



**Tackling Poverty at its Roots:
A Case Study of Skills Development in Integrated Conservation
and Development with the Example of the Working for Water
Programme**

**Ann-Kristina Rönchen
RNCANN002**

A minor dissertation submitted in *partial fulfillment* of the requirements
for the award of the degree of Master of Social Sciences in Global Studies

Faculty of the Humanities

University of Cape Town
2014

Supervisor: Dr Frank Matose

The copyright of this thesis vests in the author. No quotation from it or information derived from it is to be published without full acknowledgement of the source. The thesis is to be used for private study or non-commercial research purposes only.

Published by the University of Cape Town (UCT) in terms of the non-exclusive license granted to UCT by the author.

COMPULSORY DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Table of Contents

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations	V	
List of Appendixes	VI	
List of Tables	VII	
Abstract	VIII	
CHAPTER 1	Introduction and background to the study	1
1.1	Research question	3
1.2	Research objectives	4
1.3	Scope and limitations of the study	5
1.4	Significance of the study	6
1.5	The case study: Citrusdal Water Users Association	8
1.6	Research methodology and data collection	9
1.6.1	Research methodology: Quantitative or qualitative	9
1.6.2	Data collection methods	10
1.6.2.1	Getting an overview: Review of strategic documents and initial interviews	10
1.6.2.2	In Citrusdal: Field visits and interviews with the WfW officials	11
1.6.2.3	Giving the beneficiaries a voice: The quantitative survey	12
1.6.2.4	Backing up the findings: The review of fact-driven documents	13
1.7	Chapter outline	14
CHAPTER 2	Literature review	16
2.1	Skills development and structural unemployment in South Africa	16
2.2	The Expanded Public Works Programme in South Africa	17
2.3	The environment and culture sector of the EPWP	18
2.4	Training and skills development within EPWP	19
2.5	The connection of skills development within EPWP and future employability	21
2.6	The model of Integrated Conservation and Development: Challenges and current debates	23
2.7	The EPWP: An application of integrated conservation and development	27
2.8	Conclusion	28

CHAPTER 3	The South African context of integrated conservation and development	29
3.1	The historical context	29
3.2	The current context	31
3.3	The institutional context	32
3.4	Conclusion	36
CHAPTER 4	The training model of the Working for Water programme	37
4.1	How Working for Water teams operate	37
4.2	The theoretical training model within the Working for Water structure	38
4.3	Objectives of the training model: Contested understandings	40
	4.3.1 Training as the ‘stepchild’ and ‘nice-to-have’	42
4.4	Conclusion	44
CHAPTER 5	The practice of the Working for Water training model	45
5.1	Selection of Beneficiaries I: Who participates in the Programme	45
5.2	Selection of Beneficiaries II: Who participates in the training courses	46
	5.2.1 The ABET pilot project in Citrusdal	48
5.3	The exit strategy: Deleted without substitution	53
5.4	Development ideas within the Working for Water programme	55
	5.4.1 The contractor development	56
	5.4.2 Formal qualifications: ‘Learnerships’	58
5.5	Conclusion	60
CHAPTER 6	Conclusion and recommendations	61
6.1	Re-thinking and negotiating the programme’s objectives: “What do we want?”	61
6.2	Adjusting to circumstances: “What can we do with what we have?”	62
6.3	Concluding remarks	63

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

ABET	–	Adult Basic Education and Training
ACSC	–	Advancing Conservation in a Social Context
ANC	–	African National Congress
CARA	–	Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act
CWUA	–	Citrusdal Water Users Association
CBNRM	–	Community-Based Natural Resource Management
CBPWP	–	Community-Based Public Works Programme
DAC	–	Department of Arts and Culture
DEA	–	Department of Environmental Affairs
DHET	–	Department of Higher Education and Training
DoL	–	Department of Labour
DPW	–	Department of Public Works
DWA	–	Department of Water Affairs
EGS	–	Environmental Goods and Services Sector
EPWP	–	Expanded Public Works Programme/Programmes
ESSP	–	Environmental Sector Skills Plan
FAO	–	Food and Agriculture Organisation
GDP	–	Gross Domestic Product
GDS	–	Growth and Development Summit
HCDS	–	Human Capital Development Strategy
HIV	–	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IAP	–	Invasive Alien Plant
ICD	–	Integrated Conservation and Development
ICDP	–	Integrated Conservation and Development Project
MDG	–	Millennium Development Goal

NCD	–	New Conservation Debate
NDT	–	National Department of Tourism
NGO	–	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPWP	–	National Public Works Programme
NQF	–	National Qualification Framework
NSF	–	National Skills Fund
OECD	–	Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development
PES	–	Payment for Ecosystem Services
PWP	–	Public Works Programme
RDP	–	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SMME	–	Small, Medium and Micro-sized Enterprises
SPP	–	Surplus People Project
Stats SA	–	Statistics South Africa
UN	–	United Nations
UNEP	–	United Nations Environment Programme
WCED	–	World Commission of Environment and Development
WeCED	–	Western Cape Education Department
WCS	–	World Conservation Strategy
WfW	–	Working for Water

List of Appendix.es

1a	–	Citrusdal Total Employment
1b	–	Citrusdal Youth Employment
2a	–	Educational Level of the total Labour Force in Citrusdal
2b	–	Educational Level of the Youth, 18 – 35, in Citrusdal
3	–	General Descriptions for Mother Tongue and English Levels 1, 2, 3, 4 and Post ABET
4	–	General Descriptions for Mathematics Levels 1, 2, 3, 4 and Post ABET

- 5 – How long have you been working in WfW? (Western Cape respondents)
- 6 – How long have you been working in WfW? (Citrusdal respondents)
- 7 – Has the training improved your chances for future employment?
- 8 – Have you actively looked for a job outside of WfW...?
- 9 Do you have the intention to leave WfW in the next few months? (Western Cape respondents)
- 10 Do you have the intention to leave WfW in the next few months? (Citrusdal respondents)
- 11 – Would you like to receive more training?

List of Tables

Table 1:	ABET levels equalling grades in the South African school system	48
Table 2:	Results of the ABET literacy assessment in the projects of the CWUA	48
Table 3:	Results of the ABET numeracy assessment in the projects of the CWUA	48

Abstract

The South African government has been challenged to combat persistently high rates of structural unemployment and poverty among parts of the previously disadvantaged population since the country's political transition in the 1990s. One policy response is the introduction of the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), which seeks to alleviate poverty by providing labour-intensive work opportunities for the unemployed in the sectors of infrastructure, environment and culture, economics and in the social sector. In 2014 the second phase of the EPWP will come to a close. The environmental sector of the EPWP addresses issues of biodiversity conservation and natural resource management, and offers work opportunities in programmes such as the Working for Water (WfW) programme. South Africa is one of the most bio-diverse countries in the world and a pioneer in the control of invasive alien plants (IAPs). The WfW programme provides work opportunities and training for beneficiaries and contractors to control IAPs, using biological, mechanical and chemical methods. Skills development in the EPWP is regarded as a key factor to overcome unemployment and poverty on a long-term basis. Using the case study of the Citrusdal Water Users Association (CWUA), a project of the WfW programme, this thesis analyses to what extent and of what developmental value the environmental EPWP fulfills its objective of skills development. The training model of the WfW programme in the Western Cape, with special focus on the project CWUA, serves as analytical tool. Data was collected through qualitative interviews among WfW officials of the Western Cape Regional and the National Office, and supported by a questionnaire among 79 beneficiaries of the CWUA project using closed dichotomous questions. Furthermore, the research was informed through the review of internal WfW documents such as training matrix, training strategy and literacy assessment results of beneficiaries, as well as a questionnaire conducted by WfW officials and analysed by the researcher. The thesis has found that the training model currently in place deals only with the symptoms of poverty and that the relief is of temporary nature. Skills development

ends at the programme boundaries and has little impact on the beneficiaries' enhancement of future employability. The model does not make full use of its potential to contribute to long-term reduction of unemployment. Reasons are found in the multi-objective context of nature conservation, job creation and skills development, which leads to the neglect of the latter. This research adds to the literature of Integrated Conservation and Development (ICD) on a governmental level and questions whether interventions such as the EPWP contribute to the socio-economic development of the South African population from a long-term perspective.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction and Background to the Study

Two phenomena currently present in the social and natural structures of South Africa will form the basis of this thesis. First, the high but threatened degree of biodiversity and existence of ecosystems, and secondly, the high level of unemployment and demand for skills development.

South Africa is considered one of the most bio-diverse countries in the world, holding rich environmental assets. However, the growing demand for water and unsustainable land-use challenge “(...) declining groundwater reserves, water quality and the integrity of our ecosystems” (DEA 2010a, p.2). Of even greater concern to the South African public are the unemployment rates at a high level since the end of the 1990s, with a peak of 30.4 percent in 2002 (Stats SA 2009, p.4). The unemployment rate in the third quarter of 2013 was at 24.7 percent, meaning 4.6 million South Africans were out of work (Stats SA 2013, p.iv). Despite economic growth, a skills shortage among the population has been identified, which arguably leads to a phenomenon debated as “jobless growth” (Aliber 2003, p.476, Borat 2004a, p.946). Both challenges of biodiversity conservation and reduction of unemployment, seemingly unconnected, are addressed in the objectives of the environmental sector of the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP). The EPWP is a government programme which seeks to provide work opportunities¹ using labour-intensive methods for previously unemployed South Africans, primarily in rural areas.

Jobs are created in the sectors of infrastructure, environment and culture, economics and in the social sector (DEA n.d., p.2). The work opportunities created in the environmental sector contribute to securing ecosystem services and conserving biodiversity. One of these programmes, which is the focus of this thesis, is the Working for Water programme (WfW). It “was founded in 1995 to clear alien invasive plants [IAPs] while providing social services and rural employment” (UNEP n.d., p.1). IAPs are non-indigenous plants, “whose establishment and spread threaten ecosystems, habitats or species with economic or environmental harm” (McNeely 2001, p.3). In the case of South Africa the spread of IAPs “[impacts] negatively on

¹ “A work opportunity is paid work created for an individual for any period of time. The same individual can be employed on different projects and each period of employment will be counted as a work opportunity. A work opportunity in the Infrastructure Sector has an average duration of four (4) months and in the Environment & Culture Sector an average duration of six (6) months” (DPW 2009, p.194).

water resources and on the ecological integrity of our natural ecosystem. Of equal concern to South Africa, is that IAPs invade grazing lands, reducing their value to stock farmers (...)" (WfW 2004, p.4); furthermore, the spread of IAPs increases fire intensity, with fires burning longer and hotter (Van Wilgen & De Lange 2011, p.506). Currently 198 different plants covering about 10 percent of the country's surface are classified as invasive (DPW 2009, p.42). The economic costs of unchecked IAP spread are calculated in terms of water loss for agricultural, urban and industrial use and are estimated to amount to R6.5 billion each year (Van Wilgen & De Lange 2011, p.506). WfW operates nation-wide in more than 300 projects and creates job opportunities for approximately 20 000 people each year (DPW 2009, p.43) by training previously unemployed citizens, called beneficiaries, in functional courses which enable them to control IAPs. Each project will be facilitated for several years, before moving to another town to spread the economic benefits among as many South Africans as possible. Organised as contracting teams, the beneficiaries set out to defined catchments in their areas, using biological, mechanical and chemical methods as well as fire management to control the spread and clear the IAPs (WfW 2004, p.11). The contracts are facilitated through implementing agents, which assign areas, teams and length of work and facilitate the payment. The teams work in blocks of an average of 21 days, earning a minimum of R80 per day. It is aimed to have teams consisting of 60 percent women, 40 percent youth, being aged 18 to 35, and 2 percent being persons with disability. In the first five years of EPWP between 2004 and 2009, WfW has created 185 686 work opportunities (DEA n.d. p.5).

Programmes like these seek to provide work opportunities in an environment of historically based structural unemployment. This type of unemployment is not of cyclical nature but demands to be addressed through thorough structural reforms of the labour market and economy. Among others, there are two reasons relevant to this paper for the causes of structural unemployment in South Africa: firstly, the economic growth in post-apartheid South Africa has not been strong enough to absorb the growing numbers of labour force² (Lewis 2001, McCrod 2003); secondly, the shift towards a technology- instead of labour-based economy (Schoeman et al., 2010) demands skills which are not offered by large groups of this labour force. Reasons for the acceleration of labour supply meeting an insufficient labour demand are, for example, education policies after the political transition, aiming to reduce the increasing number of over-age learners, which had increased during the 1990s. In order to compensate the high repetition rates and subsequent "(...) high pupil-teacher ratios in

² The labour force consists of "[all] employed and unemployed persons of working age" (Census 2011a, p.14).

disadvantaged schools” (Burger & von Fintel 2009, p.5), learners were banned from repeating classes. The consequence identified by Burger and von Fintel (2009) was to “[push] young (predominantly black) individuals into the labour market without the relevant skills, rather than continuing with necessary training that is required for eventual absorption into the workplace” (p.2). Further increase of labour supply was generated through the feminisation of the labour market with especially black women entering, who previously did not participate (Burger & von Fintel 2009, p.4). Overall it is found that a steady increase of unskilled black labour on the supply side was met by slow economic growth, plus a shift in economy demanding skills-biased labour (see also Borat & Hodge 1999; Borat 2004b). These findings suggest that the current cohorts of unemployed face structural problems rather than age-related and thus temporary unemployment, meaning that the point in time of entry, the post-transition period, and the corresponding low skills level will affect this generation throughout their working life. “Retraining these individuals becomes essential and requires more long-term interventions to succeed in lowering unemployment among these cohorts” (Burger & von Fintel 2009 p. 41).

While the primary focus of the EPWP lies in the provision of temporary work opportunities, and thus immediate temporary poverty relief, “[the] primary long-term strategies for unemployment reduction are to grow the economy and to improve the skills development system so that the workforce is able to obtain the skilled jobs which are being generated by the economy” (DEA n.d. p..2).

1.1 Research question

This research asks the question:

- To what extent does the environmental sector of the EPWP fulfil its objective of skills development, and of what developmental value is this sector within the context of tackling poverty?

This research question raises several sub-questions:

- What are the objectives and goals of the environmental EPWP?
- What are the special circumstances of Integrated Conservation and Development (ICD) on the governmental level?
- How is skills development conducted within WfW?

- Does the skills development have potential to contribute to the enhancement of employability outside of the protected environment of the programme and thus to long-term poverty alleviation?

The research question and sub-questions result from the multi-objectives and multi-level context in which the WfW programme as an environmental EPWP finds itself. Firstly, the objective of the national cross-sectoral EPWP is to reduce unemployment “by creating productive employment opportunities and by enhancing the ability of workers to earn an income after they leave the programme, either in the labour market or through entrepreneurial or cooperative income-generating activities” (DEA n.d., p.3), which refers to the objectives of job creation and skills development. Secondly, the objectives of the environmental sector of the EPWP “are to achieve the immediate social benefits of the overall Expanded Public Works Programme, while at the same time generating sustainable outputs in the fields of environment, tourism, heritage, biodiversity and land care” (DEA n.d., p.11), which means adding biodiversity conservation and management of natural resources to the list of objectives. Both, the overall EPWP and the environmental sector of the EPWP stress the importance of training and skills development concurrently to the creation of job-opportunities to ensure long-term employment in the formal economy (DEA n.d., p.2 and p.11). For WfW, being considered the flagship and most successful of the environmental EPWPs and concerned with the control of IAPs, this results in the objectives of “planned and systematic prevention and control of invasive alien plants (...), [contribution] to social and economic empowerment of all beneficiaries in order to create sustainable livelihoods (...) [and to] establish an effective and efficient learning organisation (...)” (WfW 2004, p.9), contributing to ecological, hydrological, agricultural, socio-economic, economic and institutional long-term goals (WfW 2004, p.8). Thus, WfW finds itself facing the multi-objective approach of conservation, job creation and skills development. The question arises whether certain objectives are made focus areas to be prioritised while others are neglected – a common challenge in Integrated Conservation and Development (ICD) projects.

1.2 Research objectives

This research aims to look behind the paper-based policy narrative and to give an accurate picture of the actual day-to-day work within the programme and its impacts on the objective of skills development with the long-term goal of formal economy employability and thus continuous reduction of poverty. It is aimed to identify the objectives and goals of the

environmental EPWP and to display the special circumstances under which ICD is implemented on a governmental level. It is anticipated that support will be found for the claim that the objectives of job creation and conservation are prioritised over the objective of skills development. Therefore, the study will explore whether the conduct of training within the programme considers the circumstances outside of the protected environment of the programme and in the formal economy context. This will help answering the question whether the skills development has potential to enhance the employability of beneficiaries. The findings will suggest whether poverty reduction is achieved *within* the programme only or whether it is based on a developmental approach that leads to long-term poverty reduction *outside* of the programme.

1.3 Scope and limitations of the study

The research follows a deductive approach, starting at the nation-wide cross-sectoral EPWP, narrowing in on the environmental EPWP, specifically on the WfW programme in the Western Cape as regional body, with special focus on the projects implemented by the Water Users Association in Citrusdal (CWUA). WfW has been chosen as representative for an environmental EPWP due to its well-documented history, methodology, achievements and challenges, resulting from its size³ and generally good reputation, nationally as well as internationally. As a case study project, Citrusdal has been chosen due to its general accessibility to conducting field work and the CWUA's overall good performance with regard to managing staff, accomplishing operations targets and other implementation of WfW guidelines. Finding constructive results is anticipated in a project which is considered well organised and running efficiently, rather than focusing on a project which has very specific challenges and does not follow WfW guidelines in the first place.

The training model is the framework in which skills development is formally conducted. It has been chosen as an analytical tool to determine the extent and the developmental value of skills development. Considering that the majority of beneficiaries in WfW has so far only reached a low level of skills relevant for employability in the formal economy – demonstrated in their educational level and inability to find a formal job – and turn to the EPWP as an “employer of last resort” (EPWP 2008, p.7), the training model is considered as the basis for further skills development and thus contributor to future socio-economic well-being of the

³ Concerning job opportunities created, WfW is the biggest of the “Working for ...” programmes, creating most job opportunities, ahead of Working for the Coast, Working for Tourism, Working for Wetlands, Working on Fire and Working on Waste (DEA, n.d., p.5).

beneficiaries. It is analysed with regard to its structure, implementation, position in the hierarchy of daily processes and the understanding of training and its outcomes among WfW staff and beneficiaries. Thus, the analysis is not limited to the training matrix (WfW 2012a) existing on paper and serving as compliance pattern for number and type of courses, but is extended by the analysis of day-to-day implementation influenced by subjective staff and beneficiary behaviour and perceptions.

