

Rural Tourism Development: Exit Opportunities for Expanded Public Works Participants

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Abstract—The Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), an initiative of the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA), provides employment opportunities to the poorest of the poor across South Africa. The EPWP has to date created in excess of 4.2 million jobs for the most vulnerable community members, thus supporting livelihoods while at the same time developing critical skills. However, the DEA has recognized that one of the key objectives of the programme, i.e. that of participants finding permanent employment after exiting the programme, has not been realized adequately. This paper aims to discuss the challenges faced by the DEA in the context of poverty issues in South Africa. The tourism industry is viewed as a potential exit path for EPWP participants into the Green Economy or other occupational and entrepreneurial pathways. The paper highlights the urgency of job creation or career advancement for the poor and unemployed people across South Africa, contextualizes a study undertaken by DEA in 2018 on the effectiveness of the EPWP in supporting career advancement and builds insights on how skills can be applied in tourism economies as a sector with a demand for green skills. This study is exploratory in nature and makes recommendations towards a further study to develop an understanding of tourism development potential and an analysis of potential tourism skills demand and entrepreneurial opportunities.

Index Terms—sustainable tourism, green economy, poverty alleviation, rural tourism, development

I. INTRODUCTION

Recognising that its Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) participants are not moving into permanent employment, the Department of Environmental Affairs of South Africa (DEA) launched a study in 2018 aimed at providing insights into institutional and structural constraints preventing the move into sustainable jobs.

The EPWP has provided employment opportunities for more than 4.2 million South Africans since its in 2004. The programme has been viewed as one of South Africa's most successful social upliftment programmes [1]. The EPWP was created with a view of providing jobs to the

poorest of the poor in such a way that key social, economic and infrastructure services critical to sustainable development are also addressed.

Previously, limited research had been undertaken to understand what career advancement options outside EPWP exist for participants. The 2018 DEA study provided excellent insights - at a relatively high level - on potential Green Economy occupations but did not exclude mainstream occupations or entrepreneurial pathways. The DEA therefore started to build an understanding of which skills (or types of skills) are developed by the EPWP programmes and to which Green Economy jobs (and other jobs) these could be linked. In addition, an understanding of what types of training and skills development would be required to help transition EPWP participants into Green Economies was starting to emerge.

The DEA defines the Green Economy as a:

System of economic activities related to the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services that result in improved human well-being over the long term, while not exposing future generations to significant environmental risks or ecological scarcities. It implies the decoupling of resource use and environmental impacts from economic growth. It is characterized by substantially increased investment in green sectors, supported by enabling policy reforms. The Green Economy refers to two inter-linked developmental outcomes for the South African economy:

- Growing economic activity (which leads to investment, jobs and competitiveness) in the green industry sector
- A shift in the economy as a whole towards cleaner industries and sectors [2], p. paragraph 3).

A. Problem Statement

Current research provides very little insight into the potential for the tourism industry to provide EPWP participants with opportunities to find permanent

employment once they leave the programme, therefore supporting long term poverty alleviation.

B. Research Aim and Objectives

This paper aims to discuss the findings of the DEA study in the context of poverty issues in South Africa and focuses on one industry, i.e. the tourism industry to provide access for EPWP participants into the Green Economy or other occupational and entrepreneurial pathways. The key objectives of the paper are:

- To highlight the urgency of job creation or career advancement for the poor and unemployed people across South Africa;
- To outline key findings of the 2018 DEA study on the effectiveness of the EPWP in supporting career advancement of its participants as a means to support poverty reduction;
- To build on insights gained from the DEA study in relation to the skills developed within various EPWP programmes and how these can be applied to tourism as a sector with a demand for green skills.

This paper is exploratory in nature, with information being drawn primarily from a desktop review of local and international sources, as well as from the DEA 2018 Report (Educational and Occupational Pathways of EPWP Participants). No primary data was collected for the purpose of this paper, but the study will point to further research to analyze the demand for skills from within rural tourism economies and to identify entrepreneurial opportunities and supporting methodologies or approaches that could assist EPWP participants to transition into permanent tourism employment.

C. Research Contribution and Impacts

The research will make an important contribution to the growing body of knowledge that is helping to identify and understand opportunities for EPWP to deliver more effectively against its objectives of reducing unemployment and increasing the ability for participants to enter the labour market or access entrepreneurial pathways. In particular, this paper will open the conversation on how the tourism industry could contribute to achieving these objectives, more specifically in rural economies which offer tourism development potential. The paper will start to create potential links between EPWP programmes and local tourism economies towards poverty alleviation.

