any environment (Stufflebeam *et. al.*, 2000: 405). The environments include health, business, education, technology and agriculture. There are certain principles that should be adhered to as part of the evaluation process. However, it remains flexible due to the fact that it is still tailored

specifically to the needs and preferences of stakeholders and programme participants (Stufflebeam *et. al.*, 2000: 397-404).

With regard to the recipients of the evaluation process, those in favor of utilization focused evaluation maintain that empowerment evaluation does not place enough emphasis on the outcomes for its beneficiaries (Patton *in* Stufflebeam *et. al.*, 2000: 425). Instead it places more focus on developing tools and training for the evaluation process to take place. Utilization focused evaluation thus questions the merit of empowerment focused evaluation, because it is only concerned with the evaluation practices and not the actual outcome of the evaluation.

Utilization focused evaluation has been stated to be one of the most popular approaches used and taught in the field of evaluation research (Donaldson, Patton, Fetterman and Scriven 2010: 16). It is commonly described as ‘intended use by intended users’ (Donaldson *et. al.*, 2010: 16). The emphasis is placed on making evaluations useful. This approach is thus assessed by its utility and applications. The role of the evaluator in this approach is to assist in the evaluation process and design. Every aspect of the process has to be structured around the purpose of utility (Patton *in* Stufflebeam *et. al.*, 2000: 406).

Authors like Patton (*in* Stufflebeam *et. al.*, 2000: 425) who advocates strongly for utilization focused evaluation states that the four simple steps as presented by empowerment evaluation are not as plain as presented. He continues to say that these steps do not express the objective of empowerment evaluation (Patton *in* Stufflebeam *et. al.*, 2000). It does not state who or what should be empowered. In addition the front runners in this approach have stated that they have not conducted many studies to validate the statements concerning the success of empowerment of participants (Patton *in* Stufflebeam *e. al.*, 2000). In support of the steps taken in utilization focused evaluation with identifying the users and working with them to achieve the intended use makes this approach much clearer and better conceptualized than empowerment focused evaluation.

2.3.3 Experimental versus Theory based evaluation

The experimental versus theory based evaluation debate is structured around the research approach. The experimental approach is based on a quantitative nature and produces robust and systematic evidence about the impact of programmes (Abrahams, 2003: 3). The theory based design is focused on the beliefs and assumptions that informed the actions of the programme (Weiss, 1972). Measuring beliefs and assumptions are qualities more associated with a qualitative research design as these cannot be quantified. The experimental and theory based evaluation will provide the evaluation process with different results. The debate is focussed on which of these offer the more valuable set of results.

Historically the most commonly used design applied to evaluation research is the experimental model (Weiss, 1972). The experimental design makes use of experimental and control groups to conduct research. These groups are randomly selected out of the target population to either form part of the control group or the group that participates in the programme (Weiss, 1972).

Advocates of the experimental approach believe that this model should dominate evaluation research. Authors such as Finney and Moos (1989) as well as Campbell and Stanley (1963) argue for the abandonment of theoretical approaches to evaluation, and for the application of experimental designs. They state that adequate theories are not available to address the applied problem presented in the study (Finney & Moos, 1989; Campbell and Stanley, 1969).

Experimental evaluation studies require randomized designs, but these designs have not always been possible or preferable in evaluation research. Evaluators found programme goals difficult to measure, stakeholders were not always cooperative and results were used to suit political agendas (Weiss 1972b; Rossi and Williams 1972 *in* Connell, Kubish, Schorr and Weiss, 1995: 32). The experimental design thus became impossible in some case studies. In fact advocates for theory based designs emphasise how often experimental evaluations has delivered disappointing results when applied to social programme evaluations (Cook, 2000). These results were

disappointing, because it was unclear whether it proved the programmes to be effective or if it could express the actual achievements of the programme (Cook, 2000). These achievements would include elements such as behavioral and attitude changes as well as certain perceptions concerning the programme and its outcomes (Cook, 2000).

In addition, when a programme evaluation is guided by a specific design like the experimental model, the evaluator is also restricted by that model. In these types of studies evaluators are required to focus on a specific issue which commonly tends to the internal or external validity (Chen and Rossi, 1989). This is problematic when conducting programme evaluation, because social programmes are multifaceted. In addition, there are various stakeholder needs and perceptions to take into account. A study conducted with the experimental design is thus perceived, by advocates of programme theory, as narrow and restricted (Chen and Rossi, 1989). Various authors (Cordray, Boruch, Howard and Bootzin, 1986; Patton, 1989 *in* Chen and Rossi, 1989 1986, 1986; Patton, 1989 *in* Chen and Rossi, 1989) from different schools of thought in evaluation literature agree that the theory driven approach is more useful than experimental oriented evaluation.

Theory based programme evaluation is a guide for the evaluation process as it identifies important fundamentals in the programme and how they link together logically (Cojocar, 2009). The typical depiction of programme theory to express this logical thought process is presented with categorically placed boxes containing summarized points of the variables constructing the programme theory (Rossi *et. al.*, 2004: 142).

Theory based evaluation is a source of information with regard to how and why a programme works instead of evaluating only if it works (Rossi *et. al.* 2004: 146). Theory based evaluations examines the elements that link together that will make the programme successful. It thus offers the advantage of an alternative view at the problem addressed by the programme, the solutions

provided and alternative measures that could be taken to address the results. This method of evaluation could be substantially useful for decision making.

The diagrammatical depiction of programme theory has been criticized by advocates of experimental design, stating that the rigidly defined categories containing these summaries and arrows logically linking them are not an accurate reflection of the chaotic conditions these programmes are implemented in (Cook, 2000).

The theory based approach is also challenged on the basis that evaluations based solely on the programmes substantive theory have no valid counterfactual (Alkin and Christie, 2004; Cook, 2000). There is thus no way of assessing the outcomes of different stages of the implementation if the programme had not been there. Cook (2000) consequently argues that it is not possible to confirm if any of the changes observed are as a result of the social intervention or if they would have occurred without the implementation of the programme.

2.4 A theory based approach to evaluating the EPWP

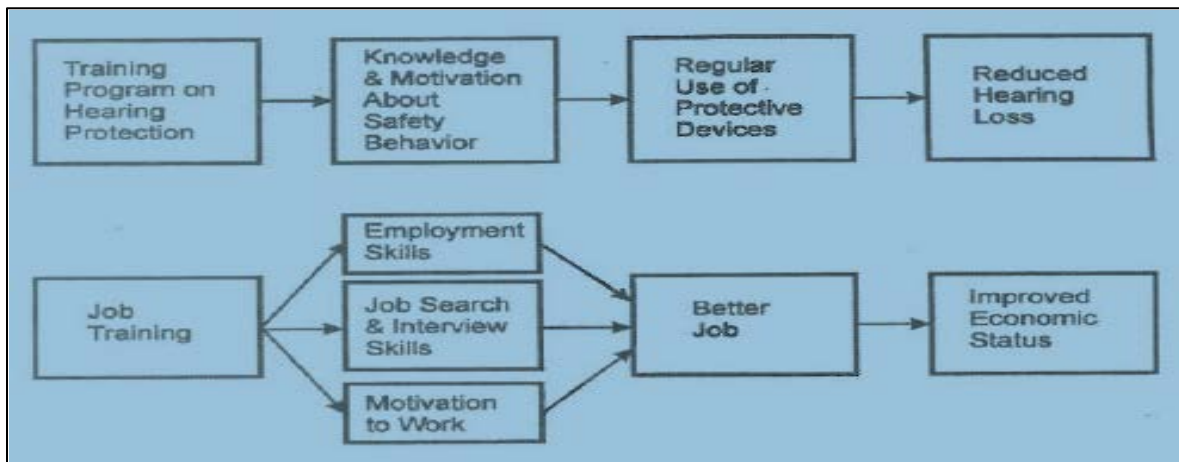
For programs in the developing stages, the evaluator can participate in constructing and developing a sound theory for the programme. With existing programmes such as the EPWP, the evaluator should extract the theory that is already imbedded in the programme structures and activities. The basic structure for reconstructing the programme theory lies in a sequence of elements described by Weiss (1997) as well as Rossi *et. al.* (2004).

Theory based evaluation presents the idea that social programmes are underlined by theories of how the programme will work and why it would make an impact (Weiss in Connell *et. al.*, 1995: 66-67). A theory based approach to evaluation entails carefully examining each facet of the programme to confirm whether or not the assumptions that form the theories are substantiated (Pawson, 2003: 473). Connell *et. al.* (1995: 17) builds on this notion and has specified that the

first step in this process would be to determine the expected outcomes, then look at the activities planned to reach the outcomes and finally look at the elements that may have an impact on the implementation and consequently effect the desired outcome.

Programme theories are typically expressed using flow charts and diagrams (Rossi *et. al.*, 2004). These graphical designs typically contain boxes in which the information regarding the functioning and intent of the programme is summarized (Rossi *et. al.*, 2004). These boxes are normally structured with the input summed up in the first box on the left. The middle will consist of the mediator variables, for instance the resources required and short term outcomes (Rossi *et. al.*, 2004). The end entails indicating the long term outcome or impact on the social ill the programme aimed to address (Rossi *et. al.*, 2004). These diagrams will be connected by arrows, indicating the flow of activities and resources as well as the dependency of one process and function leading onto another as displayed below (Rossi *et. al.*, 2004).

Diagram 1: Illustrating Programme Theory in Rossi *et. al.* (2004: 143)



Social programmes form part of the policy life cycle. Programmes such as the EPWP are the operationalization of certain policies such as the labour and economic policies. These policy programmes are aimed at addressing particular issues (Terluin and Roza, 2010). The policy

process requires government ministries to draft discussion documents known as green and white papers to allow for discussion and debates (Terluin and Roza, 2010). Parliamentary and select Committees in National parliament, National Councils of Provinces and portfolio committees in Provincial Legislature provide a platform for public input on the proposed policy. Once a policy has been adequately debated the Department and Ministry will draw up the final policy document known as a white paper (Terluin and Roza, 2010). The white paper is a statement of intent and plan which forms the foundation of programmes designed to realize policy goals (Terluin and Roza, 2010). The EPWP can be viewed as a vehicle to realize intended objectives by specific policies.

In order to construct the theory behind a programme like the EPWP, one needs to take note of the policies that informs it. These policies include policies on economic growth, education and training and employment equity. The initiatives of the EPWP are directed to create employment and address poverty, constituting a high return investment translating into economic growth (Edigheji, 2007: 100). The EPWP has similar traits to foregoing programmes such as the RDP and GEAR with the aim of creating mass employment and service delivery. In addition, similarly to these initiatives, the EPWP is viewed as one of the major initiatives to reach policy goals. However, the EPWP is differentiated by the fact that it is the only initiative which aimed to create employment to improve living conditions. The other projects such as social grants, job search support and skills training also form part of governments aim to address poverty and unemployment. The EPWP however, is the largest policy programme aimed at these concerns and therefore forms the case study for this Programme Theory Evaluation.

2.4.1 Framework for constructing and evaluating the EPWP theory

Weiss (1997) notes that when a theory is well documented in sound detail and understood by the stakeholders, the programme is then perceived to be based upon articulated programme theory. The purpose of reconstructing programme theory is to describe the programme as it was initially proposed as well as the rationale behind it, thus explaining how it will bring about the change that it was intended for (Lipsey and Pollard, 1989). Once the theory underlying the programme

has been constructed, the evaluator can assess the construction in order to assess whether the programme is based on sound thinking.

