Analysing rural development programmes in South Africa 1994 - 2000

In this hard-hitting paper, David Everatt and Sifiso Zulu analyse government's performance in delivering rural anti-poverty and development programmes since 1994. They identify three main phases in the 1994–2000 period, and use three major development programmes to identify key successes and failings on the part of both government and civil society. An important problem they identify is the tension between a participative and community-based approach to development on the one hand, and the growing need in government departments to spend, show results and avoid roll-overs on the other. In particular, they highlight the dangers of fast-tracking. They critically examine some of the challenges facing rural development and anti-poverty programmes, from gender quotas to institutional arrangements, and provide a list of critical success factors for improving future performance. They suggest that the Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy is evidence of real self-criticism by government and that it may herald a new era in rural development, but that if it too is fast-tracked – as seems likely – it may collapse.

Introduction

This issue of *Development Update* offers a range of perspectives on the role played by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) as well as community-based organisations (CBOs) in development. Some articles give detailed analyses of specific NGOs or CBOs; others provide an overview of the non-profit sector as a whole. Some include positive findings about the value added to development and/or anti-poverty programmes by NGOs and/or CBOs; others offer a more negative perspective on opportunities lost. At the heart of most of the articles – explicit in some, implicit in others – are the complex relationships between civil society and government that have evolved since 1994.

In this opening essay, we review six years of delivering rural development and anti-poverty programmes by the South African government, often in partnership with the private sector and the non-profit sector. We provide some of the context for subsequent articles, as well as a critical analysis.

Limitations

The essay is not comprehensive in the programmes it analyses or the issues it raises. Rather, we have attempted to identify some key challenges facing the implementation and management of rural development and anti-poverty programmes. We critically analyse the programmes and the issues they raise, and then offer some indicators for measuring success. Some statements may be controversial; the article has been written to stimulate open debate.

Our analysis is based mainly on:

- the Community Based Public Works Programme (CBPWP) managed by the Department of Public Works (DPW);
- the Consolidated Municipal Infrastructure Programme (CMIP) of the Department of Provincial and Local Government (DPLG); and
- the Poverty Relief and Infrastructure Investment Fund (PRIIF) of the (then) Department of Welfare and Population Development.

Some important programmes are not covered, and we are aware of the weaknesses that may flow from their exclusion. Despite this, there are important lessons to be learned from the programmes we do analyse.
For example, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) said of the CBPWP:

> *South Africa has probably one of the best public works programmes anywhere. Certainly, in terms of technical design standards and the quality of completed physical infrastructure, the CBPWP surpasses anything that the ILO members of the team have encountered in more*

than 30 developing countries in Africa, Asia and the Pacific. Not only this, but the level of professional integrity among most role players in the CBPWP is, in international terms, outstanding.

(Comment by Colin Relf, ILO team leader, in Everatt *et al* 1997)

The CMIP is widely recognised as among Africa's most ambitious infrastructure delivery vehicles. And the PRIIF marked a major turning point from "welfare as handout" to developmentally sustainable welfare grants, but encountered significant problems.

The findings in this essay are thus drawn from a powerful slate of programmes, which have had uneven success. Our argument should have broader relevance for other rural development programmes.

Part I: Delivering rural development programmes 1994–2000

The 1994–2000 period was marked by differing implementation strategies and policy shifts, and for the purposes of this essay we have segmented the period into three broad phases.

The learning curve (1994–1996): the first phase of delivery, including definition of overall programme direction; poor demographic data; adoption of labour intensive and community-based approaches; various institutional arrangements in operation; capacity challenges; lack of clarity about the role of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) office; deployment of social facilitators; learning to deliver to scale.

Innovation and refinement (1996–1997/8): learning the lessons of the first phase via evaluations; policy amendment and refinement; adoption of delivery via the cluster approach; greater devolution of power (some to provincial government, some to local government); better data and improved targeting; emphasis on economically viable assets; various models for institutional arrangements introduced; greater outsourcing of implementation.

Delivery and stagnation? (1998–2000+): emphasis on delivery within existing frameworks and models; unresolved tensions between Treasury regulations and community-based development; high staff turnover (especially at senior levels); visibly less excitement and innovation within many departments; danger of stagnation and repetition; growing (unofficial) talk of reverting to fast turn-around non-participative delivery.

A fourth phase? There is the possibility of a more positive fourth phase, marked by the recently adopted Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy (ISRDS) and Urban Renewal Strategy (URS). We return to this later.

We briefly outline phases one and two, then spend longer on phase three, the immediate past and current context.

Phase 1: 1994–1996 The learning curve

In the years immediately after the 1994 democratic elections, the common approach to development programmes (especially rural programmes) was to spread the net widely by delivering stand-alone assets to as many poor communities as possible.[1] Many government officials were new in their jobs, and excited by the prospect of delivering the fruits of democracy to the poor. Many of the new public servants were drawn from the NGO sector, and brought with them fresh ideas, energy, and the expectation that delivery could be speedy and flexible. But they worked in departments staffed predominantly by nervous, and often hostile, bureaucrats. They had to rapidly learn the rules of government, and how to cope with the slow and cumbersome tendering system, opaque decision-making hierarchies and the like. Confusion existed about the role of the RDP office as well as about relations between, and the roles of, national and provincial departments.

At a more practical level, the data available for targeting – to ensure that funds reached the poorest members of society – was unreliable.

Institutional arrangements varied – some development programmes were outsourced to NGOs and/or private sector companies, while government sought to undertake others itself. Many NGOs expected to play a prominent role as partners in programmes: some did, but many others were bypassed in favour of private sector companies. In some instances, this reflected the institutional weaknesses of NGOs; in others, government seemed intent on wooing the private sector at the expense of civil society organisations. The implementation aspect of large-scale programmes was experimental and innovation was encouraged. Behind these developments was a sense of excitement, as well as commitment to transformation and delivery. Senior government officials acted as partners in programmes and as managers of those programmes.

Case study 1: The Community Based Public Works Programme

The CBPWP is a useful case study of changing approaches to rural development delivery. In the 1994–5 period, the CBPWP dealt with the problems facing government (described above) by utilising the Independent Development Trust (IDT) to implement the first phase of the programme, the Community Employment Programme (CEP). It bypassed the province of Gauteng because of its relative affluence; used available (though not necessarily reliable) population and unemployment figures for targeting; and fielded the social facilitation expertise of the IDT in pursuance of a community-based approach.

The result? Some 600 assets were delivered to poor communities by the CEP, two-thirds of which were in the three poorest provinces and constructed by poor local residents to high technical standards. The workforce comprised 41 per cent women and 12 per cent youth. On the negative side: the programme pulled people out of existing employment because wages were set too high; training provision was poor (only a quarter of workers received any training); monitoring was patchy and not followed up; and asset maintenance was distinctly weak. Using the IDT – a last-gasp effort by the apartheid government with business to show some awareness of, and concern for, poverty – was also controversial, especially among NGOs. (For more information on delivery, see the Appendix.)

