

Gender dimensions of rural employment in agriculture and public works programmes Experiences from South Africa: Differentiated pathways out of poverty

Mac Mashiri, Gwarajena TRD, South Africa

James Chakwizira and Charles Nhemachena, CSIR Built Environment, South Africa

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Persistent poverty, unemployment and underemployment remain major challenges facing developing countries (World Bank, 2002; Mashiri *et al.*, 2008). In remote rural areas, where low levels of access to higher-order rural service centres further inhibit formal and informal employment opportunities, finding ways in which to address poverty and unemployment is all the more challenging (ILO, 1999; IFAD, 2001; Liversage & Carpano, 2002). At the same time, development projects that seek to enhance the provision of basic services are being implemented in many rural communities under conditions of limited financial resources, especially in areas where low population densities render investing in basic infrastructure costly.

Generating and extending beneficial and non-exploitative opportunities for employment is an enduring way to tackle poverty (FAO, 2004). Strategies that have been employed to reduce poverty and improve livelihoods for developing communities include:

- economic growth with expected trickle-down in the long term;
- social safety net programmes that offer short-term relief but have only a limited impact in alleviating poverty in the long term; and
- linking employment programmes explicitly to economic growth, for example by introducing employment concerns into mainstream investment policy.

The emphasis has been on the first two approaches. However, the latter approach can, if implemented effectively, address both the short-term income-generation needs of poor communities and economic growth in the long term. A typical example of this strategy is the adoption of community-based labour-intensive methods in basic infrastructure provision, such as investment in access roads, irrigation works, community markets, low-income housing and schools (Riverson *et al.*, 1991; ILO, 1999; World Bank, 2002, 2003; FAO, 2004). For most rural areas, infrastructure development tends to be the fulcrum that anchors sustainable development endeavours. The choice of the infrastructure sector as a catalyser for pro-poor growth is grounded on several factors. Infrastructure is crucial for investment and economic growth in other sectors, and the relative weight of this sector

in the overall economy is relatively high, especially in developing countries (Tajgman & Jan de Veen, 1998). Often, upwards of 70 percent of public investment is channelled into this sector (World Bank, 2002). In this context, local and international experience has lauded the potential of community-based public works programmes to simultaneously provide jobs, alleviate poverty, build local capacity, create community assets, reduce the cost of construction and maintenance and improve infrastructure (Department of Public Works, 1997; Mashiri *et al.*, 2005).

A broad review of rural women's location within local and global norms and patterns of poverty highlights the need to ensure that the employment benefits that can accrue from infrastructure investments do not perpetuate gender inequality and gendered patterns of poverty through the exclusion or exploitation of women (ILO, 1992, March *et al.*, 1999; Kehler, 2001, World Bank, 2002, Shackleton & Mander, 2005, May, 2006, Venter & Mashiri, 2007, Buiten, 2007). Traditional perceptions that women are not 'appropriate' employees within labour-intensive and technical sectors also need to be proactively challenged. It is intriguing to observe that poor rural women in developing countries are almost always tasked with many labour-intensive forms of work on a daily basis, such as the collection and transport of heavy loads of water and wood, as well as agricultural work. The term 'employment-intensive' is used by the ILO to describe a competitive technology where optimal use is made of labour as the predominant resource in infrastructure projects, while ensuring cost-effectiveness and safeguarding quality (ILO, 1999). Given that a key resource among the poor is their own labour, employment-intensive initiatives offer a sure way in which government can directly contribute to addressing poverty.

This paper not only explores both the direct and indirect benefits, but it also investigates the extent to which community-based rural road maintenance and agriculture development projects can be used as tools to empower women, the elderly, children, youth and the unemployed to work towards attaining sustainable rural livelihoods (Department of Public Works, 1997). It also addresses gender dimensions of the projects.

1.2. Methodology

A mixed-method approach was employed to assess the experiences and impacts of the *Siyatentela*⁵⁶ (Mpumalanga Province), *Gundo Lashu*⁵⁷ (Limpopo Province), *Zibambele*⁵⁸ (KwaZulu-Natal Province) and *Sakha Isizwe*⁵⁹ (Province of the Eastern Cape) labour-based routine road maintenance programmes, and the *Siyazondla*⁶⁰ (Province of the Eastern Cape) rural household agriculture programme in the context of a sustainable rural livelihoods approach. While the *Siyatentela* programme is dealt with extensively, a rapid appraisal of similar programmes in KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo and Eastern Cape provinces was conducted to improve the depth and representativeness of study findings and recommendations.