There are geographical limitations to this work. It concerns only the training model in the Western Cape. Since training is conducted differently in different provinces, the results may not be applicable for other provinces.

1.4 Significance of the study

This thesis seeks to fill gaps in the research conducted on both the EPWP policy and the ICD model. The skills development as a research topic has been identified, since it has not been a part of worldwide public works programmes (PWPs) in the past and the idea to expand these interventions by a skills development component is fairly new. Therefore, a research gap presents itself which needs to be addressed to provide support for the integration of skills development into PWPs.

In 2014 the second phase of the EPWP will be concluded and the third phase of this PWP will begin. It is reasonable to take this as a point in time to look back and analyse successes and failures. The training and skills development model in WfW as an environmental EPWP is currently undergoing various changes in structure, content, objectives and positioning within the programme. A critical evaluation can help to support these changes, can help to shape the way for the future training model and contribute to successful skills development in WfW in the EPWP III. Research conducted on the EPWP has focused mainly on the infrastructure sector (Thwala 2008; McCutcheon & Taylor-Parkins 2010), being the largest, most productive and most employment generating of the four EPWP sectors (McCutcheon & Taylor Parkins 2010, p.2). However, this thesis is an attempt to draw more attention to PWPs in the environmental sector. Being one of the longest running programmes, creating considerable shares of the employment targets of the EPWP, WfW shows the potential of what the environmental sector can contribute. Further, it is important to analyse carefully the skills development in the environmental sector in order to develop the linkage between EPWP

and employability in the formal environmental sector. Unlike the jobs in the infrastructure or social sector, 'green jobs' are a still evolving job category.

An asset for the conduct and thus outcomes of this thesis certainly is the access to WfW officials and documentation. This enables not only reviewing structures, processes and objectives in policy documents but also analysing how these are, in fact, implemented in or rather adapted to day-to-day work among staff and beneficiaries. Additionally, field work has proven that the WfW programme is highly dynamic: models which were used one year ago may have been abandoned or replaced by now, which is the case for the contractor development model analysed by Coetzer and Louw as recently as 2012. This thesis will provide an update for the contractor development currently in place.

Furthermore, this thesis seeks to transfer the principles and assumptions of the ICD model to a different level in several points. Most of the research conducted with regard to ICD has focused on the facilitation through projects, funding by international donors and the mitigation of externalities between protected areas and local communities, whereas externalities analysed were to be turned from negative to positive ones. However, the ICD model at hand is facilitated through a programme, funded by the government and participants experience positive externalities. Thus, the motivation to conduct ICD is different and shapes a different context for the implementation of conservation and development objectives.

The funding and promotion of ICD programmes by the government also creates a different context for implementation, impacted by current, historical and institutional influences. Instead of autonomous projects, this ICD implementation is an overarching national programme, relating to debates of national concern. This thesis seeks to contribute to the literature on ICD by expanding the institutional and structural context in which ICD approaches are analysed.

Of vital concern, however, is the analysis of skills development in this context of multi-objectives and multi-stakeholders. Due to the focus on protected areas and wildlife, the literature concerned with economic development is often limited to tourism or resource trade (Roe 2006; Sandbrock & Roe 2010). Skills development as sub-topic of sustainable development has not yet found enough space in the research conducted. Job creation through the management of ecosystems, in this case by controlling IAPs, has been acknowledged in

the theory of “payment for ecosystem services” (PES) (Grieg-Gran & Bishop n.d.), but has not yet found access to ICD research.

To give the reader an understanding of the target population of this study, the Citrusdal case study will be introduced in the following.

1.5 The case study: Citrusdal Water Users Association

Citrusdal is situated in the Olifants-Doorn water management area, 180 kilometres north of Cape Town in the Cederberg Municipality, with the Olifants River as the main river in the area (SPP 2008, p.4). It is estimated that “75 percent of the main river ecosystems of the Olifants-Doorn water management area are critically threatened” (SPP 2008, p.5). It is a winter rainfall region, intensely cultivated with citrus fruits. Citrusdal has a population size just over 7000 (Census 2011b, Appendix. 1a); the unemployment rate in Citrusdal was at 10.3 percent (narrow definition⁴), respectively 11.9 (expanded definition⁵) in 2011 (Census 2011b, Appendix. 1a), with youth unemployment at 12.2 and 13.8 percent, respectively (Census 2011b, Appendix. 1b). The educational profile of the town reveals that 19.9 percent of the total labour force and 9 percent of those currently between 18 and 35 attended school until Grade 7/Standard 5 or lower (primary school or no schooling) (Appendix. 2a, Appendix. 2b), while 28.9 percent of the total labour force and 26.4 percent of the 18- to 35-year-olds attended school until Grade 12/Standard 10 (matric). A total of 7.1, or 44 percent respectively, have a tertiary education, which means some form of further education or training (Census 2011b, Appendix. 2a, and Appendix. 2b).

WfW projects have been implemented in Citrusdal since the year 2000. At the moment the projects ‘Jan Dissel’ and ‘Citrusdal Riparian’ are implemented by the CWUA. The number of beneficiaries varies; however, approximately twelve contracting teams, each consisting of eleven beneficiaries and one contractor, find work opportunities in both projects. In this

⁴ The unemployed are officially (narrowly) defined by Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) following the definition by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) as “those people within the economically active population who: (a) did not work during the seven days prior to the interview; (b) want to work and are available to start work within a week of the interview; and (c) have taken active steps to look for work or to start some form of self-employment in the four weeks prior to the interview” (Stats SA 1998, p.1).

Economically active is defined as a “person of working age who is available for work, and is either employed, or is unemployed but has taken active steps to find work in the reference period” (Census 2011b, p.10).

⁵ The expanded definition of unemployed in South Africa adds to the official (narrow) definition: the “discouraged job seekers (those who said they were unemployed but had not taken active steps to find work in the four weeks prior to the interview)” (Stats SA 1998, p.12).

research both projects are considered as one unit, since a distinction is necessary merely for administrative reasons and does not have influence on training and skills development conducted. Giving work to 144 beneficiaries, WfW is a considerable source of income for the community. Besides WfW, people find work on surrounding fruit farms, picking, sorting and packing citrus fruits. This work is of a seasonal nature, providing income in the months of June till October.

1.6 Research methodology and data collection

At this point the chosen research methodology and applied methods for this thesis will be presented which contained semi-structured interviews as well as a questionnaire using dichotomous questions and the review of internal documents.

1.6.1 Research methodology: Quantitative or qualitative

For this thesis a predominantly qualitative approach was chosen to answer the research questions of an exploratory and descriptive nature. It analyses the process in which the skills development occurs and focuses on the quality of this process as “(...) ‘quality’ refers to the nature of things, rather than to their quantity” (Heyink & Tymstra 1993, p.293). The different belief and value systems of each individual involved in the skills development influence its outcome, its extent and its developmental value. This research is interested in the individual and subjective perception of those shaping the skills development process and how they interpret paper-based policy guidelines in practice. The preferred method of research was the interview. This provided the opportunity for the interviewees to raise topics they deemed essential and the flexibility to confirm or discard hypotheses right away (Heyink & Tymstra 1993, p.295).

A quantitative method in the form of a questionnaire was used where qualitative methods in the form of interviews were on the one hand not feasible due to language restrictions. On the other hand, the questionnaire was used as a method to produce findings towards the question whether the skills development has potential to contribute to the enhancement of employability outside of the programme. Observation and interviews had produced the hypothesis that the majority of beneficiaries do not actively and successfully seek for employment outside of the programme. The questionnaire set out to confirm this. A case study was chosen to explore a contemporary trend and to analyse the real-life situation of skills development.

1.6.2 Data collection methods

The process of data collection began in the context of an eight-week internship with the WfW programme and carried on afterwards. This arrangement provided the opportunity to collect data from ‘behind the scenes’, going further than reviewing public policy documents and research previously done on the WfW programme. Methodologically ‘behind the scenes’ refers to having access to internal documentation and continuous contact to WfW officials, for clarification and confirmation purposes and more in-depth interviews, where needed. The process and methods of data collection were duly permitted by WfW officials in the national and regional office, as well as by officials at the CWUA. One major ethical principal guiding the data collection process included protecting every individual’s identity. At no point must the reader be able to connect the findings of this study to the identity of a specific interviewee, or survey participant. The interviewees as well as survey participants were informed about the confidentiality and anonymity of the interviews and questionnaires. All individuals were informed about the purpose of the research and informed that participation is voluntarily.

1.6.2.1 Getting an overview: Review of strategic documents and exploratory interviews

During the internship an extensive literature review of the EPWP and the WfW programme provided a first understanding of both structure and objectives. In semi-structured interviews key informants of the WfW officials gave more information on details of the training model and thus assisted in identifying strengths and weaknesses of the model. These exploratory interviews, which also served the purpose of understanding the complexities of the programme and the position and conduct of the training model, were supported by an in-depth review of internal strategic documents, focusing on relations to the training model: the WfW Strategic Plan (WfW 2004), the Western Cape Training Strategy 2011 – 2016 (WfW 2010) and the WfW Social Development Strategic Report (Wessels-Ziervogel 2013) were analysed according to their intended outcomes and objectives. This exercise served to identify a common understanding among different departments within the programme of the outcomes of the training, but especially to identify the importance of training in the objective-matrix. It served to understand the objectives and goals of the environmental EPWP, and the WfW programme. However, this review did not yield satisfying results, since it is the aim of this research to look beyond paper-based intentions.

1.6.2.2 In Citrusdal: Field visits and interviews with the WfW officials

Therefore, following the internship, semi-structured interviews among WfW officials were conducted to address the question of possible differences between paper-based objectives and actual implementation. This helped to compare the goals and objectives of skills development to the actual conduct. Six officials in Bellville and Citrusdal and one contractor were interviewed, of whom all have worked in the programme for several years. Their expectations, focus and understanding of training and skills development were compared to each others' and to the programme policy on paper. Questions relating to successes and problems, conduct and implementation, structure, and planned changes were asked. While the interviews gave information on the overall programme, the focus was on the situation of the CWUA. Having the multi-objective approach of the WfW programme in mind, it was aimed to understand the perception and thus support for the implementation of training in different contexts and on the basis of possibly varying priorities of objectives. It became clear that weaknesses to the one are not weaknesses to the other and successful training looks different, depending on the context in which the official works. Several field visits observing contracting teams working in Citrusdal gave an impression of who the beneficiaries are and how they work together.

All three levels – the policy on paper, the transfer into reality through WfW officials in Bellville and the implementation on the ground in Citrusdal – were set in relation to each other to identify common processes and areas of misunderstanding and the resulting implications for the skills development. This set the framework to understand the special circumstances of ICD on the governmental level. Some interviews were conducted in the regional WfW office in Bellville and the national office in Cape Town, both interviewer and interviewee being proficient in the English language. The interviewees made sufficient time available, encouraging follow-up interviews if necessary, signaling a continuous commitment to improve the processes and structure of the programme. The same applied to the interview with the personnel on the ground, whereas this interview was conducted in the CWUA office in Citrusdal.

The contractor interview appeared to have more challenges and limitations. It was conducted during a site visit of a WfW official to the site where the contractor and the team were working at the time. The WfW official was not present during the interview to ensure confidentiality. However, the language barrier between English speaking researcher, and the

contractor, with Afrikaans as mother tongue and only basic knowledge of English, limited an in-depth level of the interview. Despite this challenge, the prioritised questions were answered and assumptions confirmed. Due to language barriers and the lack of an external interpreter, no further interviews with contractors were conducted. More information on contractor behaviour was drawn from interviews with WfW officials who work closely with the contractors. Including the exploratory interviews to generate an understanding of the programme and its context, twelve interviews were conducted over a period of three and a half months. The interviews were transcribed, but the researcher decided not to include a copy to this document to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. Furthermore, quotes were adapted where it seemed necessary to conceal the interviewees' identity. Since the WfW officials know each other very well and certain lines of argumentation are easily traced back to specific job positions, a full documentation of the interviews would possibly have revealed their identity. This concern also played a role in the choice of quotes used in the analysis chapters of this thesis.

1.6.2.3 Giving the beneficiaries a voice: The quantitative survey

The beneficiaries' perceptions of training are of great importance; taking these into consideration it is possible to make statements on whether they see a connection between training, skills development and future employability and whether they value training. Due to special circumstances a quantitative questionnaire has been developed, which was answered by 79 beneficiaries in August in the CWUA projects. Sixty respondents took part in an Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) project, while 19 respondents worked in field. At the time of the survey only a total of 21 beneficiaries worked in field, which led to a limited number of available respondents.⁶ In-depth interviews would have been the preferred method. However, language barriers made it impossible to conduct such interviews successfully. The option of interpreters was limited to WfW officials. This option was ruled out in fear of a biased outcome due to social desirability. Therefore, quantitative methods were considered to ensure a confidential, anonymous method to engage with the beneficiaries. The quantitative approach was also chosen to clarify whether the objective and goal of the EPWP, namely enhancement of employability in the formal economy, is adopted by the majority

⁶ It is likely that the beneficiary's level of literacy influences the answers given in the questionnaire. Sixty of 79 survey respondents were part of the ABET project to improve their literacy. However, 53 of those assessed as low literate/illiterate in the ABET assessment returned to work in field. Only ABET level one and two are offered at the moment. The returning beneficiaries were on level three or higher. This leads to the assumption that the remaining 19 survey respondents are part of this cohort of the 53 and do not have a significantly higher literacy level.

beneficiaries; or whether groups of beneficiaries do not make this connection to the world outside of the protected environment of the programme. It became apparent that the majority of beneficiaries has a low level of literacy skills, which limited the questionnaire developed to dichotomous questions (in Afrikaans and English), which could be answered by ticking a 'yes' or 'no' box, and a box indicating a duration, respectively. The results were therefore not as detailed as hoped; however, hypotheses were confirmed. Several questions were asked to find out whether beneficiaries see a connection between the training in WfW and future employability, whether they actively look for alternative employment and whether they would like to receive more training. The questionnaire was analysed using the software PSPP, applying descriptive statistics. For better referencing this survey is here called training-survey.

1.6.2.4 Backing up the findings: the review of fact-driven documents

Further data and background information has been collected through the review and analysis of fact-driven documents provided by WfW officials such as budget and performance overviews, with facts and figures of work opportunities and training person-days created or hectares cleared for previous, current and estimated future financial years nationally (years 2009/10 – 2017/18) (WfW 2012b), or the Annual Plan of Operations (APO) (WfW 2013a) providing budget figures for training, operations and overall for CWUA and other projects in the Western Cape for the financial year 2013. The Water Information Management System provides information on the profile of beneficiaries which are currently employed. A labour analysis consisting of the respective data has been provided by WfW officials for July and August 2013 (WfW 2013b, WfW 2013c). Since August the CWUA projects take part in an Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) project piloting literacy and numeracy training, which was initiated by the Western Cape training unit. The assessment results prior to the training as well as the examination results after completion of the first three months of training are at hand for this research. The results of a survey conducted by WfW officials among 1365 beneficiaries in the Western Cape have been used in few cases. The survey aimed to answer questions about the job satisfaction of WfW beneficiaries which is not directly relevant for the focus of this thesis. However, general questions such as the duration beneficiaries have spent in the programme are of interest. For better reference this survey is here called 'satisfaction-survey'.

It is assumed that despite several limitations in the application of methods due to language and literacy barriers, the overall data collection adapted to given circumstances provides a sufficient pool of data to make accurate statements.

1.6 Chapter outline

The following outline will give an overview of what can be expected in each chapter of this study.

CHAPTER 1: Introduction and background to the study provided a guide to this study by introducing the WfW programme, the (environmental) EPWP and their relation to skills development in a multi-objectives approach as context of this thesis. A detailed summary of the research methodology was given and the research question was posed and elaborated on.

CHAPTER 2: Literature review seeks to paint a picture of current available knowledge on the skills development and the context of structural unemployment, the EPWP landscape in South Africa, with special focus on the environmental sector and the skills development. Knowledge of potential subsequent employability in the formal sector is shared. The model of Integrated Conservation and Development (ICD) is introduced, declaring challenges and debates. Finally, the connection between EPWP and ICD is drawn.

CHAPTER 3: The South African context of Integrated Conservation and Development points out the nationally specific historical, current and institutional characteristics which shape the implementation and conduct of ICD in South Africa and the consequences for skills development.

CHAPTER 4: The training model of the Working for Water programme pays detailed attention to the model's structures as they exist in theory. Furthermore, it shows how these objectives are differently understood by the WfW officials and staff and reveals that there is no agreement on where the training process should lead. The chapter shows that training is often regarded as a nice-to-have instead of an essential building block.

CHAPTER 5: The practice of the Working for Water training model analyses the consequences the previous findings have on the skills development in WfW. Developmental

ideas such as the ABET project, 'Learnerships' and the contractor development will be analysed with regard to their current status and value for future employability.

CHAPTER 6: Recommendations on ways forward and conclusion composes suggestions on how the programme can use the existing tools and structures to enhance the skills development and training. Skills development as it is currently conducted in the programme is focused on the programme's needs and does not sufficiently support poverty reduction on a long-term level outside of the programme's boundaries.

CHAPTER 2

Literature review

This research is embedded in and contributes to two different sets of literature. Firstly it is linked to the model of Integrated Conservation and Development (ICD). Secondly, it contributes to the policy of PWP, specifically the EPWP in South Africa. In both cases the objective of skills development in the context of achieving multiple other objectives constitutes the research focus. The following will provide an overview of the state of knowledge of skills development in environmental EPWP and approaches, challenges and current debates of ICD; in addition, the connection between environmental EPWP and ICD will be drawn.

2.1 Skills development and structural unemployment in South Africa

South Africa faces structural unemployment, “which generally refers to the overall inability of the economy, owing to structural imbalances, to provide employment even at the peak of the business cycle. Structural unemployment may be related to a mismatch in skills or geographical location” (van Aardt 2012, p.59).

Based on historical events structural unemployment poses a problem to contemporary South Africa. Van Aardt’s findings (2012) focus on the youth⁷ of today (2004 – 2011) and identify structural unemployment as major obstacle to enter the job market “(...) as young job seekers usually do not have the right skills profile (experience and training), could be geographically mismatched (location of the job vacancies and those of job seekers) or are entrants to the job market, and their numbers exceed the number of available entry-level positions in the job market” (p.59). Van Aardt (2012) sees the prevalent reasons for youth unemployment as “skills levels, location, population group, economic environment and age” and stresses that education and training in Further Education and Training (FET) colleges or ABET programmes should be used to develop skills demanded by the needs of the industry (p.64).