The CBPWP was subsequently implemented by provincial departments of public works between 1995 and 1996/7, following an evaluation of the CEP. Almost 2 000 assets were delivered, again to high technical standards, and based on the principles of participative community-based development. As we saw earlier, the ILO rated the CBPWP (including the CEP) among the best public works programmes in the world.

The specific successes and failures of the CBPWP in this period are not necessarily representative of those in other rural development programmes, which had their own areas of strength and weakness. But the CBPWP does illustrate the steep learning curve that marked the immediate post-1994 period, the commitment to community-based development, the willingness to learn from mistakes, and the sense that government was a partner in programmes rather than their austere manager.

Phase 2: 1996–1997/8 Innovation and refinement

We continue our focus on the CBPWP as a means of illustrating key aspects of the second phase of delivering rural development programmes. The 1997 evaluation of the CBPWP, while positive in many respects, questioned both the type and spread of assets.

Firstly, it noted that educational facilities had comprised half of what the CBPWP delivered. The evaluation proposed a reorientation of the programme to focus on assets that could enhance local economic activity, and labour saving projects that could benefit women in particular (such as accessible water). It also recommended that assets with substantial potential to be labour intensive, such as roads, take priority over those with limited potential for this, such as school buildings.

Secondly, the evaluation argued that in place of providing single, stand-alone assets to individual communities, a cluster approach should be adopted – that is, one which identified developmental nodes and provided a number of mutually reinforcing assets within a defined spatial area (with a concomitant rise in the financial ceiling per community). This was simultaneously developmentally sound and politically risky – while one community might receive a clutch of assets, equally poor communities in neighbouring areas might receive nothing at all, and careful facilitation would be required.

These conclusions mirrored the experiences of senior DPW managers, who formed a Pre-Implementation Task Team (PITT) to develop implementable mechanisms for subsequent phases of the CBPWP. The realigned CBPWP focused on delivering clusters of assets to development nodes. It emphasised economically sustainable assets above others. Significantly, it placed implementation management in the hands of local (instead of provincial) government.

Policy vs. implementation?

It has become something of a truism in many quarters to say that the South African government frequently develops policies that are ambitious and developmentally sound, but cannot be fully implemented for various reasons (including lack of capacity and skills, budgetary problems, and so on). In many instances, this criticism is fair. In others, however, it misses the mark.

For example, the CBPWP set a 50–66 per cent quota for women in the workforce and in decision-making structures; CMIP introduced a target of 50 per cent women workers at the same time. Both are lower than the quotas set by the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF). CMIP went further and set a 15 per cent target for youth employment. In the socio-economic and cultural context of rural South Africa, these may be regarded as unattainable goals. Evaluations across these programmes consistently find that while significant numbers of women may gain employment on projects, they continue to “fetch and carry”, make tea or “help the men”. But the quotas were set with these problems in mind; they were offered as challenges to implementers to find creative ways of meeting them in their various local contexts. Were they over-ambitious? Perhaps. But they pinned government colours to the mast, and challenged implementers – NGOs as well as private sector contractors. They were not unrealistic policy goals, but goals to be achieved over time, and commendable.

In other cases, the criticism seems more appropriate. The strategic changes in the CBPWP were reflected in other government programmes (some were in place before the CBPWP; others followed). The PRIIF, for example, focused on delivering *inter alia* economically sustainable assets (bakeries, poultry farms, market gardens and so on) to poor communities, as preferable to welfare “handouts”. The welfare department adopted a policy that made developmental sense – but it lacked the skills to implement that policy. The field officers of the department were predominantly social workers; they had little or no experience in providing economically sustainable assets or in participatory development. Goal-setting preceded skills development, and the results were predictably poor.

The new South African skill

During this time, South Africa created a new skill, which has become an important post-apartheid profession – social facilitation. Social facilitators are tasked with the initial phases of community participation: once areas have been targeted, facilitators have to explain the programme to communities, get “buy-in” from communities and local leaders, and ensure that local structures are put in place to manage delivery in the area. The facilitators remain in place during the construction phase, to ease relations between local people and “outsiders” – contractors, technical consultants, and the like. Successive evaluations have shown that good social facilitation is a key component of sustainable participative development.

Social facilitation seems an obvious function for NGOs, who pride themselves on their detailed knowledge of local conditions and dynamics. Some NGOs did become involved in carrying out this role; many did not. And social facilitation is now largely the domain of private sector companies and consultants (many, of course, founded by former NGO personnel).

Clustering and integration

We saw earlier how the CBPWP adopted the clustering approach to delivery. “Clusters” rapidly became part of government speak, with the result that over time it has taken on multiple meanings (we return to this below). But for the CBPWP, clustering had a specific meaning: providing mutually reinforcing assets, focused on enhancing economic activity, improving access and labour saving projects, within a defined spatial area and in key development nodes. It was an attempt to enhance the impact of the CBPWP. It also represented an attempt to provide a nuanced and multi-pronged response to poverty, by drawing on a range of assets (a cluster would prioritise economically sustainable assets but could include others, such as educational facilities or community halls), embedded in a participative approach, and seeking to kick-start or nurture local economic growth. As such, however, it implicitly acknowledged the failure of government departments to integrate their activities.

The policy documents of most departments involved in development or anti-poverty activities acknowledge that poverty is multi-faceted, and that responses to it need to be broad-based. Nonetheless, the failure to integrate development activities across departments – and a parallel failure to incorporate the work of parastatals – was and is a key failing of government from 1994. This resulted from a wide range of factors, including *inter alia* turf battles in and between departments, the failure of the RDP office to operate effectively (and reactions to what was seen as its attempt to exert central control), and the division of departments involved in development into sectors.

The failure to integrate planning or delivery impacted on many development and anti-poverty programmes, which became increasingly complex in an attempt to provide a multi-faceted service. Objectives commonly covered a wide range of issues, from the provision of high quality assets, through empowerment and community participation with an emphasis on women and youth, to training local people and building the capacity of local government. Programme teams included national, provincial and cluster or project managers; contractors; social facilitators; technical consultants; and others.

Two points should be made. Firstly, the failure to integrate delivery across government and parastatals was and is a major problem facing government. The ISRDS is based on an explicit acknowledgement of this failure. Secondly, the programmes that some departments devised in seeking to eradicate poverty were complex and had multiple objectives, partly in response to the failure to integrate. They took the South African government's development programmes close to the cutting edge of development delivery world-wide. And – more importantly – many of those programmes were and are highly successful. In other words, the failure to integrate deserves criticism; but this should not obscure the high quality programmes that are in place.

Summary of phase 2

In short, the 1996 to 1997/8 period was marked by openness to evaluation and a willingness to learn from mistakes on the part of government officials. Some programmes were substantially refined, and challenging objectives were set – some realistic (if difficult), others not. The outsourcing of implementation became more widespread. The roles of provincial and local government remained areas of some confusion, and in some instances were strongly contested. Integration remained a key failing. NGO involvement was uneven, while CBO members played important (local) roles in various programmes. Labour intensive methods were successfully implemented by the CBPWP, CMIP, and others, and in programmes run by DWAF.