II. POVERTY CHALLENGES IN SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa ranked 67th (out of 140 countries) on the Global Competitiveness Index (GCI) for 2018, having fallen five places since the previous year. “In fact, only two countries in the top half of the GCI rankings — South Africa and India — demonstrate what is considered an extreme poverty incidence, in which the poverty rate exceeds 10% of the total population” [3].

Structural poverty and the alleviation of poverty have been key focus areas of many different cross-sectorial

government policies and have been the topic of a multitude of research initiatives in South Africa. Structural poverty refers to a situation where households do not have the means to generate income which will lift them above the poverty line [4]. “If households are able to accumulate sufficient assets by either borrowing or saving, they will be able to make the transition and move onto the higher-level growth path” [4] p. 443.

However, in South Africa, this is often not achieved, especially amongst rural households. The country has a long history of mass unemployment and persistent poverty, where whole communities suffer from high levels of inequality in the distribution of wealth and access to resources. With the country’s Gini Coefficient of 60.8, South Africa is one of the most ‘unequal’ countries in the world [3] and [5]. In terms of income distribution, South Africa’s population is roughly split into two groups: those that earn well comparatively to developed economies and are unlikely to leave their jobs, and those that earn very little - comparable to some of the poorest countries - and will move between jobs more regularly [5]. Further, income of those in the higher bracket, which includes mainly skilled labour, tends to increase, while the income of the lower bracket, occupied mainly by semi-skilled and unskilled labour, tends to stagnate [5]. “Almost half of the population is considered chronically poor at the national upper bound poverty line, of R992 per person per month in 2015 prices” [5]p. 6.

Rural areas are more affected by poverty than urban areas, and poverty increases with certain demographics, for example, male headed households seem better off than female headed households, Black South Africans maintain a higher poverty rate, less education translates into higher poverty [6], poverty prevalence is highest among the age group of younger than 15 and the larger the household, the more likely they are to be poor [5]. While all nine provinces of South Africa showed some reduction in poverty rates between 2006 and 2015 (with KwaZulu-Natal showing the highest poverty reduction), Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, and Limpopo remain the poorest provinces [6]. One needs to consider poverty as a multidimensional issue that incorporates, for example an individual’s relative access to health and education, food security, physical and social wellbeing, lack of access to services, and mental isolation (vulnerability, powerlessness and helplessness) [6].

Acknowledging the poverty crisis that exist across the country, the South African government has written poverty reduction plans into policies and strategies across sectors. Generic strategies include, amongst others, the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP); Development Facilitation Act, Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Programme; Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative of South Africa (ASGISA), Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), the Growth Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) [7] & [8] and Industrial Action Plan. While the policies and strategies have had various successes and failures [9], [10] and [11], the damning findings of the World Economic Forum [3] and World Bank Reports [5], show

that much work still needs to be done for South Africa to get a handle on poverty challenges. For government policies to have the desired impacts, it is therefore imperative that they are translated into targeted programmes that implement the aims that they set out and address the issues that gave rise to the need for the policy in the first place (Bolwell & Weinz, 2008). Programmes which are not delivering on expected outcomes should be investigated to determine programme gaps and could then either be discontinued, or mechanisms could be found to support better results.

The Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) - 2019 [12] focusses on two key themes to address economic development in South Africa, i.e.

Theme 1: Radical economic transformation (RET) is aimed at increasing the rate of sustainable growth attracting higher investment, reducing unemployment and reducing inequality within the economy.

Theme 2: Improving service delivery.

The MTSF themes encapsulate a number of focus areas, which collectively address poverty alleviation challenges as outlined by Fransman and Yu [6], World Bank [5] and Klaus Schwab, WEF [3]. These include making it easier to do business, attracting better investment, education, training and advancement of the workforce, eradicating historical inequalities, greater access to health services and safety and security [12]. Amongst the focus areas of RET is the advancement of public employment schemes, which are aimed at creating work opportunities for the poorest of the poor, as this is seen as a key priority to support a large part of South African citizens who are still living below the poverty line. One such programme is the Department of Environmental Affairs Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) (the other being the Community Work Programme (CWP)).

III. THE EXPANDED PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMMES

The EPWP is set to reach the 6 million employment opportunities for Africans by the end of 2019 [1]. The main aims of EPWP programmes are to provide unemployed, vulnerable people with short term employment to gain work experience, develop skills that could assist people to move into more permanent employment and to increase social cohesion.