In terms of the main case study, *Siyatentela*, both qualitative and quantitative methods were employed. The approach was centred on a 'before and after' cross-sectional survey of more

56 A Swati word meaning "doing it for ourselves"

57 A TshiVenda word meaning "victory is ours"

58 A Zulu word meaning "doing it for ourselves"

59 A Xhosa word meaning "we are building a nation"

60 A Xhosa word meaning "we are taking care of ourselves"

than 80 percent of *Siyatentela* participants to independently evaluate programme impacts. Key informant interviews (with regional managers, road superintendents/supervisors and ward councillors), focus group discussions, physical observations, assessment of project records, participatory road surveys with *Siyatentela* road maintenance gangs and household interviews with beneficiaries were employed to solicit information.

2. Labour-based routine rural road maintenance and household agriculture development

2.1. Overview

In order to break poverty cycles in the medium to long term, various provincial departments of roads and transport in South Africa have employed a mixed-contract approach (individual, household, contractor) with the common aim of increasing beneficiary numbers in efforts to push back the frontiers of poverty. The poorest of the poor, especially women-headed households, are identified and selected by communities to participate in the programmes.

2.2. Transport infrastructure construction and maintenance: Case study profiles

Generally, community members from all programmes (depicted in Table III-6) believe that the projects have opened up their areas⁶¹ for development and expanded the community horizons with regard not only to understanding developmental issues pertaining to their areas, but also with respect to perceiving and acting on economic opportunities. While, on average, all projects share the strength of creating alternative pathways out of poverty, they also share a weakness in that these alternative pathways are not couched within the ambit of an overarching strategic framework. In addition, because these pathways are externally prompted, they often have limited shelf life without continuous support from government or donor agencies. Table III-6 provides a summary of the common and divergent project issues that relate to the major rural labour-based project experiences in South Africa.

2.3. Siyazondla agriculture and food production: Case study profile

The Eastern Cape Department of Agriculture, in collaboration with the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative of South Africa: Eastern Cape and Eastern Cape Socio-Economic Consultative Council, have been engaged in a process of seeking to transform agriculture production systems, livelihood patterns and human development. The process, supported by donor organizations, is part of a broader effort to tackle poverty, create employment and build the capacity of local communities.

The approaches are broadly referred to as Agrarian Transformation and Food Security pillars of the Provincial Growth and Development Plan (PGDP), which has created programmes such as Massive Food Production, *Siyazondla* Homestead Food Production, Comprehensive Nutrition Programme and Integrated Agricultural Infrastructure Programme. However,

61 Limpopo Province (e.g. Giyani, Njelele, Musina & Mutale), Province of the Eastern Cape (e.g. Port St. Johns, Qaukeni, King Sabata Dalindyebo, Ntabankulu & Nyandeni), KwaZulu-Natal Province (e.g. Ugu, Nkonkobe & Sisonke)

in the context of this paper, the focus is on *Siyazondla* homestead food production. One woman participant from the Eastern Cape provided the following testimony:

"...Some of the women in my community including myself have started a vegetable farm with the help from the Siyazondla Homestead Food Production programme. Now we grow our own food and sell vegetables too. We use the money we get from selling vegetables to pay schools fees for our children and buy their school uniforms. I do not

TABLE III-6
Experience of labour-based routine road maintenance in South Africa

Parameter	Zimbabwe	Gundolashu	Sakha Isiziwe
Programme champions	KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Department of Transport	Limpopo Provincial Government Roads Agency Limpopo (RAL) International Labour Organization (ILO) Department for International Development (DFID) Department of Labour	Eastern Cape Department of Roads & Transport
Programme thrust	Labour-intensive rural road maintenance to improve access roads, create local jobs and alleviate poverty	Address backlogs in rural road infrastructure and create jobs in order to improve rural livelihoods	Community-based transportation programme Create new work and business opportunities for disadvantaged communities
Programme targeted beneficiaries	Unemployed youths, adults, women, persons with disabilities, and the elderly in rural areas	Workers from communities located within 4 km of respective road corridors	Targets poorest of the poor (mainly women-headed households)
Contract description	Household-based rather than individual focused	Traditional client-contractor-consultant relationship	Household-based rather than individual-focused
Working conditions	Flexible 60 hours of work per month	Normal industrial working conditions i.e. 8 am – 5 pm	Normal industrial working conditions i.e. 8 am – 5 pm
Equipment and materials	Wheelbarrows, picks, shovels, machetes, slashers, gloves, traffic cones, safety boots, vest reflectors	Appropriate mix of labour-based and high-technology methods and equipment use	Appropriate mix of labour-based and high-technology methods and equipment use
Stipend/wages	R450 – R1 200	Market wages and reward compensation for employees	Market wages and reward compensation for employees
Type and scope of work	<400 vehicles per day (road surface cleaning and verge maintenance covering areas between 500m – 800m road sections i.e. approximately 7 000m ²) <400 with more than 15% heavy vehicles (verge maintenance – grass cutting, weeding, drain cleaning & litter removal covering areas between 500m each side of the road i.e. approximately 7 000m ²) >1 000 vehicles per day (no Zimbabwe contractors used)	Rehabilitation and maintenance of roads in all levels of classification	Use the Kenyan Lengthman model to allocate and measure labour inputs/outputs ratios
Training and skills transfer	Technical and maintenance skills Social skills	Life and basic entrepreneurial skills Landscaping/kerb laying Scaffolding Supervisory skills Farm business management Computer skills	Skills acquisition through empowerment of communities Road construction and maintenance skills and theory and experience