Government was also changing. Officials better understood their roles and powers, and many departments were grappling with issues of improved management, control over spending, and avoiding the abuse of funds. The sense of purpose and energy that marked the 1994–6 phase remained, in many departments and programmes – but could it be sustained?

Phase 3: 1998–2000+ Delivery and stagnation?

The period from roughly 1998 to the end of the millennium can be characterised as "more of the same": the (revised) programmes retained their basic shape, and many were expanded to new provinces. This flowed in part from access to accurate data that allowed targeting to move beyond KwaZulu-Natal, the Eastern Cape and the Northern Province, identified as the three poorest provinces by a South African Labour and

Development Research Unit/World Bank study (SALDRU/World Bank 1995), and in part from the increased emphasis on delivery and showing results.

"More of the same" is not a blanket criticism – evaluators (local and international) have given extremely positive ratings to many of government's development and anti-poverty programmes. But the stress placed on delivery, coupled with the fear of rolling over development funds (see below), has created enormous pressures within departments, and there is a danger of programmes being rolled out year after year, with less space for learning or creativity as meeting targets becomes the overriding concern. The departure from government of many senior public servants who had driven the programmes, in the period immediately before and after the 1999 general election, also had an effect. Much continuity was lost with them.

The post-1999 stress on delivery has limited the space for reflection and change: achieving targets is of paramount concern. This reflects a change coming both from within government, and as a response to heightened criticism from the media, civil society and others. We now briefly assess key aspects of this last phase.

Context and style

Since the 1999 general election (although it was visible before then), government departments have been driven by the need to spend money, meet targets and avoid rolling over funds. The Treasury has become increasingly powerful, and the performance of departments is measured against indicators that focus on spending against budgets. Delivery is assessed in terms of assets constructed – but not against more qualitative process issues which are critical for the sustainability of those assets. Government officials are measured against their own performance contracts, and have a similar need to spend and show results against the indicators in those contracts.

The tone of government has changed. Officials operate less as programme partners and more as programme managers. Many programmes have expanded their coverage, but are managed by the same (or a smaller) number of staff that managed their earlier, smaller incarnations. This is compounded by the skills crisis in many departments. Officials may still want to learn and grow – but simply lack the time to assess research findings and evaluation recommendations, experiment, and contemplate the best way forward. Evaluators often complain that their work is regarded more as an administrative requirement than an opportunity for departments to examine themselves, identify key challenges, enhance their knowledge, and make appropriate changes.

In other words, two possibly opposing trends have emerged. On the one hand, across government, procedures and management practices have (rightly) been tightened. The need to spend budgets and show results is now ubiquitous, compounded by the need to avoid rolling over funds. On the other hand, departments involved in development are implementing large, complex programmes, many of which are premised on a participative and community-based approach. Community-based development should work at a pace that reflects the nature and dynamics of communities and the complexity of the project. The question is: Can the tensions between these two imperatives be resolved – and if not, which is likely to win out in the end?

Integration

We have already noted that despite considerable rhetoric about the need for integration, it remains elusive. Government departments continue to work in "silos", rarely sharing information with each other, even more rarely undertaking joint planning, and often unaware of what is happening in "other" sectors. This occurs despite the acknowledgement that poverty is multi-faceted and cannot be packaged into sectors.

Targeting exercises are conducted within individual departments. The result has often been the overloading of district councils, as multiple departments deliver programmes in councils' (poor) areas, and route funds and management responsibilities to council level. Roll-overs of funding or delays in implementation have frequently followed. This tendency is likely to increase; there is growing pressure for delivery to be almost entirely located at district council and lower levels, despite the glaring lack of capacity.

Government departments have also largely failed to integrate their work with that of parastatals, a critical area requiring urgent government attention.

On the whole, anti-poverty and rural development programmes are planned by individual government departments, with their own implementing agents, management teams and consultants. They are implemented in the field by a host of social and technical consultants, contractors, cluster managers and others. But there is no cross-programme communication between these different management and implementation teams, and little between government officials.

This is mirrored at the point of implementation. Government departments have found themselves implementing projects in deep rural areas, within kilometres of each other – with duplicate teams and duplicated costs. In other instances, buildings are cabled but left unconnected to a power supply, because Eskom was not included in the planning or execution of the programme. As the ISRDS noted:

> *... projects are often characterised by poor co-ordination, poor consultation, weak participation, poor data and planning, weak institutional and regulatory mechanisms, slow delivery and weak sustainability. More than a few of the projects are judged to be white elephants.* (Office of the Deputy President 2001:28)

Macho-speak, money and misconceptions

Government-speak is rarely illuminating, and became increasingly jargonised in the 1990s. Funds have to be "ring-fenced". Development must be "fast-tracked". Potential partners must "demonstrate spending capacity". The target group must comprise "the poorest of the poor". The list goes on, and new phrases rapidly spread through departments, are endlessly repeated, and soon lose meaning.

"Fast-tracking" is a macho can-do favourite, frequently attached to development and anti-poverty programmes targeting "the poorest of the poor". But it obscures a basic contradiction. Sustainable, community-based development cannot be fast-tracked without suffering serious leakage. This is particularly true where it is meant to benefit the "poorest of the poor". Although this phrase is rarely defined, it must include individuals and groups who are likely to suffer from varying degrees of alienation and anomie. They are the most difficult to reach and organise in already poor communities, and need more facilitation and capacity building than others. Reaching and benefiting them can only occur where sufficient time and resources have been set aside for process matters; the emphasis on speedy delivery, and the time-frames attached to Poverty Relief Fund grants made by the Treasury make this virtually impossible.

Poverty Relief Fund grants are made by the Treasury to provide additional resources to anti-poverty programmes on an annual basis. They are frequently earmarked for "fast-tracking". PRIIF received a first grant of R50m from the Poverty Relief Fund for the new approach to welfare as development, and it had to be spent at high speed or lost. As the department noted: "While there were some successes, there was also concern with the lack of systems and poor accountability measures and sustainability of projects". The recently adopted clustering approach also ran into problems: the cluster committees "were newly formed ... [and] required capacity building to be able to provide the necessary support". (Department of Welfare 2000) But fast-tracking meant that process issues had to be severely compromised, and, as we noted earlier, PRIIF was fielded prior to any skills reorientation for welfare department staff. (For PRIIF delivery data, see the Appendix.)

An auditing firm was appointed (its appointment also had to be "fast-tracked"!) to scrutinise PRIIF disbursements. Some of the problems resulted from limited capacity and inappropriate skills within the welfare department, discussed above, but others are not unique to it. Poverty Relief Fund grants frequently include excessively tight (and unrealistic) time-frames for "fast-tracking" programmes that are complex and based on community participation. No minister has yet refused to accept such a grant, regardless of the conditions attached to it. Public servants and implementers have to "fast-track" processes that are inherently complex and slow. If this were not enough, on at least two occasions Poverty Relief Fund grants have demanded "fast-tracking" from new (PRIIF) or substantially revised programmes (the realigned CBPWP), apparently disregarding the context.