Public works programmes (PWP) are found across the globe especially in developing economies. Ghiassi-Razavi's [13] study focused on a number of international programmes similar in nature to the EPWP and drew some conclusions on the characteristics of such poverty alleviation interventions. It is stated that PWPs internationally typically maintain wages that are lower than the minimum market rate as a mechanism to ensure the programmes only attract the poorest of the poor and exclude the less vulnerable from participation [13]. This, however, presents the risk that wages are too low, thus leaving participants unable to rise above the poverty line or "move onto the higher-level growth path" [4]. Basic wages only enable workers to satisfy basic needs of food

and shelter and do little to support for example health, education, savings and income generating activities – as was highlighted by Fransman and Yu [6] as the multiple factors that determine structural poverty. It is argued that the wage gap can be offset by a providing non-monetary benefits for example baby-sitters to look after the children of workers, maternity benefits and provision of work in close proximity to the homes of workers [13]. In addition, opportunities to take out small loans significantly enhance participant's abilities to access other income generating activities such as setting up small shops and creating other micro-businesses.

Duration of employment was also deemed an important factor. According to [13], the Maharashtra EGS programme and Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Programme have been more effective in poverty alleviation as they offer longer term jobs to participants. Longer term employment meant greater stabilisation of the vulnerable families, thus reducing income variation and associated stress. Ghiassi-Razavi [13] cited examples of PWPs in India and Bangladesh where projects run throughout the year, therefore reducing continuous re-establishment costs while also providing greater income stability. As pointed out by World Bank [5] and Von Fintel [4], if people can stay in jobs for longer and build up savings or have access to finance, their chances of lifting themselves out of poverty are improved.

Like Moeti [14], Ghiassi-Razavi [13] points out that community engagement to create a baseline for projects is critical to understand the most important needs of communities. These needs should be incorporated in the planning and design of the programmes, goals should be set, and impacts should be measured as is appropriate for the programme and for the community. This will require a level of flexibility, which may require programmes to deviate from policies such as e.g. the number of youth, women and disabled people that need to be employed, if the most vulnerable community members are male or the work required to be done is not suitable for disabled individuals.

Findings from the Ghiassi-Razavi [13] p. 73 study, which compared EPWP programmes with a selection of international PWP is summarised in Table I.

TABLE I. APPROPRIATENESS OF THE DESIGN ELEMENTS OF EPWP [13]
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Design Element	Appropriate according to international best practices	Inappropriate according to international best practices
Wage rate paid		X
Wage payment arrangements	X	
Timing and duration of employment		X
Skill and labour intensity		X
Exit policies		X
Microfinance		X
Assets / Infrastructure created	X	

Some of the above findings resonate with the Mashabela [15] study, which investigated the role of good monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems for public works programmes, both international and in South Africa, with a particular focus on Gauteng based EPWP projects. Mashabela [15] p.8 states that “an effective M&E framework has become an essential part of any activity in the country to achieve intended results, whereas weak M&E systems have been the cause of failures of many projects and programmes in South Africa. The aim of Mashabela’s study was to determine the underlying causes for EPWP programmes having reached their intended job creation targets, yet unemployment rates in South Africa remained the same. This could be ascribed to inadequate M&E resources and lack of follow-up once participants have exited programmes, which exacerbates EPWPs inability to report against the achievement of goals [15]. The study found, amongst others, that:

- Budgets allocated to programmes and actual expenditure do not correlate and are inadequately monitored;
 - There are no efficient tools, strategies and systems to monitor data collection and reporting;
 - Improvement in planning and formation of partnerships is required to provide participants with opportunities to exit the programmes;
 - The exchange of information between EPWP programmes and potential employers would be facilitated by an M&E team; and
 - Linking targets set by EPWP programmes with Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) of government officials involved with the programmes is critical.
- [15] pp. 57-58.

In EPWP projects, work being undertaken is labour intensive and task based, and participants are paid when tasks have been completed. The intention of the EPWP programmes is to provide temporary employment, therefore contributing to work experience and training, while supporting the income in vulnerable and unemployed individuals. It was expected that the programme participants would be able to find alternative employment once they have been employed by EPWP programmes for two to three years [2].