A connection between long-term unemployment and chronic poverty is made by Aliber (2003), who distinguishes the ‘chronically’ and ‘transitory’ poor in South Africa. Chronic poverty thereafter “(...) is transmitted from one generation to the next, usually meaning that children from poor households are likely to become poor adults, whose children will in turn risk remaining in poverty“ (p.476). Therefore, “(...) volatility in employment and earning

⁷ Youth is defined by the National Youth Policy (2009) as “young people as those falling within the age group of 14 to 35 years” (p.12), which is also adapted by the EPWP.

status is a major determinant of changing welfare states, and similarly, protracted unemployment is a major determinant of protracted poverty” (Aliber 2003, p.479). Those prone to poverty are, among others, the rural poor, female-headed households and people with disability (Aliber 2003, p.480). Keeping in mind that the youngest generations of labour market participants are prone to unemployment due to structural reasons, these groups compile the target population of the EPWP: youth, females, persons with disability, living in rural areas.

Aliber (2003) identifies the PWPs as a kind of policy intervention in the light of bleak prospects “for any sort of spontaneous employment creation, especially in rural areas and for those with few marketable skills” (p.487), however, acknowledging its bridging and temporary character.

2.2 The Expanded Public Works Programme in South Africa

The concept of PWPs is familiar to South African politics since the early 1990s, when the end of apartheid and the first democratically elected government demanded for rapid reduction of unemployment and poverty among previously disadvantaged groups of South Africans. Drawing from experiences in other African countries such as Kenya, Tanzania, Botswana or Zimbabwe (von Braun & Teklu 1991; McCutcheon 1995; Gibson 2005; Thwala 2008), the PWP concept was “included in the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) under the name ‘National Public Works Programme’ (NPWP)” (DPW 2009, p.3), focusing on community-based public works programmes (CBPWP) and investing of “mainstream public expenditure towards infrastructure using labour-intensive techniques” (DPW 2009, p.3). While unemployment and resulting poverty were identified as major socio-economic obstacles for the development of large parts of the population, the Growth and Development Summit (GDS) in 2003 served as the scene of establishing the EPWP as a means to “draw significant numbers of the unemployed into productive work and that these workers gain skills while they work, and thus take an important step to get out of the pool of those who are marginalised (...)” (Mbeki 2003). Since its inception, the EPWP has attracted attention in the public sphere, due to its core concern of reduction of unemployment.⁸

⁸ Interpreting the definitions on which the Census 2011 is based, South Africans who take part in an EPWP are counted as employed. Drawing larger parts of the population into these programmes thus reduces the unemployment rate (Census 2011a, p.10).

It was aimed to create 1 million work opportunities during the first five years, phase I, within all four sectors, infrastructure, environment and culture, economic and social, combined. This target was reached one year ahead of time and after the first five years more than 1.6 million work opportunities had been created (DPW 2009, p.54). Achievements like these, changes and future plans of the policy, are well captured in periodic publications by the Department of Public Works (DPW), in works such as sector plans, employment conditions or monitoring and evaluation reports (DPW 2013), as well as by the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA n.d.) regarding the environment and culture sector of the EPWP. This considerable amount of data produced enables thorough revision and monitoring of the programme. The EPWP Five-Year Report (DPW 2009) has produced an overview of experiences of EPWP I, which ended in 2009, including recommendations for EPWP II, 2009 – 2014.

The EPWP is funded through the normal governmental budgeting process by public resources and not, like other PWPs, through a special relief fund (DPW 2009, p.24). This supports the notion of the South African EPWP to be a long-term developmental rather than a safety-net relief programme. Funds have increased over the last phase of EPWP. The overall budget for all four sectors rose from R21 billion in EPWP I to 77.8 billion EPWP II.⁹

Nation-wide the WfW programme is funded with R1.1 billion an amount which has been steadily increased since the programme's inception in 1995; the budget of the WfW Western Cape amounts to R95 million. The budget of the CWUA projects amounts to more than R9.3 million, while of this amount R2.6 million are allocated for training, R49 thousand for social development interventions and R4.4 million for operations (WfW 2013a).

The large majority of funds for the WfW programme in the Western Cape comes from the EPWP and thus poverty relief fund. A small amount is added by a water levy paid by the tax payers.

2.3 The environment and culture sector of the EPWP

The environment and culture sector of the EPWP includes programmes which “[address] environment, heritage (including tourism development) and biodiversity issues” (DEA n.d.,

⁹ The EPWP II started at a budget of R25 billion, while after several expansions the budget amounted to R77.8 billion in September 2012 (DPW 2012).

p.11). Its objective is compliant with the cross-sectoral EPWP guidelines the creation of jobs, plus the promotion of environmental and cultural outcomes.

The sector's objectives are in line with the strategic paper developed by the South African government, the 'Delivery Agreement' (The SA Presidency 2010), which outlines twelve outcomes in different fields to be the "key focus of work" in the period until 2014. "Combined, these agreements reflect government's delivery and implementation plans for its foremost priorities" (DEA 2010a, p.1); the outcomes of interest for this study and addressed by the environmental EPWP are outcome ten: environment (DEA 2010a), and outcome four: employment (DEA 2010b). Eight main and other smaller programmes constitute the sector, such as the Land Care Programme, Working on Water, on Fire, for Tourism or on Wetlands. During EPWP I more than 460 000 work opportunities were created in the sector, more than 185 000 by the WfW programme (DEA n.d., p.5). This amounts to an achievement of 234 percent of the set target of 200 000 work opportunities in the environment and culture sector (DEA n.d., p.9).

2.4 Training and skills development within EPWP

The EPWP policy does not directly provide a definition of development. However, the programme is considered a development programme in the RDP along its objective of poverty alleviation and its broader developmental objective of social protection. In line with the aim of the MDGs to halve unemployment by 2015, the vision of the Growth and Development Summit (GDS 2003) and the draft of an Anti-Poverty Strategy by the government (The Presidency 2008), a combination of social and economic development is promoted on the South African agenda: the improvement of the economic situation of households through job creation and economic empowerment, the improvement of physical and mental health, through facilitating the access to resources and social capital, such as clinics and counselling and the promotion of social cohesion (The SA Presidency 2008, p.6). The training model is part of this development understanding, as tool to develop skills which open access to the labour market and thus long-term socio-economic development (GDS 2003). The creation of job opportunities alone, without concurrent skills development, does not contribute to long-term poverty reduction; it merely provides temporary income and does not acknowledge the time after the project has ended and the job opportunity has been given to another beneficiary. In line with these assumptions, and as discussed above, the EPWP states skills development as one of the main objectives to combat long-term unemployment and to ensure an absorption

into the labour market. The programmes under the environmental sector “include a training component: a) for skills development; b) to enhance exit potential; and c) to promote sustainable practices” (DEA n.d., p.17). It should be noted that according to EPWP objectives, skills are predominantly developed as preparation for a job in the formal economy, rather than as a means to fulfill the tasks set within the specific EPWP programme. Training is seen in connection with exiting the programme “to ensure that workers attain relevant and marketable skills” (DPW 2009, p.4) and should entail among others “[adult] basic education training (ABET); HIV/Aids awareness; (...) Life skills [and] Entrepreneurship” (DPW 2009, p.4). This approach and understanding of a public works initiative in South Africa differs from the way these initiatives are conducted in other countries, which serve as a safety net and a purely relief programme to alleviate acute hunger and poverty and stabilise the situation of the poor (Subbarao 1997, Ravallion 1999, Adato et al. 2005, Kühn 2012, p.9). The South African approach adds the objective of skills development and training and thus expands the core attributes by a development component, which goes beyond crisis relief. Instead of facing a temporary crisis, South Africa faces structural problems, which are addressed in the objectives of the EPWP. During EPWP I it was aimed to create more than 15.5 million person-days of training¹⁰ in all sectors combined. By the end of the fourth year only more than 5 million had been created, making up 32 percent of what had been targeted (DPW 2009, p.102). The Environment and Culture sector had achieved 71 percent (more than 1.4 million) of its 2 million targeted (DPW 2009, p.102). These figures show that while the target of creation of work opportunities was reached ahead of time, the targeted person-days of training were missed.

In EPWP II the focus on job creation as the prioritised objective remains in order “to create 2 million full time equivalent jobs and [to target] 4.9 million work opportunities for the poor and unemployed people so as to contribute to a 50 percent reduction of unemployment by 2014 (...), the Environment and Culture Sector aims to contribute [more than 325.000] full time equivalents and [more than 1.1 million] work opportunities over the five-year period”¹¹ (DEA n.d., p.10, exact numbers given).

¹⁰ “1 training day = at least 7 hours of formal training” (DEA n.d., p.19).

¹¹ “The concept of FTE [full time equivalent] is a new invention aimed at increasing the duration of employment into any EPWP project. FTE therefore refers to one-person year of employment and this is equivalent to 230 person days of work, whereas a work opportunity relates to employment of a person for any duration” (DEA n.d., p.ii).

One can conclude that the South African EPWP is unique in its approach to include skills development as a core pillar to its programme structures to make a connection to future employability. However, numbers suggest that the implementation of this pillar is not promoted enough.

2.5 The connection of skills development within EPWP and future employability

Since training and skills development are regarded as equipping the beneficiaries for future employment the Five-Year-Report (DPW 2009) cites “a longitudinal study in order to evaluate the impact of the EPWP” (DPW 2009, p.68) among 768 beneficiaries of all four sectors from the year 2007. According to this survey “(...) the skills earned were perceived as a very positive step towards long-term employment and poverty alleviation (...)” (DPW 2009, p.70). At this point, during the EPWP I, beneficiaries were allowed to work in an EPWP for a limited period of 24 months within five years, which led researchers to ask the question “(...) whether the time spent on most of these projects was sufficient to develop the necessary skills and opportunities for future employment” (DPW 2009, p.70). Despite the positive connection made by “most of the respondents” between training received and the ability to find other work (DPW 2009, p.70), only 45 percent had exited the programme while “[of] the respondents who were no longer working on EPWP projects, 27 percent were employed, as opposed to 73 percent unemployed. Of the beneficiaries that were employed, 50 percent were employed on a full-time basis, whilst (sic!) 50 percent found themselves in part-time employment” (DPW 2009, p.70). This means that less than one third of those who exited had found another job, while only half of these were full-time jobs.

The connection between training within PWP and future employability is also made by McCrod (2003 and 2005). She identifies the problem of incompatibility of level of skills developed within PWPs and level of skills demanded for an absorption into the formal labour market in the context of NPWPs, as well as later EPWP at the example of WfW, arguing “(...) that the training (supply side) component of the programme is not sufficient to guarantee, or even significantly enhance the labour market performance of former Working for Water participants in the face of mass unemployment” (McCrod 2003, p.32). Two years later she still questions “(...) the assumption of a generalised unmet demand for workers, even for those with the low level skills that may be acquired through EPWP participation. (...), there are no labour market indications that such low skill jobs exist” (McCrod 2005, p.575).

The connection between skills development, employment and environment are addressed in a skills profile in the Environmental Sector Skills Plan (ESSP), which acknowledges environment as a rapidly emerging (economical) sector and highlights that “[environmental] skills planning in South Africa is currently ad hoc, fragmented, and re-active, and is characterised by inefficiency” (DEA 2010c, p.5). Despite a focus on vacancies in the high-skilled environmental sector, the ESSP acknowledges the EPWP training objectives as source for labour and skills supply for the environmental sector and finds that “if this training is carefully developed with attention to quality and output value, this presents a significant opportunity for developing entry level skills for the environmental sector” (DEA 2010c, p.23). The Human Capital Development Strategy (HCDS) for the Environmental Sector (DEA 2010d) in support of the ESSP identifies the emergence of a green economy, which will lead to economic growth and new opportunities in the labour market. According to the HCDS “currently the EGS [Environmental Goods and Services Sector] makes up an approximate R20 billion industry or 7 percent of GDP [Gross Domestic Product] and is estimated to be growing, with potential to triple in size in five years” (DEA 2010d, p.8). New skills such as environmental economics skills and SMME (Small, Medium and Micro-sized Enterprises) development skills are needed (DEA 2010c, p.8). Furthermore, it sees the need to integrate environment into development in order to sustain and develop livelihoods, which requires equipping rural communities with the skills to manage their natural resources sustainably and on a community-based level (DEA 2010c, p.8). In the context of an overall still emerging skills development system in South Africa, strongly challenged by systematic injustices of the past, the HCDS acknowledges that environmental skills as a “(...) ‘new’ focus in the South African education and training system (...)”, requires “for high quality environmental education and training skills, to service environmental skills development in the entire skills development pipeline” (DEA 2010d, p.9).

Up to this point the literature review has shown that as funder of the EPWP the government has identified skills development in general and also in the environmental sector as main driver to overcome long-term unemployment. Green Jobs in the EGS are identified as a growing sector with potential to offer jobs in various fields, such as SMME, demanding for environmental economics skills. These jobs could theoretically be filled by well-trained WfW contractors. However, several studies have shown (McCrod 2003 and 2005), that the training as conducted in the framework of the EPWP I (2004 – 2009), has not yet enhanced the

chances of employment in the formal economy among the beneficiaries due to the mismatch between the level of skills developed and skills demanded.

2.6 The model of Integrated Conservation and Development: Challenges and current debates

The next part of this literature review will give a picture of the state of knowledge of ICD, reviewing its history and depicting current debates. The term ICD is in the literature referred to as theory, as philosophy or as approach. In this thesis the term model is used to describe ICD as a composition of different concepts of interaction between human and nature, and of reaching conservation and social goals concurrently, which give a theoretical picture of empirical case studies. This review will form the basis to understand the application of the ICD model by the WfW programme.

While Garnett et al. (2007) identify the first Integrated Conservation and Development project (ICDP) as the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and government run Luangwa Valley ICDP in Zambia in the mid-1960s (p.1, Child & Dalal-Clayton 2004), Miller et al. (2011) locate the rise of popularity of these projects in the 1990s (p.950). Prior to this, milestones in shaping the ICD model such as the World Conservation Strategy (WCS) in 1980 (IUCN 1980), the World Parks congress in 1982 and the Brundtland Report by the World Commission of Environment and Development (WCED) in 1987 (UN 1987) paved the way for a more integrated understanding and linking of “socially-oriented goals of sustainable development to the traditional nature-centered agenda of biodiversity conservation” (Miller et al. 2011, p.950). For Robinson and Redford (2004) the WCS made the initial and pioneering connection between conservation and sustainable development as “[conservation] was defined as the management of human use of the biosphere so that it may ‘yield the greatest sustainable development to present generations while maintaining its potential to meet the needs and aspirations of future generations’” (p.11). Sustainable development on the other hand is defined in the Brundtland Report as development that “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (UN 1987, p.37).

The original focus of ICDPs is to “[mitigate] the threats to protected areas from the activities of local communities” (McShane & Wells 2004, p.6; Brandon & Wells 1992), for example exploitation by resident communities of resources such as forests and wild life, but also fires and pollution.

Despite the focus on protected areas and local communities the model provides analytical concepts which can be applied to other situations, in which environmental and social goals are aimed for concurrently, for example micro-credit schemes and the conservation of wetlands (Senaratna Sellamuttu et al. 2011) or conservation of Great Apes and ecotourism (Sandbrock & Roe 2010).

The anticipation to create win-win situations for conservation and economic and social development among local communities is central to the idea of ICD (Brundtland Report 1987, Miller et al. 2011, p.950). In the light of the OECD publication ‘Shaping the 21st Century’ (1996) and the issuing of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), following the UN Millennium Summit in 2000, the emphasis of development assistance and thus ICDP funding shifted from sustainable development towards poverty reduction (Roe & Elliott, n.d. p.10). The term ‘conservation-poverty debate’ is used by Roe (2008), who has produced a review of the current topics of the conservation-poverty debate, arguing that three main points are on the agenda: “(1) the activities and accountability of big international conservation NGOs, and their impacts on local communities; (2) the increasingly protectionist focus of conservation policy and the implications for communities resident in and around protected areas, in particular regarding involuntary displacements and evictions; (3) the lack of attention to biodiversity conservation on the development agenda, with the current focus on poverty reduction” (p.491). This summary also refers to the perception of conservationists that the ICD approach has not yielded the expected benefits (Terborgh 1999) for their realm.

Responding to this, Roe (2006) suggests the approach of ‘pro-poor-conservation’, which is based on the principles that successful conservation contributes to the maintaining of ecosystem services for local communities, and the opportunity of turning the act of conservation into a means of income generation (“(...) in forestry, tourism, wildlife trade, traditional medicines (...)”, p.54), adding that “(...) addressing poverty concerns can result in increased support for conservation” (p.54). Robinson (2011, see also Shepherd 2004) uses the term ‘pro-poor-conservation’ from the point of a conservationist and agrees that besides “ethical and moral responsibility to protect and act as stewards for biodiversity” (p.959) and biodiversity being “a cultural non-substitutable (or constitutive) value for people” (p.959), “[another] ethical argument for conserving biodiversity is that people depend on natural resources, and thus through its utilitarian value, biodiversity can directly contribute to the alleviation of global poverty“ (p.960).

Despite this ethical line of argumentation of why conservation and poverty relief should be considered concurrently, Robinson and Redford (2004) identify “inherent contradictions” in the objectives of ICD approaches, which have implications for the practical outcomes of ICDP. They divide ICDPs into three categories, those which promote “species conservation”, “ecosystem functioning” and the inclusive category of “human livelihoods” promotion (p.14). They argue that most ICDPs struggle to identify clear goals, due to different indicators of success relating to different objectives (s. p.15, Table 2.1), questioning the existence of shared or even compatible outcomes.

A similar problem related to that of different stakeholders following different objectives, is that of “institutional misfit” (Brown 2003). Brown confirms “(...) the problem of fit (...) between the institutions involved in integrating conservation and development (in terms of their objectives, interests, and worldviews)” (p.480) and adds that different “(...) scales of operations (...)” lead to difficulties for the “(...) multitude of organisations with different sources of power and legitimacy, all involved in trying to integrate conservation with development. Their objectives, mandates, skills, knowledge, and resources are mobilised differently (...)” (Brown 2003, p.481), due to “(...) very different scales of influence, power, and interest (...)” (Brown 2003, p.483), which lead to an imbalance of influence on the decision-making process. The institutional design thus influences the implementation and the outcome of various objectives (see also Glick & Freese 2004).