Case study 2: Fast-tracking the Rural Anti-poverty Programme

The DPW was given R85m from the Poverty Relief Fund to "fast-track" rural development in KwaZulu-Natal, the Eastern Cape and Northern Province, in 1998 (the Rural Anti-poverty Programme, commonly known as RAP-85). When the money finally arrived, the department had to commit all R85m in four months or lose the money. It also arrived just as the PITT process (described above) was ending. RAP-85 was the first phase of implementing the realigned CBPWP with new institutional arrangements and a significantly amended hierarchy of assets, which in turn had to be delivered for the first time in clusters.

Two examples show the unevenness of RAP-85, which flows directly from the insistence on "fast-track" delivery. From humble beginnings at a local school, where a group of women from Mongoaneng village in Ga-Mamabolo got together to fight malnutrition in their families, the Mongoaneng garden now supports 47 families. A fence, storage facility, electrically-operated irrigation system and water tank were provided by RAP-85. The funds have made it possible for the women to support their families; they also sell fresh vegetables to the local community and a local supermarket. Success flowed from strengthening an existing local initiative and investing in women (who have been shown to provide greater social returns on investment than men). But the women were already organised around economic activities, had access to some resources, and may therefore not have fitted a precise definition of "the poorest of the poor".

Kgoara pre-school, located not too far from the garden, boasts a modern building and appliances thanks to RAP-85. However, they cannot be utilised to benefit the children. The building has been wired but remains unconnected to the national grid (even though electricity lines stop less than 1km from the building), and there is no water supply. Identical problems recurred across other RAP-85 projects.

High-speed rural development can work under specific conditions, or with realistic objectives – but it can also backfire through rushed planning and/or implementation. It can work where funds augment existing initiatives that have sufficient capacity to absorb and use these funds. This allows the programme to focus on delivery rather than process matters. Community participation in planning and design is limited, and assets are provided to groups that have already organised themselves, often around economic activities, and who may therefore not represent "the poorest of the poor". "Fast-tracking" obliges implementers to focus on asset construction and delivery; and limits or disregards the time needed for process matters.

The lesson seems clear: sustainable community-based development targeting "the poorest of the poor" cannot be fast-tracked. It may achieve some success in specific circumstances – such as when there are local initiatives with the capacity to grow rapidly – but this is at the expense of a key objective, namely identifying and incorporating "the poorest of the poor".

Criticism

The third of our phases is also marked by growing criticism of government, over a wide range of areas and from many sectors, notably the media. This has been widely discussed elsewhere and we do not dwell on it here, save to make two short points.

Roll-overs

Firstly, the rolling over of development funds routinely generates massive criticism from civil society, the media, opposition political parties and others. The need to avoid rolling over funds is now paramount in many departments. In many instances, the criticism is deserved, because roll-overs have been the result of poor planning, management or execution.

But roll-overs are not by definition a bad thing. If we accept the points made above – that community participation is slow, uneven and rarely matches financial calendars or planning documents – then roll-overs may be unavoidable. Moreover, where funds are unspent because processes are incomplete and communities are unready to partner a programme, rolling over funds should be a sign of good, not bad, management. The alternative – which has been used – is that funds are "dumped" on inappropriate and unsustainable projects. This is an issue that Treasury officials, as well as those outside government making the criticism, should grapple with. Roll-overs should be assessed individually and in context, and criticism should be grounded and appropriate.

NGOs

Secondly, NGOs are frequently their own worst enemy. Many wish to be independent and critical *while* implementing government projects with government money. Some have used the media to air critical views while being involved in government programmes. Others have tried to use old political connections to win favour or to reverse decisions made by departmental officials. There is no doubt fault on both sides, and many criticisms levelled at government by NGOs have been accurate. But before tendering for government work, NGOs need to carefully assess the implications for their own *modus operandi*; they must also carefully assess the hostility they generate among public servants when going over their heads to ministers or the press. NGOs – some, anyway – still exhibit signs of a "culture of entitlement" where government development funds are concerned. This is a seriously misplaced notion in 2001.

Delivery vs. community-based development?

Finally, a more worrying aspect of the post-1999 context, and particularly of the emphasis on delivery, is the growing number of public servants who privately question the efficacy of community-based development compared with traditional, fast turn-around construction methods.

Community-based development is slow, uneven, difficult and almost never in sync with financial calendars or delivery targets. But it is also a prerequisite for sustainability in the operation and maintenance phases. The private sector can deliver assets at scale and speed – but with severely restricted community participation. This may help meet delivery targets, but local and international experience shows that it is not a sustainable approach to rural development. It will shift communities from being partners to being recipients, with a concomitant drop in local ownership, and a negative impact on operation and maintenance. This is not policy, but is increasingly (if informally) discussed, and will be an important area to watch in the future.

Civil society organisations

Partnerships with CBOs and NGOs have been a marked feature of many rural development programmes. CBOs have played an important role in providing local people to sit on the project, and cluster committees that oversee planning and implementation. Many remain involved in project operation. Some of the most successful projects have been those that expanded existing CBO initiatives. Again, however, time is a key factor: CBOs commonly require capacity-building and skills transfers in order to play their role, but the emphasis is on construction and delivery, not process.

The situation regarding NGOs is less clear. Large NGOs – notably Mvula Trust and the IDT – are really "quangos" (quasi-NGOs), and operate as implementation agents for government. In some cases this has created confusion over their role. Are they funders, implementing agents or managers? Or all three at once? What characteristics do they share with more traditional definitions of NGOs? Can they provide the flexible, localised and nuanced input usually associated with NGOs? These issues are discussed by Moagi Ntsime, Edgar Pieterse and others elsewhere in this issue.

NGOs have been approached by various government departments to become implementation managers. The realignment of the CBPWP, for example, included a focused attempt to enrol NGOs. Many were found to lack the infrastructure and skills to manage large government grants. Others had capacity, and subsequently played a largely positive role in the programme. And some chose not to diminish their independent and critical stance by joining government as partners. Some of those who lacked the capacity to manage funds took their rejection as evidence of government hostility to NGOs: some lobbied senior politicians on the issue; others voiced their unhappiness through the media. And relations soured.

CBOs have played an important role in many rural development programmes. (See Moagi Ntsime's article in this issue.) However, there have also been many instances where successful CBOs emerged and soon became recipients of multiple grants from different departments wanting to use them. Some survived; but many collapsed through overload.

Summary of phase 3

The third phase is dominated by the need for government departments to roll out programmes, spend budgets and show results. Many programmes continue to provide a quality service, but integration remains elusive.

As the bureaucracy of government is brought under a tighter rein and performance agreements abound, the inherent tension between community-based development and the meeting of financial targets is becoming more evident. The worst-case scenario is that the Poverty Relief Fund grants, with their unrealistic time-frames compromising the basic tenets of community-based development, are an extreme example of a trend that will over time emerge across all government departments involved in development.

