



UNIVERSITY OF
WESTERN CAPE

ASASWEI SOCIAL WORK CONFERENCE 2017

“IN THIS LIFE ONE MUST LIVE AND
NOT SURVIVE”: DAY LABOURERS’
BARRIERS TO SUSTAINABLE LIVING

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INTRODUCTION

- Based on the findings of a case study conducted in Mbekweni, Western Cape Province;
- Title: Social Justice Vulnerabilities and marginalised communities: A case study of day labourers in Mbekweni;
- During the study, barriers to a sustainable living were clearly visible.

EXISTING LITERATURE

- A critical feature of the South African society is **unemployment**;
- Day labouring has emerged as a worldwide phenomenon, with a steady increase in the number of people congregating each day on street corners, waiting on someone to offer them a job;
- Day labour work is a survival strategy;

EXISTING LITERATURE CONT..

- In South Africa, at least 45 000 day labourers congregate at more than 1 000 informal hiring sites;
- Studies conducted this far indicates that day-labour work is characterised by low pay, hazardous conditions on the job and tremendous income insecurity

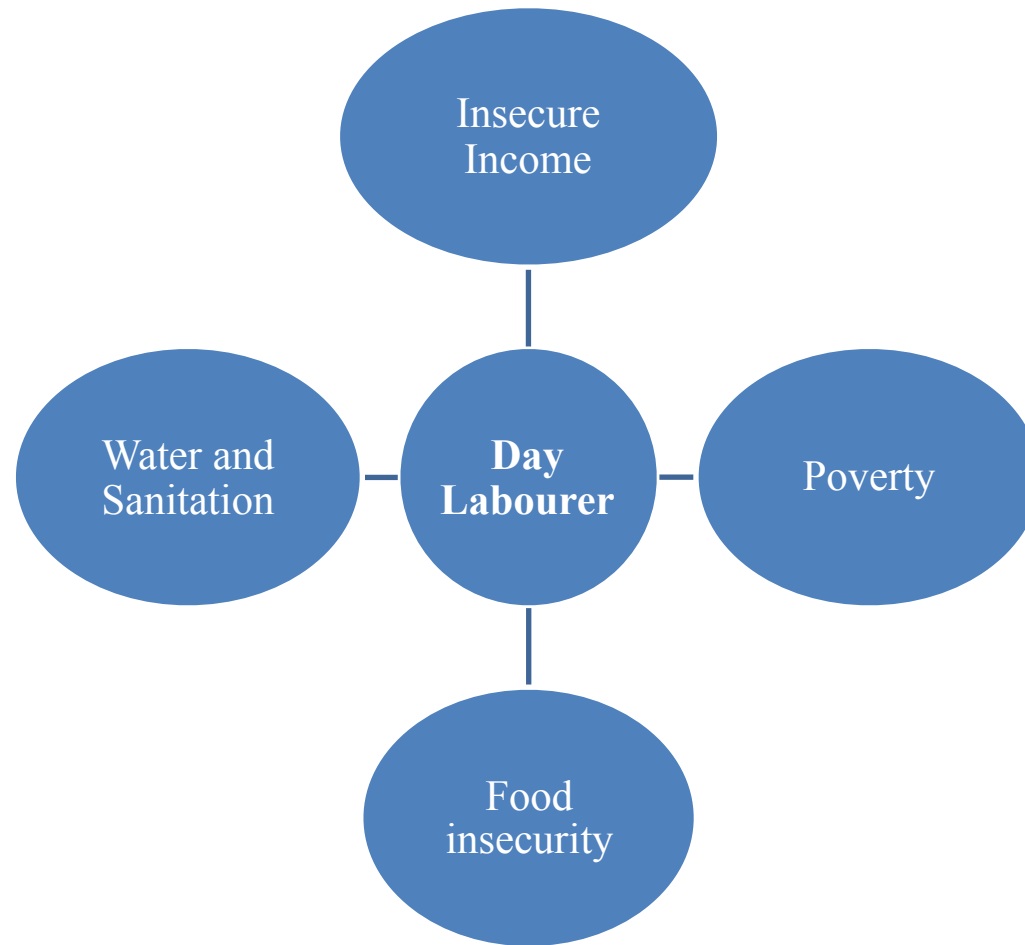
AIM OF STUDY

To explore the social justice vulnerabilities of day labourers in Mbekweni.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- Case Study Research
- Mixed methodology approach was employed (using the national day labourer survey, observations and semi-structured interviews).