In its third issue the journal *Biodiversity Conservation* (2011) undertakes to carry the ICD debate further by introducing the so-called “New Conservation Debate” (NCD). Several aspects characterise the debate. Prominent figures, such as McShane (et al. 2011) and Brown (2004), argue that “[win]-win solutions that both conserve biodiversity and promote human well-being are difficult to realise. Trade-offs and the hard choices they entail are the norm” (McShane et al. 2011, p.966). The initiative *Advancing Conservation in a Social Context* (ACSC) has conducted a four-year research project on trade-off thinking, in order to “provide guidance for the advancement of conservation in a way that takes into consideration the possibility of conflict and contradiction both within conservation, and between conservation and other social goals” (ACSC 2011, p.4) and can be seen in relation to the NCD. Conservation models such as ICD, so they argue, have put pressure on governments and other funders to create win-win situations, which in reality cannot be reached. To acknowledge and

estimate trade-offs is unpopular due to the wide-spread acceptance and expectation of win-win situations. Referring to the “pro-poor-conservation”, McShane et al. (2011) state that “[relieving] poverty through a renewed focus on this link is acknowledged today as the primary goal of many development efforts (...). Win-win approaches to conservation have the appearance of being ethical, efficient, and highly marketable” (p.967). However, the outcome for both, conservation as well as human well-being, remains questionable: on the one hand critiques argue that economic benefits have not been spread wide enough among different levels of power, have been too slow, or disrupted existing strategies (McShane et al. 2011, p. 967, see also Wells et al. 2001); on the other hand ecological soundness of projects has been questioned, initiatives in buffer areas turned into migration magnets and external factors impacting the conservation process but not relating to the behavior of local communities have been left unconsidered (McShane et al. 2011, p. 967). A shift from win-win proclamation towards trade-off thinking would not only advertise the gains but acknowledge these losses and thus paint a more realistic picture instead of raising expectations and creating pressure (McShane et al. 2011, p.968).

Another aspect in the NCD is the distinction between nature protectionists and social conservationists made by Miller et al. (2011, p.948). Nature protectionists are those “who defend protected areas and conservation policies that strictly limit human presence and who advance biodiversity protection as the primary goal of international conservation efforts”, whereas social conservationists are those “who advocate various forms of sustainable use and privilege conservation-oriented development and welfare-oriented goals such as poverty alleviation and social justice” (both Miller et al. 2011, p.948). Miller et al. (2011) draw attention to the different beliefs, ethics and value systems, which should be articulated among conservationists in order to communicate efficiently. This relates to the arguments made earlier by Brown (2003) and Robinson and Redford (2004) who focus on the interplay and resulting challenges of world views and objectives of different stake holders in ICD. Minter and Miller (2011) argue that “we should adopt a more sophisticated and nuanced understanding of the values and goods that must be weighed and traded off in real-world conservation projects” (p.946). Thus, the NCD should be seen as a debate which promotes honest and open acknowledging of trade-offs and the promotion of awareness to evaluate which outcomes can be traded-off for others. Another response to the concerns about the effectiveness of ICD is the capital asset framework elaborated on by Garnett et al. (2007). They distinguish natural, human, social and built capital (p.3) and argue that “ICDPs have to

be based upon an understanding of the states and trends of the capital assets of the concerned populations, and that interventions should be made in ways that lead to balanced and sustainable improvements in the capital assets framework” (p.4). The promotion of trade-off thinking in the NCD links directly to this creation of balance in capital assets.

In the context of skills development in the WfW programme this literature points to the pressure the programme experiences to create win-win outcomes for on the one hand IAP control and on the other hand poverty reduction and skills development. The multi-objective approach inherent in the ICD model exposes the programme to the challenge of balancing the objectives of conservation, job creation and skills development, which will be elaborated on in the next section.

2.7 The EPWP: An application of Integrated Conservation and Development

The connection between the ICD model and environmental EPWP policy emerges through the transferal of theoretical concepts of the interplay between nature and human and its consequences, to the practical level of the implementation of collaboration strategies: the EPWP policy aims to translate the ICD model into practice. The EPWP adopts the approach of cross-cutting multiple objectives, specifically the environmental EPWP promotes conservation goals and social development goals.

The problem of a clear objectives matrix and implementation template as it exists in ICD models is noted by Sanjayan et al. (1997) and can also be traced to the environmental EPWP: “[ICD] is not conservation *through* development, or conservation *with* development, or even conservation *adjoined* with development (...) [It] is the achievement of conservation goals and development needs together” (p.10). When closely studying the Environment and Culture Sector Plan (DEA n.d.), however, it becomes clear that there is no such clear line drawn in the aims and objectives of the environmental EPWP. Comparing the two following quotes of the EPWP documentation will back this claim: The sector’s aim is to create a bridge between the second and first economy by providing access to work opportunities and resources “(...) and *to do so by* [emphasis added] generating useful outputs and positive outcomes in the areas of environment, heritage (including tourism development) and biodiversity” (DEA n.d., p.5). Following this use of language, the generation of environmental outputs and outcomes is regarded as a means of implementation to create work opportunities, which would suggest that the environmental EPWP is development *through* conservation. At another point in the

same publication it is stated to “achieve the immediate social benefits of the overall Expanded Public Works Programme, *while at the same time* (emphasis added) generating sustainable outputs in the fields of environment, tourism, heritage, biodiversity and land care“ (DEA n.d., p.11). This use of language suggests that the environmental EPWP follows Sanjayan’s et al. (1997) claim of achieving conservation goals and development needs *together*.

The EPWP does not only implement the multiple-objectives approach but also the win-win rhetoric, which suggests the achieving of all these multiple objectives without accounting for possible trade-offs. As in the ICD model, also in EPWP policy different stakeholders have their say in how to achieve these win-win situations, following different priorities and objectives. As will become clear in the course of this study, the day-to-day work in an environmental EPWP demands for the acknowledgement of trade-offs and the making of hard choices, as it is promoted in the NCD.

2.8 Conclusion

This literature review explained how skills, geographic location and number of entrants into the labour market on the supply side meet an insufficient absorption of the latter on the demand side, resulting in a mismatch and structural unemployment in South Africa. The EPWP tries to combat unemployment and to draw previously disadvantaged citizens out of poverty by providing work opportunities. The environment and culture sector adds the objective of nature conservation to the cross-cutting objective of job creation. Furthermore, EPWP policy formulation stresses the importance of skills development. Training is regarded to be a preparation to enter the formal labour market. However, the literature review shows that up to now subsequent employability of previous EPWP beneficiaries has been unsuccessful due to a mismatch in skills developed and skills demanded. Different initiatives such as the ESSP and the HCDS seek to address this problem.

The model of ICD was introduced as an approach to concurrently promote environmental and social goals. The NCD illustrated how win-win rhetoric puts unproductive pressure on ICD projects and how trade-off thinking and negotiating can lead to more efficient structures of conduct. The EPWP is an application of the ICD model, translating it into practice by adopting its multi-objectives approach, here: conservation, job creation and skills development.

CHAPTER 3

The South African context of Integrated Conservation and Development on the governmental level

The following chapter will provide the analysis of the contexts in which ICD is applied on the governmental level in South Africa. It will be shown how historical, current and institutional circumstances shape the implementation of ICD. What implications does this have for the skills development in an environmental EPWP? The motivation, why the government decided for an ICD approach to control IAPs in the first place will be addressed, too. As WfW official 1 argues “(...) doing this programme through job creation is most probably the most difficult way of doing it. But then again, I think that’s what *sold* it right in the beginning”, while WfW official 2 agrees: “If it was only about clearing aliens the government could have given the job to highly trained people.”

3.1 The historical context

If this is the case, what could have motivated the government to integrate conservation and development? The WfW programme was initiated in the year 1995, during the years of the political transition of the country. Reconciliation of past injustices and the inclusion of previously marginalised groups of society were main targets of the new government. The creation of job opportunities, followed by the reduction of poverty is one means to reach social participation and social justice. Despite this general aim of sector-crossing EPWP, the environmental EPWP aims to address the problem of injustice in yet another field, which historically has influenced South African society. The idea of environmental racism and environmental justice is not exclusive to the South African society (Khan 2002); however, colonial and apartheid regimes created a conservation ideology centering on wildlife protection, which was promoted by the privileged white minority, and which excluded and disadvantaged the black majority on various levels (Khan 2002). Khan sees the early decades of the twentieth century as the beginning of black exclusion from the environmental sector through the white minority, who regarded black Africans as “environmentally destructive” (Khan 2002, p.19). During the period from 1948 to 1989, apartheid policies led to further alienation of the black majority from nature and promoted the image of conservation as an elitist concern. Environmentally desirable areas were declared ‘whites only’, as were parks and trails for recreational activities, while the majority of the black population was evicted from their ancestral land and re-located to overcrowded townships, which were prone to pollution due to a lack of facilities and services, and had matters of livelihoods on their daily

agenda rather than nature conservation (Khan 2002, pp.21). “At best, the environment was seen to be a white, suburban issue of little relevance to the anti-apartheid struggle. At worst, environmental policy was seen as an explicit tool of racially based oppression” (McDonald 2002, p.1). This environmental racism was met by the environmental justice movement, which has its roots in the United States of America, and reached South Africa in the early-nineties. The African National Congress (ANC) as elected governing party supported the movement and “made it clear that social, economic, and political relations were also part of the environmental equation and those environmental inequalities and injustices would be addressed as an integral part of the party’s post-apartheid reconstruction and development mandate” (McDonald 2002, p.2, ANC 1994, 1.2.4). Job creation through PWPs (ANC 1994, 7.6.1), as well as environment as ‘basic need’ (ANC 1994, 1.4.3) is mentioned in the RDP.

While the government included environmental concerns in their agenda, this does not automatically ensure support for environmental goals in society. Additionally, in the case of WfW’s objective to control IAPs the conservation goal is not readily accessible for the general public, since impacts are of long-term nature and the control itself is contested in cases where recreational and aesthetic values of the IAPs are held against its negative impact on biodiversity or water resources. A programme with the sole aim of controlling IAPs would most likely not have generated support among the public, due to an alienation from nature of the black population during the apartheid period and more pressing matters on the agenda of the transition period. To combine conservation with a topic of greatest concern in society, job creation and thus poverty alleviation, appears to be the way forward: “*Direct links work best* in gaining support for conservation. Direct employment generated through conservation activities provides the clearest link to conservation objectives” (Brandon & O’Herron 2004, p.170). Thus, conservation does not reflect objectives of a white minority elite but moves to the heart of the society as they take advantage of conservation efforts in form of job creation, skills development and finally economic development.

The aim to restore environmental justice included generating direct positive outcomes of conservation for the black population, while they had experienced eviction and exclusion during past years; compensation is paid years later and through the provision of work opportunities and the chance to receive training and develop skills to compensate for the lack of educational justice in the past. Conservation in the context of the environmental EPWP and thus on an ICD level is a way to reallocate power and resources and can thus be seen as a way

of reconciliation. Conservation efforts have shifted from being wildlife-centred to being people-centred in the context of EPWP. Instead of the creation of work opportunities which focus on the achievements of the work done in field, for example clearing of as many IAPs infested hectares as possible, which only last until the specific project is terminated and lead back into poverty, the promotion of skills development as means to overcome poverty long-term, would mean true compensation for past injustices.

3.2 The current context

Despite the apartheid system ending almost two decades ago, many problems have persisted, among them one of the largest concerns for today's society: job creation. The approach to actively link conservation with job creation therefore has not lost its relevance. What Khan (2002) notes eleven years ago can still be applied today: "It is still a country in which development and conservation are viewed by many historically disadvantaged communities as two diametrically opposed options because a history of black alienation from environmental issues, together with a legacy of underdevelopment, has made this almost inevitable" (p.42). The conduct of IAP control at this large scale as single objective is not realistic, neither has a way been found to provide sufficient work opportunities in another way or to create sufficient full-time jobs in the formal economy. The focus of the WfW programme to create job opportunities has been confirmed in the majority of the interviews conducted among WfW officials. Creation of work opportunities leads to days worked in field, and thus days of clearing IAPs. After exceeding the goals set for EPWP I by far, the goals for EPWP II are even higher at a set target of an increase in work opportunities of almost six times as many as targeted in phase I, and 2.5 times as many as actually achieved in phase I (DEA n.d., pp.9).

The lack of skills among large parts of society has been acknowledged in several studies (DEA 2010c, DHET 2010). However, the direct creation of work opportunities and the direct relief of poverty are still regarded as main objective: they bring direct and palpable change for poor households, compared to the speculative improvement skills development might bring in the future. With many households in South Africa still being considered poor¹², the number of work opportunities created, translating into meals on the table is of great value for governments facing election cycles. Short-term goals, such as job-creation, are more easily achieved and can be sold more readily to the public, compared to long-term goals, such as

¹² A Stats SA Living Condition Survey found that between 2008 and 2009 26,3 percent of South Africans were living below the poverty line (R305 available for food per person per month), 38.9 percent below the lower-bound poverty line (R416) and 52.3 percent below the upper-bound poverty line (R577) (Stats SA 2012, p.5).

skills development, which yet have to prove their value and might fall into the term of a different government. This thinking by the government is closely linked to what WfW official 3 identifies as ‘dependency thinking’ among the South African society:

“And if the government – there is a dependency idea that the *government* gives us grants when we have children, the *government* gives us jobs, the *government* must give us houses and there is this raised expectation in our country, it’s not only the programme, the *country* has this expectation that the government will supply and there is this approach ‘Whatever we require, the government will... so if we don’t get it we strike and we toi-toi.’ The *government* must give the house, the RDP house, the *government* must give me my job and the *government* must give me my wages, the grants.” (WfW official 3)

By promoting social protection through EPWP, the expectations by parts of the public are attempted to be met by the government, which aims to be re-elected in the 2014 general elections. Even if long-term plans, such as skills development, will yield more benefits in the long-run, direct results are needed to satisfy the voters’ expectations. For the conduct of ICD this means that development is being neglected, while conservation is being promoted; not necessarily to promote the actual conservation goals, but rather as tool to achieve a set target of jobs created. The statements made in EPWP policy documentation, stressing the importance of skills development for future absorption into the labour market and thus long-term development and including the observation of Adato et al. (2005) that “[the] South African programs are unusual in that they envisioned long-term poverty alleviation – rather than a short term horizon most often held by public works and other safety-net programs – by attempting to generate skills that enhanced people’s ability to secure employment after the project has ended” (p.2), suggest that the government’s plans have experienced a shift in focus while being translated from theory into practice.

In addition to the domestic pressure to create jobs, the South African government has committed to the MDGs, which demand for halving hunger and extreme poverty. This internationally closely monitored commitment will be judged as soon as 2015. The commitment to achieve the MDGs thus favours an ICD approach, and within this the focus on job creation as means to reduce hunger.

3.3 The institutional context

Besides historical and current societal contexts influencing the implementation of ICD on the governmental level, there are also institutional contexts to be considered. A governmental

programme has the advantage of providing a rather stable framework backed by legislation, secure funding and experience in institution building, which is based on overarching institutional structures and procedures monitored and supported by a powerful and resourceful public body. The background of such a programme allows for project implementation on a large scale, supported by existing administrative structures. However, the size of the EPWP leads to a filtering process of objectives and guidelines, or put differently: what is expected by the EPWP does not necessarily comply with each programme's and project's reality and thus is individually adjusted respectively. The institutional structure of this filtering process looks as follows: there are four sectors of the EPWP which belongs to the Department of Public Works (DPW); the environmental EPWP is aligned to the Departments of Environmental Affairs (DEA), Water Affairs (DWA), Arts and Culture (DAC) and Tourism (NDT) and consists of eight larger and several smaller programmes; the WfW programme belongs to the DEA's environmental programmes and currently contains 300 projects nation-wide, 19 in the Western Cape.

The overarching principles and implementation models applicable for all programmes are set by the DPW. WfW official 4 identifies that at this very first point of the supply chain problems occur:

“(...) unfortunately EPWP has a very infrastructure kind of driven mind-set – building of roads all those kind of things. So, the environmental sector gets a bit of a raw deal, when they start strategising around what's actually happening with our massification of employment; what's the trends we're seeing... (...) But you still find that whenever they put together a policy or guideline kind of document it's predicated almost by an infrastructure kind of mind-set in the way work happens.” (WfW official 4)

While the environmental EPWP has stated several objectives and guidelines for the conduct and outcomes of the programmes, each programme adjusts these and adds its own objectives and guidelines for its specific circumstances. These programme objectives, in this case WfW's objectives, are meant to apply for each project in each province. However, each province then again adjusts the objectives and guidelines to their given circumstances, which are further implemented by different implementing agents in different projects. The general idea remains the same throughout the process: job creation and conservation. However, the objective of skills development, as described in the EPWP, experiences changes in its structure, implementation and intention while going through the filtering process, from the

umbrella EPWP to the training received by beneficiaries in Citrusdal.¹³ Some examples concerning the training and skills development will clarify the argument. The training strategy (WfW 2010), which was developed by the training manager for the Western Cape, in order to introduce major changes in intention, structure and implementation and is to serve as a basis for further training has been developed for the Western Cape only. Despite the urge by the national office to follow a common strategy, WfW officials are sceptical and believe that each province has their own strategy of implementing the training, leading to different outcomes.

Another example is the target that “beneficiaries should undergo at least two days of training out of every 22 days spent in employment” (DPW 2009, p.77) In the Citrusdal-reality training usually is conducted during the winter months June and July when the teams cannot go into field due to rain fall and subsequent dangerous working conditions. This strategy is reported to be the usual in WfW, since implementing agents and project managers do not want to miss out on time and man power which can be utilised clearing infested areas by taking valuable beneficiaries out of field and send them to training courses. Furthermore, the turnover of beneficiaries is high during the harvesting season between May and October, when beneficiaries, especially women, leave the project to work on citrus farms. Contractors, who are officially responsible for the selection of beneficiaries to be sent to training courses, in some cases limit the selection to beneficiaries who have worked in their team for at least one year. These circumstances – conducting training predominantly during winter, high turnover during harvesting season and contractor specific selection criteria – influence the chances of receiving training. The target of two days training per beneficiary per 22 days of employment is described by WfW official 2: “We are never going to reach this.”