Phase 4: Towards the future

We noted earlier that a new phase of development delivery may emerge under the aegis of the Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy (ISRDS) and the Urban Renewal Strategy (URS). There is insufficient space to describe and analyse the strategies in detail here, and anyway they can only be properly evaluated once implementation begins. The ISRDS is more developed than the URS, and already in its pilot phase, and we describe it briefly below.

The Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy in brief

The ISRDS is premised on a frank appraisal of many of the weaknesses we have discussed. (It is often harder-hitting than we have been.) (Office of the Deputy President 2001) Above all, it acknowledges the failure to provide appropriate, integrated services to the poor, and comprises a mechanism for addressing that failure.

The ISRDS will inevitably run into problems once it is implemented, and can be criticised from a number of angles. But it shows that government has been reflecting critically and honestly on its own performance. The ISRDS represents a creative and ambitious attempt to address weaknesses, deepen the impact of government delivery, and bolster local capacity and participation. It strongly suggests that government has not yet reached a plateau on the learning curve that began in 1994.

The ISRDS seeks to provide an integrated response to poverty using existing programmes, but dramatically shifts the emphasis from central planning and supply to a local and demand-driven process. At the core of future development delivery is the Integrated Development Plan (IDP). Municipalities and other local government structures have to facilitate processes in their area, ensuring broad participation, and develop lists of local needs and prioritise them. They then approach the relevant departments to match need with provision. The ultimate goal is to provide an integrated set of services to match the various needs identified by communities themselves.

The ISRDS is both ambitious and fragile. It rests heavily on the ability of local government structures to undertake a genuinely participative process in identifying and prioritising needs, and on their having the capacity to manage and monitor implementation, operation and maintenance.

Will it work? Can it work?

As we noted above, the ISRDS must be assessed once implementation has begun. But it is fair to predict that if the ISRDS is “fast-tracked”, it will fail: capacity needs at local level are enormous and cannot be provided overnight. If the ISRDS is allowed to unfold slowly, so that lessons can be learned and amendments made where needed, it has a better chance of success.

There is a growing body of opinion in some government quarters that all delivery should be sourced to district councils and other organs of local government, and largely removed from national departments. As a 10 or 20 year goal, this is correct; but pressure is mounting for its almost immediate enactment. This should worry everyone involved in development, and must be carefully monitored. The role played by Treasury officials in particular should be closely scrutinised.

Part II: Key challenges in rural development

The first part of this essay provided an overview of the 1994–2000 period. In this part we analyse some of the challenges facing programme managers and implementers. In the final part, we offer recommendations for improving performance and for helping to meet these challenges.

Empowerment

Empowerment is a common objective of rural development and anti-poverty programmes, though rarely defined in any detail; it has as many meanings as there are people discussing it. A more rigorous (and possibly programme-specific) definition is required. Currently, providing relevant, quality training is taken to be part of empowerment. So is the provision of opportunities for local people to make management-level decisions about projects (such as selecting the project type and location, participating in discussions about wage levels and worker recruitment, etc). Taken together, these can give new skills and new confidence – both important for the post-project context.

Providing quality training to workers has been a conspicuous failing of many rural development programmes. Training must be prioritised and resourced in current and future programmes, and should be equitably available to all project workers. Some programmes only provide basic on-the-job instruction; others offer technical as well as life-skills and HIV/AIDS inputs. The South African context suggests that the latter approach should be followed in all development and anti-poverty programmes. If this raises the administrative costs of a programme – a common international indicator of efficiency – that may be a sacrifice worth making.

Sustainability

Sustainability is also a widely quoted but infrequently defined objective. In the context of community-based programmes, sustainability includes *inter alia* the physical integrity of the asset; the appropriate utilisation of the asset by the entire target group; and avoiding the monopolisation of an asset by the elite. It may also include support after the construction phase, an area many government departments have shied away from in attempting to limit recurrent costs. It also includes maintenance of the asset.

An enormous body of research shows that sustainability is significantly enhanced by using a community-based approach. (Many argue that sustainability can *only* be achieved through such an approach.) Communities that have helped plan, design and construct an asset are more likely to use it and look after it. The conventional wisdom in institutions such as the World Bank has it that user fees should be charged for such assets, to avoid government facing recurrent costs; in reality, however, they often create barriers for the very poor.

Maintenance

One of the major planning weaknesses in government's development and anti-poverty programmes is maintenance. In the early phases of implementation, the issue was frequently forgotten. At other times, it was obscured by confusion over the ownership of completed assets. It is also less "sexy" than project delivery, and frequently occupies a position at the bottom of meeting agendas.

Maintenance can be strategically used to enhance local economic activity. This is most easily achieved if project committees are formally constituted and tender for maintenance contracts. Assuming they have the skills and capacity to undertake the work, the "recurrent costs" of maintenance become part of ongoing empowerment. Unfortunately, this is not taking place.

With the formal transformation of local government now complete, it is vital that maintenance responsibilities are made explicit and clear, and budgets allocated accordingly. If that is done, it should take care of future assets. But we also believe that government should commission a national audit of all assets provided to date, in order to assess their functionality and develop a strategy for short-term repair and longer-term maintenance.

HIV/AIDS

HIV/AIDS poses a direct threat to sustainability. The South African epidemic is already restructuring the demography of rural areas. There are thousands of AIDS orphans, and child-headed households will become increasingly common.[2] Children – especially girl children – will be withdrawn from school to care for the sick, and to increase household incomes. Research commissioned by the DPW has shown that adults who worked on the CBPWP and received training – and who were meant to have been able to enhance local economic activity – are already dying of AIDS. (Everatt 2000a; Jennings and Smith 2001)

Setting aside the heated debate over government's understanding of, and responses to, HIV/AIDS, the fact remains that few (if any) departments have considered the impact the epidemic will have on virtually every aspect of their development programmes.

Government is committed to outlawing child labour – but can anti-poverty programmes targeting "the poorest of the poor" refuse employment to children heading poor rural households? And if they do, how else can these children be provided with income-generating opportunities? Are programmes offering assets that can benefit this emerging, highly vulnerable group? Should people with HIV/AIDS comprise a new target group for employment?

The questions go on and on, but we lack the space here to analyse HIV/AIDS and sustainability in detail. It is nonetheless vital that all departments involved in development urgently address the multiple issues raised by HIV/AIDS, and make (potentially difficult) policy decisions now.

Targeting

Put simply, targeting means asking how we maximise gains to the poor at a given cost. Without targeting, programmes can do no more than spread income, and may suffer widespread leakage (i.e. the benefits may go to those not necessarily in need). The issue is how to deliver programme benefits to the poor efficiently.

Targeting requires a mechanism to distinguish the poor from the "non-poor". Since there is no universal definition of poverty, identifying this mechanism is a key aspect of targeting. Information on vulnerable groups needs to be reliable and widely available. The cost of targeting must not outweigh its benefits – the system to administer and manage the programme must be as simple as possible.