want to think how difficult our lives could be without such programmes. It means families would have to traditionally depend on absentee husbands who have migrated elsewhere to look for employment. In fact, we are learning a lot from the programme and from each other, since some of us have only been subsistence farmers all our lives..." (extract of an interview with a woman-headed household, 22 September 2008 in Tsolo, Eastern Cape).

Parameter	Zimbabwe	Gundolashu	Sakha Isiziwe
Support services	Acquisition of identity documents, opening bank accounts, organizing them into credit unions and savings clubs and investing savings into other productive activities	Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB) contractor profiling, registration and development	Programme linked to the contractor grading system of the construction industry development board (CIDB) Support SMMEs Sakha Isizwe Learnership Programme
Programme outcomes	95% of contracts awarded to women-headed households	Each trained contractor has an average annual turnover of R5 million 267 km of roads rehabilitated and 142 km gravelled 24 km sealed at a cost of R70.7 million 24 contractors trained. 13 contractors (54%) are female, 70% of all trainees are youth 8 engineering consultants trained 10 RAL staff trained in LBM management More than 59 272 training days provided so far 895 627 worker days created in the employment of 3 139 workers as follows: 1 697 workers (54.1%) female, 1 326 workers (42.2%) youth, 18 (1%) disabled	1 995 households contracted (2006/07) Used in urban renewal (Motherwell & Ngangelizwe) Integrated Sustainable Rural Development (Umzimkhulu) Learnership programme has recruited 100% historically disadvantaged individuals, 100% youth and more than 60% female learner contractors. 220 temporary jobs have been created within this programme This programme has created access to finance, thus facilitating development of financial track-records for the learners through ABSA (a commercial bank)
Strengths	Skills transfer and training model Community employment and local economic development Integrated rural development approach Flexible working conditions and use of project equipment Targeting the indigent especially women-headed households	Comprehensive governance institutional strengthening model Small and medium enterprise contractor development programme Employ local communities within a 4 km road corridor radius	Capacity building and development Learner skills development Local transportation system improvement
Weaknesses	Top-down initiative Lack of a clear model for transfer and sustainability beyond government funding Lack of a clear strategy on exit options for pursuing alternative pathways out of poverty	Excludes members from beyond 4 km road corridor radius Government-driven (top down) Lack of a clear strategy on exit options for pursuing alternative pathways out of poverty	Government-driven (top down) Lack of a clear strategy on exit options for pursuing alternative pathways out of poverty

TABLE III-7
Summary of Siyazondla project impact in the Eastern Cape Province

District	Projects (number)				No. of households	Budget R	% spent
	Clinic Garden	Home Garden	School Garden	Community Garden			
Alfred Nzo	22	570	38	10	727	2.0 million	55
Chris Hani	11	500	15	7	830	3.0 million	35
O. R. Tambo	8	741	11	10	3 460	4.0 million	61
Ukahlamba	1	757	3	2	764	2 million	88
Total	86	6 323	130	43	10 266	11 million	57

Source: Cabinet Lekgotla, 2007

Table III-7 suggests that a substantial number of rural dwellers are being offered and are enjoying alternative pathways to addressing poverty owing partly to programmes such as *Siyazondla*.