RESULTS: DAY LABOURERS' BARRIERS TO SUSTAINABLE LIVING

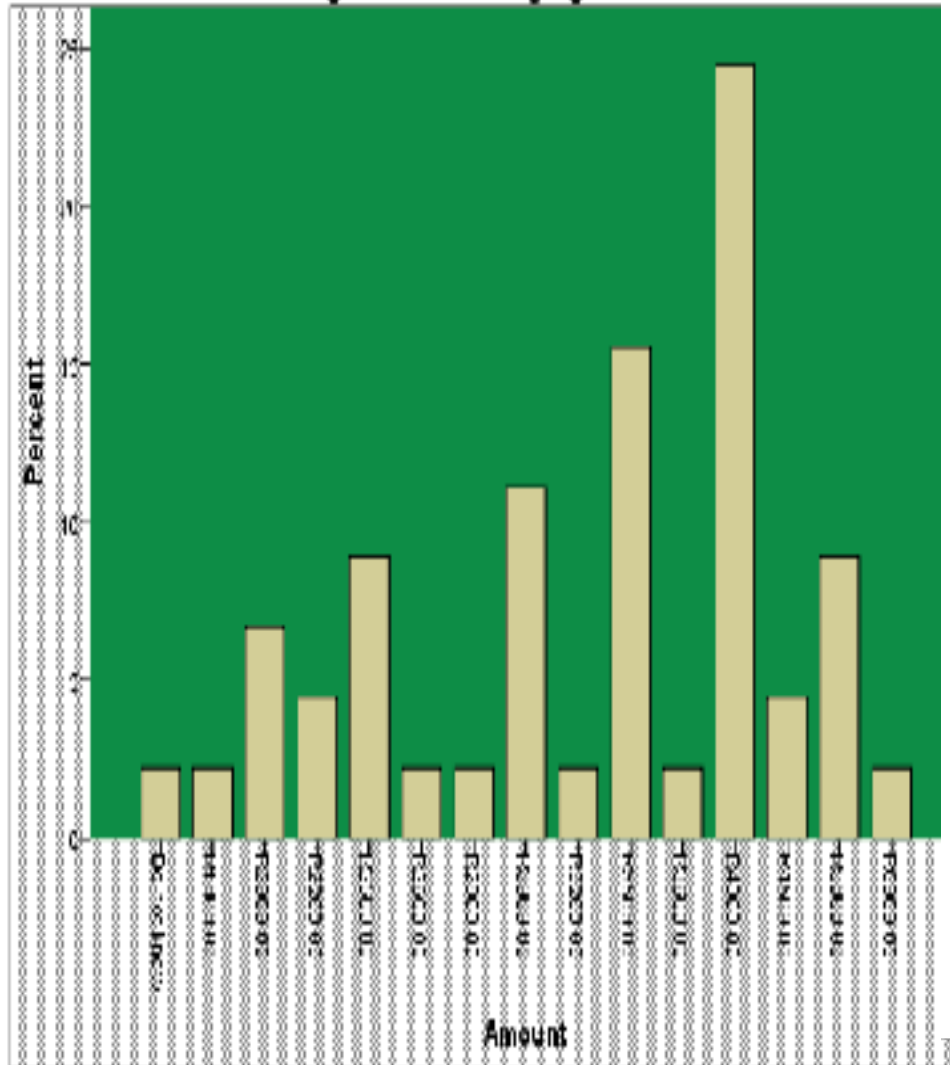


INSECURE INCOME

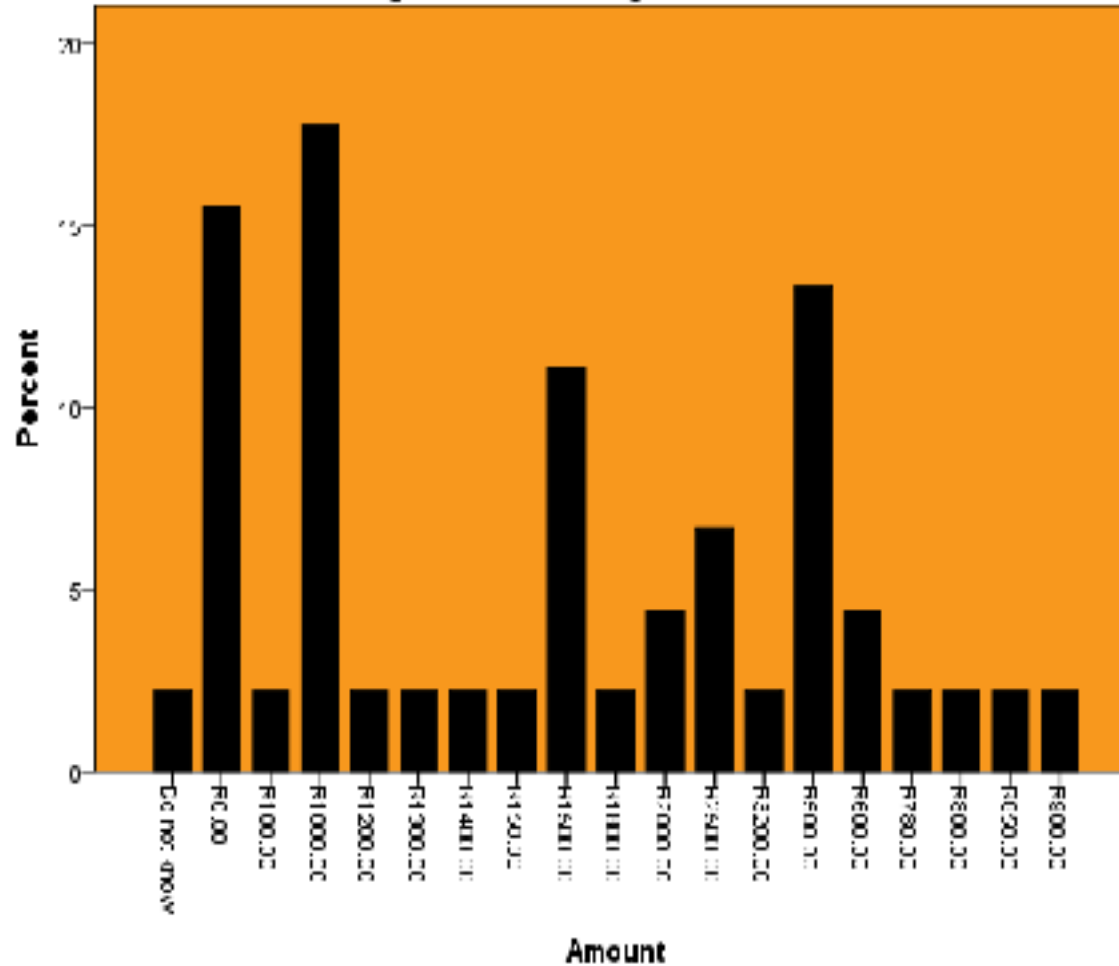
“To be a day labourer means that today you can work, tomorrow you can be at home... there’s no benefit in doing that, cos you earn something today, tomorrow you cannot earn” 2016 May 04.

INSECURE INCOME CONT..

Amount in wages earned during a good month of work



Amount in wages earned during a bad month of work



INSECURE INCOME CONT

- Approximately 15 percent of day labourers earn **R0.00 during a bad month of work**. The **dominant** income earned in a **bad month of work is R1000.00**. However, during a **good month of work**, the predominant category of income is **R4000.00**.
- Despite the insecure income, 80 percent of day labourers **pay more than R300.00 rent per month**. Furthermore, **97.8 percent of day labourers interviewed indicated that they have one and more persons (between one and seven) who are dependent on their wages** and **71.2 percent explained that they have dependents under the age of eighteen years**.