At present, there is no coherent, comprehensive targeting initiative in which those government departments working in the realm of poverty alleviation participate. Statistics South Africa (SSA) recently released a profile of poverty in the country. Almost immediately some government officials, notably from the Treasury, argued that the model outlined in the SSA report should form the basis of targeting for government as a whole. But the report, *Measuring Poverty*, did not provide one model; rather, it "examines four different ways in which poverty can be measured in South Africa at present". (Statistics South Africa 2000)

Different departments have different definitions of poverty and different target groups. A multiplicity of targeting exercises is a necessary (and good) thing. However, it is important that an overall targeting framework is put in place, using data that can serve government as a whole, and that all departments can access. Such a framework would facilitate programme-specific or department-specific targeting exercises.

It is also important that targeting is as detailed as possible, and includes the specific locations of projects, not just the district council where they are located. This would avoid duplication and overlap, and minimise opportunities to influence the precise location and beneficiary communities of projects.

Gender and quotas

Many rural development and anti-poverty programmes include quotas for the employment of women; but we have seen that women frequently occupy subservient positions on projects. Evaluations have also shown that women are commonly paid less than men, work for shorter periods of time than men, and are less likely than men to receive training. The CMIP, for example, has an impressive track record for providing training – 311 963 training days had been provided by September 2000. But women comprised just 13 per cent of trainees. (Department of Provincial and Local Government 2000)

Labour-intensive programmes, utilising a community-based approach, provide multiple opportunities for acting on gender issues. Mechanisms must be devised to ensure that women and men enjoy equal opportunities for employment and training. Assets can be provided that benefit women specifically, ranging from crèches to easily accessible clean water. Quotas can be extended to cover the representation of women in the community/cluster committees that manage implementation at the local level. Recent diagnostic studies commissioned by the DPW have shown that where women comprise the majority of project managers at local level, projects are more efficiently run. (Department of Public Works 2000)

If quotas are to be more than administrative requirements, careful monitoring is vital, and must be followed by intervention. Even where quotas are set, they are often not realised. In the CMIP, despite gender quotas, women remain severely under-represented in the workforce. The June-September 2000 *Quarterly Report* noted, in section 5.8, that women accounted for just 10 per cent of workers – itself a 1 per cent increase and the result of "an effort … to increase employment opportunities available to women". (Department of Provincial and Local Government 2000)

The issues confronting implementers are real: many rural communities (men and women) have clear ideas about who should access work opportunities from development programmes, and about what work is appropriate for women. In some instances, raffles have been held to select workers for projects; women who drew a marked piece of paper permitting them to work gave it to their husband or partner. (Everatt *et al* 2001) Sexist attitudes pervade society as a whole, including social facilitators, contractors, technical consultants, project and programme managers, and communities at project level. We do not seek to minimise the challenges facing rural development programmes.

However, it is clear that with commitment and creativity, women can be enrolled in rural development projects in large numbers and play a meaningful role. It is also clear that quotas that are not monitored are of no value, as are those where monitoring does not lead to remedial action. Without accurate and timeous monitoring data, no-one can know how many women are being employed; what work they are doing; whether or not they are receiving training; how much they are being paid; and so on. The same applies to other target groups such as youth and people with disabilities (see below). It is vital that rural development programmes implement monitoring systems (many do) *and* analyse monitoring data (many do not).

Youth

Most rural development programmes include youth in their list of target groups, although few set quotas for youth employment (as they do for women). No programme boasts a successful track record in recruiting youth in large numbers. (In addition, age definitions of youth vary widely; few are in alignment with the legal, 14–35 years definition provided by the National Youth Commission Act of 1996.)

Where the 1994–97 CBPWP workforce was 41 per cent female, it was only 12 per cent youth (using the legal definition provided by the National Youth Commission Act of 1996). CMIP presents the opposite picture: while women account for just 10 per cent of workers, youth account for 14 per cent. CMIP data includes rural and urban projects, which may partly explain the difference. (Department of Provincial and Local Government 2000) (No age definition of youth is provided in the CMIP *Quarterly Report*, and we may not be comparing like with like.) People between the ages of 14 and 35 years comprise 40 per cent of the South African population. (For CMIP delivery data, see the Appendix.)

The failure to attract youth to development programmes reflects a broader problem. *Development Update* vol. 3 no. 2, focusing on the youth sector, highlighted the fact that every major youth initiative of the 1990s collapsed. These included civil society initiatives such as the National Youth Development Forum as well as government-driven initiatives such as the Reconstruction Workforce. The much discussed National Youth Service remains a paper idea.[3]

Anecdotal evidence suggests that there are problems on both sides. On the one hand, young people in rural areas enjoy significantly better educational opportunities than their elders, are commonly described as "cheeky" or "disrespectful", and are not offered employment. On the other hand, it also appears that many young people are less than enthusiastic about working for low wages in labour intensive programmes.

We do not adequately understand the push and pull factors that affect the attitudes of rural youth to development programmes; nor the attitudes of adults to youth participation in such programmes. Research is needed to better understand the issues; it must also provide concrete recommendations for enhancing youth participation in rural development programmes. Improved facilitation is also required if youth are to be drawn into such programmes in significant numbers.

Disability

Many rural development programmes include a quota (commonly in the area of 1–1.5 per cent) for employing people with disabilities, although even these relatively low targets seem difficult to achieve. Part of the problem reflects social attitudes that continue to regard disability as shameful and to be hidden. But it also derives from complexity within the term "disability". People who are sight impaired or hearing impaired – the two categories most commonly thought of – can do very different types of work from a paraplegic or quadriplegic, for example.[4]

If the quotas are to have meaning, implementing agents must be sensitised about disability and made aware of the wide range of jobs that can be undertaken by people with different types of disability. This must occur at site level, where communities and contractors implement projects. It is the people who operate at this level who need to understand why people with disabilities should be recruited and what work they can do.

Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring comprises the regular collection and analysis of data to inform management decisions at all levels, and is essentially a management function. Evaluation is the periodic assessment of both internal efficiency and external impact.

Monitoring

The post-1999 period witnessed a flurry of tenders for monitoring systems; a recent study commissioned by the DPLG found enormous variation in the reliability, quality and utility of monitoring data across line function departments. In particular, it noted that monitoring is still widely regarded as "policing", and that monitoring data is rarely consulted when management decisions are taken. (Atkinson and Everatt 2001)

Monitoring has been an area of conspicuous failure for most anti-poverty and development programmes. Systems have been non-existent or have malfunctioned and have failed to provide adequate or accurate data; system outputs have been un- or under-analysed; and some systems have been so high-tech that they could not work in poor rural areas. Some programmes have suffered from a number of these problems simultaneously.

The report commissioned by the DPLG (*ibid*.) proposed a national monitoring framework, premised on the need to improve (and in some cases create) monitoring systems. The DPLG is currently assessing the report and its recommendations; their response will be important and should itself be carefully assessed. What is clear is that on the whole, monitoring delivery is weak and unsystematic, and requires urgent improvement.

Evaluation

Where evaluations are concerned, however, the situation is somewhat different. Government departments have commissioned many evaluations, and as we showed earlier, many departments have shown a willingness to learn from those evaluations. However, in the rush to spend money and meet targets, evaluations have become more an administrative requirement than an opportunity for learning and changing.