There are different ways in which programme theory has guided the evaluation process. Some theory based evaluations use experimental designs in conjunction with programme theory. This means that there would be a control group who does not receive the benefits of the programme. For other authors like Fitzgiben and Morris (1996 in Abrahams, 2003) the theory based evaluation is based on a model or philosophy based on a causal relationship operating the programme. Weiss (1998) presents a causal approach by combining programme theory and implementation theory. The evaluation does not merely focus on the design of the programme. The evaluation also focuses on aspects of the implementation process such as the target group, place and adequacy of resources. For the purpose of this study, the evaluation of the EPWP will only be approached through a theory based evaluation focusing on the design of the programme prior to implementation.

The theory based approach by Rossi *et. al.* (2004) applied in this study is focused on the theory behind the programme. The programme being evaluated is a national programme and a control group can thus not be used. In addition, this is a qualitative study as it is focused on the meanings and thought process invested in the assumptions underlying the EPWP. The approach by Rossi *et. al.* (2004) presents a framework for constructing and evaluating programme theory in relation to factors of implementation. However, the argument made in this thesis is based on the whether the assumptions forming the theory are sound.

The basic structure for constructing the programme theory lies in a sequence of elements described by Weiss (1997) as well as Rossi, *et. al* (2004). Based on the framework in table 1, the first step would be to formulate the programme objectives. The second task comprises of identifying and explaining the intermediate variables which are the indicators to be measured in

relation to attaining programme goals. These will include the activities, functions and structure of the programme.

In this section the framework by Rossi *et. al.* (2004) which was applied in this study will be presented below. In addition, each section within the framework is discussed separately, because each section requires different information about the programme. The first subsection requires a description of the goals and objectives of the programme. The second discussion is about the programme activities, functions and resources. The last section explains the logic between programme objectives and activities, resources and functions.

Table 1: Theory based construction and evaluation of the EPWP theory (Rossi *et. al.* 2004)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Formulate EPWP goals and objectives <hr/> ➤ Describing EPWP activities, resources and functions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Participants ▪ Services delivered ▪ Programme components <hr/> ➤ Clarifying the logic between EPWP goals and activities <hr/> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ensure EPWP goals are clear and well defined ➤ Establish if goals are feasible <hr/> ➤ Consider reasonability of change process ➤ Assessing participants and services delivered ➤ Considering sufficiency and adequately defined functions, components and activities of the programme <hr/> ➤ Assess adequacy of resources too EPWP activities
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2.4.1.1 Programme goals and objectives

The objectives of the programme are not always made clear through programme documents and information gathered from stakeholders (Rossi *et. al.*, 2004; Weiss, 1972). The goals that are presented by programme documents and stakeholders might be very broad and unrealistic. Determining and depicting the goals and objectives of the programme forms an integral part of

the programme theory, because it sets the bar for all activities and functions of the programme (Rossi *et. al.*, 2004; Weiss, 1972). The goals and objectives are to be determined due to the fact that they do not always correspond with those in the mission statement of programmes or gathered from interviews with stakeholders (Rossi *et. al.*, 2004; Weiss, 1972) Determining the goals and objectives of the EPWP forms an integral part of the theory construction and evaluation process. It gives insight into what the intended outcomes and expectation of the programme was. It is the foundation on which all the other components such as the activities, function and resources of the EPWP theory will be based on as it all works together to reach the objectives of the EPWP.

The EPWP goals need to be realistic and specific. They must be in operational terms and thus more practical for the evaluator to measure. There are arrays of techniques the evaluator can use to measure function. These techniques include amongst others observation, studying of programme documents, questionnaires, laboratory experiments, measurements of physical evidences' (Weiss, 1972). For the purpose of this study the focus is on studying the programme documents. The construction and evaluation of the EPWP theory does not require any observation or experiments as all the information needed are in the EPWP strategy and planning documents. It provides the researcher with detail about how the programme was intended to work. The programme and policy documents informing the EPWP theory are in document form and are the most important data sources in this study.

Once the goals are identified, the evaluator can then decide which goals to select (Rossi *et. al.*, 2004). The selection is done based on the aim of the evaluation. Another selection criterion is dependent on what the stakeholders and staff perceive as critical to the success of the programme (Rossi *et. al.*, 2004). The evaluator should also use good judgment to eliminate goals that are not related to programme purpose and incompatible with the rest of the program aims and priorities. Both short term and long term goals are to be considered, but the evaluator decides which are more important to focus on in relation to the purpose of the evaluation (Rossi *et. al.*, 2004).

2.4.1.2 Describing programme activities, resources and function

In this section the task of the evaluator is to identify each significant component of the EPWP (Rossi *et. al.*, 2004). This would include the function of these components and the activities attributed to ensure functionality. Each of the four sectors of the EPWP in alignment with their projects was identified in order to understand the allocation of resources. These functions would range from need assessment to the training of the staff involved in implementation of the programme (Rossi *et. al.*, 2004). Describing these functions entail defining and describing the job description of the programme personnel (Rossi *et. al.*, 2004). In relation to the functions mentioned, it is essential that the programme theory express the relationship between outcome and these functions. However, the description of staff duties does not form such an important part of evaluating the theory behind the EPWP. The focus is on how the programme would work with the resources and activities employed to reach the EPWP objectives.

2.4.1.3 The logic between programme objectives and programme activities

The logic that links the programme objectives and activities is explained by stating how the programme objectives are obtained by means of the envisioned activities. This process is firstly described in story form and then depicted through a diagram summarizing the theory. The evaluation questions based on the theory that was constructed is a useful tool for evaluation. The evaluation tool was applied to evaluate the EPWP theory which provided answers to the research question presented in chapter one.

2.4.2 Evaluating the logic of the theory behind the programme

The first task in commencing the evaluation process is to assess how the various processes are interlinked and affect one another (Rossi *et. al.*, 2004: 156). In this way the evaluator will be able to assess the logical linkages between the sequences. One can consequently start making certain assumptions and test the links from step to step. The data derived from these assessments can be used to adjust programme settings. This process of evaluation does not adhere to any strict

structure and is very open ended, although there are some elements that the process should address (Rossi *et. al.*, 2004). These will be discussed below.

Firstly, evaluators need to ensure that programme goals are well defined and clearly explained. According to Rossi *et. al.* (2004: 157) an objective is well defined when it is stated in clear and concrete terms. The definition of the objective should be stated in such a manner that the evaluator would be able to determine whether it is attainable (Rossi *et. al.*, 2004: 157).

Secondly, the evaluation process needs to establish if the goals are feasible (Rossi *et. al.*, 2004: 157). The evaluator thus needs to review the activities and processes within the programme structure are realistic in attaining the set goals. The activities therefore cannot fall short of the goal it aims to attain. For instance, if the goal of the programme is to employ 100 people the programme projects cannot accommodate 80 participants. The outcomes set by the programme should be realistic and be accomplishable by a practical set of activities or functions. In addition, the programme goals should be attainable in the social ill that it aims to address.

The third element for evaluators to consider is the plausibility of the change process presumed by the programmes theory (Rossi *et. al.*, 2004: 157). The change process is the notion that the programme will bring about certain change for participants from when they enter the programme to when they exit (Rossi *et. al.*, 2004: 157). The change to be observed is the improvement in the circumstances or behavior of the target population. It is important that every step in the causal chain be credible in relation to the change it is supposed to bring about (Rossi *et. al.*, 2004: 157).

A fourth consideration for programme evaluation should be an assessment of the correct selection of participants, the services they should receive and sustaining these services till their completion of the programme (Rossi *et. al.*, 2004: 157). Certain factors like the accessibility of programme facilities to participants are important when looking at selection and recruitment

process. For example, one needs to look at whether or not the location of the programme is accessible to participants.

The final two elements Rossi *et. al.* (2004) advises evaluators to take note of is adequacy and well described functions, components and activities of the programme. In addition the adequacy of the resources allocated to the activities should be assessed. There should be a correlation between the programme functioning and the resources available for operating it. Programme theories that require unrealistic resources are not well constructed and would need revising.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter reviewed previous evaluation of the EPWP, debates in the subfield of programme evaluation and the theory based approach to evaluating the EPWP. The EPWP evaluations were discussed according to similarities of their findings. These similarities formed the themes in this first section.

These studies found that the EPWP did not have a significant impact on the problems of poverty and unemployment. It was found that the amount of employment created is small in relation to the scale of unemployment in the country. In contrast, some studies revealed that the EPWP made improvements in some sectors and in certain areas where the programme was implemented. Another set of studies focused on the perception of the EPWP pre and post implementation. These studies revealed that stakeholders and programme leaders had high expectations of a positive outcome of the programme. However this perception changed after implementation and the overall perception was that there was not much progress in relation to the objectives projected by the EPWP. The last stated findings of evaluation of the EPWP relate to the need for the approach in this study. These studies found disconnect between the design and implementation of the programme.

The approach to evaluating the theory was discussed under the subfield of programme evaluation. The debates in this field that was discussed in this chapter covered the qualitative versus quantitative approach, experimental versus theory based debate and the experimental versus theory based debate. It was found that the debate between qualitative and quantitative approaches to evaluation is debated vigorously in South Africa and elsewhere. However, authors agree that a combination of these approaches would deliver the best results for a study. The next debate that was discussed focused on the purpose of programme evaluation. The utilization versus empowerment debate advocated that the merit of programmes should be evaluated based on how useful it is in addressing the social ill. On the other hand, advocates of the empowerment focused evaluation expressed that the merit lies in how well programme leaders were trained to execute evaluations on their own. The experimental versus theory based approach revealed that the experimental approach is rigid and is not ideal to deal with assumptions and beliefs that are crucial for theory based evaluation.

The theory based approach applied in this study was then discussed. The approach presented by Rossi *et. al.* (2004) was explained and the framework to be applied to construct and evaluate the EPWP theory was stated. This framework acted as a guide for the research methods applied in this study. The framework provided themes useful to analyse data. The data analysis will be discussed in further detail in the next chapter.

Chapter 3: Research methods

3.1 Introduction

This study aimed to do a theory based evaluation on the South African Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP). This chapter discusses the research design, data collection methods and how data analysis was done. The EPWP was approached as a case study research design. The data collection was conducted through a literature study of programme, policy and government documents. The data analysis was guided by the framework by Rossi *et. al.* (2004) describing how to construct the programme theory. This framework is divided into different sections which needed to be completed with the data that was collected. These sections were used as themes to do a thematic analysis of the data.

This study applied a qualitative case study approach to the evaluation of the theory behind the EPWP. A theory based evaluation design was applied to evaluate the assumptions behind the EPWP. It was assumed that the EPWP would employ one million people during the first phase of the programme. It was also assumed that at least 14% of these participants would find permanent employment after exiting the programme. In addition improved service delivery was also formed part of the assumptions. These assumptions were socially constructed by the various parties involved in the design of the programme. These assumptions needed to be examined in order to determine if the theory they construct is sound.

3.2 Case study research design

With regard to evaluation research, qualitative data has been stated to be useful for areas such as implementation, identification and interpretation of side effects (Alkin and Christie, 2004). However, this study applied the qualitative approach by focusing on the perceptions and ideas that constructed the theory underlying the EPWP. Design elements such as the ideas regarding implementation of the EPWP, identification of key role players and resources as well as the

interpretation of expected results of the EPWP are crucial in the construction of the theory and evaluation process.

