

## CSVr Project on the Community Work Programme and Violence Prevention

# The good, the better and the best:

## How the Community Work Programme can reach its full potential as an instrument of community development in South Africa

### The Community Work Programme

The Community Work Programme (CWP) provides 2 days of work per week (up to 100 days per year) to unemployed and underemployed people. The work that participants in the CWP do should be 'useful work'. This is defined as work that contributes to the public good, community goods or social services.<sup>i</sup>

The CWP is an employment safety net. It provides participants with a predictable number of days of paid work per month. By working in the CWP participants can receive a stable basic income. This may be their only income or supplement other income<sup>ii</sup> or livelihood strategies.

CWP is implemented at the local level at 'sites' and is supposed to employ a minimum of 1 000 people per site. Participants must be residents of the area where the site is. Sites can only be established with the approval of the relevant municipality.

Sites should be established in the poorest areas, particularly where unemployment is high and there are not many jobs available. As of April 2015 the CWP included 186 sites. During the year April 2014 to March 2015 there were 202 599 participants in the CWP.<sup>iii</sup>

The CWP was launched as a pilot initiative of the Presidency in 2007. In 2008 it was accepted as a new element within the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), though it continued to operate as a pilot. In 2010 it was formally established as a full government programme within the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA). At each site the CWP is managed by an implementing agent (IA) that is appointed by CoGTA.

### CSVr's study on the Community Work Programme

The Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVr) has been involved in research on the CWP and its impact on violence and crime prevention since 2013.

One of the first observations from this research was that there is a lot of variation between different CWP sites. Some sites are much more dynamic than others. Sites that are functioning better are also the sites that are likely to make the biggest contribution to community development, and to violence and crime prevention.

In this policy brief we look at what distinguishes 'better sites' from other sites.

Policy brief 2 in this series looks at questions about the impact of the CWP on crime and violence.

Also look for other CSVr research on the CWP at [www.csvr.org.za](http://www.csvr.org.za).

CWP – LAUNCHED

2007

APRIL 2015

186

SITES

APRIL 2014 TO MARCH 2015

202 599

PARTICIPANTS

## THE PURPOSE OF THE CWP

### CREATION OF



#### EMPLOYMENT SAFETY NETS

The first purpose of the CWP is to provide an **employment safety net** by providing participants with a basic stable income. If participants have other sources of income they can use the CWP wages to supplement this income. If they are eligible for social grants the CWP wages can also supplement this income.



#### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The CWP also has another purpose, which is to contribute to **community development**. How the CWP is implemented at each site, as well as the work it does, will shape the type of contribution that the CWP makes to community development.



#### SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC INCLUSION

In addition the CWP may contribute to the **social and economic inclusion** of people in poor areas, for example by strengthening 'the economic climate ... in poor areas', 'providing work experience' and 'enhancing dignity'.<sup>iv</sup>

## THE GOOD, THE BETTER AND THE BEST CWP

### The good CWP – the employment safety net and basic management of CWP sites

By providing an employment safety net, the CWP offers enormous benefits. Although the payments that people receive are relatively small, they contribute to raising average household incomes and stimulating local economies in areas with high levels of poverty and unemployment. (This is one level on which the CWP promotes economic inclusion – it may also enhance employability or support participants in becoming self-employed – see further below.)

It is a major undertaking to establish and manage a CWP site in an efficient and fair manner. The basic management of sites includes a wide range of tasks including ensuring that communities are consulted to identify work that is useful, that recruitment is done fairly, and that the site has the right equipment and technical assistance to do work at the required quality. It also includes ensuring that all participants really work, sign registers and that tools are returned and stored safely. Site staff must dedicate considerable time to ensuring that these systems are operating properly.

The CWP can be abused. Instead of being allocated fairly, positions in the CWP (for both site management and ordinary participants) can be allocated depending on 'who you know'. People who are not really working at the site ('ghost workers') can be allocated positions and their wages can be siphoned off to enrich specific individuals rather than the unemployed people who should benefit from them. Tools can be stolen resulting in participants not being able to do their work properly.

The first priority of the CWP is therefore to ensure that these basic systems are operating efficiently and fairly. This includes ensuring that the resources provided by government for the CWP, are not abused. It also includes ensuring that the government systems for paying participants are working efficiently. The CWP cannot serve as a safety net unless CWP wages are paid reliably to those working in the CWP.

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## From good to better to best – How the CWP can contribute to community development

The CWP can make a major contribution to **community development**. Both the way the CWP is implemented at each site and the work it does are important in shaping the contribution the CWP makes to the development of the community.

### How the CWP is implemented

The CWP model envisages that the ‘useful work’ that participants do will be identified through a process that includes community participation. Identifying useful work at each site should take into account the concerns and priorities of people in the community or communities that form part of the site.