Although no full-scale impact assessment of the programme has been conducted, the preliminary assessment indicates positive benefits. These include:

- assistance with the establishment of gardens (at clinics, homes, schools and in communities);
- provision of seed capital and starter packs for agriculture production such as farming implements (e.g. wheelbarrows, forks, spades, rakes, watering cans) and production inputs (e.g. seeds and seedlings, fertilizer, insecticides);
- provision of infrastructure (e.g. irrigation pipes, garden fencing, harvesting equipment);
- linkage to marketing, skills and knowledge transfer systems and a land-care programme (beneficiary communities have successfully organized themselves into collective buying and marketing structures, which could be the cornerstone for agrarian transformation);
- provision of opportunities for growth (e.g. the programme provides exit and migration pathways to graduate from subsistence to small-scale commercial farming through the *Siyakhula* food production component).

Overall, the *Siyazondla* programme is currently the highest contributor to local sources of income (DoA, Province of the Eastern Cape, 2008). However, some commentators have labelled the massive food programme a 'failure'. This is premised on the weak rural agro-logistics infrastructure support system, a lingering perception that beneficiaries appear to continue to associate development with receiving handouts from government, late 'no till' planting season because of challenges of mobilizing inputs such as seed, fertilizer and equipment, the dysfunctional land care programme as evidenced by the continued visible soil erosion, and poor access and information support systems. What is clear from these contestations is that sustainable agricultural transformation is a process and not an event. The programme is thus being continuously improved.

3. Siyatentela rural road maintenance programme

3.1. Siyatentela case study overview

The Mpumalanga Department of Roads and Transport (MDORT) implemented the *Siyatentela* employment-intensive routine rural road maintenance project with the purpose of not only cutting the cost of road maintenance and improving road conditions, but also as part of a much broader initiative to take advantage of the government's extended public works programme (Mashiri *et al.*, 2008). The *Siyatentela* programme, which was modelled on the relatively well-known *Zibambebe* programme in KwaZulu-Natal, targets women in indigent households, especially women-headed households. These women are identified through a consultative and rigorous screening and verification process involving many stakeholders, including local political and traditional leadership, to ensure that the households most in need are included.

The programme commenced very modestly in the 2005/06 financial year in Ehlanzeni District Municipality in the Mpumalanga Province, with a budget of R300 000 and employing ten women. It has since expanded to all of the three districts that constitute the province, with a budget of R1.5 million towards the end of the 2005/06 financial year and employing 55 women. *Siyatentela* now employs 544 women maintaining 272 km of rural roads in Ehlanzeni, Gert Sibande and Nkangala districts. Largely because of its apparent success, the provincial government has sought to scale up the programme to serve more poor households and, at the same time, service more community assets in the form of rural roads. In 2008, plans and projects to increase the programme budget to R10 million per year were at an advanced stage. However, in order to upgrade this programme from R1.5 million to R10 million, there was a compelling need for MDORT to undertake an independent impact assessment of the programme. The outcome of the study has provided MDORT with adequate empirical evidence to arrive at an informed decision to scale up the programme.

3.2. Siyatentela case study findings

3.2.1. Siyatentela contracts and employment frameworks

Siyatentela awards renewable 12-month contracts. Although an individual signs the contract, in order to break the cycle of poverty in indigent households, *Siyatentela* 'employs' the household rather than an individual, thus ensuring continuity should anything befall the original woman employed. Depending on skill and experience, participants earn weekly stipends of between R600 and R1 500. *Siyatentela* contracts women to maintain the drainage system and road signs, ensure good roadside visibility, maintain the road surface, and clear the road of litter and noxious weeds. While on paper each woman employed is allocated half a kilometre, the actual length depends on the nature of the terrain; the more difficult the terrain, the shorter the length of road. Overall, the employed women work in groups of ten to maintain a 5 km stretch of road close to their homes. Participants work two days per week with a maximum of 64 hours per month. *Siyatentela* encourages flexible working hours, thus allowing participants ample time to deploy their labour elsewhere.

"...Since the women work only two days a week, we have been encouraging them to start small gardens at home. Some of them are now doing brisk business selling vegetables to other programme beneficiaries and to the community at large..." (Project supervisor – February 2008).

3.2.2. Training, knowledge and skills transfer

Participants were technically trained on road maintenance and life skills over the duration of their contract.

"...Before the project, we did not know anything about drainage. Now we know what it means to have a good drainage system as well as how to maintain such drains. We are now in a position to undertake similar work when new opportunities arise, using skills we have acquired through Siyatentela. In addition to basic road maintenance training, we have also received additional training in life skills, gardening, how to run and manage small enterprises such as a poultry or piggery project and HIV/AIDS awareness. This kind of training has made us better people than what we were before we joined the programme..." (Project participant – February 2008).