A qualitative approach is stated to best express multiple realities that can be socially defined (Firestone, 1987: 16). The stakeholders, parliamentary members and all involved with shaping the programme provide different realities and views with regard to the needs the programme aims to address, the processes it affects and the events that it sets into motion. The EPWP was expected to work with regard to addressing the need of employment, improving service delivery and providing a small percentage of participants with permanent employment. The research thus aims to uncover the meaning behind the socially constructed realities which has influenced the logic that constructs the EPWP.

There are different types of qualitative research designs, each with their own merits, but for the purpose of this study the most useful design to apply is the case study design. When using a case study a single person, program, event, process, institution, organization, social group or phenomenon is investigated within a specified time frame, using a combination of appropriate data collection devices (Creswell, 1994; 12). The case study is the EPWP. The EPWP has been in operation between 2004 till 2012. This study only focused on the first five years from 2004 till 2009 because the research is centered on the theory that the programme was based on before it was implemented.

Case studies are valuable in evaluation research because; (1) the knowledge produced is more concrete, (2) the knowledge is specific to the context in which it was established, (3) Case studies can produce new assumptions and knowledge through the readers' interpretation and (4) due to the various interpretations one can make, generalizations are more likely (Robertson, 2004: 47).

Case studies are divided into various types. It can be explanatory, descriptive, exploratory, instrumental and collective (Robertson, 2004: 47). Based on the notion that the type of case study is determined by the research question, which is based on how sound the EPWP theory is, this case study is descriptive. The research question asks how sound the theory was behind the South African EPWP. The 'how' question is one of the main characteristics of descriptive research (Robertson, 2004: 47). Descriptive case studies describe the natural phenomena which are found in the data (Zainal, 2007:3). Zainal (2007), states that the challenge for descriptive research is to start with a theory which describes the case. The end result will thus be comprised of a complete literal description of the case under study.

3.3 Data Collection

Weiss (1972) states that data collection for evaluation research is only limited by the imagination of the evaluator. Thus the data to be collected for the evaluation process can come from various sources and can be collected by different research techniques. The most popular among evaluators include interviews, questionnaires, observations, programme records, government records and government statistical series (Weiss, 1972). As stated in the previous section this study was conducted qualitatively. A qualitative study can include different methods of data collection such as observation, interviews, focus group discussions and document reviews (Weiss, 1972). This study used documents as data sources. In order to evaluate the theory behind the programme, programme documents are the best source to provide insight into the logic behind it.

Government agencies and departments keep documents on individuals and programmes that would be ideal for programme evaluation if made accessible (Weiss, 1972: 56). These would include policy documents, white and green papers and departmental records. Government documents play an important role in this study specifically as the programme to be evaluated is one initiated by the ruling political party (African National Congress) and the stakeholders are various government bodies such as the National Treasury, the Department of Public Works and local municipalities where the programme has been implemented. The data

collected from these agencies could provide insight into the theory underlying the programme as they formed part of the planning process.

The programme that this study is based on was introduced by the ruling party (ANC) of South Africa through the Department of Public Works. According to parliamentary protocol when a government department submits a white paper, which is a statement of its proposed programme or policy; it is to be debated in parliament (Department of Public Works, 1997b). The white paper to be used as reference in this study is the one submitted by the Department of Public Works in 1997 (Public Works, towards the 21st century). The objective of this White Paper was to lay out key programmes for different departments for the next five years. It demonstrates how South Africa's broader socio economic objectives would be achieved through expanding investments in public works (Department of Public Works, 2007).

Other policy papers were also reviewed because it was found vital for the construction of the theory behind the EPWP. These policy papers included the White Paper on Social Welfare (1997), the public works vision towards the 21st century (Department of Public Works 1997b) as well as the business and economic policy of South Africa (The South Africa Foundation, 2002) and the South African Developmental Policy (Edigheji, 2010). These policies include policies on economic growth, education and training as well as employment equity. The programme documents which were a more direct source of information for the construction and evaluation of the EPWP theory consisted mostly out of EPWP strategy plans for each sector (Department of Public Works, 2006; Department of Public Works, 2006; DoS, DoE, DoH, 2006), EPWP business plans (Department of Public Works, 2003), Departmental annual reports (Department of Public Works, 1996; Department of Public Works, 1997a and 1997b) dating from 1996 due to the fact that the foundation of the programme is imbedded in similar programmes at that time.

Existing records often provide insights about a group of people or programme that cannot be observed or recorded in any other way (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). This information is presented in document form. The best source of information with regard to programme objectives, activities, resources and the logic linking it all is to be found in programme strategic plans, departmental records and policy documents. Document review considers the context in which they were created (Wilkins *et. al.*, 2007: 6). The researcher therefore learns about a specific programme at particular time and place which offer information regarding a certain topic (Wilkins *et. al.*, 2007: 6). In this study the insight is given into the EPWP during its design phase with the aim of addressing unemployment through labour intensive projects focused on skills development in South Africa.

Document review has been stated to be a natural choice for evaluation research (Weiss, 1972; 54). In this study the main reason for choosing this source of data is due to the fact that the EPWP is only in its second phase now and some of the most valuable data is to be found in the programme planning documents for this first phase. These programme documents included Department of Public Works triennial plans, 2004 to 2007. Labour, education and development policies are reviewed to study the policies that informed the EPWP. Infrastructure, social, economic and developmental EPWP strategy plans for 2004 to 2009.

The data sought out in these programme documents are concerned with the planning stages of the programme. Focus was placed on finding documentation on the development of the EPWP in order to establish the thought process behind the programme. This will aid in building the theory that underlies the programme as it contains information with regard to the processes and mandates of the programme.

There are benefits as well as disadvantages to using document review to collect data. The advantages include the fact that data already exist and is normally easily accessible (Yin, 1994).

It does not interrupt the program process as it does not require the researcher to be an active participant in the research process like with interviews or observations (Yin, 1994). The researcher does therefore not become a burden to those administrating or taking part in the programme. It is a source that can provide historical data that cannot be easily removed. In addition, this method helps the researcher to be more objective as no contact with participants or stakeholders will take place and the only contact will be with the documentation to be reviewed.

The disadvantages of using this method includes the notion that it can become time consuming as data to answer the research question might take time to compile and analyze (Yin, 1994). It is a limited source of information, because the documents that exist are all that is available to the researcher doing an exclusive document review as in this study. Documented data is not always complete and reliable. The researcher should thus be very thorough in order to ensure that gaps in the data are identified clearly and dealt with accordingly. The figures and facts with an important impact on the EPWP evaluation was therefore checked thoroughly by making sure that there is enough documented research supporting it.

3.4 Data Analysis

Data becomes useful when it has been properly analysed (Rossi *et. al*, 2004: 198). When data is analysed qualitatively the researcher can build the evidence needed to support the main argument that the study aims to make. This study is based on document analysis. Document analysis is defined as the review or evaluation of documents, both printed and electronic material (Bowen, 2009: 27).

Analysing documents requires that the data collected be studied and interpreted in order to draw out meaning, gain in-depth understanding of the subject matter and consequently to develop empirical and useful knowledge (Corbin & Strauss, 2008 *in* Bowen, 2009: 27). In this study analysing the data plays a crucial role in constructing the programme theory, which forms the foundation for the evaluation process.

3.4.1 Data analysis through thematic analysis

Thematic analysis is defined as a form of pattern recognition in the data (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 32). In this case the categories set out by the framework from Rossi *et. al.* (2004) formed the themes in the study. Thematic analysis requires the researcher to rigorously and thoroughly re-read and review the data. Identifying themes already starts when the data is being collected and ends when the data is presented or reported. Scholars differ on when the analysis process should start, but Braun and Clarke (2006: 32) state that there is no 'right' way to do thematic reading. One can merely adhere to the guidelines in accordance with qualitative analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 32). These guidelines will also be followed in this study when evaluating the constructed programme theory.

There are six guidelines presented by Braun and Clarke (2006: 17) for use of thematic analysis. First, the researcher needs to familiarize him/herself with the data, meaning that the researcher needs to be immersed in the data to know the depth of the content presented (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 17). Second, the researcher will identify a general list of ideas that are of interest and relevance to the study and research question (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 17). For the purpose of this study the ideas relevant to the study has already been provided by the framework from Rossi *et. al.* (2004)

From this list of ideas the third guideline which entails identifying themes can be conducted (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 17). This can be executed through noting the similar trends and ideas that have emerged from the data. The fourth guideline would comprise of reviewing the themes that have been identified (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 17). A review of the themes presented by Rossi *et. al.*'s (2004) framework is an important tool for summarising the EPWP theory because it would explain why the programme was expected to work.

Once the researcher is confident with the themes identified they can be titled and the data required to support each theme can be more strictly refined. The final step involves the

write up of the themes (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 17). In this the researcher will have to ensure that there is sufficient data to support the prevalence of the themes. In this study the writing up of the themes is done by providing answers to the evaluation questions which formed the themes in the evaluation.

3.4.2 Advantages and limitations of thematic analysis

There are both advantages and limitations to the application of thematic analysis. The advantages of using thematic analysis includes that it is flexible in analysing both qualitative and quantitative findings (Mays and Pope, 2005:15). It can thus be applied to almost all types of data.

Thematic analysis is also useful to summarize key features of a large body of data (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 37). The EPWP is an extensive programme and the body of data needed to do a theory based evaluation was large. It ranged from programme documents useful for the construction of the theory. In addition to the EPWP reports, annual reports from the Department of Public Works from 1997 until 2002 were studied. Other data included reports from the Labour Market Review, The World Bank and reports from the Centre for Development and Enterprise.

In accordance with qualitative research methods, thematic analysis makes room for unanticipated results (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 17). It therefore allows for personal interpretation which is important for the evaluation of the EPWP theory, because the underlying assumptions need to be interpreted to construct the theory. Another advantage of thematic analysis is its usefulness in producing analysis suited to inform policy development (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 37). The EPWP is a programme informed by different policies and this type of analysis can produce information valuable to the operationalization of these policies, which are the programmes.

The limitations of thematic analysis also include its flexibility which is associated with a lack of transparency (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 37). This lack of transparency is attributed to the fact that thematic analysis doesn't explain theoretical assumptions (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 37). Using thematic analysis as a tool for analysis is more concerned with the overarching ideas. This study overcomes this limitation because the construction of the theory requires one to pay attention to details within the themes.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has noted that this study was conducted qualitatively by using a case study research design. The EPWP is the single unit investigated within a specified time frame, using a combination of appropriate data collection devices. Data collection methods included a literature study of programme documents which include strategy plans, white papers, policy documents and government records. The documentation covered different subjects in relation to the EPWP, National Development Plans, Departmental strategic plans and related related policies. Data analysis was conducted through thematic analysis. The themes to be analysed were provided by the framework from Rossi *et. al.* (2004) applied in this study. The next two empirical chapters report the findings of the data that was analysed.

Chapter 4: Constructing the theory behind the Expanded Public Works Programme

4.1 Introduction

This chapter demonstrates how the theory behind the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) was constructed. The chapter thus describes the objectives that the EPWP was meant to achieve and how the programme was expected to achieve these objectives. This was achieved by applying the theory based method to conducting and evaluation as presented by Rossi *et. al.* (2004). The construction of the theory is the starting point of the evaluation process. The theory constructed in this chapter, is evaluated and discussed in the next chapter.

In chapter two, it was stated that in order to construct the theory behind the EPWP, it is important to look at the policies that informed it as well as the context of the programme. This will provide the evaluator with the information regarding the origin of the programme as well as the conditions and environment it was developed in. This chapter will therefore start with a description of this context by describing the background of the EPWP. The context will contain detail of the State of the Nation address in February 2003 and the Growth and Development Summit of 2003, where the EPWP was initially introduced.