This also derives from ongoing use of summative evaluations, which tell government what went wrong when the programme is complete and no remedial action can be taken. Evaluators should be deployed from programme conception onwards. Each step in the cycle of programme management should be tested and analysed. The summative evaluation should be the last step in the evaluation process – not the only step.

Institutional arrangements

Institutional arrangements differ across government's various anti-poverty and development programmes; they have also changed over time within individual programmes. There is no blueprint for institutional arrangements for rural development programmes, and none is offered here, but we note that institutional arrangements must be based on an accurate assessment of the capacity in provincial and local spheres of government. The concentration of delivery in the three provinces defined as the poorest in South Africa led to enormously increased workloads for district councils, which lacked capacity before the programmes began, and remain seriously under-resourced.

Part III: Conclusion

Many of South Africa's rural development programmes have been innovative, creative and well managed, and are highly regarded. Some are strong where others are weak – the CMIP, for example, seems to be far more effective than the CBPWP in the amount of training it provides for workers, but they share the problem of significantly fewer women or youth accessing training than men. We hope we have highlighted the positive aspects sufficiently – but our focus has been on problem areas, precisely so that the ISRDS (and the URS) can be based on an accurate understanding of current problems and provide (or help provide) solutions to problems, rather than repeating them.

Common problems

There are common problems facing rural development programmes (not all are true of all programmes), including, in summary, the following.

Government

- A failure to address the tension between community-based development and the insistence on monies being spent within a given financial period.
- Ongoing turf battles within and between departments.
- Ongoing tensions regarding the appropriate roles of provincial and local government in rural development.

Integration

- Patchy (at best) cross-departmental collaboration.
- Virtually no integration at the point of delivery.
- No integration of government and parastatals.

Delivery

- An ongoing reliance on “easy” building projects, such as community halls and classrooms, and restricted delivery of economically viable assets.
- A widespread failure to design, fund and implement a maintenance strategy for assets that have been delivered.
- Multiple funding of successful rural CBOs by government departments, leading to overload.

Target group

- A failure to provide training to large numbers of people (thus losing important spin-offs for job creation via skills learned, local-level maintenance, etc).
- A failure to recruit significant numbers of youth.
- A failure to ensure that women get equal opportunities on projects.
- A failure to recruit significant numbers of people with disabilities.
- A failure to ensure that these three categories of workers are represented in local decision-making structures.
- Ongoing dominance of programmes (as workers, in community/cluster committees, in accessing training, etc.) by men in the 25–45 years and older age cohorts.
- Weak monitoring, allowing targets to be missed.

Monitoring and evaluation

- Weak monitoring systems, and/or a failure to react to problems identified by monitoring systems.
- Absence of a monitoring culture and ethos within government.
- Emphasis on summative evaluations.
- Evaluations commissioned and read by single departments, which focus only on “their” programmes.

What is at the heart of these problems?

The following key factors seem to lie at the heart of the problems listed above.

- The absence of a mechanism for integrated planning, targeting, monitoring and information sharing.
- The absence of functional monitoring systems and a central database providing accurate information to government and the public.
- The absence of integrated planning and implementation.
- Inadequate maintenance of completed assets.
- The lack of space and time for developing new ideas and approaches based on an understanding of common problems and common successes.
- The absence of integrated evaluations i.e. across programmes/disciplines/departments).
- The absence of a “monitoring culture” where managers analyse monitoring data in order to learn lessons and change direction where required.
- Declining interest in research findings.
- Unresolved tensions between community-based delivery and Treasury regulations.

Critical success factors

The ISRDS and the URS have been designed in part to resolve some of the problems identified in this article, and to deepen the impact of government’s development and anti-poverty programmes. As we have shown, the challenges facing them are considerable – but (we believe) far from insurmountable.

In our opinion, if the two strategies are to succeed in transforming delivery, they should take careful note of the factors that we have argued contribute significantly to the failure of South African rural development programmes. For example, unclear institutional arrangements can lead (and have led) to confusion and conflict within programmes, with a knock-on effect on delivery; non-integrated targeting and planning have led to duplication and non-functional assets; and so on.

The following factors seem to be crucial to success when correctly applied, and the cause of failure when misapplied.

Integrated planning and implementation

Sustainable rural development is multi-faceted, potentially involving multiple government departments as well as NGO and private sector players. If integration or co-ordination are to occur, they must (a) be specified in planning and financial documents; and (b) begin at the programme design stage.

Time-frames

Community-based development works at a speed somewhere between what implementers want and the rhythms of the community itself. Imposing time-frames on spending forces the pace, unbalances the programme and can easily lead to failure.

Community-based development

Community-based development is the most effective method of providing sustainable rural development. Local people need to become partners from the outset, participating in asset choice, planning, asset location decisions, worker selection and implementation management. Local CBOs make powerful partners. Delivery is also enhanced where traditional leaders become programme partners.

Financial flows

Government is extremely slow in paying contractors. Where emerging enterprises are concerned, delayed payments can be fatal. Workers on projects must be paid the correct amount and on time. Financial flows must be speeded up.

Facilitation

A key South African innovation has been social facilitation, to provide an interface between the community on the one hand, and the contractors, technical consultants, project and programme managers and government on the other. Social facilitators' role (when successfully executed) has repeatedly been shown to be critical to success, but standardisation and skills training are needed to provide a quality service in all parts of the country.

Asset choice

Rural development programmes must develop a clear strategic approach to the types of asset they provide, and not deviate from their strategy other than in exceptional instances. The emphasis on directly productive assets delivered in clusters is complex and requires considerable facilitation, but should be maintained.

Targeting

A central database that can generate targeting reports for all departments would improve efficiency and represent significant cost saving (departments currently have to purchase census and other data). It would also allow monitoring of the specific location of projects.

Target groups I

The issue of setting quotas for all target groups – especially youth – needs to be considered as an across-the-board requirement, and mechanisms must be devised for helping to meet those targets. More work is needed in the areas of youth and people with disabilities.

Target groups II

The impact of HIV/AIDS on rural areas is going to be devastating. It will stretch already limited infrastructures, lower household income and productivity, and negatively impact on education as children are withdrawn from school to care for the sick. All delivery departments must urgently assess the implications of HIV/AIDS for all aspects of their programmes.

Operation and maintenance

Providing assets to impoverished rural communities is the first step – what matters is who in the community can use the asset, and who will maintain and repair the asset. Operation and maintenance planning and costing must be given greater prominence.

Maintenance

Maintenance funds can be used to deepen the impact of projects, where community structures can tender for maintenance contracts. This should be encouraged in all development programmes, and negotiated with district councils.

Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring systems must be simple, accurate, and rigorously analysed so that management decisions are based on sound information. Evaluators should be appointed when a programme begins, so that they can provide ongoing inputs as the programme unfolds, rather than being restricted to summative evaluations that cannot impact on implementation.

Institutional arrangements I

Rural development programmes commonly employ a large number of private sector companies, consultants and NGOs. Roles and responsibilities must be very clearly specified from the outset, as must lines of accountability. This is vital if government (and not the preferences of consultants or successful bidding companies) is to drive rural development.

