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Critical analysis of Modimolle local municipality labour-intensive projects (2002-2007)

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ABSTRACT

The 2002 Stellenbosch African National Congress Policy Conference discussed and agreed on a short- to medium-term programme aimed at reducing unemployment and alleviating poverty. Subsequently, the Republic of South Africa's ruling political party, the African National Congress, announced the Expanded Public Works Programme through President Thabo Mbeki's "State of the Nation" address in February 2003. The President's announcement endorsed the Government's adoption of the position towards correcting unemployment levels in South Africa. However, during November 2002 Modimolle Local Municipality (formerly known as "Nylstroom") had already embarked on an on-the-job labour-intensive programme. The programme was intended to introduce and implement labour-intensive construction methods in all the Municipality's infrastructure projects. The above background formed the basis for the purpose of this research project which aims to discuss, analyse and evaluate Modimolle Local Municipality's nine (9) – six (6) water projects (including the pilot project) and three (3) sewer projects – labour-intensive infrastructure projects undertaken between November 2002 and March 2007 in comparison with experience gained on similar projects in Africa, with specific reference to their contribution to job creation. The research found that the success of Modimolle's programme was due to long-term political support; adequate training; the availability and willingness of unskilled people to be employed as casual labourers; the pilot project that was carried-out before the main or core programme, and the ability to transfer experience and lessons learnt from the pilot project to the other projects. The research concludes that labour-intensive construction methods are economically feasible for water and sewer infrastructure projects and can reduce unemployment and alleviate poverty.

KEYWORDS:

Expanded Public Works Programme, Modimolle labour-intensive work programme, construction projects, construction methods.