The next section begins with delving into the components of the theory. These components will form the themes in the rest of this chapter. These components include formulating the goals and objectives of the programme and describing the activities directed at attaining the set goals and objectives. The logic that links the programme objectives and activities is then discussed accompanied by a diagram summarising the EPWP theory. The diagram is followed by the conclusion of the chapter which summarises the important evaluation components discussed in chapter five.

4.2 Background of the EPWP

The EPWP is an expansion of the National Public Works Programme (NPWP). The NPWP was defined as an instrument for asset and employment creation by promoting community based public works programmes and increasing the labour intensity of infrastructure programmes across all government departments (Adato, Haddad, Horner, Ravjee, Haywood, 1999 in McCord, 2005: 572).

After the second democratic election, the ANC government was still faced with vast socio-economic challenges. It perceived the challenges to be fourfold: reducing unemployment, alleviate poverty, improve general skill basis and improve social services (Department of Public Works, 2005). The African National Congress (ANC) subsequently decided that this required a large scale of labour intensive methods in the construction industry in order to reduce unemployment while addressing the lack of service delivery in disadvantaged areas (Department of Public Works, 2005).

Following the ANC policy conference in 2002, former President Thabo Mbeki first announced the EPWP in his State of the Nation address in February 2003 (Du Toit, 2005: 661). He announced that “government has decided that we should launch an expanded public works programme” (The Presidency, 2003). The programme was then approved by cabinet later that year in November 2003 (Du Toit, 2005: 661). The programme was officially launched by the presidency in May 2004 at Sekhunyani Village, Giyani, in the Limpopo Province (Department of Public Works, 2005).

The EPWP can be viewed as an extension of previous programmes such as the Community Based Public Works Programme (CBPWP). The CBPWP, like the EPWP, used infrastructure as a means of addressing the problem of unemployment in South Africa. The CBPWP was implemented by the Department of Public Works between 1998 and 2003. It resulted in limited success, because little sustainable employment was created and the constructed assets were not

well maintained (National Labour and Economic Development Institute, 2010). The initial programme was focused on the three poorest provinces in the country. These provinces were the Eastern Cape, Kwazulu-Natal and the Northern Province (National Labour and Economic Development Institute, 2010).

The CBPWP had four major objectives. These included creating and maintaining physical assets that serve the community as well as reducing unemployment through productive jobs (Department of Public Works, 1997a). In addition, the programme aimed to provide education and training for programme participants as a means of economic empowerment and empowering communities to manage their own affairs while fostering sustainable economic development (McCord, 2003: 7).

The EPWP was referred to, by former president Mbeki, as a programme developed over several years, focused on the public and shared by various departments within government (Department of Public Works, 2005). He stated that the success of the programme is highly dependent on a strong relationship between government, the public as well as commerce in the country (Department of Public Works, 2005). In a workshop conducted with all the major departments of the construction industry, the EPWP is presented as the former president's flagship initiative to alleviate poverty and unemployment (EPWP, 2005).

The introduction of the EPWP came as a result of an expansion of an already established programme, the NPWP. The Department of Public Works added elements which incorporated sectors such as the economic and social sectors and therefore address a broader range of policy issues (Department of Public Works, 2005: 11). The context of this programme was marked with very high unemployment and poverty rates, backlogs in service delivery, weak infrastructure assets and low economic growth. By constructing the theory behind the EPWP it will be made apparent how the programme aims to change the context it would be implemented in. The construction of the theory discussed below has three different components that link to from the EPWP theory.

Before the theory can be evaluated, the evaluator needs to describe the theory embodied in the programme's structure. This section therefore describes how the programme was intended to work. The theory was constructed by applying the framework presented below in Table 2, with the data gathered from programme documents, policy documents, and summit reports.

Table 2: Theory construction framework by Rossi, Freeman and Lipsey (2004)

4.3 Determine programme objectives (Rossi <i>et. al.</i> , 2004: 148)
4.4 Describing programme activities, resources and functions (Rossi <i>et. al.</i> , 2004: 149)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Participants ▪ Services delivered ▪ Programme components
4.5 Clarifying the logic linking between programme goals and activities (Rossi <i>et. al.</i> , 2004: 149)

4.3 The EPWP objectives

The formulation of objectives consists of the stated objectives which were formulated by the Department of Public Works for the EPWP. The first stated objective of the EPWP is to create temporary employment and income opportunities for at least one million unemployed South Africans (Department of Public Works, 2005: 50). The programme has a period of five years to achieve this objective. The four sectors of the EPWP are each designed to create employment opportunities for a certain amount of participants amounting to the total of one million over the first phase of the programme (Department of Public Works, 2005: 50).

The second objective presented in the programme documents entail the provision of labour intensive public services and goods (Department of Public Works, 2005: 50). This is accomplished through public sector budgets with the help of public and private sector implementation. The EPWP's main focus is the infrastructure sector which receives most of the funding allocated to the programme. The EPWP is funded by government through the National Treasury. The funds are provided through Provincial and Municipal Infrastructure Grants (MIG

and PIG). These are granted under conditions of the Division of Revenue Act (DORA). The DORA states that all activities under the EPWP should be conducted through labour intensive methods (Department of Public Works, 2005: 50).

The other objective is focused on the exit strategy of the EPWP. The aim is to ensure that at least 14% of the participants find permanent employment after leaving the programme (Department of Public Works, 2005: 51). The programme makes provision for this by equipping participants with work experience, skills training and information with regard to work opportunities in their areas. In addition the option of further education and training is also offered by the programme especially with the focus on creating SMME's (Department of Public Works, 2005: 51).

4.4 The EPWP components, their functions and planned activities

As stated in section 4.2, the EPWP has four sectors and these are the infrastructure, environmental, social and economic sectors. These four sectors form the components of the EPWP. Each sector has a function and contains activities to attain sectorial goals. These activities require resources to accomplish them which will also be discussed here.

4.4.1 The infrastructure sector

The projects under this sector would be requiring labour intensive activities. These activities would include spreading, shaping, building low volume roads, storm water drains, chamber formation, loading, ditching, trenching, sloping, graveling and finishing and sidewalks (Department of Public works, 2005). As stated previously, the infrastructure sector forms the largest section of the EPWP. It was projected to create approximately 750 000 jobs over the next five years. It was planned that 37000km of roads would be built, 31000km of pipelines be laid, 1500km of storm water drains and 150km of sidewalks be constructed (Department of Public works, 2005). The average duration of these programmes will be a period of four months which will result in the employment of 250 000 employees per year.

All these workers will receive skills accredited training funded by the Department of Labour (DOL) (Department of Public works, 2005). This training is NQF level accredited courses focused on labour intensive construction. The different sectors in the programme all have their own members of staff and leadership. For example the infrastructure sector requires a staff qualified with NQF levels 2, 4, 5 and 7 (Department of Public Works, 2004: 16).

The candidates come from different fields of expertise. Five hundred consulting engineers are to be trained in order to ensure successful implementation of the infrastructure projects Act (Government Gazette, 2004: 10). In addition, 250 000 contractors will then be put through Construction Education Training Authority (CETA) registered learner-ships to build the infrastructure by applying labour intensive methods as conditioned by the Division Of Revenue Act (Government Gazette, 2004: 10).

The training provided through these learnerships cover technical concerns related to labour intensive construction and maintenance of municipal infrastructure (Department of Public Works, 2004: 11). In addition they provide training in business management, financial management and tendering. After completing the learnerships contractors and supervisors would receive a NQF registered qualification. They can then successfully tender for on-going or newly started labour intensive projects under the EPWP or other initiatives.

The Department of Public Works prepared certain guidelines to be adhered to regarding the types of projects to be conducted as well as tender and design guidelines to help provinces and municipalities implement the proper completion of the projects. These guidelines also entail contractual agreements for the consultants and contractors who were designing and managing these projects (Department of Public Works, 2004: 9). This forms part of the human resources needed to execute the activities under the infrastructure sector of the EPWP. The monetary resources for this sector includes R15 billion of the provincial and municipal infrastructure

grants for the first five years. This represents one third of the national budget distributed to provinces and municipalities over the five year period (Department of Public Works, 2004: 16).

4.4.2 The environmental sector

The Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism have been tasked with coordinating and implementing the programme in the environmental sector (Watermeyer, 2004). This is accomplished through subordinate programmes such as the Working for Water programme, the Land Care programme, the Coastal Care programme and the Waste Management programme (Watermeyer, 2004).

The environmental sector of the EPWP intended to create 200 000 employment opportunities through the following programmes: the Department of Agriculture's land care programme; the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism's People and Parks, Coastal Care, Sustainable Land-based Livelihoods, Cleaning up SA, and Growing a Tourism Economy programmes; and the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry's Working for Water, Wetlands, and Fire programmes (Department of Public Works, 2004: 16). The activities in this sector has a triple effect as it creates employment, cares for the environment and thus contributing to a sustainable development as expected by the Millennium Development goals.

The activities under this sector of the programme should result in 720 000 hectares of alien plant species being treated, 40 rehabilitated wetlands, 20 fire protection associations, 700 km of the coast cleaned and assisted with infrastructure, 10 000 hectares of rehabilitated land, 32 waste management programmes and 150 historical and community tourism projects (Department of Public Works, 2004: 16). In order to realize these projects, government has allocated R4 billion for the first five years of the programme (Department of Public Works, 2004: 16).

4.4.3 The social sector

The social sector of the EPWP has basically two initiatives to attain its goals, the Home Community Based Care (HCBC) and Early Childhood Development Programme (ECDP). The Home/Community Based Care is the provision of health and social services by formal and informal caregivers in the home (DOL, DOE and DOH, 2004: 7). The service offered by this initiative include: patient care and support related to HIV/AIDS and other chronic illnesses, identifying families and children in need, addresses the needs of child headed households, income generating projects, family counselling and social service advice (DOL, DOE and DOH, 2004: 7).

In 2003, it was noted that there were 892 HCBC sites in the country (Department of Public works, 2004: 16). The funding for these sites comes predominantly from government and the rest from international donors or businesses. Each of the 892 sites serves approximately 1453 clients (Department of Public works, 2004: 16). The proposed number of personnel needed to attend to these sites is 31565 members (Department of Public works, 2004: 16). Due to the financial constraints in this sector more than half of the personnel are volunteers and do not receive remuneration.

The plan is to involve 20 000 already trained HCBC who would receive additional accredited training and work opportunity on a full time bases (Department of Public Works, 2005). Volunteers are also provided with skills- and learnership programmes. They will gain work experience and receive a stipend. They will be able to exit the programme with an NQF level qualification and subsequently be in a position to find permanent employment with longer term income prospects (Department of Public Works, 2005).

The programme is intended to result in 2.9 million people able to access qualified Home Based Care services (Department of Public works, 2004: 16). In addition, the Early childhood Development sites and trained practitioners should service an amount of 400 000 children (Department of Public works, 2004: 16).