Siyatentela also helps women to open bank accounts, establish savings clubs and invest some of their savings in other productive activities. Participants indicated that training improved their skills and capacity to confidently work on the project. They now employ maintenance skills learned in the project in their homes and community.

3.2.3. Livelihoods and income use: Entrenching the rural private sector

The communities in which the *Siyatentela* programme is operating are largely dependent on subsistence agriculture based on small pieces of land or home gardens growing mostly maize and horticultural crops. A small number of households rely on both formal and informal employment and mixed, largely subsistence farming.

About 80 percent had a total monthly income of between R601 and R1 500. However, while 20 percent of households interviewed depend solely on income from the *Siyatentela* project, all salary incomes reported by respondent households derive from the project largely because these are the most indigent households. Indeed, interviews from all project sites indicated programme beneficiaries were grateful and appreciative of this intervention.

"...This project has really helped us a lot and now we can earn our own money for use in the home. We certainly hope and would like the project to continue strongly into the future, bringing more women like me into its fold..." (extract from testimony of one of the women involved in the Siyatentela programme – February 2008).

3.2.4. Wage use by households participating in Siyatentela

Upwards of 80 percent of the money earned from the project is used for food, clothing, school fees, agricultural inputs, medical fees and household assets. In this way, income earned on *Siyatentela* benefits the whole household.

"...When women get their wages, they buy food and other needs for the family while men would most probably use the money to drink beer and play lotto..." (key informant interviewee – Siyatentela foreman – February 2008).

Just over 50 percent of the respondents also reported that they use the money for burial society contributions, a significant cost burden within many households and part of fostering a sense of dignity for households and communities, especially given the HIV/AIDS pandemic that has not exhibited any signs of relenting.

Income earned flows into different geographic economies, which, to some extent, has an impact on local economic stimulation. A total of 12 percent reported that their entire income is used only within the local community, and the majority use their wages in both the local community and in other rural service centres and towns.

Upwards of 60 percent of respondents use their wages to procure goods and services locally and in the nearest rural service centre, as aptly described in a focus group discussion:

"...We are making wise use of the wages we earn on the project. We have assisted each other in acquiring basic household goods that we did not possess before being employed on the project, including refrigerators, television sets, radios, electric stoves and other items of value. We have also used our wages to construct and improve our assets such as houses. This has certainly brought a sense of pride and achievement to our families and the community at large. These achievements are unlikely ever to have happened without the project..." (Focus group testimony, February 2008).

Since participants often open bank accounts into which the government pays their wages, some of the women contractors spent their wages in distant rural service centres and towns with banking facilities. This represented some leakage of funds that could have been employed to stimulate small business in programme areas. A partial remedy could involve enabling the women to access their wages in their local areas, which could confine their purchases to essentials that can be acquired locally.

3.2.5. Social capital

Project participants felt that the deliberate affirmation and involvement of women through the *Siyatentela* programme is a positive development given that women often single-handedly fend for their families with meagre resources (Mashiri *et al.*, 2008). In addition, access to income and the formation of voluntary associations such as savings clubs has broadened participants' social networks. This is succinctly illustrated by one participant's testimonial:

"...I used to live in a makeshift plastic shack. My family and I were used to going for days without a decent meal. We were surviving on our neighbours' generosity. I had never had a brand new pair of shoes in my life, nor travelled beyond the village, let alone visiting a big city like Nelspruit. I had never had a bank account in my life. Thanks to Siyatentela, I now have a proper roof over my head, a bank account, go to town at least once every month, have all these many people and friends I can talk to..." (extract of an interview with a project participant – February, 2008).

The setting up of investment clubs to facilitate the pooling of resources for procuring a variety of household assets is indeed a prime example of community development in practice. Furthermore, these social capital gains contribute in some part to addressing strategic gender needs (e.g. transforming existing subordinate relationships between men and women such as power and control, legal rights, equal wages and gender division of labour), thereby challenging existing social formations that shape gender inequality (March *et al.*, 1999).

3.2.6. Impacts of improved road maintenance

The results of the survey indicated that the number and ownership of motorized and non-motorized vehicles increased after the road was upgraded and subsequent routine maintenance provided through the *Siyatentela* programme. In addition, public transport availability improved – especially buses and minibus taxis. A total of 37 percent of the interviewees were of the opinion that vehicles using the *Siyatentela* roads had increased (although not verified by a 'before and after' count). In addition, a variety of public transport modes became available to ferry passengers to the main centres, in contrast to the 'before' situation when mostly buses and light delivery vehicles with higher clearance constituted the public transport modes.