POVERTY

ACCESS TO SERVICES:

- 75.6 percent of the day labourers are originally from Zimbabwe and came to South Africa to obtain employment. These people are often called economic migrants. It was further observed that the latter day labourers were afraid to access services such from government institutions such Department of Social Development, South African Police Services, Department of Home Affairs and the local health clinic as they are undocumented as they don't have legal documentation. Therefore, migrant day labourers have limited access to the latter services and are social excluded formal political participation.

POVERTY CONT..

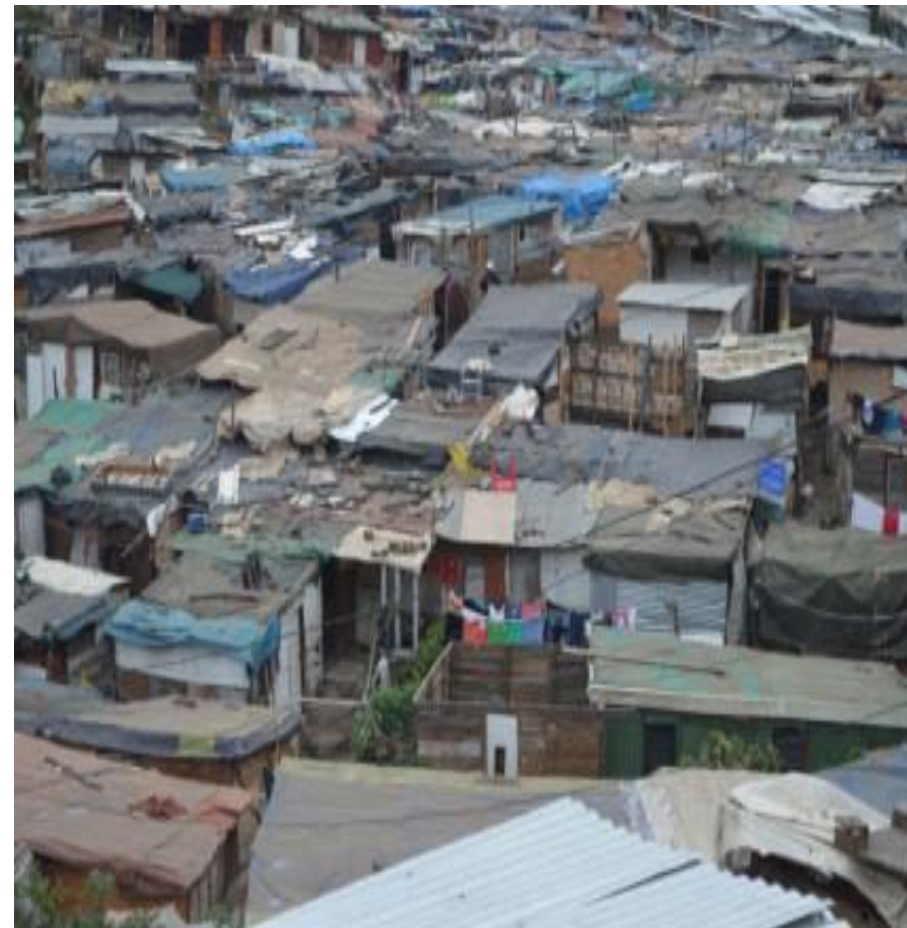
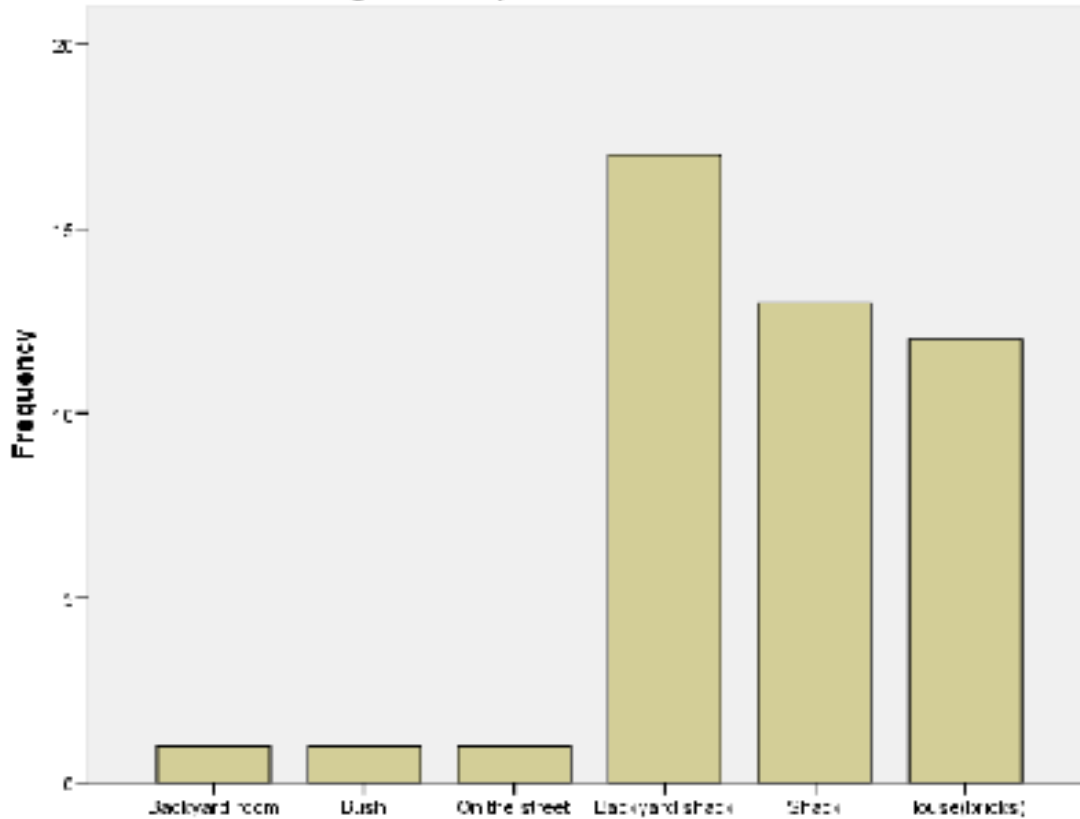
LIMITED FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