4.4.4 *The economic sector*

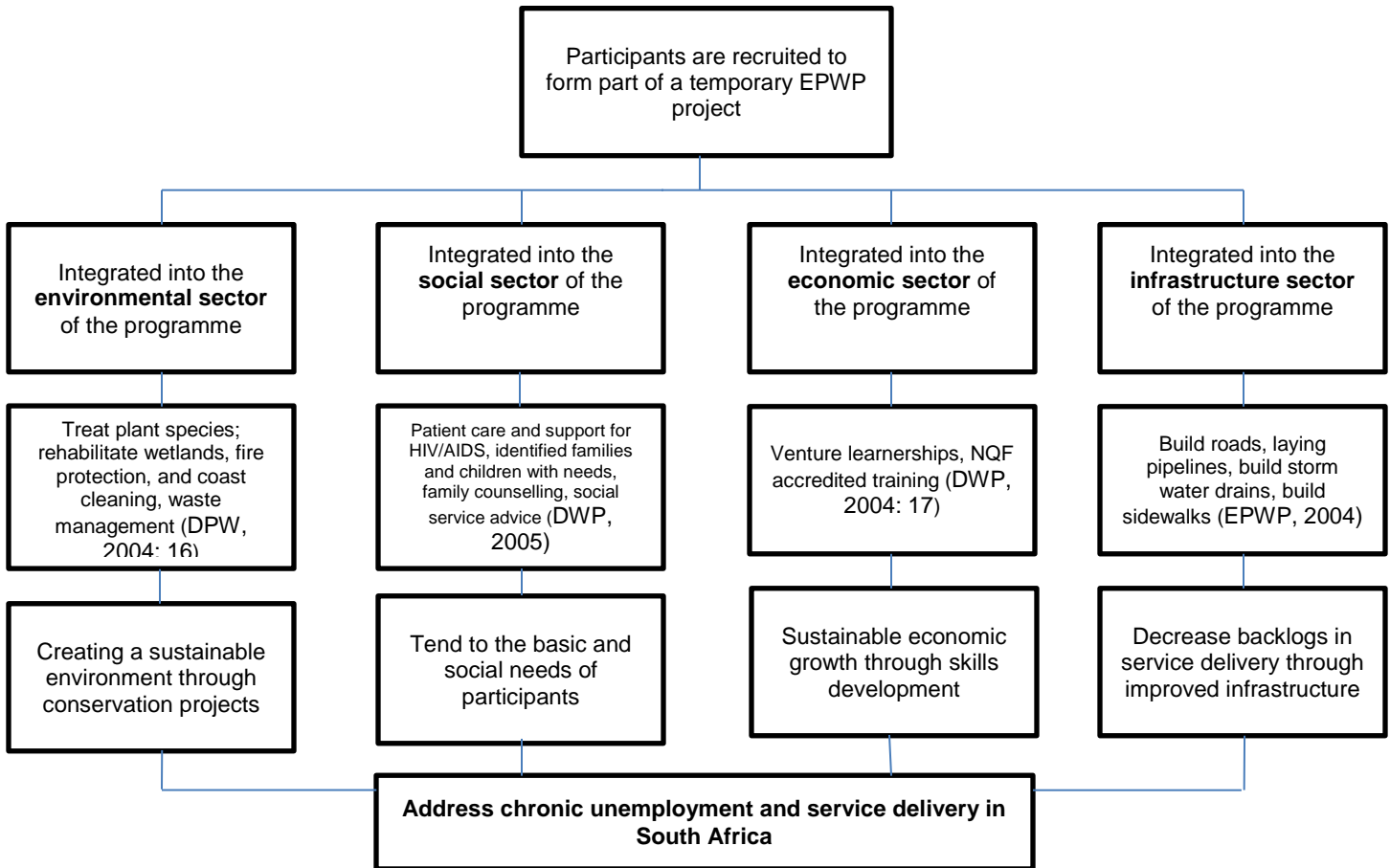
The Department of Trade and Industry is responsible for coordination and implementation of the EPWP in the economic sector (Watermeyer, 2004). The programmes related to this sector include projects for small to medium sized businesses; entrepreneurship as well as community based projects for new business owners (Watermeyer, 2004). The focus of this sector is more on creating own businesses and consequently creating jobs for others. The learnership ventures offered in this sector could possibly result in long term success for participants.

The activities in the economic sector include a micro-enterprise venture learnership project. This learnership entails selecting participants from the unemployed pool and placing them in a full time learner-ship to teach and support them to eventually develop their own SMME's (Department of Public Works, 2003: 17). The participants will graduate from these learner-ships with the ability to manage and sustain their own businesses. In addition they will have the knowledge and guidance to tender for public sector projects as well as a NQF accredited qualification with a credit record. The target for this sector has been set at 3000 venture learner-ships of the first phase of the programme (Department of Public Works, 2003: 17).

4.5 Clarifying the logic linking programme objectives and activities

The EPWP has certain objectives to realize the ideals of reducing unemployment and poverty in South Africa. Structures and activities were envisioned to operationalize the objectives. This section discusses how the objectives of the EPWP were envisioned to be attained. The broader objectives of the EPWP will form the themes in this section in order to show how the components of the theory fit together. This will be summarised in a diagrammatic figure below and discussed starting with the envisioned outcome of each sector. Programme theories are usually presented as diagrams (Rossi *et. al.*, 2004).

Diagram 2: Expanded Public Works Programme Theory



4.5.1. Creating a sustainable environment with conservation projects

The EPWP creates other employment opportunities such as the rehabilitation of wetlands. This ensures the delivery of water purification which forms an important part of the basic living conditions of all South Africans, especially those in rural areas. Another initiative under the environmental sector of the EPWP is the waste management programme which encourages the collection of waste in return for food parcels. This renders a service to those living in dire poverty, providing immediate nutrition. In addition it also ensures for a cleaner environment which means healthier living. It also solves the problems of backlogs with regard to the collection of waste by the municipality.

Other EPWP activities also related to the environment includes treating alien plant life and the cleaning of coast lines. Treating alien plant life consists of removing alien tree species which are considered to be one of the largest threats of the eco system. The EPWP has transformed this activity into an opportunity of employment and protecting the environment. The wood from the trees removed is proposed for use in wood work projects and could be a business opportunity for SMME's (EPWP, 2004b).

The entire process is labour intensive from the removal of the alien species to the building and selling of the wood works. In addition the coast cleaning projects also provides employment services while ensuring cleaner shore lines and oceans which has positive effects on the environment and surrounding areas and their inhabitants.

4.5.2 Tend to the basic needs of the community

The EPWP is a multi-faceted programme with a range of subsections from different government departments and projects. It stretches over almost every sphere of society from infrastructure to social, economic and even environmental protection and preservation. It therefore addresses a range of concerns. It aims to address the state of infrastructure in the country while improving service delivery through public works improving infrastructure in rural areas in the country. It projects to deliver social services to children and those affected by HIV and AIDS through ECD and HBC projects. In addition, the EPWP intended to create and develop SMME's as an initiative to invest in economic growth in the country. Improved economic growth would mean more work opportunities for the unemployed.

The programme will offer participants a stipend which will allow them to meet their basic needs and thus relieve the impoverished conditions of one million participants by March 2009. The programme will thus reduce unemployment by offering work opportunity to the unemployed and an income to those living in poverty.

Participants will therefore no longer form part of the percentage of people living in dire poverty with no source of income. The programme's exit strategy poses the challenge of finding work opportunities with a permanent and improved income base. The cleavages between wage earners will eventually become smaller, for those whom have never had an income of any sort before will now have that opportunity and those exiting the programme will be able to earn a better income (Department of Public Works, 2003).

The programme thus holds the potential to break the cycle of poverty in many households, but only temporarily. Consequently, on a much larger scale the programme contains the capacity to reduce income inequality in the longer term if exit strategies prove to be successful. It will initially bring those whom have not earned an income before on a platform with wage earners in the country. This will give them the platform to empower the lives of their children with education opportunities mentioned. This would enable the next generation from these households to gain a higher standard of life and earn a higher income, putting them on equal standing with those in a higher economic and social standing.

The EPWP also renders services to the children and those infected with HIV and AIDS. The HBC and ECD programmes provide these members of society with services of care and attention to improve their living conditions. It also provides employment to participants and volunteers equipping them with an NQF level qualification. This sector focuses predominantly on women and the youth and thus forms part of governments' objective of creating a more interactive and equal economy.

The objective of offering people the skills to establish a sustainable living is a daunting task. The EPWP aims to accomplish this by meeting initially meeting the basic needs of participants by providing an income that was absent prior to their involvement with the programme. In the larger scheme of things, this goal falls under the objective of alleviating poverty. It will allow households to meet their basic needs, save money and in the long term create a better life for

their children by providing them with the opportunity to attend school and possibly enter a higher level of education.

4.5.3 Sustainable economic growth through skills development and improved infrastructure

The economic sector is to produce a result of 3000 learner-ships by the end of the first phase (Department Public Works, 2003). This brings the planned estimate to one million participants in total between 2004 and 2009 (Department Public Works, 2003).

Each division within the EPWP offer a certain set of skills and experience to be obtained to improve participants' potential of further employment and eventually create a sustainable living. Many of the environmental projects provide the opportunity for permanent employment. There will always be a demand for waste management and nature conservation. It is a sector that will always be in demand for individuals who can aid in the efforts of caring for the environment whilst creating employment. In addition, it delivers some of the most basic services to South Africans.

With regard to human resources, the labour intensive sections will be managed by a consultant with an NQF level 7 (Department Public Works, 2004). The staff member working under these consultants must be qualified with an NQF level 5 (Department Public Works, 2005). In addition, NQF level training is provided by the EPWP. The different sectors in the programme all have their own members of staff and leadership. For instance the infrastructure sector requires a staff qualified with NQF levels 2, 4, 5 and 7 (Department Public Works, 2005). An individual will be trained in labour intensive methods of the construction industry and be in a position to become a contractor and NQF level two and supervisors at NQF level four (Department Public Works, 2005). Much of the output expected from the EPWP is dependent on the training and skill development provided by the programme and more importantly the exit strategy. The programme aims to prepare participants in such a manner that they are able to enter the economy and make a sustainable living.

It has been stated that inadequate infrastructure is a limiting factor to economic growth (Molise, 2008: 22). The infrastructure sector has been identified as one of the drivers for addressing the unemployment problem in South Africa (Molise, 2008: 22). This could be attributed to the fact that it is an industry that can absorb a large labour force. The large investment choice from the EPWP into this sector is thus evident. However, the concern lies with the weight placed on this sector in relation to the other sectors in the EPWP. The infrastructure division, both financially and by amount of intake of participants should make up the largest portion of the programme. In the interest of economic growth in South Africa the significance of these other sectors in the EPWP is worth exploring as they might play an equally important role in economic growth.

4.5.4 Decreasing backlogs in service delivery through improved infrastructure

The infrastructure sector is presented to be the largest employer within the programme. It is expected to create work opportunity for 750 000 unemployed individuals over a period of five years (Department of Public Works, 2005). This sector of the programme receives the most funding due to the scale of the initiative. It is perceived as addressing two concerns with one action, because it creates unemployment while lessening the backlogs in service delivery.

Infrastructure development plays a key role in using construction for job creation and delivering of services. The services to be provided by the infrastructure sector of the EPWP include tarred roads and sidewalks, thus better infrastructure. The assumption is that this will also result in increased business activity due to improved access to rural areas. The EPWP also consist of activities such as trenching for pipelines and building storm water drains. The improved infrastructure will mean better quality of sanitary services and prevent extreme flooding during winter months especially.

4.6 Conclusion

The EPWP had three main objectives which were, creating one million short term employment opportunities, improving service delivery and producing participants whom will form a permanent part of the active economy. These were to be achieved through the activities describe in each sector. The framework presented in Table 2 in the beginning of the chapter outlined the process through which the theory will be extracted. This was accomplished by analysing the data through thematic analysis by use of the categories provided by the Rossi *et al* (2004) framework.