In terms of local women's perceptions of the impact of the road upgrading and routine maintenance on access to other services, the overwhelming evidence suggests a positive correlation between the improved roads and easier access to socio-economic opportunities such as education, health, police and social networks. The improved roads also allowed better response times of emergency vehicles (ambulance and police). For example, more than 80 percent of the respondents indicated that access to educational, health and police facilities had improved.

3.2.7. Other experiences and perceptions of women employed in the programme

Most women reported that they walk to the *Siyatentela* project roads, which takes 33 minutes on average (with a few exceptions requiring more than an hour). The loosely constituted women's groups do not entertain leadership positions to ensure that all the women are equal and putting in an honest day's work; this thwarts the emergence of divisions among them.

A total of 85 percent of the women received a one-day on-the-job training covering the actual work they need to perform as well as an introduction to the philosophy of and rationale for road maintenance.

A total of 93 percent of respondents stated that training improved their skills and capacity not only to work in the *Siyatentela* programme, but also to employ their newly learned skills elsewhere, for example in their homes – building water drains, cleaning gutters, removing litter around their households and keeping the home neat and tidy.

3.2.8. Key project-related challenges identified by the women

- Twenty percent of the women respondents were worried by the irregular payment. Given the crucial importance of stable employment in enhancing women's socio-economic position and reducing poverty, this issue was discussed with the relevant authorities and ways in which to improve the situation were identified.
- Twelve percent of women respondents walked distances of between 2 km and 5 km to reach their work stations – a cumbersome exercise indeed.
- Nine percent of the women respondents suggested that their remuneration be revised to between R1 000 and R1 500 per month.
- Seven percent of the women respondents complained about the lack of adequate tools and uniforms. They argued that working with inadequate tools and incomplete

uniforms was not only hazardous, but also encouraged inefficiency and circumvented the recognition that derives from wearing a complete uniform.

- Seven percent of the women respondents complained about having to burn unpleasant and at times explosive or dangerous materials (often dumped with the rubbish along the road) without the benefit of masks and eyeglasses as protection against dust, fumes, glass and other dangerous materials.
- Five percent of the women respondents said that working conditions needed improvement. They observed that it is hard to work in inclement weather and with the dust resulting from their work and passing vehicles.
- Five percent of the women respondents indicated that balancing paid employment and child care was a challenge. However, this was also mitigated to some extent by the flexible times that they work.
- Some women expressed their fear of the threat of rapists and thugs when walking to and from work and while working on the roads.

The question of occupational health, both in training and in the provision of adequate protective gear, clearly needs to be addressed. In terms of the problems associated with the threat of rape and assault, project supervisors resolved to have the women work in groups. However, this was not entirely successful.

"...The original arrangement was that each woman would work on a 500 m stretch of the designated road and because of these problems (such as rape, thieves, snakes, etc.) we decided that they should work in groups. This would assist them in defending each other or calling for help in case of any attack. However, this didn't work well with some groups, as some women complained that some of their co-workers were not working hard enough..." (Supervisor from Albert Luthuli Municipality, March 2008).

3.2.9. Suggested changes to the programme by respondents

A total of 31 percent of the women respondents suggested increases in pay, timely payment and the opportunity to increase work hours in order to earn more as ways in which the programme would be improved. The latter is a sensitive issue, given that there is a tension between the need to spread the opportunity to earn income to more households, which implies allotting fewer hours per household, and the need to improve the income of those already working and therefore depriving others of the chance to engage in paid employment.

Without exception, the consensus from all women was that *Siyatentela* programme was beneficial for participating households. They also felt that the programme as currently constituted was indeed fair in targeting women only. They argued that women often bear, sometimes single-handedly, the poverty burden, and that it is women who are generally expected to provide for their families. However, given that households that do not have women are currently not considered for the project, some of the key informants interviewed felt that there were also men and youths in dire need of such opportunities to earn income, especially orphaned youths. They argued that while women may often be those with the greatest need, there is a need to reassess the selection criteria for the project to respond to other patterns in terms of poverty and vulnerability in rural areas.