However, the rate at which EPWP participants are finding alternative employment has not been satisfactory. This could be ascribed to various factors, some of which including the short-term nature of projects and the inability to adequately balance skills development, sustainable livelihoods and satisfactory delivery of projects and political challenges amongst community members [1]. One of the aims of phase three of the EPWP programme (2014/2015) was to address some of the structural issues identified. These would include greater cohesion amongst the various stakeholders, improvement of the operational aspects of the EPWP, implementing standards and norms across the various EPWP platforms, better community consultation during the establishment of the programmes and improving the

measurement, monitoring and evaluation of the programmes.

While EPWP has received much criticism, what is indisputable, is that EPWP has made a significant contribution towards poverty reduction amongst millions of poor community members. It has also delivered important services towards infrastructural, environmental and social improvements. However, the DEA has recognized that EPWP participants are not adequately advancing into full time employment outside the programme.

IV. THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS STUDY

In 2018, the DEA commissioned a study to better understand the educational and occupational pathways which could be accessible for the participants in the Expanded Public Works Programme, and to help identify some of the constraints to career advancement of participants. It was felt that addressing these constraints would help solve problems associated with an education and training system that is unable to open up clear occupational progression and career paths for EPWP participants. Fourie [16] stated that EPWP participants are trained to perform certain tasks and that skills developed inadvertently have the result that participants become dependent on government-supported employment [16]. Generally, training is not sufficient to open alternative employment options for programme participants [16].

The DEA study [2] focused on six environmental sub-programmes, three from the Chief Directorate Natural Resource Management and three from the Chief Directorate Environmental Protection and Infrastructure Programmes [2]. The sub-programmes under Environmental Protection and Infrastructure Programmes that were included in the study are Working on Waste (WoW); Working for the Coast (WfC); People and Parks (P&P); Biodiversity Economy (BE); Working for Land (WfL); Greening and Open Space Management (GOSM); and Youth Employment Programmes (YEP). The sub-programmes under Natural Resource Management that were included in the study are Working for Water (WfW); Value Added Industries (VAI); Working on Fire (WoF); and Working for Wetlands (WfWet). All data was collected from rural EPWP programmes.

The DEA study [2] highlighted a number of potential occupations or part-qualifications that could be linked to the skills that are developed by the EPWP sub-programmes within the scope of the study. The occupations spanned a multitude of industries including forestry, agriculture, mining, manufacturing, construction, health and tourism. Health and safety, conservation and environmental best practice underpinned all the skills within the EPWP programmes, and key skills that were acquired include waste management, alien invasive clearing, plant identification, animal identification, machine operation and electric fence installations. Most of the qualifications are either level 1 or 2 of the Organising Framework for Occupations (OFO) [17],

meaning that they represent basic occupations with relatively low skills. While this paper will not go into detail of these occupations, some of the critical findings of the study are discussed in the following paragraphs.

A. Poverty Dimension of EPWP Participants

Drawing on observations from Fransman and Yu [6], Von Fintel [4] and Mashabela [15] in relation to structural poverty, important insights gained from participants of the 2018 EPWP study are as follows.

- 67% of participants were younger than 35. Younger people are more vulnerable to poverty [6] and therefore the age groups targeted by EPWP was appropriate;
- 93% of participant households were larger than three people (with households as large as 18 people), with 50 % of participants being the sole breadwinner. The larger the household, the more likely they are to be poor [6];
- 78% of participants were already receiving grants within their households, but it was not clear how these support the overall resource base of households [4];
- 56 % of participants either did not have any schooling or left school by grade 11 (only 12 % had education beyond grade 12). The most cited reason for leaving school was financial pressure on the family not having enough income to support themselves;
- 84% of Environmental Protection and Infrastructure Programmes and 47% of Natural Resource Management participants had been employed by EPWP programmes for a maximum of two years, hence they will be unlikely to build up adequate resources to lift themselves from poverty [6].
- While this correlates with the notion that EPWP are meant to provide short term employment, there was very little information available on where participants found employment after leaving EPWP or whether they did in fact find any employment.
- Viewed from another perspective, 16% of Environmental Protection and Infrastructure Programmes participants and 53% of Natural Resource Management participants stayed in EPWP jobs for longer than two years, with the number of years going up to 20 years. For these participants, the EPWP has not achieved its purpose of providing short term employment. What needs to be considered here, is that with participants not moving out of the programme, spaces for new entrants are not opened up [15].
- During interviews, some participants mentioned that they were paid R1,000 per month and some quoted figures in the vicinity of R1,500. While this indicator was not specifically included in questionnaires during the Educational and Occupational Pathways study, it was mentioned by participants in the course of conversation during the interviews. Considering that EPWP wages

could be low by design [13], the question should be asked as to whether participants are able to lift themselves out of poverty in the long term and that participants may be trapped in persistent poverty, especially in the context of the World Bank's suggested R992 per person per month threshold of the chronically poor [5].