The EPWP theory, illustrated through this chapter, described how the programme should work and why. The EPWP is a policy programme which would address unemployment in South Africa through providing jobs for unemployed South Africans. These jobs would be executed through four sectors of the programme being infrastructure, economic, social and environmental. Each sector provides skills training, equipping the participant for the work place and increasing their chances of finding permanent employment. The participants will be provided with a stipend to tend to their basic needs and the work that they do in each sector will benefit the community as a whole through improved infrastructure and service delivery.

Chapter 5: Evaluating the theory behind the Expanded Public works Programme

5.1 Introduction

Evaluation of the theory behind the EPWP is the final piece of the evaluation process. It entails studying the theory carefully and answering the questions with the information gathered from the theory. The theory reveals the critical assumptions and expectations embedded in the design of the programme (Rossi *et. al.*, 2004: 156). The evaluation critically reviews of the logic and the plausibility of the different aspects of the programme.

This chapter demonstrates the application of the framework presented by Rossi *et. al.* (2004). The principles in the framework presented as evaluation questions will form the different themes in this chapter. In addition to answering these questions, assumptions highlighted through the application of the framework will be discussed. These assumptions were then summarised to answer the research question. The conclusion provides a summary of the evaluation's findings.

5.2 Application of the evaluation framework

The theory based evaluation was conducted by applying a framework presented by Rossi, *et. al* (2004). The framework is designed to evaluate the logic that underlies the programme theory. In order to evaluate the logic one needs to study the theory that was constructed. The framework consists of a set of questions that will be used to evaluate the assumptions regarding how the EPWP was supposed to work. The evaluation questions were answered by using the information from the programme theory as well as other sources. There are six questions that will be applied to conduct the evaluation. The questions allow one to examine the objectives, change process, activities, target population and resources of the EPWP.

Table 3: Rossi, Freeman and Lipsey's (2004) questions for theory based evaluation

5.2.1	Are the programme objectives well defined?
5.2.2	Are the programme objectives feasible?
5.2.3	Are the components, activities and functions of the programme well defined and sufficient?
5.2.4	Are the resources allocated to the programme activities adequate?
5.3.5	Are the procedures for identifying the target population and delivering services to them clear?
5.3.6	Is the change process presumed on the programme theory plausible?

5.2.1 Are the programme objectives well defined?

According to Rossi *et. al.* (2004: 157) an objective is well defined when it is stated in clear and concrete terms. The definition of the objective should be stated in such a manner that the evaluator would be able to determine whether it is attainable (Rossi *et. al.*, 2004: 157). The EPWP documents identified and projected these objectives to be, creating one million temporary employment opportunities for unemployed South Africans, providing public goods and services and increasing the potential of at least 14% of participants to find permanent employment.

The first objective is stated in the following way: “Create temporary employment and income for at least one million unemployed South Africans” (Department of Public Works, 2005: 50). This objective is clearly stated, but lacks the details concerning how it is to be attained. It is clear in stating that the employment is temporary and employees can therefore prepare themselves to seek other employment at the end of their contract. It also states that employees will be provided with an income. Finally, it provides a number of one million which is a measurement indicator, making it useful to determine whether or not the target was reached.

The second objective is stated as: “Provide needed public goods and services through labour intensive methods, at acceptable standards, through funding by public sector budgets and implementation through the private and public sector” (Department of Public Works, 2005: 50). This objective is clearly stated according to Rossi *et. al.*'s (2004: 157) criteria. It states the intent, which is to provide public goods and services. It also states how it will be funded and implemented. The EPWP sector plans give specific targets in each sector of the EPWP of the services and goods that need to be provided (Department of Public Works, 2004). The definition in this instance is thus sufficiently clear. The determination of whether or not the objective has been reached would be able to be measured with the targets provided for each sector.

The third and final stated objective provided by the programme documents is the following: “Increase the potential for at least 14% of public works participants to earn future income by providing work experience, training and information related to local work opportunities, further education and training and SMME development” (Department of Public Works: 2004: 70). This objective is also clearly stated as it provides information on what the objective is and the action required to obtain the objective. It provides information with regard to the benefits it would hold for participants after exiting the programme. In addition, it also includes the responsibilities of the EPWP in assisting participants with finding future employment. This statement of the objective also contains a percentage which can be used as a measurement indicator making it useful to permit a determination of whether or not the objective has been obtained.

5.2.2 Are the programme objectives feasible?

Rossi *et. al.* (2004: 157) defines feasibility as realistic assumptions that the objectives can be obtained as a result of the service the programme provides. The assumptions to be discussed in this section include ones regarding the labour market and the target group of the EPWP. These assumptions would explain the thought process behind the realisation of the EPWP objectives and policy goals. The objectives should be operationalized in such a manner that the programme should have an effect on certain conditions in a meaningful way, not beyond its influence (Rossi *et. al.*, 2004; 157).

The services projected by the EPWP documents can reach the set objectives in theory. Each sector aims to contribute a certain amount of work opportunities to reach the one million employment mark. The goal is to employ 750 000 individuals through the infrastructure sector, 200 000 through the environmental sector, 50 000 through the social sector and 3000 learner-ships to be contributed by the economic division (Department of Public Works, 2004: 51). With the majority being employed by the infrastructure sector which requires low to unskilled individuals the 1 million employment mark is attainable. This can be attributed to the fact that there is a large number of the population who falls into this target group (McCord, 2007:15).

In relation to the second objective with the delivery of public goods and services, the EPWP plans to ensure goods and service delivery through the four broad sectors with projects conducted by municipalities (Department of Public Works, 2005). The EPWP is a big and complex programme. It has various objectives and could be interpreted differently by municipalities as they create their own projects around the objectives of the EPWP (Department of Public Works, 2005). The progress and implementation may differ and may be lacking in some municipalities while succeeding in others. It could differ as each municipality would create different projects to reach the overarching objectives of the EPWP. These projects might progress differently depending on the effectiveness and the efficient manner each project is implemented by the different municipalities.

The last objective of finding permanent employment for at least 14% of participants after exiting the programme emphasises the exit strategy of the programme. The services produced by the programme to aid participants with finding permanent employment is the skills training as well as the information with regard to permanent work opportunities. The only way of determining if these were sufficient is to study the labour market and look at the skills demanded as well as the capacity of the labour market to absorb the 14% of participants indicated.

The 14% projection seems like an insignificant amount in relation to the one million employment target. This means that only 140 000 out of the 1 million employees are projected to find permanent employment after exiting the programme. There are certain assumptions concerning the functioning of the participants after leaving the programme. The assumption concerning the labour market at the time was that it could absorb 10% of the participants exiting the programme (Department of Public Works 2004: 19). If the labour market could absorb 10% of the public works participants then the objective of 14% was already an over estimation and with the aim of making a noteworthy impact on employment and poverty it is not adequate.

In addition, it was assumed that the skills and experience gained by participants are relevant to the labour demand in the economy at that stage (Department of Public Works 2004: 19). In 2004 the Minister of Labour emphasized the notion that we live in an ever changing environment (Maja, 2004: 4). Government and policy makers thus need to stay relevant with regard to the supply and demand of the labour market when developing ways of addressing the concerns such as unemployment and skill shortages. A study done by the Development Bank of Southern Africa revealed that there has been a rise in the demand for most occupational job opportunities (Bhorat & Jacobs, 2010: 6).

These changes in the labour market have been attributed to technological growth as well as a rise in capital labour forces (Bhorat & Jacobs, 2012: 7). There have consequently been various repercussions. These include increased unemployment levels for unskilled and additionally made it very difficult for workers without the requisite skills or qualifications to find sustainable employment (Bhorat & Jacobs, 20210: 7). The South African labour market is in need of skilled educated workers. The market for lower and unskilled workers is not an area that has been identified (Maja, 2004: 18). It thus explains the projection of the low labour market intake of those exiting the programme.

In addition, the highest positive rise in demand was for managerial positions (93%) and this was followed by craft-, trade-, and clerical workers (Bhorat & Jacobs, 2010: 6). Operators and assemblers have had the lowest rise accompanied by a decrease in the demand for elementary workers (80%) (Bhorat & Jacobs, 2010: 6). Overall there was a rise in the demand for skilled and semi-skilled workers during the first ten years following apartheid (Bhorat & Jacobs, 2010: 6).

The final assumption concerning the labour market was that the private sector, municipalities and communities will take responsibility for continued service delivery and the encouragement for obtaining SMME's (Department of Public Works 2004: 19b). However, this is merely an assumption as there were no agreements or plans found between the Department of Public Works and local municipalities with regard to maintaining infrastructure from the EPWP or continued service delivery after the programme is completed in a certain area. However, this assumption is emphasised when one looks at the overall objectives the EPWP wants to reach and the immense problem it aims to address. Structural unemployment would require an on-going collaboration between municipalities and service providers to tend to the needs of the public.

An assessment of labour market policy in general noted that public works programmes can be effective as a short term solution for the unemployed, but it does not improve the possibility of participants to find future employment (Meth, 2009: 13). In light of this, it is important to take note of the fact that the EPWP is and has been one of South Africa's largest tools to address mass and chronic unemployment.

The EPWP focuses mainly on creating work in the infrastructure sector. It is aimed at a specific demographic which include women, the youth and the disabled (Department of Public Works, 2003: 10). They thus perceive the unemployment and poverty concern to be more concentrated within these groups. This is a sector that accounts for 83% of government expenditure within this programme (Department of Public Works, 2004a). The funds would be spent on four sections

including construction, low cost, low volume roads, storm water drainage, trenches as well as pedestrian and cycle paths (Department of Public Works, 2004a).

The infrastructure sector consists of work commonly completed by men. The focus on infrastructure is based on the assumption that this sector can absorb a large portion of the unemployed and unskilled. Questions thus arise regarding the fact that the main target group is women and yet the largest focus area within the programme is the improvement of infrastructure. It is difficult to grasp the feasibility in targeting women for an industry that is most likely to have a larger male intake.

Another assumption to be contested is that young, black women will enter the infrastructure sector of the EPWP. In 2002, Statistics South Africa (2003: 24 *in* Geertsema, 2007: 1) found that in all sectors of the construction industry only 12.14% of the work force was women. This supports the idea that the construction industry is still very much male dominated in spite of the legislation put in place. The infrastructure sector would be large enough to carry the uptake of this target group, but the concern lies with the rationality of this objective.

The construction industry is not so appealing to women for obvious reasons. The conditions of some of the construction sites have been described as unacceptably low (Podges, 2009: 33). It also entails long hours, hazardous working conditions, inadequate housing arrangements and at times long periods away from home (Podges, 2009: 33). The South African Time Use Survey revealed that women from poor households spend twice as much time on housework and child caring than men (Geertsema, 2007: 3). Therefore, the likelihood of these women being absorbed into the infrastructure industry is slim.

The largest target group of the EPWP in terms of gender are supposed to be women as they form the larger part of the unemployment pool (Bhorat and Oosthuizen, 2004: 28). However, if the

women cannot be employed by the largest sector of the programme then this target is inappropriate. There is no mention of men as part of the target group, but the construction industry is a male dominated one, especially for the reasons mentioned above. The working conditions on some of the construction sites in South Africa has been described as dire and most women in these targeted societies have assumed the roles of household managers and care takers (Podges, 2009: 33). Ensuring a more equal male to female ratio in the work place is thus not an appropriate policy goal of the EPWP, considering the evidence related to the intake of women in the programme

5.2.3 Are the activities and functions of the programme well defined and sufficient?

In order to evaluate the definition and sufficiency of programme components, activities and function, the structure and processes of the programme should be studied (Rossi *et. al.*, 2004: 159). The definition of the components, activities and functions should be specific enough to conduct operations orderly, for management control to be effective and monitoring to materialise by means of attainable, meaningful performance measures (Rossi *et. al.*, 2004: 159). In addition programme components and activities should be adequate to meet the needs it set out to address (Rossi *et. al.*, 2004: 159).