These examples show that programme policies defined to apply at such large scale, adjust to reality and lose in strength of their objectives. While the approach of single autonomous projects implemented without a programme umbrella creates the problem of lack of power and resources, it is debatable whether the umbrella approach of the EPWP can be translated successfully into project realities.

In the light of the ICD model this filtering process describes a support for the conservation while neglecting the development component. The focus on operations is described by all

¹³ A more detailed elaboration on these changes will be undertaken in Chapter 4.3 Objectives of the Training Model: Contested Understandings.

interview partners: “So currently we would say that operations *are* focus because people need to get *in* field. We want to have the teams working”, “Training is the stepchild of operations”, and “There is a hierarchy: first operations, then training”, “The stress is on clearance of land. Operations are always put first; the training is neglected. This attitude is carried over to the teams. The contractors think this way; they don’t care about who goes to the training.” The explanation by the WfW officials for this tendency links to the main EPWP objective of job creation. When beneficiaries are in field, they work, person-days of employment¹⁴ are created, so the common understanding. However, this argument loses its weight when one considers that person-days of training are also counted as person-days of employment and thus contribute to achieving EPWP’s targets in full-time equivalents. A more palpable however only partial explanation is the monetary incentive by implementing agents; meaning that exceeding the targeted hectares to be cleared will be rewarded by a production bonus in form of a month’s salary for the office staff: “So the focus is on delivering production.” (WfW official 2).

These scenarios apply to the internal processes of a project. However, the nature of EPWP additionally challenges development and in this case likewise conservation in a different way. Since the EPWP is publicly funded through money generated through taxes, the benefit of the programme has to be spread as wide as possible. This influences the duration of a project and thus has repercussions on development of beneficiaries and control of IAPs:

“I mean the Working for Water’s money cannot just give the benefit of clearing to *one* community only. You need to, because there might be a community right next to it, that’s also in need of... whether it’s the clearing or the poverty alleviation. So, Working for Water will have to move on.” (WfW official 1)

This challenges long-term conservation success. Since an interrupted clearing process can result in even stronger infestation due to re-growth of seeds; areas have to be maintained for up to 30 years in order to successfully conclude the control of IAPs. For the job creation component this means, that one day these jobs will no longer exist for WfW beneficiaries in Citrusdal. This project has existed since the year 2000 and estimations by WfW officials of how much longer it will remain range from one to five years. Having this institutional condition in mind, skills development through training gains even more importance, since the

¹⁴ “The number of people who worked on a project x the number of days each person worked” (DEA n.d., p.19).

jobs created by WfW are decidedly of temporary nature. Without the development of relevant skills beneficiaries will relapse into poverty as soon as the programme moves to the next town.

3.4 Conclusion

ICD implemented by a government body and on a national scale may appear balanced in policy formulation; however, it is influenced by various historical, current and institutional circumstances: firstly, the variety of stakeholders involved will in a filter process influence the outcomes not necessarily in line with programme objectives. Secondly, the alienation of the black population from environmental matters during the apartheid period makes it necessary to combine the goal of IAP control with a topic of higher urgency for the public such as job creation. The pressure to create jobs for the masses constantly is on top of the agenda for South Africa's government. Direct positive outcomes such as money in the beneficiaries' hands generate more support for the programme than indirect positive outcomes such as skills development which will only materialise in an uncertain future.

While policy formulation acknowledges the importance of skills development the relation between government and public demands for direct and fast poverty relief in form of work opportunities. This favours conservation and goes at the expense of skills development.

CHAPTER 4

The training model of the Working for Water programme

This chapter will provide an overview of the training model within WfW structures. The model will be described as it exists in theory; afterwards empirical findings will be analysed to show how the model is applied in practice and what impacts these differences have on the outcomes of the training and skills development in WfW. The aim of this part of the thesis is to analyse how skills development is conducted in WfW and whether it contributes to the enhancement of the beneficiaries' employability.

The training model is understood as the framework in which skills development is being conducted. Its structure, its implementation, its hierarchical position in the daily working processes and its understanding by WfW officials are of concern for the analysis. To understand the training model it is necessary to first understand the structures in which WfW teams operate in more detail than given in the introduction.

4.1 How Working for Water teams operate

One team ideally consists of eleven beneficiaries and one contractor. The contractor tenders for contracts with the implementing agent to clear a certain amount of hectares in a certain amount of time. Usually one contract, one block of work, comprises 21 working days. If a team cannot work, the common reason being rain, the days missed will be made up for later. Therefore, one block might consist of 21 paid working days, but be fulfilled in a time period of 25 or 30 days. After the completion of the work in field, a quality control is undertaken by the implementing agent. The contractor then submits documentation such as time sheets and invoices to the implementing agent, who handles the processing. If several teams finish their block at the same time, the quality control may be delayed; if documentation is incomplete this will cause further delays. The process between finishing a block and the receiving of money by the contractor can take up to one month. The contractor then has to pay the beneficiaries within five working days. The team may have started working a new block, without having received their wages yet. Wages are paid according to job category. The minimum wage is R80,00 per day for a general worker. A chainsaw operator can earn approximately R105,00. The contractor has to pay the minimum wage and may give more. The majority of beneficiaries work as general workers, given the nature of work that has to be done. It is, however, compulsory to have a health and safety representative and a first aider in the team.

To become a WfW beneficiary one has to be selected by a contractor to be on their team. One condition is to be unemployed before joining the team and only one person per household may work at WfW. Furthermore, the aim is to “target the poorest of the poor” (WfW 2004, p.5), and to employ 60 percent women, 40 percent youth and 2 percent persons with disability. On this note, the next step will be to describe how in theory training is conducted within WfW.

4.2 The theoretical training model within the Working for Water structure

The training model in WfW is not documented in detail; there is no written up strategic plan containing regulations or guidelines for processes and structures; the only such thing which conceptualises the training in basic terms is the training matrix (WfW 2012a). Therefore, most of the knowledge generated on the way training is conducted in WfW results from interviews with the WfW officials. The structures described in this chapter apply for the beneficiaries; the contractor training is elaborated on in Chapter 5.4.1.

The national training matrix provides information about the minimum training for beneficiaries and contractors with regard to course names, point in time when the course should be attended to, accreditation status, unit standard ID, National Qualification Framework (NQF) level, credits, course duration and job category (WfW 2012). Courses are divided in the categories functional, health and safety, social development interventions and contractor development. Despite several courses specific for special working conditions such as boat operators or aquatic weed plant identification, there is a set of standard courses which are offered each year and for each team: chainsaw operator, brush-cutter operator, herbicide applicator, health and safety representative and first aider. Furthermore, the social development (SD) interventions in the Western Cape focus on HIV/AIDS and TB awareness and substance abuse. SD interventions are held at least twice a year, attended by beneficiaries and contractors. “The SD programme is comprised of [sic] four key themes: Transitional employment; Health and wellbeing; Personal financial management and Institutional structures” (Wessels-Ziervogel 2013, p.8), with the objective of promoting the beneficiaries’ overall wellbeing and to create a working environment in which development can occur (Wessels-Ziervogel 2013, p.11). SD and training used to be managed by one WfW official. However, in 2012 each task was assigned to an individual manager, in order to strengthen the profile of SD interventions and leave enough space to develop both programmes further.

Despite its institutional distinction, an integrated approach remains to develop the beneficiaries' skills in both spheres. Even though the focus of this thesis lies on the training model and thus only secondarily on the SD interventions, it is important to note that “without the combined effort of the different programmes within the WfW programme, the outcomes and impact will not be achieved” (Wessels-Ziervogel 2013, p.8).

Despite SD interventions and the five standard courses, the training matrix plans an induction and a plant identification course, to be attended by each beneficiary before they work in field. The duration for the courses overall varies between ten days for a chainsaw operator course, three days for a herbicide applicator course and one day for plant identification. After the successful participation in practical and theoretical exams, the beneficiary is awarded a certificate. A refresher course for functional courses has to be completed within six to twelve months in order to renew the awarded certificate; if the training is missed the certificate will expire. There are different levels of training courses. A beneficiary who, for example, has completed level one of the first aid course should ideally attend level two before his first certificate expires.

The training is facilitated by service providers, which are appointed by the implementing agent and monitored by the training manager. Each beneficiary who attends the training course gets paid her/his daily wage and is provided with food worth R40,00. The payment of the training courses, such as wage of the instructor or training materials, is provided by the WfW programme, the contractor does not pay the training with her/his own money. The contractor receives the money from WfW and has to hand the training wage to the beneficiaries, just as she/he would have given them the wage for work in field.

It should be noted that the training is not undergone by the team as a unit but by individual beneficiaries. In an annual plan of operations the project manager and the contractor define which training courses are needed in the next financial year starting in April, for example asses how many chainsaw operators have left within the last year and estimate how many will most likely leave in the near future and will have to be replaced. In the annual plan of operations the dates for the training courses are laid down. As mentioned earlier, most of the training is conducted during the winter months. When the time for training has come, the contractor appoints beneficiaries to attend the training. The responsibility lies with the

contractor completely, assuming that she/he will know their team and send the adequate person. There is no gender, youth, or disability compliance in this selection process.

The structures described in this chapter reveal, that there is the room for skills development in the WfW training model. In addition to earning cash income and thus increasing their financial capital, beneficiaries get the chance to attend a training course, to receive a certificate and to increase their knowledge in a specific field by attending higher levels of a specific course and thus increase their educational capital. As Rosa and Posel (2007) argue “perhaps the most pervasive skill absent among the unemployed is their lack of previous work experience” (p.2). As shown above, WfW gives untrained and un-experienced beneficiaries the opportunity to gain work experience, attend a training course and receive a certificate. However, the following chapters will reveal weaknesses in this concept and show under which impacts the objective of skills development loses strength.

4.3 Objectives of the training model: Contested understandings

In order to conduct training effectively it is necessary to define its purpose: why is there training, what does the training aim for, what are its objectives? Training in the WfW programme is mainly in the responsibility of the training manager and her/his training officers. However, other WfW officials can influence the training when their realms intersect in day to day work. Before analysing and comparing their understandings and perceptions of the training in WfW, a comparison of the formulation of relevant objectives in policy and internal documents will be conducted.

To remind the reader, the environmental EPWP follows the cross-sectoral EPWP in its objective to alleviate poverty by “creating productive employment opportunities and by enhancing the ability of workers to earn an income after they leave the programme, either in the labour market or through entrepreneurial or cooperative income-generating activities” (DEA n.d., p.8). Skills development is meant to “increase capacity of participants to earn an income after exiting” (DEA n.d., p.3). Training and skills development are clearly linked to the beneficiaries’ exiting of the programme into formal or self-employment. The WfW Strategic Plan (WfW 2004) states to comply with the objectives of poverty reduction and employment creation, and to additionally “(...) monitor the impacts against its own six goals (ecological, hydrological, agricultural, institutional development, economic development and social-economic empowerment)” (WfW 2004, p.14). The aim of training and skills

development is not clearly stated in the WfW Strategic Plan. However, it is aligned with the “[economic] rationale” (WfW 2004, p.5), which states that the training of people is one component among others to derive economic benefits (WfW 2004, p.5); under the goal of socio-economic empowerment training is listed as an outcome to enhance the beneficiaries’ quality of life (WfW 2004, p. 8). Furthermore, it is listed under the Key Focus Area 2 “[to] contribute to social and economic empowerment of all beneficiaries in order to create sustainable livelihoods” (WfW 2004, p.9), by empowering contractors and workers through training, and to train “beneficiaries who can be placed in the first economy” (WfW 2004, p.13). Despite a lack of a distinct statement of the objective of training, the WfW Strategic Plan goes in hand with the EPWP’s objective to train beneficiaries and to develop their skills in order for them to exit the programme and be employed outside of the EPWP and WfW. This objective is confirmed in the Western Cape Training Strategy (WfW 2010), stating its long-term mission: “[to] implement a training strategy that will focus on interventions that will put our beneficiaries on a learning path to equip them to increase their employability outside of WfW and not just with functional training to perform their daily task” (WfW 2010, p. 3).

This comparison of policy and internal documents shows that on paper there is a common understanding of the goal of the training conducted in WfW: train to exit. In the context of the ICD model, this means that training is conducted primarily to promote the future employability and thus the economic development of the beneficiary.

SD is not explicitly mentioned either in EPWP policy documents or in the Western Cape Training Strategy. The WfW Strategic Plan mentions SD as part of the rationale to promote socio-economic empowerment of the beneficiaries and the creation of sustainable livelihoods (2004, p.7, p.9).

However, this common understanding about training objectives was not confirmed to be translated into practice. It appears that WfW officials are aware of the theoretical objective of “train to exit”, as WfW official 3 summarises:

“But the idea would be for a person to enter, get the skills and the knowledge and the know-how and then benefit the community by being able to apply that outside of Working for Water, allowing another entry level person to enter the programme.” (WfW official 3)

However, in day- to-day work this objective has adapted to programme realities. WfW official 3 describes the main purpose of skills development in the programme:

“So the skills first and foremost, to be very selfish is to equip them to do the Working for Water clearing operations, ... that is the main focus, first and foremost. In addition to that, [it] was seen as the nice-to-haves.” (WfW official 3)

This practice is confirmed by WfW official 5, who said:

“WfW wants to clear trees and create employment. And the development part, it’s fading. This is the impression I get, otherwise they would have started ten years ago. If they are equipped to do the job, they don’t care what happens after they have left the programme”,

adding that

“[people] only do functional training. People don’t get other jobs, even if they get trained. They get the training course to work for WfW, but there is no thought about whether the beneficiaries can use it later.” (WfW official 5).

Differing from theoretical objectives, these reality-based observations reveal that training up till now has not prioritised development but focused on the present needs of the programme to fulfill its objective of IAP control.

Furthermore, this observation is closely linked to the hierarchical position of training within day-to-day work’s priorities, which will be elaborated on in the following section.

4.3.1 Training as the ‘stepchild’ and ‘nice-to-have’

The analysis of the semi-structured interviews with WfW officials has revealed a pattern of terms which are used to describe the training within WfW. The interviews have shown that implementing agents and project managers do in most cases comply with the regulations of minimum training as outlined in the training matrix. However, the selection of suitable beneficiaries (see 5.2), the temporal placement of training courses, the fact that trainings are not attended to and qualifications lost, link to the understanding of training as a ‘nice-to-have’. The following abstracts from two interviews will serve as examples:

“So it has always been low paying jobs, but the *added benefit* [emphasis added] would be the training and social development component where you widen and broaden a person’s perspective and the scope of possible alternatives in the area, where they have at least been

empowered enough and receive *some* form of certificate and skill to think differently and apply their skill in a higher paying job.” (WfW official 3)

“So currently we would say that operations *are* focus because people need to get *in* field. We want to have the teams working. You develop and up-skill a person who has employment and for us to do our best we need to have consistency of work. So there is a *very* big focus on operations. The programme is focused on job creation with a *spin-off* [emphasis added] being the training and social development component. It’s not a fifty-fifty approach. We would all lie if we say it was fifty-fifty” (WfW official 3)

“*All* the theory would tell you they are equal, all the theory would tell you that the programme has the dual purpose, and the dual focus and the dual objectives, which by our day to day dealings, we don’t see it as balanced. We still see that training and social development is the *stepchild* [emphasis added] of operations and we do feel that the main driver is still focused on employment, which is important. We can’t do development and we can’t up-skill people who are not employed.” (WfW official 3)

The assumption of training and skills development being an added benefit to the daily job is sourced in the argument that “[you] won’t just have training and social development interventions if there is no employment. So the other way around will never happen” (WfW official 3). To carry this thought further: there will only be employment if there is conservation. Following this argument, training depends on the existence of a conservation agenda, which means that the socio-economic development of the beneficiaries depends on conservation. Drawing a connection to the ICD model, one could argue that conservation is used as a tool to create jobs (short-term economic-development), which is used as a tool to develop future employability (long-term development); the development component is dependent on the conservation component. This also becomes clear in the following statement, which suggests that the training the beneficiaries could benefit the most from is only considered as an add-on:

“And they [the implementing agents] comply as far as functional training is concerned. All of them won’t think further than that. You will get your implementing agent like (...) as I said, what about doing some computer training *if we have money left* [emphasis added], because people will really benefit from it. Others won’t even think about it. If they did what they planned for – finished. If there is money left, they use it for operations” (WfW official 5).

It has been shown that training in the WfW programme is not prioritised as a programme inherent development tool but regarded as additional benefit to the job opportunities which are created. The creation of job opportunities is the basis for any further action. The

understanding of being a programme that creates job opportunities favours the conservation objectives of the programme, since every day spent working in field equals a day of clearing IAPs, while a day of training equals a day less in field and less IAPs cleared. The fact that person-training days are counted by the EPWP equally to person-working days could make the promotion of training easier. However, in the programme reality beneficiaries are only employed for approximately twenty days per block. After this a new block has to be tendered for. This uncertainty about a beneficiary's duration in the programme bundles capacities among the WfW staff to focus on the creation of jobs, as a means to keep the beneficiary in the programme, as stated by WfW official 3 earlier: "We can't do development and we can't up-skill people who are not employed."

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter familiarised the reader with the training model as an analytical tool. The training matrix forms the compliance pattern along which operational and social development training courses are organised in frequency and point in time. It was shown that the training matrix provides structures in which skills development is possible. However, it revealed that the training matrix does not give guidance on the purpose and anticipated outcomes of the training. This lack of an agreed-on training vision results in differing interpretations by different stakeholders. The policy formulation to link training and future employability is not embraced by all WfW officials. In practice the training is perceived as a means to equip the beneficiaries to do their job; the developmental component is neglected and seen as 'nice-to-have'. Thus, training is not conducted with the aim to see beneficiaries exiting into the formal economy, leaving them to return to poverty as soon as the programme moves on.

CHAPTER 5

The practice of the Working for Water training model

This chapter will focus on the consequences for training implementation and beneficiaries which arise through the above described understanding and perception of training in theory and by WfW officials. It will be analysed where WfW actively promotes developmental concepts in its programme structure. First the practice of selecting beneficiaries to join the programme and to attend training courses will be analysed.