- What the study did not establish, but which could potentially be of benefit for future analysis, is the relationships between the various demographic parameters. For example, the relationship between female headed household and relative income [6] as well as the size of those households, the number of dependents per household and their education / skills as an indicator of potential to earn income and build a resource base had jobs been available [4].

B. Skills Developed Versus Skills Demand

It was stated that it should be assessed what training is commonly used in the EPWPs, what tasks are performed and then assess how these link to potential occupation (OFO) or qualifications (NQF). Lotz-Sisitka and Ramsarup (2017) stated that:

learning pathways are the way we navigate and sequence our learning, skills development, education and training to attain competency towards an occupational context. These pathways are numerous, multifaceted and inherently unique to each individual. Enabling a seamless learning pathway is complex and contingent upon numerous interdependent systems, including schooling, career guidance, post-school opportunities, training opportunities, workplace learning and work experience as well as the formal system of skills provisioning ... (p. 38).

A key question that arises from the Educational and Occupational Pathways study is whether the skills acquired, and the training provided are relevant in the context of the EPWP participant's lives in terms of where they find themselves geographically, socially and economically. In other words, are they developing "competency towards an occupational context" [18] p. 38)? The Educational and Occupational Pathways report asserted that skills development plans are often supply-side focused, rigid and concentrate on the context within a programme. However, Ghiassi-Razavi [13] highlights that areas that are, for example exposed to seasonal labour demand should have different types of projects than areas where continuous structural poverty would require longer term interventions. Moeti [14] argued that the EPWP project impacts would be more effective if training and skills developed are aligned to employment opportunities in specific areas. As the DEA Educational and Occupational Pathways study pointed out, depending on where the participants are from, there may not be demand for the skills that they have acquired or recognition of the importance of those skills by local

industry¹. There may not be educational structures that offer aligned or continuous training options to that which EPWP offer [2].

The main focus of the Educational and Occupational Pathways study was to determine Green Economy occupational pathways for EPWP participants, by matching skills developed through EPWP with possible OFO occupations. However, there are a number of social economy (SE) projects which support vulnerable groups e.g. unemployed, youth and women, which does not necessarily require formal certified training. Skills that people have attained through work experience also allow them to follow certain career pathways, including entrepreneurial pathways. Such projects exist in multitude across South Africa, and it would be worthwhile to investigate which of these projects have attained successes, and can be replicated.

C. Understanding of Skills Developed

The top five descriptions EPWP participants provided to define their jobs are general worker, alien invasive removal, construction related, cleaning / litter clearing and general maintenance / plumbing / fixing. The top five skill-sets that were mentioned are being developed are physical (or hard) skills; soft (or character) skills; desktop & office skills; domestic, hospitality & retail skills and medical, safety & wellness skills. Generally, the programmes provided relatively rigid training plans, with the exception of the Environmental Monitors (EM) (a subset of the Biodiversity Economy (BE)). EM training was adapted according to the specific needs of the host employer. Accredited training that is critical for participants to do their work safely and effectively, e.g. health and safety training and first aid training, is found across all programmes, as is environmental awareness training while some pockets of accredited specialised training such as machine operations was provided. Much of the training that required skills for a specific job context, e.g. brick laying and fencing, was taught on-site and are not accredited training. An important finding of the Educational and Occupational Pathways study was that, while the participants felt that they increased their knowledge and skills overall, they did not have specific ideas of where they would find employment with those skills. Further, only 14% of participants believed that the environmental knowledge and awareness that they had gained would allow them further work opportunities outside of the EPWP. It was not clarified whether Environmental Protection and Infrastructure Programmes or Natural Resource Management staff are tasked with providing career guidance and job search skills to

programme participants, but it is certainly worth investigating in future research as it could be used as a tool to help advance participants into permanent employment. It is critical, however, that such guidance is given in the context of skills demands in a particular geographic area. The Educational and Occupational Pathways study included a broad demand analysis within the Green Economy and while it highlighted a number of potential occupations, it did not go into depth creating clear links between sector opportunities and supply side skills which EPWP provides.