- Day labourers struggle to move to other places where there are more jobs as they cannot afford adequate housing or pay rent or transport? So the right to freedom of movement remains limited to day labourers in a very strict sense.

POVERTY CONT..

SHELTER

Housing of the Day Labourers in Mbekweni



POVERTY CONT..

THE UNDERMINING OF HUMAN DIGNITY AND LACK OF PROTECTION

- 64.3 percent of day labourers articulated that employers are racists, discriminate against them and exploit their labour as they have to work long hours for little wages.

During a qualitative interview, one of the participants explained the following:

“I work there as a guard so they didn’t pay me for the whole of the month...is about R3200.00...” 2016 May 04.

FOOD INSECURITY

- **35.6 percent** indicated that they went to bed hungry because there was nothing to eat or no means to obtain food;
- **15.5 percent** did not have anything to eat for at least two-seven days;
- **48.9 percent** of day labourers do not have food when they are at the informal hiring sites.
- No organisation at sites that is providing food

FOOD INSECURITY CONT..

Table 1:
Conditions informing vulnerability at the informal hiring sites (food insecurity)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Bring food from home	10	22.2	22.2	22.2
	Buy at shop	4	8.9	8.9	31.1
	Eat at home	9	20.0	20.0	51.1
	No food	22	48.9	48.9	100.0
	Total	45	100.0	100.0	