5.1 Selection of beneficiaries I: Who participates in the programme?

To understand who participates in the training courses it is necessary to understand who participates in the programme. Who are the beneficiaries? As described earlier, a WfW beneficiary has to be unemployed prior to entering the programme, only one person per household may be employed as WfW beneficiary, it is targeted to reach the poorest of the poor and to employ 60 percent women, 40 percent youth and 2 percent persons with disability. At the end of July 2013 154 beneficiaries were employed in Citrusdal projects, while 27 percent were women, 55 percent youth and 12 percent disabled (WfW 2013b). The contractor is responsible to recruit her/his team. It is believed that the contractor as members of the community will have a good understanding of whom to employ. Only one WfW official draws attention to the databases provided by the Department of Labour, which offers a record by gender, age and ability status of registered unemployed people in the area. Contractors are encouraged to make use of this data base to comply with equity standards and enable a fair and unbiased employment process. However, field work in Citrusdal revealed that the strategy of recruiting new beneficiaries is in fact less structured in that contractors spread the word about vacancies in a word-of-mouth manner within the community or display posters in public places such as supermarkets. While in the past often the first one to call would get the job, the selection criteria today focus first of all on the applicant's health status and capacity to work efficiently; new beneficiaries have to give the impression to be productive in field. Furthermore, the economic situation of the household is taken into consideration and preferably those are employed who live in households in which no other person has employment. Women are also targeted to be employed on the teams.

To paint a more detailed picture of the profile of beneficiaries employed in WfW contracting teams WfW official 3 describes two scenarios. On the one hand there is the positive profile of beneficiaries with developmental motives entering the programme:

“From the start it was for a majority of young people exiting school, it was a first entry level job where they could up-skill themselves with a couple of certificates, earn income and then move on. So for me the focus originally was seen for most that it was a stepping stone to get a job, income, and some form of qualifications, whether you’re a chainsaw operator now go and work with the municipality or whether you are trained in home-based care and you can now go and work at an old age home, and... ja it’s a stepping stone.” (WfW official 3)

On the other hand there is the very real picture of existential desperation, as WfW official 3 explains further.

“A lot of entries into the programme would be financially driven out of desperation for an income and not finding any form of other income in the area. I think the majority of people, we could say, enter the programme not only because they love nature but they would know a contractor, or they would be known in the area for not having an income and they would be recruited for that purpose. I think that is the... a lesser amount of people would see that this is a road to improve myself and work myself up (...).” (WfW official 3)

Ideally it should be a programme to gain work experience which should be used as stepping stone into other employment. In reality many beneficiaries are desperate for an income and are unable to find other employment in the area they live in.

To be unemployed is a condition to be accepted into the programme. There are, however, no formal entry requirements such as educational level or literacy and numeracy level, which influences the level and way of conduct of training for the beneficiaries. The following will describe the selection process to decide who out of the group of beneficiaries takes part in the training courses.

5.2 Selection of beneficiaries II: Who participates in the training courses?

The selection of beneficiaries to become a part of the contracting team is the pre-selection of the beneficiaries who will attend the training courses. The contractor is responsible for indicating to the project manager which training courses are needed and should be requested in the annual plan of operations; according to WfW official 5 she/he also is responsible for the selection of which beneficiaries attend the training courses. The training matrix aligns each training course with a specific National Qualification Framework (NQF) level; some courses such as the brush cutter or the herbicide applicator require NQF level 2, which equals the completion of grade ten in the South African educational system (WfW 2012). Other courses

such as the plant identification or first aid courses do not indicate a specific requirement. The responsibility to confirm whether the beneficiaries have the required educational level lies with the contractor. The beneficiary's school report should be given to the contractor. However, according to WfW official 5 "this happens only orally."

Further criteria for being selected for training are introduced individually by contractors. Field work in Citrusdal and Bellville showed that in some cases a beneficiary has to be on a contracting team at least for one year, has to be a good worker and responsible and has to prove her/himself first. Training is popular among some beneficiaries because a qualification may result in more income, if the beneficiary is actually employed as a skilled worker after the completion of the training. Since there are eleven beneficiaries and in practice on one team only two chainsaw operator and two herbicide applicators are needed, eight beneficiaries are left with the position of general workers and thus less daily wages.

The contractor as being solely responsible for the selection process of beneficiaries is contested by the description of a selection process in form of a group decision. In this case WfW officials go into field and ask the team who should take part in the training. Since the WfW officials do not know the teams well enough and the contractor does not take part in the meeting, a team discussion among beneficiaries leads to the decision. Since these discussions are not always fruitful, there is the proposal for a service provider to assess the suitability of a beneficiary to attend the training course and subsequently make a decision.

The unclear selection process of the past years has led to question the success of the training courses. Courses such as the chainsaw operator are composed of a theoretical and a practical part. Each course has to be completed by a theoretical and practical exam. WfW official 5 describes a meeting with a beneficiary.

"He could not read, not write. I asked him as what he worked and he said as a chainsaw operator. He was trained as a chainsaw operator. I ask myself how can you pass an assessment – there is a theory part – if you cannot even write your name?" (WfW official 5)

Later on she/he adds that the chainsaw operator course was not only taken and passed once, but twice, which leads to another ineffectiveness in the selection of beneficiaries for training courses.

“Ja, and you know what happens. The person who does chainsaw operator training for example, the validity of the certificate is three years, right. In that three years, he does chainsaw operator training again; while that was really a waste of money. It wasn’t thought through.” (WfW official 5)

While some take part in training courses twice, others don’t receive training at all. Despite flexibility in the annual plan of operations to move training courses in the duration of the year, the favoured strategy to organise the training courses for the winter months when operations in field are on halt prevails. Administrative delays may lead to postponement of the training.

“(…) maybe the APO [annual plan of operations] is running late and we have paused the winter months, (…) when it’s summer, then they [the implementing agents] will tell you ‘I know I have three courses still to do, but now it’s operations, that’s first priority. We’re not gonna do the training.’ (…) And you can tell them ‘Listen, don’t let quality control come in field and find a person that’s certificates are not valid or anyone, anyone of the people for that matter, find anyone who’s certificates are not valid.’ And people do just… I mean I spoke to some of the learners and you know more than one told me, when I asked them ‘What do you do in field?’ ‘I’m a general worker’ ‘Ok, a general worker, ok’ ‘But sometimes, I do herbicide application as well’ ‘But are you trained for it?’ But no, they don’t know. ‘But if the herbicider is not there, I do it’. You know that type of things happen.” (WfW official 5)

The beneficiaries’ profile analysed previously will now be examined from yet another perspective, dealing with the ABET-pilot project, which is being implemented in Citrusdal¹⁵. It will reveal a long-ignored obstacle for successful training conduct in WfW and give an example of an active development approach within WfW.

5.2.1 The ABET pilot project in Citrusdal

In June 2013 the literacy and numeracy abilities of 129 beneficiaries and contractors¹⁶ of the WfW Citrusdal projects were assessed by a training provider. The assessment was conducted according to ABET-standards and enabled the service provider to place each beneficiary on a certain learning level. Each ABET level has a corresponding level in the South African school system (Table 1). A total of 98 men and 31 women were assessed. As shown in Table 2, the majority of beneficiaries can read and write on a primary school level, while 60 percent are on the two lowest levels, meaning that they are “(…) unable to read and write in mother tongue – only able to communicate verbally”, respectively “(…) are able to read and write simple

¹⁵ Citrusdal was chosen to be a pilot project due to their overall good performance in clearing and project organisation. A second pilot project is being implemented in Hottentots Holland.

¹⁶ In total 132 people were assessed, while three were WfW officials and staff members. Irrespective of their test results, they do not take part in ABET classes. Therefore, the total of assessed beneficiaries equals 129.

sentences, fill out forms with assistance. [Their] [comprehension] is limited to simple passages that do not have any hidden meaning” (Appendix. 3, see also for more detailed description of the levels). Mathematics level one involves “[using] their ability to read and write numbers, counting and ordering, in order to solve real life problems involving addition and subtraction; [matching] shapes to names; [telling] time; [critically] analyze [sic!] a bar graph to extract information” (Appendix. 4). Table 3 shows that 89 percent of the assessed are on level one, which equals grade three of school mathematics. The remaining 11 percent of the assessed are on level two.

ABET level	Grade in SA School System
ABET level 1	Grade 3
ABET level 2	Grade 5
ABET level 3	Grade 7
ABET level 4	Grade 9

Table 1. ABET levels equalling grades in the South African school system (information see Appendix. 2a).

Number of Beneficiaries	ABET literacy level
25	Mother tongue level 1 and 2
53	English level 1
38	English level 2
11	English level 3
2	English level 4

Table 2. Results of the ABET literacy assessment in the projects of the CWUA (information see WfW 2013d).

Number of Beneficiaries	ABET numeracy level
115	Mathematics Level 1
14	Mathematics Level 2
0	Mathematics Level 3
0	Mathematics Level 4

Table 3. Results of the ABET numeracy assessment in the projects of the CWUA (information see WfW 2013d).

The assessment was followed by the commencement of ABET classes in mid-August. Of the 129 assessed beneficiaries and contractors, 73 were assigned to take part in ABET classes¹⁷, while a total 68 in fact attended the first class, of which three were contractors. By mid-September another six had withdrawn from the classes. Eventually 53 beneficiaries took the final exam in November, of which 93 percent passed the exam and can proceed to the next ABET level (WfW 2013f). The ABET classes were taught over a period of three months, while classes took place five times per week, eight hours per day (WfW 2013e). It is planned to have another block of three months allocated for ABET classes in the following years, until the beneficiaries have reached level four. As for any training course in the WfW programme beneficiaries are paid for every day they attend the ABET classes, while the wage is determined by the job category under which they were employed in the contracting team. Since their labour force will be missing in field, the WfW programme pays the wages of the ABET-beneficiaries, while the contractors recruit substitute workers for the period of the ABET project.

The initial assessment to estimate whether there was a need for ABET was conducted in 2010, followed by lengthy planning, budgeting and the final start of the classes in August 2013. Field work has shown that the project is perceived and attended well among beneficiaries and experiences support from key stakeholders on the ground and in the regional office. WfW official 5 sees ABET as an “eye-opener” and identifies the support for the project as general support to change the direction of training into a more structured and development-orientated one. The results have caused concerns among WfW officials about the training received by beneficiaries in the past years which was not developed for illiterate or low-literate learners. This raises questions of how the courses could have been passed at such low literacy levels. Furthermore, the results have stirred thoughts among WfW officials about whether a certain level of education should be introduced as an entry requirement.

“EPWP doesn’t want to have an entry requirement. But they want us to comply. So how are we going to comply if we are getting people that are really really below the level of training itself and so what we would like to see is, you know, that contractors at least first consider ‘I must get someone in my team that I will be able to send on training’. The lowest level of education that they need is standard three.” (WfW official 5)

¹⁷ The beneficiaries who were not assigned to take part in an ABET class are above the currently offered levels I and II and will join the classes when their level is available.

This shows how the low literacy level poses a challenge for WfW officials. The programme seeks to target the poorest of the poor; however, their literacy and numeracy levels do not necessarily correspond with what is needed to receive training and thus develop their future employability. Other suggestions on how to encounter this problem focus on changing the training instead of introducing entry requirements.

“So, when a person cannot read and write, they *can* work a chainsaw and they can with a herbicide set; we can give them training, we can do the skills courses, we have alternative methods testing a person’s skill; retention of knowledge can be tested. They can do oral and verbal tests and stuff, so we never discriminate in this programme against a person who cannot read and write.” (WfW official 3)

However, none of the officials regards the ABET classes as core task to the WfW programme. It is seen as a task the programme took up demonstrating responsibility for its beneficiaries, which are currently in the programme and promoting their individual development.

“Ten years of this programme, fourteen years of this programme running with the exact same beneficiary, so the fact that we are adding that is just some, is how the programme is developed now is to say that we’re accepting, that the historical background of this country has made that not *all* people read and write well or they don’t all read and write at all, but we’re offering that in the support, because that is development. If a person who has not been able to read their name can read their name and although it might not be of international value, an individual’s development can be as simple as writing my name and my surname and know how to go to the closest Shoprite and buying a bread and knowing what change I need to give.” (WfW official 3)

Field work has shown that low literacy levels in some cases can make beneficiaries vulnerable to exploitation by contractors. Beneficiaries sign blank payment sheets, do not know what their wage should be, cannot read their contracts. Especially in the case of payments for training courses, there is no control by the WfW programme whether the individual beneficiary receives the money and how much. It is reported that in some projects beneficiaries turn down training opportunities since they fear they will not receive payment.

The decision to introduce ABET, instead of adapting the training courses to low literacy levels, demonstrates developmental value as it provides the beneficiaries with basic skills they will need for jobs in the formal economy and especially if they will be self-employed. Additionally, the ability to read, write and know basic mathematics will promote the

beneficiaries' self-esteem and decision-making abilities in their work and everyday life, and will empower them to demand their rights as beneficiaries in WfW.

To harmonise this development approach with the conservation objective of WfW, extra funds have been allocated, so that contractors will not be presented with fewer work force in field. Whether the treatment of the substitute workers, such as paying the minimum wage, has happened according to WfW regulations and whether the re-entry of ABET beneficiaries into their old teams will be performed without complications should be a concern of further research. Overall the ABET pilot project is of high value for the individual beneficiary's development. However, not any negotiation of trade-offs between development and conservation has made this project possible, but the provision of extra funds which ensure that conservation is not being compromised.¹⁸

What should be noted is the limited duration and target group of the ABET project. WfW officials have made it clear that it is not planned to make ABET a permanent part of training efforts in the programme. It is planned to provide ABET courses for the beneficiaries who are currently in the programme, respectively took part in the first round of three months of ABET classes, until they reach ABET level four. There are no plans to offer the classes to beneficiaries who enter the programme in the future. WfW officials refer to the department of education as the responsible body to ensure adequate literacy and numeracy levels.

However, there is no sign, that the beneficiaries who will enter the programme in the near future will have significantly higher literacy and numeracy levels. If compliance with training outcomes needs to be ensured, the training courses will have to be adapted to levels of low literacy/illiteracy. This strategy indicates that the developmental approach of WfW is not integrated into the programme's (financial) structures, but is of a limited nature. It will contribute to the long-term poverty alleviation of the current cohort of beneficiaries. However, it will not have long-term impacts and not contribute to long-term poverty alleviation for a broader target group.

This situation shows how an ICD programme such as WfW finds itself in a context, which demands hard choices between conservation and development objectives to negotiate trade-

¹⁸ To remind the reader, each day spent in the ABET class by a beneficiary is counted as a person-training day and is included in the EPWP's aggregation of person-working days. The ABET training does therefore not compromise the objective of job creation.

offs and how important it is that the programme's objectives are not only clearly defined but also collectively understood.

The following section analyses a development concept which existed in EPWP phase I but was suspended in phase II: the exit strategy.

5.3 The exit strategy: Deleted without substitution

Following the regulations of the environmental EPWP, the WfW programme suspended its exit strategy in the year 2009. The exit strategy limited a beneficiary's work in the WfW programme to a duration of 24 months within five consecutive years. The intention was to spread the economic and social benefits among as many people as possible and it was assumed that beneficiaries were then equipped to find other employment. Experience has proven these assumptions wrong; beneficiaries exited back into poverty. The skills developed in the WfW programme did not enable them to find employment in the formal economy or to sustain as self-employed (McCrod 2005). As a consequence the EPWP II allows beneficiaries to remain in the programme for an unlimited time period, despite still encouraging programmes to have some form of exit strategy in place (DEA n.d., p.20). The assumption is that longer periods of employment will allow beneficiaries to develop at their personal pace and not forcibly release them into the labour market ill-equipped and vulnerable. The duration spent by beneficiaries in the programme shows that many have taken advantage of the new regulation and remain in the programme: the 'satisfaction survey' reveals that 41 percent of the respondents have been working in WfW projects for more than two years and another 13 percent for more than one year (Appendix. 5), corresponding to the results in Citrusdal at 44 percent and 15 percent (Appendix. 6).

The reasons for the extended stay in the programme are debated by WfW officials questioning whether lack of alternatives or dismissal of existing alternatives in favour of WfW is the reason. The fulfillment of the objective of EPWP and WfW to develop a beneficiary while she/he is in the programme and then see her/him exit into formal or self-employment appears to be the exception rather than the rule. WfW officials report from single cases in which they know that a beneficiary has started a taxi company and two others became policemen. One official reports about a contractor who started his private business to clear IAPs, another reports about a beneficiary who works on a farm as chainsaw operator. Rather than exiting, it appears, careers happen internally within programme structures. The project manager in

Citrusdal started to work in WfW as a general worker, was later appointed contractor and is now project manager. Also the quality controller started as a general worker, was appointed contractor before he was appointed quality controller. Since 2011, three new contractors were appointed in Citrusdal. All of them had been skilled workers in WfW teams and were approached by WfW officials to apply for the contractor position.

Seasonal labour is the most likely alternative for WfW beneficiaries in Citrusdal to earn an income. Migration streams have not been documented; however, it is anticipated that especially women leave the programme during harvesting season to earn better wages on fruit farms, and return to WfW when the season is over.

However, many beneficiaries remain as skilled or general workers in the programme. When researching for the reasons for beneficiaries to stay, attention is drawn to the low level of skills conveyed in the training courses, which allegedly do not equip beneficiaries to compete on the formal labour market. However, 65 percent of the training-survey participants felt that the WfW training has improved their chances of future employment (Appendix. 7). Therefore, an important reason can be seen in the understanding beneficiaries have of their employment. Field work has shown that many do not regard their WfW job as a temporary job or stepping stone. When asked when they had last looked for alternative employment, many did not understand the question, asking why they should look for alternative employment, since they are employed with WfW. Of the beneficiaries who took part in the training-survey 42 percent indicated that it has been more than one year since they had last looked for work outside of WfW, while 22 percent indicated they had never looked for alternative work (Appendix. 8); 61 percent of the respondents of the satisfaction-survey said that they did not have the intention to leave in the next few months (Appendix. 9), while in Citrusdal 72 percent had no intention to leave (Appendix. 10). The idea to have beneficiaries exit voluntarily when they feel ready to do so has in many cases turned into no exiting at all. One considerable reason is the fact that the abolished exit strategy has been replaced without substitution; there is no developmental tool that would encourage beneficiaries to move forward or show them how to. In contrary programme realities show, that in some cases exiting is not supported by WfW officials but prevented.