4. Recommendations and conclusions

4.1. Recommendations

The common thread that runs through *Zibambele*, *Gundo Lashu*, *Siyazondla*, *Sakhi Isizwe* and *Siyatentela* transport and agriculture programmes is the relatively significant positive impact they have had on improving rural livelihoods in KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo, Eastern Cape and Mpumalanga provinces of South Africa. The need to scale them up can not be overemphasized. Given that these types of programmes are management-intensive, it is important to grow a cadre of skilled overseers to enable enhanced outcomes. However, challenges exist particularly with regard to dire shortages of skills in science, engineering and technology to assist with technology and skills transfer. In addition, funding constraints are bound to severely truncate the rate and pace of scaling up and replication that may be desired. Furthermore, the lack of standard datasets for evaluation often makes it difficult to engage in direct comparisons across programmes. The main recommendations to ensure success in the scaling-up process include:

- developing a strategic approach and plan to scaling up;
- establishing a sustainable management information system;
- generating a communication strategy (including employing existing success stories such as *Siyazondla*, *Gundo Lashu*, *Sakha Sizwe* and *Siyatentela* as models);
- putting in place a systematic monitoring and evaluation programme.

4.2. Concluding remarks

Women, children and youth comprise a significant proportion of the indigent population in rural South Africa and can be instrumental in breaking the poverty cycle. Empirical evidence from the *Siyatentela*, *Zibambele*, *Siyazondla*, *Gundolashu* and *Sakha Isizwe* case studies as well as other similar projects suggests that, besides creating employment opportunities for those least able to compete on the job market, bolstering women's incomes, productivity and empowerment is pivotal in positively transforming the rural socio-economic landscape in favour of sustainable livelihoods.

References

- ANC 1994. *Reconstruction and Development Programme*. Albert Luthuli House, Johannesburg, South Africa.
- ANC 1997. *Polokwane Conference Report*. Albert Luthuli House, Johannesburg, South Africa.
- Aliber, M. 2005. *Synthesis Report of the 2005 Development Report: Overcoming underdevelopment in South Africa's second economy*. Pretoria, South Africa.
- Bentall, P., Mason, D., Tanzarn, N., Nduru, J. 2002. *Uganda transport rehabilitation project – Feeder roads component: Project review and sustainability study*. March 2002.
- Buiten, D. 2007. "Gender, transport and the feminist agenda: Feminist insights towards engendering transport research". In *Transport and Communications Bulletin for Asia and the Pacific*, 76, United Nations ESCAP.
- Department of Public Works 1997. *Public works towards the 21st Century White Paper*, Pretoria, South Africa.
- Cabinet Lekgotla 2007. *Siyazondla project assessment report*. Bhisho, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa.
- Cater, M., May, J. 1999. "Poverty, livelihood and class in rural South Africa". *World Development*, Volume 27, Number 1.
- Commission on legal empowerment of the poor. 2008. *Making the Law Work for Everyone*, vol. II, p. iii. (<http://www.undp.org/legalempowerment>).
- Deininger, K. 2003. "Land policies for growth and poverty reduction." *World Bank Policy Research Report*, World Bank.
- DoT 2001. *Empowering communities for prosperity – KwaZulu-Natal*. Pietermaritzburg, South Africa.
- DoT 2005. *Prosperity through mobility – KwaZulu-Natal*. Pietermaritzburg, South Africa.
- Edmonds, G.A., Howe, J. 1980. *Roads and resources: Appropriate technology in road construction in developing countries*. London: Intermediate Technology Publications Ltd.
- FAO 2008. "Gender and Equity Issues in Liquid Biofuels Production – Minimizing the Risks to Maximize the Opportunities". World Bank, *World Development Report 2008*, p. 45.
- FAO 2004. *Socio-economic analysis and policy implications of the roles of agriculture in developing countries – summary report, roles of agriculture project*, FAO, Rome, Italy.
- FAO 2002. "Land Tenure and Rural Development". *Land Tenure Studies* N. 3.
- Griffin, K., Khan, A.R., Ickowitz, A. 2002. "Poverty and the distribution of land", *Journal of Agrarian Change*, 2(3): 279-330, p. 315
- IFAD 2004. *Guidelines for the incorporation of land tenure issues into IFAD-supported operations in Eastern and Southern Africa*. Rome, March 2004.
- IFAD 2001. *Rural Poverty Report*, Rome.
- ILO 1999. *An opportunity for employment creation: Labour-based technology in roadworks – the macroeconomic dimension*. Uganda, SETPNo.6.
- ILO 2000. *The ABC of women worker's rights and gender equality*. ISBN 92-2-110844-9.
- ILO 1996. *Rural women in micro-enterprises development: A training manual and programme for extension workers*. ISBN 92-2-110508-3.
- ILO 1992. *Images of the gender role in two ILO projects in Asia and Africa*.
- ILO 1987. *Education and employment problems in developing countries*. (Mark Blang) ISBN 92-2-101005-8.
- ILO 1998. *Employment-intensive infrastructure programmes, labour policies and practices* by David Tajgman and Jan de Veen, ISBN 92-2-111034-6.
- Keddeman, W. 1997. *Of nets and assets, effects and impacts of employment-intensive programmes: A review of ILO experience*. Development Policies Department, International Labour Office, Geneva.
- Kehler, J. 2001. "Women and poverty: The South African experience". In *Journal of international women's studies*, 3(1).
- KwaZulu-Natal Department of Roads & Transport (nd.) *Zibambele labour-based construction & maintenance programme in KwaZulu-Natal Province*, Pietermaritzburg
- Liversage, H., Carpano, F. 2006. *Integrating the strengthening of land tenure security into IFAD-supported activities in Eastern and Southern Africa*. November 2006. p. 7.
- March, C., Smyth, I., Mukhopadhyay, M. 1999. *A guide to gender analysis frameworks*. Oxfam.
- Mason, A.D., King, E. 2001. *Engendering development through gender equality in rights, resources, and voice, Volume 1, World Bank Policy Research Report 21776*. World Bank Washington DC.