D. The Role of Qualifications in the Broader Economy Context and Entrepreneurship

The EPWP training offered are generally accredited skills programmes such as is provided for in the National Qualifications Framework. In a study on national qualifications frameworks across 16 countries, Allais [19] states that some countries, including South Africa, had hoped that economic change and transformation would be an outcome of implementing a better qualifications framework. However, it was argued by some countries that rigid, centralized or regulated training frameworks could present barriers to education and training meeting economic needs of a country. Many countries had hoped that national qualifications frameworks will “increase the productivity and competitiveness” and reduce the unemployment and poverty of their workforce [19] p. 7. But it is argued that in countries where the informal economy dominates, such as in South Africa, there might not necessarily be a need for formal qualifications and that because of the complexity of national qualifications systems, formal economy employers may place less emphasis on such qualifications [19]. Another important point raised by Allais, Marock, & Ngcwangu [19] is that unless underlying issues within the economy of South Africa are addressed, developing more skills amongst more people will not have the desired outcomes of economic growth and inclusion.

This may be of significance in the Educational and Occupational Pathways study, as 82% of participants indicated that they had considered the idea of running their own business, which would not necessarily require skill acquired during the training. As an example, the top five types of businesses (making up 71% of ideas) that participants had considered are running food, catering or tuck-shop businesses, tradesmen (e.g. plumbers, electricians, tilers and construction), event planning or similar, making clothes or sewing and farming or gardening.

The most cited reasons for not having started their own businesses were financial and resource constraints (62%) and knowledge or training (13%). From the above mentioned ambitions, it would appear that economic opportunities and funding, rather than specific skills, would be a driver for participants finding alternative forms of employment.

¹ In a 12 June 2018 SABC News Interview, North West University Researcher stated, “I find that the main reason why they cannot fend for themselves beyond the programme participation is because the skills that they were empowered with are not necessarily important in the labour market. They are not of relevance in them being part of the active economic society. They are unable to participate because the labour market does not need them. They’re unable to participate because the skills are not important to the job offers and job opportunities. Therefore, in this case, it questions how credible are these skills that these people are being given” <http://www.sabcnews.com/sabcnews/govts-epwp-programme-criticised/>

E. Conclusion

Three important findings (whether implicit or explicit) emerged from the Educational and Occupational Pathways study as follows:

- Structural poverty is prevalent amongst EPWP participants within the scope of the study;
- It is unclear what happens to participants once they leave EPWP programmes, with little understanding of what opportunities exist for them while they are still within the EPWP, what skills demands exist within the geographic areas or how skills developed can be utilised to further employment.
- Running their own businesses is something that are being considered by many participants, but they lack the means to do so. There is not a clear relationship between the skills that participants acquired through the EPWP and the types of businesses they consider starting. This could conceivably be due to the research not specifically assessing tacit skills developed through life experience, but it is nonetheless an important factor to consider in development programmes.

The Educational and Occupational Pathways study concluded that desktop research into other types of transitioning, enterprise development and entrepreneurial training should be undertaken along with determination of regional and local context of EPWP programme. It stated that potential exists for developing a flexible EPWP exit model which involves planning with local stakeholders and takes into consideration local context.

V. THE ROLE OF TOURISM IN POVERTY ALLEVIATION

Worldwide, tourism has received much focus for its potential to help alleviate poverty, one of the key aims of the EPWP programmes. UNEP and UNWTO [20] p. 12) defined sustainable tourism as “tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities”. UNEP and UNWTO [20] further asserts that sustainable tourism promotes the conservation of environmental, ecological and natural heritage and respects “socio-cultural authenticity of host communities” (p.5), while supporting long-term economic development. Tourism, therefore, when approached from a sustainability perspective, aligns to the definition of the Green Economy: it aims to deliver services in such a way that it considers the well-being of communities and their future generations, creates jobs and reduces environmental impacts and risks.

The Green Economy Inventory for South Africa (GEISA) [21] investigated the eight key sectors which present opportunities for transitioning into the Green Economy. These are: Energy, Transport, Agriculture, Resource Conservation & Management, Built Environment, Sustainable Consumption & Production, Waste and Water. Tourism was not specifically listed as a separate sector, but is instead referred to an example of a cross-cutting industry for its link to large conservation projects. According to UNEP and UNWTO [22],

however, tourism presents major cross cutting opportunities for creating green jobs and reducing negative environmental impacts through e.g. reducing greenhouse gas emissions, waste management, water conservation and energy efficiency. The report reiterates that the tourism industry is a large consumer of water and energy as well as a large producer of waste and greenhouse gasses. Implementing best practices in the operations of major groups of tourism businesses not only create jobs, but also reduces the overall negative impact on societies and on the environment. These groups include transport, accommodation, food and activities. Further, the potential for tourism to transition into the green economy lies mainly within SMMEs, which generally need better access to finance.