WATER AND SANITATION

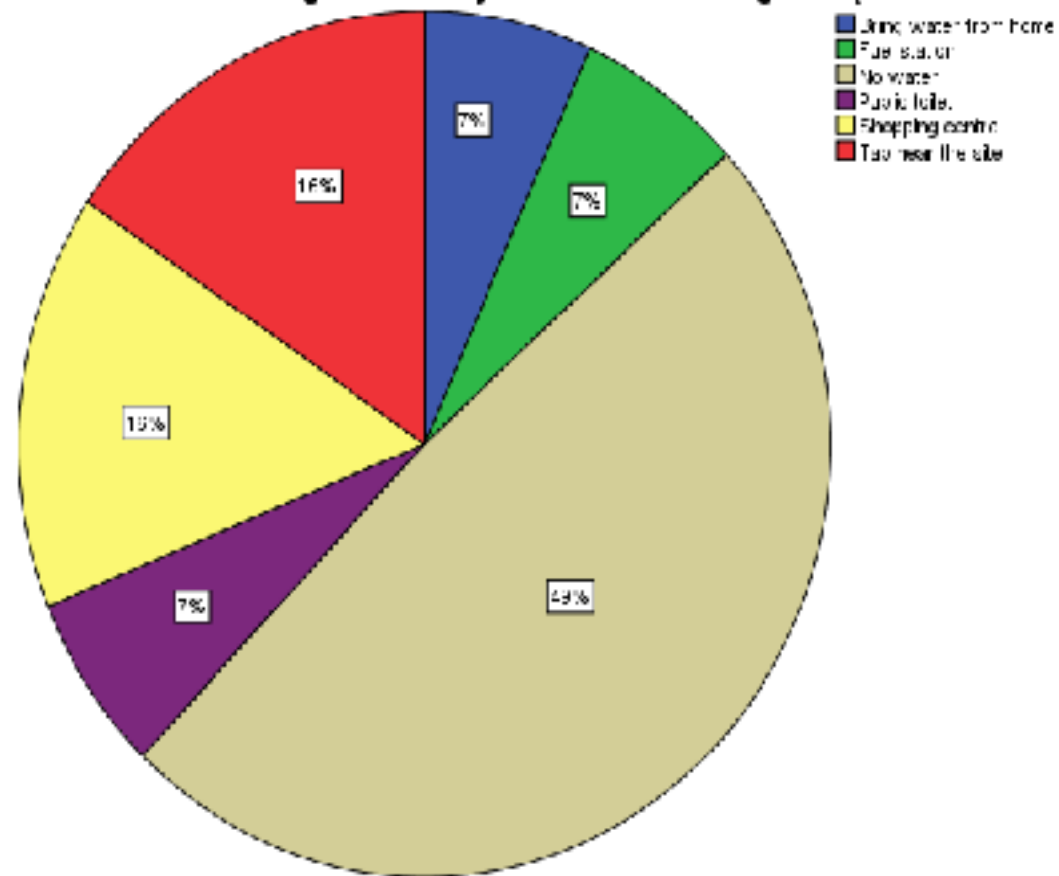
- **57.8 percent** will use the bush (metres away from the site) as a toilet;
- **49 percent** of day labourers interviewed had no access to water while they are at the hiring site.
- ***Important to note: Day labourers in Mbekweni are approximately between three and five hours at the site.***

WATER AND SANITATION CONT..

Table 2:
Conditions informing vulnerability at the informal hiring sites (hygiene)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	At home	1	2.2	2.2	2.2
	Bush	26	57.8	57.8	60.0
	Don't know	1	2.2	2.2	62.2
	Fuel Station	1	2.2	2.2	64.4
	Public toilet	3	6.7	6.7	71.1
	Shopping centre	13	28.9	28.9	100.0
	Total	45	100.0	100.0	

Conditions informing vulnerability at the informal hiring sites (access to water)



REFLECTION

- Changed my perception of the informal economy;
- Provide opportunity to understand the socioeconomic vulnerabilities faced by day labourers;
- Realised how privileged I am to have employment and receive a fixed income.

CRITICAL QUESTIONS TO ASK DURING THE DISCUSSION ON RETHINKING SOCIAL WORK IN AFRICA

- How can we respond to the vulnerabilities of day labourers?
- Can the operationalisation of social justice, through advocacy, make a difference?
- Why are we silent on these social justice vulnerabilities faced by those in the informal economy?

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION

THANK YOU