Where municipal Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) are up to date and have been developed on the basis of proper consultation, they can also serve as a source of information about community priorities. Participants in the CWP also often have a good understanding of their community and can play an important role in identifying new opportunities. The work of the CWP can be identified through the collaboration of diverse community leaders in a Local Reference Committee at each site (see text box).

There should be proper communication about the CWP in each community so that people know what the CWP is, who it is managed by, how people join the CWP and how it is intended to serve the community.

Role players in the community should be consulted and actively engaged in decision making about the CWP. Role players may include municipal councillors and officials and community-based organisations and NGOs working in the community, brought together in a Local Reference Committee (see text box).

### IF THE CWP IS IMPLEMENTED IN THIS WAY:

The CWP will have greater respect and support from community members. As a result it will be able to work in cooperation with the community.

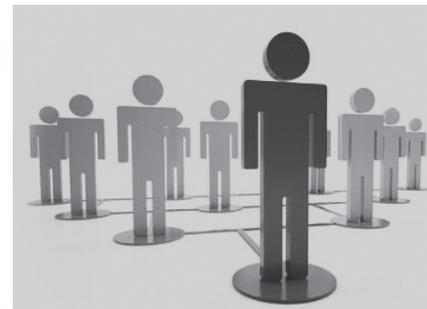
The Implementing agents (IAs) and CWP staff will be able to work with the support and cooperation of leaders in the community.

At its best, especially if respected and trusted community leaders are involved in or work with the CWP, this can mean that the CWP is community owned and driven. Then the CWP becomes a tool of the whole community in helping to strengthen community development.

People in the community who want to improve their own lives alongside those of others in the community can use the CWP as a tool. As a national government programme that is implemented in collaboration with provincial and local government, the involvement of sector departments. The CWP provides community members who want to take action to improve their community with a platform to do so.<sup>v</sup>

Where community structures are not functioning effectively, the IA should still try to ensure that the process of identifying useful work involves consultation with community members, for example by using public meetings, surveys or broadly inclusive consultation meetings.

The process of recruiting CWP site staff (who do site management and administration) and participants (who do the useful work) at each site should be demonstrably fair – it should be clear to everyone in the community that CWP recruitment is not based on favouritism. In addition to regular participants, the CWP can recruit participants with the requisite skills or train regular participants so that they acquire such skills. But whoever is selected, it must be clear that the participants have been chosen fairly and for good reason.



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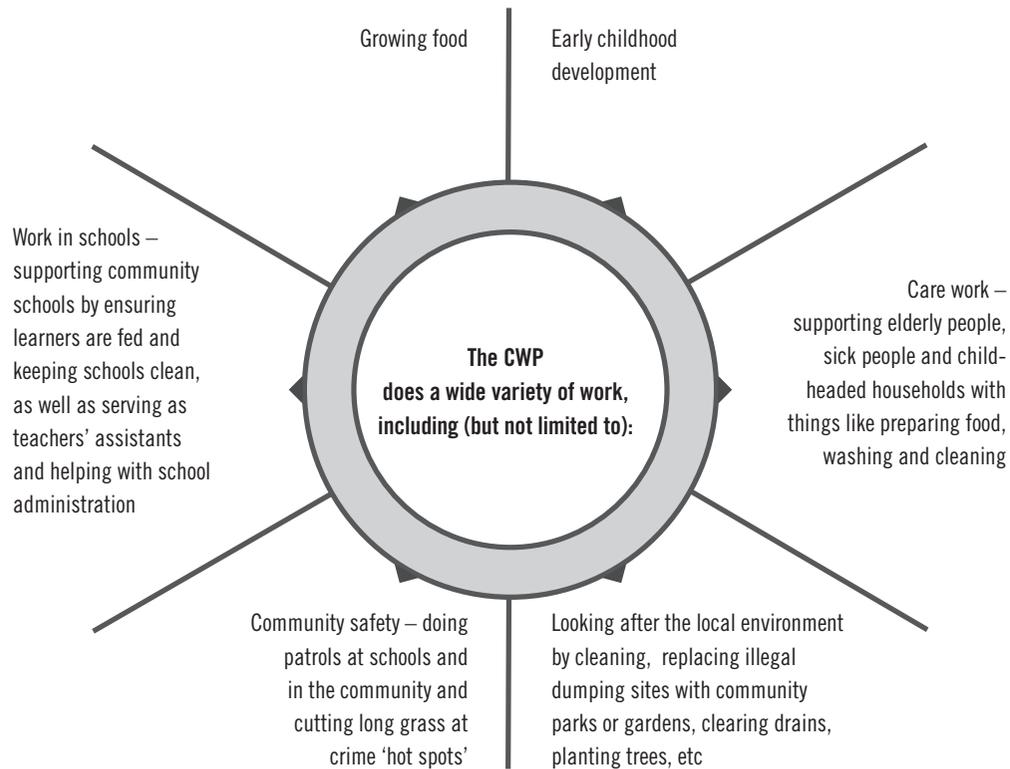
### Local Reference Committees (LRCs)

The CWP model envisages that role players in the community will be represented in a Local Reference Committee (LRC) that is consulted by the IA about useful work and other key issues related to the CWP.