In South Africa, tourism is widely viewed as an effective industry for job creation and poverty reduction: through involving poor people in its supply chain, tourism can be used as a vehicle to reduce poverty. The Rural Tourism Strategy of South Africa [23] states that “rural tourism allows rural people to share in the benefits of tourism development, promoting more balanced and sustainable forms of development” (p. 10). There are many different sustainable tourism implementation approaches or frameworks that promote the inclusion and beneficiation from tourism of poor communities across South Africa, for example, Inclusive Tourism, Community Based Tourism and Pro-poor tourism.

Inclusive tourism (IT) is an approach for sustainable development, defined by ICT as “an innovative trade promotion approach that aims to integrate local community producers into promising tourism industry value chains, harnessing their entrepreneurial capacities and generating income and employment for the poor” [24] p. 2. The ICT [24] states that inclusive tourism is mainly focussed on areas where tourism economies already exist. Inclusive tourism refers to creating linkages between established tourism industries and communities on the fringes of tourism developments to include them in the tourism value chain [25]. Inclusive Tourism creates opportunities for both direct employment as well as for entrepreneurial development within the tourism supply chain, which may be guided and governed through strategic planning and formal product and service contracts. Some examples cited include:

1. Maintenance and services
 2. Activities
 3. Crafts
 4. Food and beverage
 5. Transportation
 6. Natural conservation
 7. Construction
- [25] p. 7

Community based tourism (CBT), on the other hand, aims to introduce tourism into communities where the potential to develop the industry exist, for example in areas with rich natural and cultural assets [26]. “CBT shares the goals of sustainable development in that it

strives to be socially equitable, ecologically sound, and economically viable for the long term” [27] p. 1548. The ICT [28] asserts that some challenges with CBT have emerged over the past few years, including concerns about the long term sustainability of products created, dependence on collaborative approaches for the management of products versus individual business ownership and the financial models that do not consider both long term income and expenditure of businesses [28]. Many different dimensions should be considered for selecting the most appropriate CBT model for a particular area, which include e.g.:

- Whether the initiative is driven from within our external to the community
 - Whether the project facilitator is a private entity, a government entity or the community itself;
 - The development approach, i.e. top-down or bottom up;
 - The markets that are being target, i.e. international or local;
 - The size of the venture – large, medium, small or micro; and
 - Whether the venture is formal or informal.
- [26].

Pro-poor tourism (PPT) refers to tourism that create benefits for all, including poor communities [25]. Pro-poor tourism requires political support and tourism development policies that are aimed at poverty alleviation, integration of poor communities into the tourism economy and means to protect vulnerable people as well as commitment from the private sector [29].

Inclusive Tourism, CBT and Pro-poor tourism are all sub-sets of sustainable tourism, and have been implemented successfully in many places across the world, the African continent and in South Africa. An important element that all the different tourism development approaches have in common is the need for all actors in the tourism sector to collaborate and to find mechanisms, which are appropriate to the local context, to transfer benefits from tourism to local communities. The primary actors are the public sector, private sector business and local communities. Additional stakeholders such as non-profit organisations (NGOs), tourism and business associations and tourism practitioners can play an important mediation and facilitation role that utilises available frameworks such as IT, CBT, PPT and Sustainable Tourism Implementation approaches to guide project implementation [30].

From a skills demand perspective, little knowledge exists in literature on the specific skills demands in local, rural development contexts for tourism to be successful. One of the objectives of the 2017 Strategic framework for tourism human resource and skills development in South Africa, commissioned by the NDT and CATHSSETA, was “to identify the specific workforce skills needs and gaps in the tourism, hospitality and conservation sectors” [31], p. 2. The study outlined the role that skills development agencies

(such as Universities and TVET colleges), government institutions and tourism associations could play in aligning skills developed with skills needed within the industry. The outcomes of the research were generic and cross-cutting, not allowing for a distinction for example between urban or rural, large or small and emerging or established tourism and hospitality industries, nor did it provide any guidance on contextualising skills development. It did, however, state that

The [Expanded] Public Works Programme (EPWP) while encouraging labour intensity and responding to a critical need to extend social protection to large numbers of unemployed people is misaligned with local needs for sustainability with respect to what training is incentivised and how work opportunities created align with industry needs in a particular locality. [31] p. 18.