Field work has revealed that in some cases certificates for chainsaw operator training courses are not given to beneficiaries, out of fear they will leave the programme immediately and

work as private chainsaw operators. WfW official 6 attests that beneficiaries who receive training and leave, are perceived as a ‘negative investment’, while WfW official 1 describes that contractors “are not protecting the investment” when trained people leave. The understanding is that beneficiaries should stay at least several years after they have received training, to pay off the training costs. While WfW official 4 calls it a ‘Catch 22’ and official 2 ‘a two-sided sword’, WfW official 3 describes the dilemma as follows:

“A loss of skilled labour, I always say people complain, but that is what we want to, we’re aiming for. If we train people and we equip people and you better their decision-making and they are linked to resources in their area, we have done our job from a developmental perspective, which might be seen in the contrary of the programme, when people have left. But if people leave for anything better, it is a benefit for that individual and that is a positive. So, although we then need to fill the gap and re-train new people, which takes time and *money*... (...) So the loss to the one is the benefit to the other.” (WfW official 3)

Having the conservation objective in mind, a stable, well-qualified team is valuable, since they can clear more hectares of infested areas and at better quality. Financially it is also valuable, since no further money for training has to be spent. However, from a developmental perspective keeping the beneficiaries in an unstable and low-paying working environment such as EPWP cannot be seen as valuable, but counter-productive. The EPWP and also WfW objective to let beneficiaries enter, equip them with skills and encourage them to seek work outside of the programme is suspended by abolishing the exit strategy altogether without an alternative strategy. There is no common understanding among WfW officials of what the goal of the programme is with regard to the beneficiaries’ development, which adds to the obstacles the beneficiaries face in the first place to find alternative employment.

5.4 Development ideas within the Working for Water programme

Despite developmental gaps and contradictions analysed in the previous chapters, the WfW officials still emphasise that development is part of their objective and that they see it as their task to promote it. However, how this is going to happen is unclear. Partially conflicting developmental concepts are pursued by different WfW officials. On the one hand there exists the idea of the contractor development, focusing on the contractor to become an entrepreneur who leaves WfW and employs other people in the community. Closely linked to that is the idea that WfW contracting teams should develop as an entity, led by the contractor, and seeking for alternative employment as a team. On the other hand this is contrasted by the idea

to offer learnerships to individual beneficiaries in various fields to equip them with qualifications they can use to enter the formal labour market.

5.4.1 The contractor development

Coetzer and Louw (2012) explore the contractor development in WfW as one of the programme's socio-economic rationales. They find that contractors receive functional training to be able to clear IAPs and receive social development training such as HIV/AIDS and health and diversity management (p.794). Additionally, they find that “[once] the contractor is awarded contracts, and starts work, further training is provided on an ongoing basis. Referred to as contractor training, this includes aspects such as business principles, business finance, human resources training, how to obtain future work, legal matters around business, marketing, health and safety, and first aid. They are trained in how to manage a team, about good management practices, and conflict management” (Coetzer & Louw 2012, p.794).

WfW official 3 describes a contractor development model, developed by WfW, consisting of four levels. Each contractor proceeds through these levels and is graded on her/his performance, which has financial implications – the size of the blocks increases – and the content of the courses attended by the contractor increases in the degree of difficulty, so that contractors who complete level four will be able to tender for large sums of money in the private sector. They will receive training and guidance in a protected environment to be prepared to exit the programme with sufficient business skills to sustain themselves and employees. While few projects have undertaken the grading system, there is currently no overall enforcement of the contractor development. While the national office confirms that the contractor development model is under evaluation and new strategies are being developed, the regional WfW officials agree that the current ad-hoc training in place is not yielding satisfying results.

“In the meantime though with the whole contractor development, with the whole package not being enforced, there are individual courses running. And (...) has told you about the one or two... it's to enhance the business savvy of the contractor; in the meantime the computer courses are running, the entrepreneurial courses are running. But it's ad hoc and it's short term... (...) it's like a five day crash course but this is not the same as you would read up.”
(WfW official 3)

A contractor in Citrusdal will receive all functional WfW training courses, often even before she/he is appointed contractor; additionally, a five-day worksite management course is

attended, in which contractors are taught how to manage a team in field. In June 2013 a contractor budgeting course was introduced in Citrusdal. In four days contractors were taught how to budget their income and how to spend the money during the work block. There are plans to introduce computer courses for contractors, in case not all funds are used by the ABET project. All parties concerned with the contractor development agree that these courses are not sufficient and that the business skills levels of many contractors are not of the required standard.

“And it was a shock to see how little our contractors know about business planning. They didn’t have a clue how to work out running costs and costs of the team and those types of things.” (WfW official 5)

The difficulties in business planning are in some cases reinforced through low literacy and numeracy levels among contractors, as the ABET assessment revealed. Furthermore, the training is often only received when the person has already worked as a contractor, while “bad habits”, as WfW official 4 puts it, have already manifested. The contractor is seen as a key figure in the WfW programme: she/he is responsible for the performance of the team, to ensure continuous work opportunities and is expected to develop a well-run business, which can progress to the private sector. Expectation and reality are unbalanced.

“You *want* something on a certain level, that would *really* make a difference, but then you leave behind some of the contractors, because they won’t cope in content.” (WfW official 5)

This experience has drawn attention to the selection of contractors and once more uncertainty about the objectives of the WfW programme is revealed.

“We must decide where we want to go with this programme. Do we still want to develop contractors? Or develop... If that is your aim, if that is your very important part of your aim, then that changes everything, because then you must focus on getting entrepreneurs and business people on board, who want to develop and become something better. (WfW official 1)

Field work has shown that contractors do not necessarily see themselves as entrepreneurs, using WfW as stepping stone to progress into the private sector, but seeking to progress within the programme structures and to procure sufficient work for their team, staying in the programme for ten to fifteen years. This observation is in line with the beneficiaries not making a connection between their WfW job and future employment.

WfW official 1 sees the development of contractor and beneficiaries interlinked. Instead of developing each beneficiary for an individual employment path, contracting teams should progress as entity. The contractor is here seen as a business person, who acquires skills and leads the team into employment.

“If you know how to quote and how to keep people busy and how to work productively and all those things – *what* you do is actually irrelevant. You can go on a painting course for a week and then you can paint.” (WfW official 1)

Undoubtedly, the concept of the contractor development has potential to develop skills, which can be transferred into the formal economy, when adapted to the labour market context. The HCDS (DEA 2010d) has identified employment potential for environmental economics skills, especially in SMME, referring to the growth of the Environmental Goods and Services Sector (EGS). However, the past and current approaches do not offer an environment in which contractors can develop sufficiently. Translating this into the model of ICD, one can note that the contractors have sufficient skills to run their teams within the WfW programme, as they have demonstrated for many years, which promotes the conservation objective of clearing IAPs.¹⁹ However, there is no sign that these skills are being utilised to develop outside of the programme structures. Development is thus cut off at the programme boundaries and its sustainability depends on the duration of the programme. Furthermore, potential to contribute to conservation efforts on a wider scale outside of the programme by supplying the growing green economy is not met.

5.4.2 Formal qualifications: ‘Learnerships’

The need to transform training efforts into a long-term outcome, which is valuable to increasing a beneficiary’s employability outside of the programme, is identified by WfW officials and included in the Training Strategy for the Western Cape (WfW 2010). The idea to offer learnerships for beneficiaries and awarding them a formal qualification is being discussed at the time of writing. The plan is to develop a learning path with each beneficiary individually, to set a target where she/he wants to be in several years’ time and identify opportunities how she/he can achieve this within WfW structures (WfW Training Strategy 2010, p.2). Initial plans are made to cooperate with SETA bodies and allocate funding from the National Skills Fund (NSF) (see Skills Development Act in DoL 1998). While pursuing a

¹⁹ It is likely that even better conservation results may be achieved if the contractors’ skills are on a higher business level and teams can be managed more efficiently.

learnership the beneficiary takes theoretical and practical courses according to regulations of a Further Education and Training (FET) institution and completes the learnership with a formal, nationally recognised qualification. The exact procedures and certificates are still being discussed. The learnerships would not necessarily be offered in fields related to WfW or even the environment, but depend on what would generate the most likely follow-up employment in the area.

While 96 percent of respondents of the training-survey say that they would like to receive more training, there was a trend to favour courses which are not currently offered by WfW (Appendix. 11). These courses ranged from mechanic and electrician, computer, and business management to hairdressing, administration, building or skilled crafts and trade. However, in the case of Citrusdal, and several other project areas, the alternative employment opportunities are very limited, here in most cases to working on fruit farms. Ten newly trained mechanics or hairdressers in Citrusdal would compete against existing businesses, hence either failing to compete or replacing them. Migration by the young and skilled to cities would be a consequence, which could ideally benefit the individual's development, but would not be beneficial for Citrusdal as a community. Despite these contextual challenges, several tasks in the process of implementing the learnerships should be carefully evaluated: considering the literacy and numeracy level of current beneficiaries, they would have to take part in ABET for three or four years to complete all levels (three months per year) and receive their General Education and Training Certificate to start a learnership, which will again take several years. The turnover among beneficiaries and inconsistency of work may yield to inconsistency and drop-outs of learnership arrangements. Different learnerships will be conducted at different times. This would lead to constant disruptions in teams in field, which is not supported by implementing agents and contractors. Since training efforts do not currently experience enough support in the programme a fundamental shift in thinking would have to forego the acceptance and support of an even greater training effort in the form of learnerships.

Generating the necessary support for the learnership idea appears to be very difficult. Despite the need for developmental components of long-term value in the programme structure, WfW remains an environmental programme, and its identity is defined through the control of IAPs. Before expanding the focus of training courses to non-environmental realms a careful analysis should be undertaken to establish whether an improvement of training structures could yield

qualifications relevant for the environmental sector. It is generally questionable whether sufficient financial and human capacity can be provided to implement learnerships. More support might be generated if learnerships lead to formal qualifications relevant for the environmental sector.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter described the selection process of beneficiaries to be on a contracting team. Two types of beneficiaries were identified: those seeing WfW as a stepping stone into the formal economy and those who are desperate for an income and join out of economic need, while the latter are found more frequently.

The second part of this chapter discovered that the criteria to be selected for a training course do not necessarily comply with WfW guidelines, which leads to questioning the success of training courses attended by unsuitable beneficiaries. While some attend the same training course twice, others do not receive training at all.

Many beneficiaries do not look for alternative employment but understand the WfW work opportunities as their regular job. Deleting the exit strategy without substitution and a lack of encouragement by WfW officials to leave the programme support this understanding. The current contractor development is ad-hoc, neglecting the skills development of a key-figure responsible for the team as a whole. 'Learnerships' as a means to receive formal qualifications appear promising for the individual development of the beneficiary; however, implementation faces obstacles. The findings show that the level of the current training model is too high for the beneficiaries' overall low educational level. Offering ABET courses for beneficiaries – as happening in Citrusdal – will be essential in the future to prepare beneficiaries for skills development relevant for the labour market. If WfW wants to enhance the beneficiaries' employability, the ABET programme must not be regarded as a nice-to-have but as essential. They will have to meet each beneficiary on their personal educational level. It is questionable whether capacities suffice to substitute on a large scale what has been missed by the educational system.

CHAPTER 6

Conclusion and recommendations

Up to now this study has analysed several challenges in the training and skills development in the WfW programme. This last chapter tries to suggest how to move forward in overcoming a lack of internal agreement on the programme's objectives and how to react to the structural problems of the South African labour market in this particular case.

This research set out to answer the question to what extent the objective of skills development is fulfilled in the environment sector of the EPWP and of which developmental value it is, specifically in the WfW programme. This case study programme was informed by the case study project Citrusdal Water Users Association (CWUA), the main analytical tool being the training model of the WfW programme in the Western Cape. To answer the research question, it was asked what the objectives and goals of the environmental sector of the EPWP entailed; which special circumstances influence the conduct of ICD on the governmental level, specifically in the context of a PWP; and how skills development is executed in the WfW programme. Furthermore, an analysis was done of whether this skills development has the potential to contribute to an improvement of employability. The theoretical basis of this analysis was the ICD model; WfW was analysed in the multi-objectives context of biodiversity conservation, job creation and skills development, with the overarching objective of poverty reduction.

6.1 Re-thinking and negotiating the programme's objectives: "What do we want?"

The most significant challenge in the training model has been identified not necessarily as a challenge in training execution itself. Rather, the lack of a common objective of what the training should achieve and the lack of agreement on the importance of training in the WfW structures influence the training model negatively. The programme structure strongly promotes the understanding that there will be win-win outcomes for both conservation and development. Following the New Conservation Debate (NCD), the findings of this study can be used to create a platform for WfW officials to clearly define a collectively understood objective of the programme, acknowledging that hard choices will have to be made, and each side – operations and development – will have to agree on trade-offs in their realm. Open discussions about the programme's identity and subsequent negotiations about programme implementation can help to re-define WfW's objectives after 18 years of practice. While operating for almost two decades, the programme has experienced many changes; WfW

officials appear constantly to seek to improve the programme and to adapt to new circumstances. Recently, there have been signs that the training support by WfW officials has increased and that a re-thinking of training objectives has been acknowledged, for example in the overall support of the ABET project. Training models such as the contractor development model do exist in policy and promise good results. This appears to be a valuable basis for further negotiations among more stakeholders in the programme. It is expected that as soon as all WfW officials and staff have a common understanding what they are working towards, the training will yield better outcomes. The WfW Western Cape branch can serve as a role model for other regions.

However, in order to conduct training effectively, there is a definite need to change the WfW working environment. Late payments and inconsistency of work lead to high turnover in the teams and migration of beneficiaries in and out of the programme which disturbs any learning process geared towards sustainability. There have to be clear regulations of how the selection of beneficiaries to attend training courses proceeds, in order to guarantee a fair selection process for the most vulnerable among the beneficiaries. Only if a working environment that supports training efforts is created, is there a chance that the training can have the desired outcome.

6.2 Adjusting to circumstances: “What can we do with what we have?”

Even if the suggested efforts are made, there remains the problem that the skills developed in the WfW programme is on a low level, and does not – as seen in the past – lead to absorption of the beneficiaries into the labour market. A careful study of the emerging green economy and increase of green jobs could help to identify job categories which can be filled by WfW beneficiaries, for example in a field like the payment for ecosystem services. The generally low educational profile of beneficiaries and the limited training capacities of the WfW programme have to be acknowledged.

There is no sign that the educational level will improve in the near future, nor can the WfW programme fully substitute what has been missed in schools. There is, however, legislation in place, such as the conservation of agricultural resources act (CARA 1983), which creates a labour market for contracting teams such as the ones in WfW. According to this act, private landowners are obligated to control IAPs on their land and to maintain it after the initial clearing phase. The number of IAPs in South Africa and the Western Cape, coupled with the

payment by landowners to have them cleared, would give work to contracting teams for many decades. The WfW programme would be the ideal training body to prepare contracting teams for the work for private landowners, offering functional training, work experience and knowledge. Up to now the enforcement of this legislation has not proven very successful. While other approaches to generate employment for the WfW beneficiaries do not sufficiently apply yet, the opportunity should be taken into account to combine efforts to support the enforcement of the CARA legislation.

The previous paragraphs suggest that a thorough communication process about WfW's objectives and its mission can help to re-think and re-focus the programme's expected outcome and to aggregate capacities to work in the same direction. In addition, the existing opportunities for contracting units should not be ignored but actively supported by exploring the green-labour market and promoting legislation such as CARA.

6.3 Concluding remarks

The study has shown that skills development is an objective of multiple sectors including the environmental sector of EPWP. Training and skills development are promoted to create a bridge for beneficiaries between their work opportunity in a PWP and formal or self-employment. It is intended to equip beneficiaries with skills to enhance their future employability outside of the protected environment of public works and the WfW programme. However, it was found that this objective undergoes a filter process in the institutional context of the government funded WfW programme. When translated to the programme level there is a lack of common understanding of the goals of skills development and training. There is no clear and commonly understood agreement of what WfW aims to achieve for their beneficiaries in the long-term. One of the most significant findings to support this argument is the suspension of the exit strategy without any substitution. While in the past beneficiaries had to leave the programme at a terminal point in time, today beneficiaries may remain in the programme as long as they wish to. The EPWP formally still encourages exiting; however, this has not been translated into programme reality. It was found that the WfW officials and staff pursue opposing goals. While some would like to see the beneficiaries exit into formal or self-employment after they have been trained, others regard exiting as a loss of monetary and temporal investment and support structures to keep the beneficiaries in the programme. For the first group training should be oriented towards employment outside of the programme, for the second group training should equip the beneficiary to do the job and end there. Therefore,

it seems that training and skills development are conducted in an incoherent manner, without clear direction and purpose, lacking sufficient support among parts of the WfW officials and staff. Furthermore, findings of this study indicate that beneficiaries and contractors do not make a connection between their work with WfW and future employability. They appear to value the training, regarding it as improving chances for future employment. However, findings have shown that many beneficiaries do not actively look for alternative employment and that exiting into formal or self-employment is the exception. On the one hand the labour market which would absorb beneficiaries skilled in the WfW programme is not created, as seen in the lack of enforcement of the CARA legislation. On the other hand skills developed in the WfW programme are not demanded by the general South African labour market.

The results of this research support the notion that current programme structures are supportive of conservation; however, that this does not lead to long-term poverty reduction for the beneficiaries. Stable teams, working together for many years, composed of trained and experienced workers will generate better results in clearing IAP infested areas than teams in constant flux. For the objective of biodiversity conservation it is preferable that beneficiaries remain in the programme. However, the nature of EPWP work opportunities does not provide a sustainable work environment, manifested in inconsistency of work, delay of payments, minimum wages, and no pension or health insurance. Projects like the CWUA project are of terminal nature, the project is estimated to close in up to five years, leaving beneficiaries without employment. Even if the prerequisite of willingness and means to migrate were given it cannot be assumed that the majority of former beneficiaries will find employment in similar ICD projects due to the large number of beneficiaries and the availability of potential beneficiaries in most regions in South Africa.

It has become clear that EPWP cannot be successful in isolation: if needed investments fail to materialise, and laws which oblige landowners to clear IAPs are not enforced, the beneficiaries equipped with skills developed within WfW will only, if at all, substitute low skilled workers but not contribute to a net increase in employment in South Africa.

The study has shown that skills development in the WfW programme is in fact executed; however, that it is not fulfilled to the extent, respectively of the developmental value which is aimed for in the EPWP. Therefore, current programme structures only cure symptoms of poverty, not its causes. Thus, they do not actively contribute to the reduction of poverty on a

long-term level. The environmental EPWP does not act as a bridge between second and first economy but keeps the beneficiaries trapped in an unstable and unsecure working environment. The hope to leave poverty behind for good remains exactly that.