LRCs do not always function effectively. Sometimes they are composed mainly of one group, such as local councillors, rather than representatives of different groups. LRC members may try to prevent other groups from being included. They may not participate in the LRC consistently, so that there is little continuity from one meeting to the next. In sites that extend over very large areas it may be difficult to hold LRC meetings.

## THE CWP'S WORK AND THE 'WORK SUPPORT PROCESS'

The work that CWP participants do should be 'useful work', defined as an activity that contributes to the public good, community goods or social services.



But how to ensure that the CWP work really benefits the community? As discussed above, one answer is by consulting community members in CWP sites about what work the CWP should do. Because there will be a long list of work that the CWP could do, the CWP will need to set priorities in each site.

However, setting priorities is not enough to ensure that the work can be done. In order for the CWP to carry out its work, the **CWP work support process** (see text box) needs to operate effectively. Making the CWP work well to support community development is not just about making good decisions about the work to be done but also about ensuring that these decisions are supported with whatever tools, materials, training or other support is required. Only if each of part of the 'work support process' is done properly can work that has been prioritised actually be done effectively.

The better the quality of the work done by the CWP, the more beneficial it will be for community development. At its best, where the CWP is doing high-quality useful work, this can give people in the community confidence about their ability to change their own lives for the better.

### The CWP work support process

Participants at each site need to receive the appropriate:

- ❶ **Clothing** – certain types of protective clothing and equipment are particularly important to some tasks
- ❷ **Tools and materials**
- ❸ **Training and technical guidance** and support to ensure that work done in community is of suitable quality
- ❹ **Supervision** by site personnel to ensure that work is being done consistently and effectively

The CWP's work cannot be done unless it is supported in the right way. If specific work requires certain tools and materials or technical support, then it will not be possible to perform this work if these are not available.

## How the CWP supports economic inclusion

- Provide participants with a regular and stable income
- Provide them with work experience and help them to become 'work ready'
- Provide training to some participants – this training enables them to do the 'useful work' properly in order to ensure effective community development. The availability of training depends on the site budget
- Sometimes CWP sites form partnerships with agencies that provide training and 'leverage' training from them. This training is not paid for from the training budget. This training should be linked to available job opportunities
- Sometimes the CWP supports some participants in learning the skills to establish their own businesses or cooperatives – but it can only do this for small numbers of participants at any one time
- Sometimes participating in the CWP helps participants get jobs in government or in private companies, if they have the required skills

## How the CWP contributes to economic and social inclusion

The first purpose of the CWP is to provide a safety net to unemployed people by ensuring they have access to regular, paid work. The wages paid are low, but they provide a reliable and stable source of income.

Although their contribution on this level is modest **CWP wages themselves contribute to economic and social inclusion**. Participants in the CWP report that they are better able to participate in stokvels and other savings clubs. These wages also increase average household incomes, with beneficial impacts on local economies.

Participants who have not previously been employed or who have been unemployed for a long time, learn, or re-learn, the **habits and discipline of work**. The experience of work and applying oneself to work are important 'life skills'. The CWP can assist people to become more work-ready through greater (self) discipline, particularly if work at the site is properly managed and supervised. Many companies are only willing to employ people if they can show that they are 'work ready'.

By participating in the CWP participants are also likely to get to know more people in their community. This means that participants have access to increased support from people in the community, which can mean that they have better access to information and assistance with responsibilities such as child care. The CWP **increases social bonds** not only between participants but also between participants and others in the community with whom they are working or whom they are providing services to.

Some CWP participants report a sense of pride in their work, especially where there is acknowledgement and appreciation from other community members. Doing regular work and feeling that your work is valued by others provides participants with a sense of **dignity** and enhances their sense that they are worthy members of their community.

When the CWP is seen to be doing work that is important and useful, people will feel a greater sense of achievement. More generally the ability of the CWP to contribute to inclusion is much greater if it is operating effectively as a tool of **community development**.

Another way in which the CWP can enhance economic and social inclusion is by **enhancing employability** and facilitating access to employment opportunities or **supporting community members in becoming self-employed**.

## THE CWP'S CONTRIBUTION TO ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

CWP wages contribute to economic and social inclusion

Re-introduces habits and discipline of work

Increases social bonds and community support

Enhances participants' dignity and sense of worth

Improves community development

Enhances employability and provides some community members with support in becoming self-employed



## Role of the CWP in enhancing employability, facilitating access to employment opportunities, and supporting participants in becoming self-employed

One of the ways the CWP enhances employability is through the simple process of involving people in work and thereby helping them to (re)learn the habits and discipline of work, making them 'work ready'.

