

**COMMUNITY GARDENING AS A POVERTY  
ALLEVIATION STRATEGY IN RURAL AREAS:  
NGCOLOSI COMMUNITY, EMAHLABATHINI AREA**

**BY**

**MBEKEZELI COMFORT MKHIZE (201509054)**

**2011**

**UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL, DURBAN  
CAMPUS**

## **Declaration**

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of M. Soc. Sc., in the Graduate Programme in Community Development, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa.

I declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. All citations, references and borrowed ideas have been duly acknowledged. It is being submitted for the degree of M. Soc. Sc. in the Faculty of Humanities, Development and Social Sciences, Durban, South Africa. None of the present work has been submitted previously for any degree or examination in any other University.

Mbekezeli Mkhize

Student Name

11 August 2011

Date

Professor Pearl Sithole

Name of Supervisor

---

Signature

## Table of Contents

Declaration .....	i
Dedication .....	vi
Acknowledgements .....	vii
List of Acronyms .....	viii
List of Tables .....	x
List of Graphs .....	xi
List of Pictures .....	xii
Abstract .....	xiii

### **Chapter One: Background and Introduction** **1**

1.1 A description of Ngcolosi, Emahlabathini Area .....	7
1.1.1 Leadership Structure .....	11
1.1.2 Economy of Mahlabathini .....	12
1.1.3. Culture .....	13
1.2 Key Objectives of this Study .....	14
1.3Key Research Questions .....	14
1.4 Significance of the Study .....	15
1.5 Limitations of the Study .....	16
1.6 Defining gardening .....	17
1.7 How is poverty conceptualised .....	19
1.7.1 Absolute poverty .....	20
1.7.2 Relative poverty .....	20
1.8 Rural conceptualisations of poverty .....	23
1.9 Short description of chapters .....	25

### **Chapter Two: The South African Poverty Profile** **27**

2.1 The Historical Overview: The Apartheid Context .....	28
2.2 The Road to Democracy in South Africa .....	30
2.3 The Post-Apartheid Context: The ‘New’ South Africa .....	32
2.4 Reactions of COSATU and SACP to GEAR .....	36
2.5 Poverty in South Africa .....	39
2.6 Poverty in the context of Ngqolosi, Mahlabathini.....	44
2.7 Critics of poverty measurements/indicators.....	45
2.8 KwaZulu-Natal Development Planning .....	47

**Chapter Three: Literature Review** **51**

3.1 Theoretical Framework: Sustainable Livelihoods .....	53
3.2 Policy Context: Food Security .....	56
3.3 How does food become insecure? .....	60
3.4 Contextualising food insecurity in South Africa .....	60
3.5 Home gardens versus Community Gardens .....	62
3.6 Community gardens in KwaZulu-Natal .....	75
3.7 Critiquing community gardening .....	76
3.8 Alternative Poverty Alleviation Strategies .....	77
3.8.1 Child Support Grant .....	77
3.8.2 Foster Care Grant .....	78
3.8.3 Zibambele Expanded Public Works Programme .....	78

**Chapter Four: Research Methodology and Methods** **80**

4.1 The Qualitative Paradigm .....	81
4.1.1 Case Study .....	81
4.1.2 Semi-structured Focus Group Interviews .....	82
4.1.3 Individual Interviews .....	84

4.1.3 Recording .....	85
4.1.4 Transcribing .....	85
4.2 Quantitative Paradigm .....	85
4.2.1 Sampling .....	85
4.2.2 Study Population .....	86
4.2.3 Non-probability Sampling .....	86
4.2.4 Participatory Observation .....	87
4.3. Data analysis .....	89
4.2.1 Content Analysis .....	90
4.3.2 Triangulation .....	93
<b>Chapter Five: Social Benefits of Community Gardens</b>	<b>95</b>
5.1 Overview .....	95
5.2 Historical backgrounds of community gardens interviewed .....	96
5.3 Data collection activities .....	99
5.4 Diagrammatic presentation of information .....	100
5.5 Differences between home and community gardens in detail .....	113
5.6 Reasons why people enter into community gardens .....	114
5.7 A Summary of Social Benefits .....	117
5.8 Reasons why people do not enter into community gardens .....	125
5.9 Constraints facing community gardens .....	127
<b>Chapter Six: Economic Benefits and Institutional Support of Community Gardens</b>	<b>131</b>
6.1 Overview .....	131
6.2 A Summary of Economic Benefits .....	133
6.3 Lack of Institutional Support to gardening .....	135
6.4 Rate of poverty in the Community .....	136
6.5 Rate of unemployment in the Community .....	139

<b>Chapter Seven: Conclusions and Recommendations</b>	<b>142</b>
7.1 Introduction .....	142
7.2 Implications for theory .....	150
7.3 Recommendations .....	152
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	<b>153</b>
<b>Appendix A</b> .....	<b>160</b>
An Informed Consent Form .....	160
<b>Appendix B</b> .....	<b>161</b>
Survey: Questionnaires .....	161
Semi-structured Focus Group Interview Guide .....	164
<b>Appendix C</b> .....	<b>165</b>

## **Dedication**

This dissertation is unequivocally dedicated to God, my entire family, and those who love me with all their hearts.

## Acknowledgements

This dissertation would not have been a success if the following people have not contributed immensely. These were:

- ✚ My supervisor, Professor Pearl Sithole who sacrificed most of her time in making this dream a reality. Although she has a busy schedule, she managed to allocate time and space to my project. Your contribution particularly in terms giving direction, advice and constructive criticisms has been warmly welcomed.
  
- ✚ My family, who contributed substantially during the beginning and the finalisation of this project. In particular, their moral support was particularly inspiring. I would like to urge them to continue with their support so that my academic endeavours would be a success.
  