The report states that service excellence, transformation, upskilling, youth development and responsible tourism should be areas of focus for the tourism and hospitality industry, but offers no guidance on how to deal with entrepreneurial development in relation to EPWP programmes or how the transition could be made into the tourism industry.

VI. CREATING POTENTIAL LINKS BETWEEN EPWP PROGRAMMES AND LOCAL TOURISM ECONOMIES TOWARDS POVERTY ALLEVIATION

Having briefly assessed the EPWP programmes and their strengths and weaknesses, as well as various tourism development models, it is clear that common objectives towards poverty alleviation exist between these two streams. EPWP participants acquire skills that are developed to specifically help them execute their work effectively and efficiently while working in the programme. They also are provided with skills, however, that may not serve them in good stead when moving into permanent employment or even assist them to find permanent employment. From the Educational and Occupational Pathways study, it is clear that some EPWP participants could be trapped in chronic, structural poverty situations. Considering local contexts, participant interests as well as the tacit skills acquired outside the programme could therefore be harnessed to help them transition into alternative livelihoods.

Both the EPWP and sustainable tourism development models are concerned with contributing to environmental, social and economic prosperity in the communities where they are implemented and could therefore be deemed Green Economy industries. The outcomes of sustainable tourism development are well aligned to the outcomes of EPWP projects and the environmental, ecological and social services delivered by EPWP are undeniably linked to tourism, as is evidenced by the plethora of nature based, cultural and community based tourism offerings of South Africa [32] & [2].

The tourism industry, therefore, has an important role to play in achieving the objectives of EPWP in that it

could provide career or entrepreneurial pathways for participants exiting the programmes, especially in rural areas. It is clear that in order for sustainable development models, whether IT, CBT or PPT to succeed, a number of key conditions need to be met which include close collaboration of public, private and community stakeholders as well as finding the correct approach to tourism development that considers the local context.

In order to take this study forward, it is necessary to home in on EPWP programmes that are being executed in rural areas with strong tourism potential. It is recommended that a deeper analysis is undertaken to document the specific skills, capabilities and interests of EPWP participants, as well as develop a deeper understanding of local and specific personal contexts (e.g. size of household and earning potential of the household) to gain insights into the potential grip that poverty has on participants.

Working with public and private sector tourism industry stakeholders, it will then be important to develop an understanding of tourism development potential (which will include the entire tourism supply chain) and undertake a skills demand and entrepreneurial opportunities analysis. A desktop study on successful sustainable tourism projects, whether IT, CBT, PPT or other relevant models should be undertaken to assess their potential to guide transition from EPWP participation to tourism participation. It is suggested that this study is undertaken as a pilot study within two EPWP projects, after which appropriate tourism development models (or hybrid models) could be selected. The transition from EPWP participation to working in a tourism environment, which builds on EPWP developed skills, prior skills developed and tacit knowledge and developing additional context specific skills could then be assessed and mapped.

The outcome of the study must be a flexible, adaptable and replicable model, which provides a framework and tools through which the tourism industry and the EPWP programmes can collaborate towards achieving common objectives of transitioning participants into the Green Economy and out of poverty.

VII. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The work submitted above has been done so without any personal, professional or financial relationships that could be construed as a conflict of interest of any nature. The authors declare no conflict of interest".

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The authors wish to thank the Department of Environment Affairs, Green Skills Academy, Roopa Singh and Jonathon Wigley. This work was supported in part by funding from Environmental Learning Research Centre Education Department, Rhodes University.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The following describes the contributions of each author to this work i.e. Niki Glen, Kathryn Fourie and Nthabiseng Moche collectively conducted desktop research for this article as well as for the DEA 2018 Report (Educational and Occupational Pathways of EPWP Participants). Niki Glen and Kathryn Fourie wrote the main content for the article with input from Nthabiseng Moche's. The final DEA 2018 report was written by Niki Glen and Kathryn Fourie, with input from Nthabiseng Moche and this article, which is largely based on the report as well as any additional desktop review, was mainly written by Niki Glen with input from Kathryn Fourie and Nthabiseng Moche. All authors had approved the final version.

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