When looking at the second step in the construction of the theory where the components, activities and functions of the EPWP are set out, the complexity of the programme is indicated. If one looks at the programme as a whole, each sector, it is informed by a number of policies and a number of different organizations are involved in implementing the programme. For example the infrastructure sector is informed by public works policies and labour policies. Some of the parties involved, are the Department of Public Works, municipalities and different contractors as well as possible employees. The activities under each sector are thus managed and influenced by different bodies. This makes the programme very complex and extensive and consequently more difficult to monitor or assess.

There are many different actors involved with regard to the implementation of the EPWP. On the national level are the Departments of Public Works, Social Services and Economic Development. In addition, there is the National Treasury responsible for the channelling of funds and local municipalities which involve contractors and employees to execute the programme. Therefore, it could possibly be more difficult to monitor as keeping track of all the actors and the activities they manage could be challenging. The EPWP would require a very effective monitoring and evaluation system on each level of implementation, from the project managers at municipal level to the heads of departments at national level.

The four components also referred to as the sectors within the programme can be perceived as well defined as it categorizes activities. It thus creates order which could make it easier to manage. Approaching the programme by sector is more useful than looking at the activities on their own with all the different agencies and functions associated with them.

Monitoring is made easier because the activities associated with various sectors have numeric targets which can be useful when measuring sufficiency of the programme. For instance under the infrastructure sector there is a certain amount of roads that should be built by the end of the first phase and evaluators can use this projection as a measurement indicator. All the sectors have activities with specific targets and in that aspect it can be effectively monitored making it well defined to some extent according to Rossi *et. al.*'s (2004; 159) definition.

5.2.4 Are the resources allocated to the programme activities adequate?

When assessing the adequacy of resources allocated to the various activities, one should pay attention to the correspondence between the programme described in the programme theory and the resources available for operating (Rossi *et. al.*, 2004: 159). A programme theory that requires activities that are unrealistic in relation to the resources available cannot be said to be a good theory (Rossi *et. al.*, 2004: 159).

It is difficult to determine the actual adequacy of the resources as this research is focused on the time period prior to implementation of the programme. The judgment of resource adequacy needs to be based on what seems adequate in theory as the evaluation is conducted before any resources have been employed. The only resources mentioned in the documents that were obtained are the funding and human resources. The EPWP was allocated one third of the national budget during its first phase. It can be perceived as well funded and also sensible keeping in mind the scope of the EPWP.

In addition to government funding other organizations were planned to be approached to form partnerships with the programme (EPWP, 2005: 9). This was an important step as the program stretches over various industries from social welfare to business creation and infrastructure development. It calls for inputs from both the public and private sector. The involvement of other businesses and organizations would be important to create a more inclusive society. One of the envisioned partners included Business Trust (EPWP, 2005: 9). As a result of the planned partnership, Business EPWP was formed. This partnership was to result in an additional R100 million in support of the EPWP (EPWP, 2005: 9). Business Trust forms part of the public sector and is an initiative aimed at combating poverty, reducing unemployment and promoting economic growth in South Africa.

The human resources for a programme with a strong infrastructure focus could be fairly easy to obtain as there are a lot of unskilled individuals in the different municipalities. Human resources specifically play an important role in the social sector as the services that would be delivered for these projects require personal care and home visits. The main commodity in this sector is thus the human resources. The sector planned to employ paid and unpaid volunteers (Department of Public Works, 2005). The human resources could thus be perceived as adequate for the targets set out.

The EPWP documents did not mention resources allocated to the economic sector, other than the training to be provided. However, it does not mention budgetary allocations as with the other sectors. The EPWP economic sector projects to produce the most learner-ship/skills programmes out of the programme. With regard to resources, the learnerships are fully funded by SETA (Department of Public Works, 2004). The practical work experience factor will be funded by public bodies who allocate learner contracts to these participants. In addition general public sector expenditure will be used to obtain the goods and services needed. This sector also appears to be adequately resourced. Like the social sector it produces participants appropriately skilled for the labour market. In spite of the benefits the economic sector presents to participants and the programme as a whole, it receives the least funding in relation to the other sectors in the EPWP.

5.2.5 Are the procedures for identifying the target population and delivering services to them clear?

Answering this question is concerned with how the target population will be reached. One thus needs to look at the location of the programme projects and how accessible it is to participants (Rossi *et. al.*, 2004: 159). Another factor to take into consideration is how effective it would be for the services to be delivered to these participants (Rossi *et. al.*, 2004: 159).

There is no standard procedure for the selection of beneficiaries. The EPWP is based on the Code of Good Practice, which states that local structures are to identify target groups within the different municipalities (Government Gazette, 2002: 2). The local structures are generally considered to consist of a steering committee. This steering committee will consist of community leaders, community members and a technical assistance team. This committee will tend to the recruitment of participants. A community liaison officer will also be appointed to act as a link between the community and project managers.

The EPWP is a national initiative and the target population was stated to be women, the youth and people with disabilities (Government Gazette, 2002: 3). The location where these individuals

should be identified from, are the areas experiencing the worst infrastructure backlogs. These areas would include the 'poorer' provinces and poor areas in the wealthier provinces (Department of Public Works, 2003: 16). It is important to note that the sectors in the EPWP more focused on employing women are the social and economic sectors. These are some of the lowest funded sectors of the programme. In addition, they also have the lowest intake of participants within the programme. The goals with regard to the target market of the EPWP would therefore not be met due to the fact that women would most likely only part take in the smaller, lower funded projects of the programme.

The EPWP is guided by the code of good practice for employment and this practice is regulated by the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (BCEA) of 1997. This BCEA provides guidelines on a national scale with regard to target group and recruitment of beneficiaries. However, each municipality have different projects relating to the needs of the community. The recruitment process might therefore differ, but should still adhere to the broader guidelines which states that 60% should be women, 20% youth and 2% people with disabilities (Department of Public Works, 2005: 14).

The EPWP with help from the SETA's train and employ contractors to follow through with the on the ground implementation of the programme in the targeted areas. The EPWP does not instruct contractors how to recruit participants or provide any procedure with regard to handling applications to participate in the programme (Democratic Alliance, 2009: 6). Usually contractors take the initiative to employ a community liaison who then identifies unemployed individuals in the community who are suitable to part take in the EPWP (Sunday Times, 2005 *in* Democratic Alliance, 2009: 6).

There is also an online registration option for prospective participants with internet access. Participants would thus register themselves free of charge online on the Umsebenzi portal (www.umsebenzi.gov.za) and this is intended to ensure a more equal selection process. A

database will thus exist with the details of possible participants, making it more useful for employers to identify possible employees. However, with projects in rural areas, access to the internet or online registration processes might be limited, if not impossible.

The concern that arises in this regard is the unbiased identification of participants. If there are no specifications with regard to the recruitment and employment process of participants, there might be a problem with recruiting the target population of the EPWP. Each municipality has their own projects and the different steering committees could have different ways of identifying participants. In addition, there are no stated accountability measures when it comes to identifying potential participants.

After selection of beneficiaries there needs to be structures in place to ensure they get the services intended for them. The services the EPWP intends to deliver other than employment through the different sectors are skills training and social services. The employment services are well defined through the different activities to be executed in each sector. The skills training will mostly be provided through SETA. Social services include home based care for individuals suffering from AIDS and identifying families and children in need.

Identifying the target population is broad and not sufficiently defined. There are broad guidelines but no specific details. The definition of delivery of services is clear, but the matter of sustaining these services and seeing them through to completion is not clearly stated through the EPWP documentation that was reviewed.

5.2.6 Is the change process presumed by the programme theory plausible?

Rossi *et. al.* (2004: 157) defines plausibility of the change process as the presumption that a programme will have certain beneficial effects on the target population. This beneficial effect is dependent on the occurrence of a “cause-and-effect chain” (Rossi *et. al.*, 2004: 157). It begins

with the target's interaction with the program and it ends with improved circumstances of the target population (Rossi *et. al.*, 2004: 157).

The assumption is that the stipend provided by the EPWP will enable participants to provide for their most basic needs (Department of Public Works, 2005). The stipend will be sustenance for households struggling to provide food and care to their dependents. An income will go a long way to improving the overall health and livelihood of these participants.

Studies have found that poor and rural households spend a larger share of their total expenditure on food than their urban counterparts (Altman *et. al.*, 2009: 13). It is also important to take note that the acquisition of food might be a costly exercise. One needs to consider traveling expenses and the prices of goods which might make it more difficult for participants of the EPWP living in these areas to pay for their basic needs. It has also been found that only one in ten rural households can afford a basket of goods which is nutritionally adequate (Altman *et. al.*, 2009: 13).

Another factor to consider, with regard to the assumption of participants being able to meet their basic needs with the stipend given, is the number of individuals who live in these households (HSRC, 2009). Rural households tend to have one or two working individuals with many children to care for (Benerjee and Duvlo, 2006: 4). In addition many of these households have adults living together that might not be conjugally related. There might be from two to five adults living in one home (Benerjee and Duvlo, 2006: 4). This might make provision for the basic needs of all the individuals in these households a very challenging task. It is thus evident that participants might actually be able to tend to their own most basic need with the stipend provided. These most basic needs are being defined by expenditure on food as a necessity to survive.

The improved circumstances for participants with regard to the EPWP are expected to be social as well as economic. The EPWP provides participants with temporary employment and a short term income. They are temporarily in a position to have better living conditions with the possibility of permanent employment. The improved conditions referred to in this instance include temporary relief from extremely impoverished conditions. Participants are therefore able to put a meal on the table for a few months thus improving their dire living conditions to a more bearable state. The change process in this instance is thus plausible because the links from when the participant enters the programme to providing temporary relief for impoverished conditions is established.

It is projected that EPWP employees would improve their skills level and thus able to find permanent employment which would improve their living conditions. This would also enable participants to provide their children with the opportunity of a better education. They then have the possibility of finding better jobs than their parents and the poverty cycle that is a trend in impoverished communities. In addition the human resources are improved creating a better economy which can have a positive effect of the nation as a whole.

Another benefit that participants as well as the broader community are intended to reap is improved service delivery, infrastructure, social services and a cleaner environment. The notion is to use public funding to employ participants and provide resources to build infrastructure, protect and clean the environment, provide social services and increase economic growth. This will increase the flow of business in the location where the programme is implemented thus increased potential for job creation.

The change process in the programme is plausible based on the notion that participants who are employed by the programme will reap the benefit of skills training and earning an income. The broader community will benefit with the improvement of infrastructure. The change process might not be plausible because of the relation between the target population and the sector focus

of the EPWP. Women are the main target population of the programme, but they might not form part of the majority intake as planned, because the major sector in the programme consists of infrastructure projects.

5.3 Conclusion

The assumptions made with regards to how a programme will work form the theory behind that programme. The evaluation of this theory examines factors which challenge the plausibility of the assumptions. In this chapter the framework by Rossi *et. al.* (2004) helped draw out the information to examine the assumptions. This was done by answering questions in relation to the description and feasibility of programme objectives, the change process in the programme theory and the activities assisting this change process.