The CWP can also enhance participants' employability by providing them with work experience and by providing training. This can be seen as an asset by potential employers or provide participants with skills that will enable them to become self-employed.

There are serious structural limitations in the economic environment in which the CWP works. This limits the ability of the CWP to play a role in assisting participants to access jobs or become self-employed through their own businesses or cooperatives. The reason why the CWP was established is because the economy is not generating jobs. The market for many goods is already dominated by companies that sell mass produced 'branded' goods with marketing supported by big advertising budgets. There are limited opportunities for people to break into these markets.

While the CWP may be able to support some participants in finding jobs or becoming self-employed, it is not designed for this purpose. It is important to avoid unrealistic expectations in this regard, particularly among participants.

The CWP was established because of the structural nature of unemployment. The main value of the CWP for participants is the guarantee of work and income. The CWP's role in supporting people to obtain formal employment or become self-employed is an added benefit. It is likely to be more viable in areas that are stronger economically and is not something the CWP can promise to all participants.

### The question of training

The CWP has a budget for training. The purpose of this budget is to provide participants with knowledge and skills in order to be able to do 'useful work' effectively.

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TOOL

If the CWP is working effectively as a tool of community development, this usually means that:

1 Some more challenging tasks are being identified for participants at the site to do

2 The work support process provides effective support and skills development to participants to enable them to carry out these tasks

In other words, where a CWP site is working well as a tool of community development, participants are likely to be involved in a greater variety of more sophisticated types of work, and receiving training and technical support to enable them to do this work properly. If this is happening the training and experience that they receive is more likely to **increase their chances of getting jobs or developing skills** that they can use for their own businesses.

Each CWP site may be able to improve the way it works to better support participants in getting jobs or becoming self-employed. But such opportunities will not be feasible in all sites. When this is not happening, it should not be seen as a failure of the CWP. As a result of macro-economic obstacles there are limited opportunities for people to find work and establish small businesses especially in poorer areas.

## CSV's recommendations for strengthening the CWP

Based on our research CSV believes that the following five measures are necessary to strengthen the CWP and enable it to reach its full potential as a tool of community development.

1. Management of the CWP needs to be strengthened at three levels:
  - a. The national office to be strengthened to enable it to support the efficient basic functioning of the CWP and contribute to ensuring that the CWP can achieve its potential as a community development tool.
  - b. Implementing agents (IAs) should be better selected and supported in order for them to strengthen the CWP as an instrument of community development.
  - c. Site management should be strengthened. Currently the responsibilities involved in the basic management and administration of CWP sites means that site managers cannot focus on community development. An operations officer should be appointed to ensure that the basic management is dealt with properly. The site manager should be freed up to engage more actively with community development responsibilities.
2. CoGTA should enhance their engagement with municipalities (politicians and municipal officials) to strengthen their relationship with the CWP sites. This should include explaining more fully the types of support that municipalities can give CWP sites and how the CWP can benefit their communities. This should also include promoting a code of good practice outlining the 'rules of the game' for municipalities to work with CWP sites without allowing inappropriate interference.
3. CoGTA should also aim to build awareness about the CWP in South Africa. In particular civil society organisations should be encouraged to work with and support the CWP and develop programmes that are complementary to the CWP.
4. CoGTA should provide better information to CWP participants about conditions of working in the CWP and about their rights. In addition CoGTA should provide clearer information to participants about the type of support the CWP can provide in enabling them to find employment or become self-employed, and about the limits of the CWP in this respect.
5. The CWP should be scaled up, but the strategy for scaling up should take into account the need to strengthen the functioning of the CWP as an instrument for community development.





The Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) is a multi-disciplinary non-governmental organisation (NGO) involved in research, community interventions, and training. CSVR's main goal is to build reconciliation, democracy and a human rights culture and to prevent violence in South Africa and Africa.

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- i Community Work Programme Implementation Manual, 2011, 8.
- ii The current daily wage received by ordinary participants in the CWP (in July 2015) is R76. There is an annual increment in the wage each year.
- iii Analysis of data provided by Community Work Programme, Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, April 2015.
- iv Community Work Programme Implementation Manual, 2011, 8.
- v Interview with policy expert, 10 March 2015.
- vi Centre for Democratising Information, The South African Community Capability Study: The Context of Public Primary Education and the Community Work Programme, 2013, [http://www.tips.org.za/files/u72/community\\_work\\_programme\\_education\\_report.pdf](http://www.tips.org.za/files/u72/community_work_programme_education_report.pdf) (accessed 9 April 2015).
- vii Interview with implementing agent staff member, 17 February 2015.
- viii Interview with implementing agent staff members, 27 February 2015

#### PARTNERS



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