- Mashiri, M., Thevadasan, D., Zukulu, R. 2005. "Community-based Labour-intensive Road Construction: Findings of an Impact Study of the Amadiba Road." Proceedings: Southern African Transport Conference (SATC), Pretoria, 11-13 July 2005.
- Mashiri, M., Maunder, D., Venter, C., Lakra, A., Bogopane-Zulu, H., Zukulu, R., Buiten, D. 2005. "Improving the provision of public transport information for persons with disabilities in the developing world." Proceedings: Urban Transport Conference 2005, Algarve, Portugal, 12-14 April 2005.
- Mashiri, M., Chakwizira, J., Madzikigwa, B., Maponya, G. 2007. *Rapid appraisal of community transport infrastructure & services*. Mpumalanga Department of Roads & Transport, Nelspruit, South Africa.
- Mashiri, M., Nhemachena, C., Chakwizira, J., Maponya, G., Nkuna, Z., Dube, S. 2008. *Siyatentela impact assessment report*, Mpumalanga Department of Roads and Transport, Nelspruit, South Africa.
- Mashiri, M., Chakwizira, J., Nhemachena, C. 2008. "Rejecting the inevitability of poverty': Empowering women for sustainable rural livelihoods through community-based employment intensive rural infrastructure maintenance projects." *Science real and relevant: 2nd CSIR Biennial Conference*, CSIR International Convention Centre, Pretoria, 17&18 November 2008, p. 7.
- Mashiri, M., Chakwizira, J., Nhemachena, C. April 2009. "Gender dimensions of agricultural & rural employment – differentiated pathways out of poverty: Experiences from South Africa." Technical Expert Workshop on: Gaps, trends & current research in gender dimensions of agricultural & rural employment. *ILO-IFAD-FAO Working paper series*, April, 2009. Rome, Italy.
- May, J. 2006. *South Africa: Poverty and rural development*, OCEAN, UK.
- May, J. 1998. *Poverty and inequality in South Africa. Report prepared for the office of the Executive Deputy President and the Inter-ministerial Committee for Poverty and Inequality*. Praxis publishing, Durban.
- Riverson, J., Gaviria, J., Thriscutt, S. 1991. "Rural Roads in Sub-Saharan Africa: Lessons from World Bank Experience." *Technical Paper 141*. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- Turner, J., Spitzner, M. 2007. "Reality check: How effective have efforts been to integrate gender into donor agency transport interventions?" *In: Transport and Communications Bulletin for Asia and the Pacific*, 76, United Nations ESCAP.
- Venter, C., Mashiri, M., Buiten, D. 2007. "Gender and transport: Towards a practical analysis framework for improved planning. The challenges of implementing policy?" The 26th Annual Southern African Transport Conference, Pretoria, South Africa, 9-12 July 2007, 10p.
- World Bank 2002. *Integrating gender into the World Bank's work: A strategy for action*, Washington.
- World Bank 2008. *Agriculture for development. World Development Report 2008*, Washington, DC October 2007, p. 29.
- World Bank 2003. *World Development Report 2004: Making services work for the poor* (<http://econ.worldbank.org/wdr/wdr2004/>).
- World Bank 2003. *World Development Indicators*, Washington, DC.