All three EPWP objectives are well defined as the outcomes are made clear. The feasibility of the objectives was challenged by assumptions relating to the needs of the labour market and the identification of the target population. The labour market is indicative of the context of the EPWP and the identification of the target population has an effect on the outcomes. The labour market was found to be unsuitable for the objectives of the EPWP, because it would not be able to absorb the employees exiting the EPWP. In addition the target population, being mostly women, was also found to be problematic as the infrastructure sector of the EPWP employs the majority of participants. The infrastructure sector is still a male dominated industry.

The EPWP took the right approach with regard to placing a large focus on infrastructure as this is a sector which could absorb a large labour force. The infrastructure sector of the EPWP is the largest within the programme and receives the most funding. The programme is therefore able to reach its objective of providing mass employment. However, when looking at ways to increase economic growth, the economic and social sector projects could be of more value as it encourages entrepreneurial growth. These were stated as areas which could be advantageous for

economic growth and sustainable livelihoods of participants if it were to receive larger investment.

The activities of the EPWP were well defined, because specific tasks were identified for each sector. These tasks all have numeric target which would make it effective to determine if they would be reached or not. In addition, the targets make it useful to determine if the resources allocated are adequate to successfully complete these activities. The EPWP is projected to have a large budget and would be adequate for the planned activities.

The change process presumed by the programme theory was found to be plausible due to the fact that the temporary employment would result in meeting basic needs for the employment period. In addition it would better equip individuals to find permanent employment after exiting the programme because it offered skills training and work experience. The short term change process of the EPWP theory is thus plausible.

However, in relation to the longer term policy goals that inform the EPWP, the EPWP theory falls short. This is attributed to the fact that programme participants might form part of the unemployment pool again after exiting the EPWP. In addition, gender inequality specifically in the infrastructure sector would not be improved, because women are projected to be the target group but the programme would probably still employ mostly males, because infrastructure is still a male dominated industry. All the evaluation findings in this chapter will be summarised in the following concluding chapter.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

This study has presented an alternative way of evaluating South Africa's Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP). Applying a theory based evaluation approach to the EPWP has allowed for critical thinking about the context of the programme as well as the logic behind it. The evaluation was focused on how sound the EPWP theory was. An evaluator would be able to apply this approach before the programme is implemented. Evaluating the theory behind the programme can be of assistance to programme planners and organizers as it is not only concerned with the bottom line, but the intermediate results of the programme (Posavac and Carey, 1997 in Abrahams, 2003: 57). It helps evaluators to anticipate either positive or negative results from the outcome of the programme.

This chapter provides a summary of the study addressed. It begins by reiterating the research question. The research design, data collection and data analysis tools used to best answer the research question will also be discussed. The theory presented in chapter four and the findings of the theory evaluation discussed in chapter five is presented next. In addition, recommendations for future research on this topic and the theory based approach are discussed. The purpose of the recommendations for future research is to primarily address the research problem that was identified as well as encouraging deeper exploration into the case study as it is perceived to be an important tool government uses to address a very pressing concern in the country. Finally, a conclusion is presented to tie together the research.

6.2 The EPWP evaluated through theory based evaluation

The literature has revealed that unemployment and poverty are the most pressing concerns facing South Africa. It is one of the countries with the highest unemployment rates in the world. Unemployment and poverty has formed part of the country's history and economic structure. The

study emphasised the fact that unemployment is a structural problem requiring a long term stable response. The programmes and policies that government has implemented in the past to address these concerns have proved to be of limited success.

The study therefore presented an alternative method of evaluating these types of programmes by use of the EPWP as case study. Theory based evaluation can be perceived as a preventative measure as it can be executed prior to the implementation of these programmes. It could thus save institutions millions of rands in funding which were intended for programmes with a low probability of success.

The aim was to establish how the EPWP was intended to work and why it was expected to work. These questions were answered by extensively considering all relevant information regarding the context the programme would develop in, the objectives of the programme and how these will be reached. The logic behind the EPWP was unpacked by applying a framework presented by Rossi *et. al.* (2004). The framework organised the information in categories starting with the assumptions concerning the programme and ending with the ultimate impact the programme is projected to have. The theory underlying the EPWP was then evaluated also by application of an approach by Rossi *et. al.* (2004). This evaluation challenged certain assumptions regarding the EPWP. The findings of the evaluation questions are briefly presented in the next section.

6.3 The main findings from the evaluation of the EPWP theory

The EPWP theory was found to be sound when one focuses solely on the programme objectives and the potential of success in reaching these objectives. However, when considering the broader picture with all the influencing factors such as the context, the labour market, the representativeness of the target market and overall economic growth, a different story emerged. In relation to the aforementioned factors the EPWP theory proved not to be as sound.

6.3.1 The EPWP was primarily based on sound programme theory

The EPWP projected three main objectives. These included creating one million jobs for unemployed individuals, improved service delivery and providing at least 14% of participants with permanent employment over a period of four years. These objectives are to be reached through the four different sectors of the EPWP. These sectors are outlined with activities. These activities were allocated specific targets. These targets are to be reached with the resources provided and human resources employed.

It was found that the objectives were predominantly well defined. The aim of the programme was made clear through each objective. The objectives were feasible as each sector of the programme set out specific targets to be met when the programme would be implemented. These numeric targets are useful when one needs to determine if they were reached. The objectives were thus found to be feasible due to clear discussions about activities to be executed. The resources for these activities were not extensively studied, but the projected funding and human resources were found to be adequate.

A main stream approach which only focuses on the outcome of the programme in relation to the input would probably have found the programme to be successful, because it reached the stated objectives. However, the theory based approach looks at different factors and thus delivered different results. For instance, it focused on the problem of unemployment the EPWP aimed to address and therefore looked at aspects other than infrastructure to improve economic growth and sustainable development. The study drew a conclusion that these other sectors require more intensive investment and focus as its value is underestimated when addressing unemployment.

6.3.2 Flaws in the EPWP theory

The EPWP is a policy programme. It was the operationalization of a range of policy goals. There were some policy goals that the EPWP was not able to meet. These goals include improving

economic growth in the country, addressing gender inequality in the work place and providing participants with the opportunity to maintain a sustainable living.

6.3.2.1 Inappropriate context for the EPWP

The EPWP theory has demonstrated that the major focus financially and by measure of employee intake is on the infrastructure sector. The theory thus projects that the problem of unemployment can be addressed through offering work in the construction industry. The possible reason for this is the fact that it is the industry that can absorb the largest amount of the unskilled individuals who form the major part of the unemployed. In this regard, it is important to note that the infrastructure sector of the EPWP will predominantly deliver low skilled workers.

South African labour market reviews has demonstrated that there is a demand for skilled and semiskilled workers. This study has shown that the EPWP does not produce individuals with the skills in demand by the labour market. It is for this reason that the intake the labour market can absorb after exiting the programme is a low 14%. The labour market needs at that time of the development of the programme was for skilled and semiskilled individuals.

The introduction of a short term employment programme with a dominant focus of infrastructure development in the South African context might provide temporary relief to the plight of the poor and unemployed, but it is not appropriate for the structural problem of unemployment in the country. Addressing the problem of unemployment in South Africa through the EPWP and other similar initiatives requires the provision of long term employment and continuous service delivery. This would translate into creating a sustainable society which could change the face of unemployment in South Africa structurally.

6.3.2.2 Inadequate in addressing gender inequality in the work place

Considering the weight of the infrastructure sector in the programme, the target market is expected to be young males. This is however not the case as the programme documents have stated the target market to be women, the youth and the disabled. In Chapter five when presenting a challenge to the assumption that the EPWP will promote gender equality, the conditions and requirements of the infrastructure industry were made clear. The conditions are not appealing to women and might not be practical for those with disabilities.

In addition, a study by Geertsema (2007) discussing the current role of women in rural South Africa, has proven that there has not been much of a change in this regard for the decades. Women are predominantly still stagnant in activities concerning household maintenance and child care. This brings attention to the sectors in the EPWP that are more conducive to recruiting this target market. These are the social and economic sectors. Women have already assumed roles of caregivers and these skills can be developed and accredited to make them part of the active economy. This is a service that can be provided through the social sector of the programme where home based care and early childhood development is the focus. In the economic sector where learner-ships are provided, the target market is adequate as they are trained to start SMEs.

6.3.2.3 Limited impact on sustainable development of participants

The skills training element of the programme addresses the skill shortage problem in the country to a certain extent, but the question arises of the relevance of these skills to the demand and needs within the labour market. The 2004 Labour Market Review from the labour department stated that skilled and semi-skilled workers were in high demand at that stage. This explains why the projection of participant finding further employment was a low 14%. It is thus important to develop programmes and policies that are relevant and appropriate to the environment and context it will be executed in. It might not be possible for the programme to have a significant effect with regard to economic growth.

The reality is thus that 86% of participants of the EPWP will be unemployed after exiting the programme. The possibility of them being permanently employed is low as the infrastructure sector which offers the largest intake provides the lowest merit of accredited skills training. The idea that improved infrastructure fosters economic growth because they create a more business friendly environment is sound. However the short term nature of this employment does not contribute to sustainable development of participants.

The programme thus provided short term solutions for the poor to meet basic needs but it did not provide exit opportunities to sustain those needs. They did however gain skills to make them more eligible for permanent employment. The problem is that the skills obtained were not in demand by the labour market at that stage. There is thus no positive prospect of finding permanent low skilled employment in a labour market marked by structural unemployment.

6.4 Recommendation for future research

This study has applied programme theory evaluation and demonstrated the value of using it to evaluate policy programmes. It was found that the theory based approach is fairly young in South Africa. It is thus recommended that further studies be done applying this approach to other policy programmes in South Africa.

With regard to the theory of the EPWP, a more in depth study can be done of the different sectors of the programme in the context of a specific area. This could serve as a more focussed and in depth study of the EPWP theory. When one applies Rossi *et. al.*'s (2004) framework to a programme like the EPWP it can prove to be problematic. The programme is so extensive and complex that one would have to choose a more specific and narrowed down case study in order to answer the evaluation questions more comprehensively. There are only specifics in the programme documents that were found up to municipal level. This could be because there are too many projects by each municipality to evaluate the programme as a whole. It would be more

practical to choose a specific municipality and a specific sector of the EPWP that was planned to be implemented.

6.5 Conclusion

The findings in this study have confirmed some of the findings done by previous research. It has confirmed that the context and labour market is not appropriate for the EPWP. It also confirmed that sectors other than the infrastructure industry need to receive more funding as it has the potential to contribute significantly to economic growth.

The conclusion that this study has come to is that the theory behind the EPWP has been sound with regard to the logic that links EPWP objectives to EPWP activities and resources. However, it was also found that the EPWP is not necessarily designed to make a significant impact or reduction on the unemployment rate. The EPWP theory is accurate in aiming to address the specific target market as an objective to create a more equal society, but the operationalization of this objective does not correlate with the focus of the programme on the infrastructure industry. In addition it is affirmed that infrastructure development forms an important part of any growing economy. It is also crucial to look at other elements which could reach this objective like the service the economic and social sectors of the EPWP provides.

The importance of the review of alternative ways of creating employment in South Africa has been practiced by middle income countries especially with the focus on developing SMEs. This might not be the solution to the unemployment crisis, but the tools presented in this study through theory based programme evaluation can be useful in exploring these ideas and assessing the value of a programme prior to its implementation.

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