Institutional arrangements II

The roles and responsibilities of national, provincial and local government must be clear and agreed to well before implementation begins. Institutional arrangements must also be based on an honest assessment of the capacity of local and provincial government.

Appendix: Delivery data

It is difficult to access accurate figures for the total numbers of assets delivered by anti-poverty programmes, by asset type and/or by province. One programme will provide figures by asset, another by financial allocation; some analyse delivery by province, others by urban/rural location. This illustrates the need for improved monitoring and a database of all assets delivered to date. Data here for the CBPWP was provided by the DPW (personal communication from Monitoring and Evaluation Unit, DPW, 2001); for CMIP it was sourced from the programme monitoring system reports (Department of Provincial and Local Government 2000); for PRIIF it was taken from departmental documentation. (See for example Department of Welfare 2000.)

CBPWP delivery

Between 1994 and 1996/7, the CBPWP delivered 1 199 assets to poor communities, overwhelmingly in rural areas. RAP-85, which delivered 162 assets to the three poorest provinces, was the first phase of the realigned CBPWP. The CBPWP has subsequently delivered 1 469 assets. The CBPWP has thus delivered a total of 2 830 assets since 1994.

Subsequent to the realignment of the CBPWP, a wide range of assets has been made available to communities, as shown below. These figures reflect projects funded by the national department. Additional CBPWP projects may be taking place, funded by provincial departments, but are not shown here.

TABLE 1: Assets delivered by RAP-85 and the CBPWP
(1998–2001 financial years)

ASSET TYPE	TOTAL	ASSET TYPE	TOTAL
Access road	7	Piggery	3
Bakery	2	Pottery	1
Bridge	17	Poultry	27
Brickyard	1	Pre-school	89
Community centre	21	Production centre	4
Community garden	5	Refurbishment	38
Craft market	10	Road upgrading	236
Crèche	71	School ablutions	92

Dam	2	School classrooms	326
Dipping facility	6	Sports field ablutions	7
Donga rehabilitation	64	Sports field	67
Erosion control	15	Sports hall/centre	8
Fence	26	Stock dam	4
Food lot	2	Stream crossing	22
Food processing	7	Supply depot	1
Food production	3	Taxi rank/upgrade	32
Food silo	2	Vegetable garden	81
Irrigation	35	Waste collection	2
Market stalls	63	Water supply	66
Multi-purpose hall	87	Workshop	11
New road	60	Unspecified	8

The provincial spread of assets shows that the three poorest provinces have been the main beneficiaries of the CBPWP, while those with better infrastructures (Gauteng, the Northern Cape and the Western Cape) have not been included. A third of projects went to the Eastern Cape (36 per cent), a third to KwaZulu-Natal (34 per cent), and 16 per cent to the Northern Province. CBPWP assets continue to be dominated by educational facilities, which (taken together) comprise a third (31 per cent) of all assets delivered since 1998, despite the attempt to focus the CBPWP on productive or labour saving assets. Road upgrading and the construction of new roads and rural access roads are growing categories of assets, and a wide range (but limited number) of productive items has been provided for poor communities.

CMIP delivery

The CMIP remains somewhat more urban than rural focused, although a significant amount of work is being done in rural areas. Projects in rural areas received 47 per cent of funds allocated by September 2000 (up from 43 per cent in the preceding quarter). A total of 10.4 million rural residents were cited as beneficiaries of CMIP projects by September 2000, alongside 23.4 million urban residents.

The CMIP allocates funds to six project categories. The following tables reflect available data. Total financial allocations per project category are reported; financial allocations by urban/rural location are reported within provinces; but no combined data are available. These kinds of reporting inconsistencies, within and between programmes, must be ironed out in future if any accurate national picture is to be available.

TABLE 2: CMIP financial allocation per project category
(end September 2000)

PROJECT TYPE	**FINANCIAL ALLOCATION**

Water	R1 370m
Sanitation	R425m
Roads	R640m
Solid waste	R66m
Community lighting	R116m
Storm water	R152m
Training	R2m
Total	**R2 771m**

Water projects dominate CMIP, accounting for 50 per cent of all funds allocated by September 2000 (a total of R2 771m). Allocations to water projects were more than twice those for the next biggest categories – roads and related storm water management.

When CMIP financial allocations are analysed within provinces across an urban/rural axis, we find – importantly – that even in heavily rural provinces such as KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape, the CMIP is also allocating substantial sums of money to pockets of deep poverty found in urban areas. Many rural development programmes are criticised for "bypassing" urban poverty; if composite data were available, a more accurate picture could be provided that might in part counter such arguments.

TABLE 3: CMIP financial allocation to projects per province
(end September 2000, all provinces)

PROVINCE	RURAL ALLOCATION	URBAN ALLOCATION
Eastern Cape	R343m	R168m
Free State	R87m	R90m
Gauteng	R23m	R403m
KwaZulu-Natal	R215m	R362m
Mpumalanga	R99m	R41m
North West	R167m	R142m
Northern Cape	R53m	R31m
Northern Province	R205m	R47m
Western Cape	R105m	R190m

PRIIF delivery

The Department of Welfare's PRIIF in 1998/9 covered 2 075 projects with a 3-year budget allocation of R203m, and built on the R50m grant from the Poverty Relief Fund in the preceding year. Monies were allocated as follows (again, the table reflects available data).

TABLE 4: PRIIF project and financial allocation per province (February 1999)

	PROJECTS PER PROVINCE	
	NUMBER	**PERCENTAGE**
Eastern Cape	643	31
Free State	185	9
Gauteng	125	6
KwaZulu-Natal	370	18
Mpumalanga	195	9
Northern Cape	118	6
Northern Province	195	9
North West	142	7
Western Cape	102	5
Total	**2 075**	**100**

PRIIF allocated 15 per cent of funds to starting projects from scratch; another 27 per cent was spent on emerging projects; half the money (50 per cent) was allocated to expanding nascent, community-based projects; while just 8 per cent went to existing and "mature" projects. The emphasis on supporting nascent community-based projects has risks, and common problems uncovered by a mid-term review included illiteracy, poor accounting, weak budgeting and poor financial records among many beneficiaries; it also found low levels of project activity.

PRIIF funds were allocated to the following main categories: agriculture (32 per cent), clothing (24 per cent), "multiple objectives" (14 per cent) and manufacturing (12 per cent). In all, 72 per cent of projects were located in rural areas, 27 per cent in urban areas, and 2 per cent in informal settlements.

PRIIF calculations suggested that over the course of the programme, women would get 67 per cent of all employment created, youth 24 per cent and men just 11 per cent – a significantly better performance than the other programmes studied here. (We are not aware of any verification of these projected figures.)

Notes

1 Throughout this article, 'asset' refers to the physical infrastructure provided by the programmes, such as classrooms, community gardens and so on.

2 See for example Cullinan (2001).

3 For an overview of youth in the 1990s, see Everatt (2000b).

4 See for example Schneider (2000).

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