This study adds to the growing body of literature on ICD by providing empirical findings which transfer the concepts of the ICD model to the governmental level, analysing them in a less-attended context. Furthermore, the findings increase the understanding of skills development in the context of natural resource management; supporting the ideas of the New Conservation Debate (NCD) that trade-offs in a multi-objectives context have to be negotiated and hard choices have to be made. With the beginning of the third phase of EPWP in 2014, the study makes noteworthy contributions to the evaluation of training within EPWP II. Since the South African EPWP stands out in the pool of world-wide PWP through their commitment to long-term development and training, this study has contributed to a still expanding body of literature concerning skills development in PWPs.

It has to be acknowledged that this study is concerned most of all with the current skills development structures within the programme and is limited in the analysis of how to adapt the content of training to match it to current labour market demands. Further research is needed to establish how to successfully utilise the limited training structures in the programme to build a bridge between the low educational level of the beneficiaries and labour market opportunities. In addition, further research on payment for ecosystem services and environmental goods and services will have to show where these opportunities to enter the labour market can be found.

References

Adato, M. et al. (2005). Power, Politics, and Performance. Community Participation in South African Public Works Programs, in: Research Report 143, International Food Policy Research Institute Washington, D.C.

Aliber, M. (2003). Chronic Poverty in South Africa: Incidence, Causes and Policies, in: World Development Vol. 31, No. 3, pp. 473–490.

ANC (African National Congress) (1994). Reconstruction and Development Programme, Government Gazette No. 16085, 23. November 1994, online: <http://www.info.gov.za/view/DownloadFileAction?id=70427> last accessed 16 October 2013.

ASCS (Advanced Conservation in a Social Context) (2011). Advancing Conservation in a Social Context: Working in a World of Trade-offs. Final Report, online: www.tradeoffs.org last accessed 9 October 2013.

Bhorat, H. (2004a). Labour Market Challenges in the Post-Apartheid South Africa, in: South African Journal of Economics Suid-Afrikaanse Tydskrif vir Ekonomie, Vol. 72 No.5 December/Desember 2004, pp.940–977.

Bhorat, H. (2004b). The Development challenge in post-apartheid South African education, In: L. Chisholm (Ed.): Changing Class: education and social change in post-apartheid South Africa. Cape Town. HSRC Press and London: Zed Books.

Bhorat, H. and Hodge, J. (1999). Decomposing shifts in labour demand in South Africa, in: The South African Journal of Economics Vol. 67 No.3, pp. 348-380.

Brandon, K. & O'Herron, M. (2004). Parks, Projects and Policies: A Review of Three Costa Rican ICDPs, in: McShane, T.O. & Wells, M.P. (ed.) (2004): Getting Biodiversity Projects to Work. Towards More Effective Conservation and Development, Columbia University Press, New York, pp. 154 – 180.

Brandon, K., & Wells, M. (1992). Planning for people and parks: design dilemmas, in: World Development Vol. 20, pp. 557–570.

Brown, K. (2003). Integrating Conservation and Development: A Case of Institutional Misfit, in: Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment, Vol.1, No.9, pp. 479–487.

Brown, K. (2004). Trade-off analysis for integrated conservation and development, in: McShane, T.O., Wells, M.P. (Eds.), Getting Biodiversity Projects Work: Towards More Effective Conservation and Development. Columbia University Press, New York, pp. 232–255.

Burger, R. & von Fintel, D. (2009). Determining the Causes of the Rising South African Unemployment Rate: An Age, Period and Generational Analysis, in: Stellenbosch Economic Working Papers Vol. 24, No. 09, pp. 1–47.

CARA (Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act) (1983). Act 43 of 1983, online: https://www.capetown.gov.za/en/EnvironmentalResourceManagement/publications/Documents/Conservation_of_Agric_Resources_Act_43_of_1983.pdf last accessed 30 October 2013.

Census 2011 (2011a). Census 2011. Metadata, Statistics South Africa, online: http://www.statssa.gov.za/Census2011/Products/Census_2011_Metadata.pdf last accessed 16 October 2013.

Census 2011 (2011b). Citrusdal Main Place. Data retrieved from Census 2011 CD-Rom, Community Profiles, Statistics South Africa.

Child, B. & Dalal-Clayton, B. (2004). Transforming Approaches to CBNRM: Learning from the Luangwa Experience in Zambia, in: McShane, T.O. & Wells, M.P. (Ed.) (2004). Getting Biodiversity Projects to Work. Towards More Effective Conservation and Development, Columbia University Press, New York, pp. 256–289.

Coetzer, A. & Louw, J. (2012). An Evaluation of the Contractor Development of Working for Water, in: Water SA, Vol.38, No.5, pp. 793–802, online: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/wsa.v38i5.19> last accessed 9 October 2013.

DEA (Department of Environmental Affairs) (n.d.). National Environment and Culture Sector Plan. A guideline to align sector programmes to EPWP, Phase 2, 2009 – 2014, Pretoria.

DEA (Department of Environmental Affairs) (2010a). Delivery Agreement for Outcome 10. Environment, Pretoria, online: <http://www.thepresidency.gov.za/MediaLib/Downloads/Home/Ministries/DepartmentofPerformanceMonitoringandEvaluation3/TheOutcomesApproach/Deliverypercent20Agreementpercent20-percent20Outcomepercent2010.pdf> last accessed 01.04.2013.

DEA (Department of Environmental Affairs) (2010b). Delivery Agreement. For Outcome 4: Decent employment for inclusive growth, online: <http://www.thepresidency.gov.za/MediaLib/Downloads/Home/Ministries/DepartmentofPerformanceMonitoringandEvaluation3/TheOutcomesApproach/Deliverypercent20Agreementpercent20-percent20Outcomepercent204.pdf> last accessed 01.04.2013.

DEA (Department of Environmental Affairs) (2010c) (ESSP). Environmental Sector Skills Plan For South Africa: A Systems Approach to Human Capacity Development and Sector Skills Planning. Summary Document. Based on More Comprehensive Series of Working Documents, online: https://www.environment.gov.za/sites/default/files/docs/environmentalsector_skillsplanfor_southafrica.pdf last accessed 30 October 2013.

DEA (Department of Environmental Affairs) (2010d). Human Capital Development Strategy Environmental Sector. A systems approach to skills development to support the Environmental Sector Strategic Plan. 2009 – 2014, online: https://www.environment.gov.za/sites/default/files/docs/human_capital_strategy_environmental_sector.pdf last accessed 30 October 2013.

DoL (Department of Labour). Skills Development Act, No 97 Of 1998, online: <http://www.labour.gov.za/DOL/downloads/legislation/acts/skills-development-act/Actpercent20-percent20Skillspercent20Developmentpercent20Act.doc/view?searchterm=percent20Skillspercent20Developmentpercent20Act> last accessed 30 October 2013.

DHET (Department of Higher Education and Training) (2010). National Skills Development Strategy III, online: <http://www.info.gov.za/view/DownloadFileAction?id=163950> last accessed 16 October 2013.

DPW (Department of Public Works) (2008). Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP). Overview of Phase II. Second Economy Strategy, 29 September 2008.

DPW (Department of Public Works) (2009). Expanded Public Works Programme. Five-Year Report. 2004/5 – 2008/9. Reaching the one million target, Pretoria.

DPW (Department of Public Works) (2012). The Expanded Public Works Programme flaunts its success yet again, Newsletter, September 2012, online: http://www.epwp.gov.za/news_room/Newsletter/EPWPpercent20Newsletterpercent20Septemberpercent202012.pdf last accessed 28 October 2013.

DPW (Department of Public Works) (2013). Expanded Public Works Programme. Documents, online: <http://www.epwp.gov.za/documents.html> last accessed 5 October, 2013.

Garnett, S.T. et al. (2007). Improving the Effectiveness of Interventions to Balance Conservation and Development: a Conceptual Framework, in: *Ecology and Society* Vol. 12 No.1, Art. 2.

Gibson, L. (2005). The EPWP. The South African cure-all?, in: IMIESA, January 2005, p.6–11.

Glick, D. & Freese, C. (2004). Yellowstone: A 130-Year Experiment in Integrated Conservation and Development, in: McShane, T.O. & Wells, M.P. (ed.) (2004). *Getting Biodiversity Projects to Work. Towards More Effective Conservation and Development*, Columbia University Press, New York, pp. 124–153.

Grieg-Gran, M. & Bishop, J. (n.d.). How Can Markets for Ecosystem Services Benefit the Poor?, in: Roe, D. (n.d.) *Managing Nature's Wealth for Society's Health*, International Institute for Environment and Development, London, pp. 55–72.

GDS (Growth and Development Summit) (2003). Growth and Development Summit (GDS) Agreement, 7 June 2003, online: <http://www.info.gov.za/issues/gds/gdsagreement03.htm> last access 11 October 2013.

Heyink, J.W. & Tysmtra, T.J. (1993). The Function of Qualitative Research, in: *Social Indicators Research*, Vol. 29, No. 3, pp.291 – 305.

Hulme, D. & Murphree, M. (1999). Communities, Wildlife, and the 'New Conservation' in Africa, in: *Journal of International Development* Vol.11, pp. 277–285.

IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature and National Resources) (1980). *World Conservation Strategy. Living Resource Conservation and Sustainable Development*, IUCN, UNEP, WWF, online: <http://data.iucn.org/dbtw-wpd/edocs/WCS-004.pdf> last accessed 9 October 2013.

Khan, F. (2002). The Roots of Environmental Racism and the Rise of Environmental Justice in the 1990s, in: McDonald, David A. (Ed). Environmental Justice in South Africa, University of Cape Town Press, pp.15–48.

Lewis, J. (2001) Policies to Promote Growth and Employment in South Africa, Discussion Paper 16, South Africa: World Bank Southern Africa Department, pp. 1–87.

Mbeki, T. (2003). State of the Nation Address of the President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, Houses of Parliament, Cape Town, 14 February 2003, online:
<http://www.info.gov.za/speeches/2003/03021412521001.htm> last accessed 10 October 2013.

McCutcheon, R.T. & Taylor Parkins, F. (2010). The Expanded Public Works Programme: policy, rhetoric, reality and opportunities foregone during the expenditure of over R40 billion on infrastructure, Development Policy Research Unit Conference 2010, 27-29 October 2010.

McCutcheon RT. (1995). Employment Creation in Public Works: Labour-Intensive Construction in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Implications for South Africa, in: Habitat International, Vol.19 No.3, pp. 331–355.

McDonald, D.A. (2002). Introduction. What is Environmental Justice, in: McDonald, David A. (Ed). Environmental Justice in South Africa, University of Cape Town Press, pp.1–12.

McNeely, J. A. (Ed.) (2001). The Great Reshuffling: Human Dimensions of Invasive Alien Species, IUCN, Gland, Switzerland and Cambridge, UK.

McShane, T.O. et al. (2011). Hard choices: Making trade-offs between biodiversity conservation and human well-being, in: Biodiversity Conservation, Vol.144, No.3, pp. 966–72.

McShane, T.O. & Wells, M.P. (2004). Integrated Conservation and Development?, in: McShane, T.O. & Wells, M.P. (ed.). Getting Biodiversity Projects to Work. Towards More Effective Conservation and Development, Columbia University Press, New York, pp. 3–9.

Miller, R.T. et al. (2011). The new conservation debate: The view from practical ethics, in: Biological Conservation, Vol.144, No.3, pp. 948–957.

Minteer, B. & Miller, T. (2011). The New Conservation Debate: Ethical foundations, strategic trade-offs, and policy opportunities, in: Biological Conservation, Vol.144, No.3, pp. 945–947.

OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development) (1996): Shaping the 21st Century. The Contribution of Development Co-Operation, online:
<http://www.oecd.org/dac/2508761.pdf> last accessed 9 October 2013.

Ravallion, M. (1999). Appraising Workfare, in: The World Bank Research Observer, Vol. 14, No. 1, pp. 31–48.

Robinson, J.G. (2011). Ethical pluralism, pragmatism, and sustainability in conservation practice, in: Biological Conservation, Vol.144, No.3, pp. 958–965.

Robinson, J.G. & Redford, K.H. (2004). Jack of all Trades, Master of None: Inherent Contradictions Among ICD Approaches, in: McShane, T.O. & Wells, M.P. (Ed.) (2004).

Getting Biodiversity Projects to Work. Towards More Effective Conservation and Development, Columbia University Press, New York, pp. 10–34.

Roe, D. (2008). Review. The origins and evolution of the conservation-poverty Debate: a review of key literature, events and policy processes, in: *Fauna & Flora International*, Oryx, Vol. 42 No. 4, pp. 491–503.

Roe, D. & Elliott, J. (n.d.). Meeting the MDGs – Is Conservation Relevant?, in: Roe, D. (n.d.): *Managing Nature’s Wealth for Society’s Health*, International Institute for Environment and Development, London, pp.7–19.

Sandbrook, C. & Roe, D. (2010). *Linking Conservation and Poverty Alleviation: the case of the Great Apes, an overview of current policy and practice in Africa*, The Poverty and Conservation Learning Group, Arcus Foundation.

Sanjayan, M.A., Shen, S., & Jansen, M. (1997). Experiences with Integrated Conservation Development Projects in Asia, in: *World Bank Technical Paper*, No. 388, Washington D.C.

Senaratna Sellamuttu, S. et al. (2011). Exploring relationships between conservation and poverty reduction in wetland ecosystems: lessons from 10 integrated wetland conservation and poverty reduction initiatives, in: *International Journal of Sustainable Development & World Ecology* Vol. 18, No. 4, August 2011, pp. 328–340.

Shepherd, G. (2004). Poverty and Forests: Sustaining Livelihoods in Integrated Conservation and Development, in: McShane, T.O. & Wells, M.P. (Ed.) (2004). *Getting Biodiversity Projects to Work. Towards More Effective Conservation and Development*, Columbia University Press, New York, pp. 340–371.

Schoeman, Ch. et al. (2010). Labour Conflict and the Persistence of Underemployment in South Africa, in: *SAJEMS NS 13 (2010) No 3*. Department of Economics and Econometrics, University of Johannesburg, pp. 272–292.

Stats SA (Statistics South Africa) (1998). Unemployment and Employment in South Africa, online: <http://www.statssa.gov.za/Publications/EmployUnemploy/EmployUnemploy1997.pdf> last accessed 9 October 2013.

Stats SA (Statistics South Africa) (2009). Labour Force Survey. Historical Revision. September Series 2000 to 2007, Statistical release P0210.

Stats SA (Statistics South Africa) (2011). Local Municipality. Cederberg. Key Statistics, online: http://beta2.statssa.gov.za/?page_id=993&id=cederberg-municipality last accessed 10 October 2013.

Stats SA (Statistics South Africa) (2012). Living Conditions Survey 2008/09. Poverty Profile of South Africa. Applications of the poverty lines of the LCS 2008/2009, Report No. 03-10-03 (2008/2009), online: <http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/Report-03-10-03/Report-03-10-032009.pdf> last accessed 16 October 2013.

Stats SA (Statistics South Africa) (2013). Quarterly Labour Force Survey, Quarter 3, 2013, statistical release P0211, 29 October 2013, online:

<http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0211/P02113rdQuarter2013.pdf> last accessed 30 October 2013.

Subbarao, K. (1997). Public Works as an Anti-Poverty Program: An Overview of Cross-Country Experience, in: *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, Vol. 79, No. 2, pp. 678–683.

SPP (Surplus People Project) (2008). *Water Users Association in the Olifants-Doorn Water Management Area*, Cape Town.

The Presidency (2010). *The Outcomes Approach*, online:
<http://www.thepresidency.gov.za/pebble.asp?relid=1905> last accessed 23 October 2013.

The Presidency (2008). *Towards an Anti-Poverty Strategy for South Africa. A Discussion Document, Draft*, October 2008.

Thwala, WD. (2008). Employment Creation through Public Works Programmes and Projects in South Africa. Experiences and Potentials, in: *Acta Comercii* 2008, pp. 103–112.

Terborgh, J. (1999). *Requiem for Nature*, Island Press, Washington DC, Island Press, first paperback edition 2004.

UN (United Nations) (1987). *Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development. Our Common Future*, transmitted to the General Assembly as an Annex to document A/42/427 – Development and International Co-Operation: Environment, online:
http://conspect.nl/pdf/Our_Common_Future-Brundtland_Report_1987.pdf last accessed 9 October 2013.

Van Aardt, I. (2012). A review of youth unemployment in South Africa. 2004 – 2011, in: *South African Journal of Labour Relations*, Vol.36, No.1, pp. 54–68.

Van Wilgen, B.W. & De Lange, W.J. (2011). The costs and benefits of biological control of invasive alien plants in South Africa, in: *African Entomology* Vol. 19, No.2, pp. 504–514.

Von Braun, J. & Teklu, T. (1991). Labor-Intensive Public Works for Food-Security: Experiences in Africa, in: *International Food Policy Research Institute, Working Papers on Food Subsidies*, No.6.

WeCED (Western Cape Education Department) (2003). *Admission of Over-Age Learners to Public Schools. Circular 0240/2003*, online:
http://wced.pgwc.gov.za/circulars/2003/e240_03.html last accessed 9 October 2013.

Wells, M.P. et al. (2001). *Medium-Sized Projects Evaluation: Final Report*. Global Environment Facility, Washington, DC, online:
http://www.thegef.org/gef/sites/thegef.org/files/documents/C.18.inf_.4percent20MSP.pdf last accessed 9 October 2013.

Wessels-Ziervogel, W. (2013). *Draft Strategy and Monitoring and Evaluation Plan for the Social Development Programme of the Working for Water Programme*, National Department of Environmental Affairs. Southern Hemisphere (March 2013), not published.

WfW (Working for Water) (2004). The Working for Water Programme. Strategic Plan 2004/5 – 2007/8, not published.

WfW (Working for Water) (2010). Western Cape, Training Strategy, 2011 – 2016, not published.

WfW (Working for Water) (2012a). Working for Water Programme. Training Matrix 2012/13, not published.

WfW (Working for Water) (2012b). Budget Regional and National Programmes 2012/2013, not published.

WfW (Working for Water) (2013a). Annual Plan of Operations (APO) Summary 1314, not published.

WfW (Working for Water) (2013b). CWUA Labour Analysis July, not published.

WfW (Working for Water) (2013c). CWUA Labour Analysis August, not published.

WfW (Working for Water) (2013d). ABET assessment results, June 2013, not published.

WfW (Working for Water) (2013e). ABET Rollout Plan 2013, not published.

WfW (Working for Water) (2013f). ABET learners November 2013 IEB results, not published.