- ✚ Ngcolosi, Mahlabathini community, which has been very receptive since I started doing research projects in the community. I always regard this community as a unity and a blessing to work with. I particularly thank them for the time they gave me.
  
- ✚ Community garden groups, who sacrificed their time by honouring the appointments that were made. I was particularly impressed with the smile and laughter that they shared with me although the interviews and survey were sometimes long and time-consuming.

## **List of Acronyms**

ANC	African National Congress
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
BEE	Black Economic Empowerment
CBOs	Community-Based Organisations
COPE	Congress of the People
COSATU	Confederation of South African Trade Unions
CSG	Child Support Grant
DAE	Department of Agriculture and Environmental Affairs
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
FCG	Foster Care Grant
GEAR	Growth, Employment and Redistribution
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNU	Government of National Unity
HDI	Human Development Index
HIV	Human Immune Virus
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party
IMF	International Monetary Fund
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
MALA	Ministry of Agriculture and Land Affairs
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NGOs	Non Governmental Organisations
NP	National Party
NPOs	Non Profit Organisations
PAC	Pan Africanist Congress
PGDS	Provincial Growth and Development Strategies
PSEDS	Provincial Spatial Economic Development Strategy

RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SACP	South African Communist Party
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SMME	Small, Medium and Micro Enterprise
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
UK	United Kingdom
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WRI	World Resource Institute

## **List of Tables**

Table 1 shows different types of food gardens .....	72
Table 2 shows different types of community gardens .....	74
Table 3 shows community gardens and the years in which they were established .....	98
Table 4 shows key purposes of community gardens .....	109
Table 5 shows differences between home and community gardens .....	111

## **List of Graphs**

Figure 1 shows the interconnection of beautiful areas at KwaNgcolosi .....	10
Figure 2 shows the distribution of power at KwaNgcolosi .....	11
Figure 3 shows the relationship of poverty definitions .....	24
Figure 4 shows Sustainable Livelihoods framework .....	56
Figure 5 shows leadership structure of community gardens .....	104
Figure 6 show activities that members of community gardens are involved in .....	106
Figure 7 shows the importance of community gardens .....	110
Figure 8 shows a consensus that exists between home and community gardens .....	113
Figure 9 show social benefits of working in community gardens .....	115
Figure 10 shows the impact of community gardens in people's lives .....	124
Figure 11 shows outward relationship between ward councillor and community gardens ...	125
Figure 12 show economic benefits of working in community gardens .....	132
Figure 13 shows the rate of poverty in the community .....	137
Figure 14 shows the rate of unemployment in the community .....	139

## List of Pictures

A picture showing Inanda Dam .....	8
A picture showing Mahlabathini Park .....	8
A picture showing Nature Conservation Area ( <i>Isiqiwi</i> ) .....	9
A picture showing a working community garden .....	100
A picture showing a closed community garden .....	101
A picture showing a home garden .....	102
A picture showing common community garden activities .....	103

## **Abstract**

The study seeks to assess the impact of community gardening in alleviating poverty in a rural area, namely, KwaNgcolosi, Mahlabathini. The community gardening in this study is used as a coping or defence mechanism which is used to eliminate poverty. Further, the study aimed to answer some research questions. These were: what is the significance of community gardening? Are community gardens effective in alleviating poverty in a rural area? What are economic and social benefits? In achieving this goal, the study relied solely on using a quantitative research method – namely, a questionnaire. For convenience purposes, self-administered questionnaires were used where the researcher filled in the questionnaires for respondents because a majority of respondents could not read and write, and semi-structured focus group interviews along with individual interviews to investigate this from the members of community gardens and other members of the community who do not participate in gardening activities.

The existing literature shows that ‘gardening’, regardless of whether it is home or community, has various benefits that often accrue to the farmers. These include, amongst other things, social, economic, and environmental benefits, respectively. Interestingly, the literature has been underpinned and strengthened by the key findings of the research. Indeed, key findings have pinpointed social and economic benefits as the reliable end products of gardening. Not surprisingly, the key findings also identified several weaknesses of community gardening that ultimately dissuade people from entering. Lack of resources, and support from relevant structures were amongst the key weaknesses identified. More strikingly, the lack of cooperation between local councillor and farmers was also key challenge.

Similarly, the study applied the sustainable livelihoods theory because it provides a comprehensive understanding of the situations under which poor people live. The sustainable livelihoods theory places strong emphasis on poor rural people and what they often do in order to survive. Furthermore, there are policies in place that have sought to measure access to food. Food security has been used to further determine what it means to be poor.

Despite the existing policies such as food security, people continue to be subjected to poverty particularly in rural areas. The study, therefore, aims to show the significance of community gardening in fighting poverty.

# Chapter One

## Background and Introduction

“Gardening” as a concept has captured the imagination of many poor rural dwellers not only in South Africa but around the globe. In fact, a week hardly goes by without a talk or debate of some sort on this concept in the rural areas. The considerable increase in the imagination could be attributed to its perceived potential to reduce poverty. The concept is therefore popular because rural communities use it to safeguard themselves against poverty and other hardships. Gardens have become an important means by which rural poor dwellers are able to support their families and reduce their ongoing susceptibility to poverty.

Most importantly, as we enter the 21<sup>st</sup> century it is undoubtedly true to state that we are still constantly surrounded by the hardships and setbacks of the past. Not much has been done by way of phasing out adverse legacies that continue to linger around Africa, and other formerly colonised countries. In the past, Africa has been subjected to various forms of colonialism where colonial powers were looking to prosper and advance their interests at the detriment of Africa. In this conquest, Africa was deprived of its precious raw materials which were later processed and sold back to Africa. Smith noted that “50% of world’s diamonds are produced in Africa and yet 32 of the 38 countries in Africa are highly indebted poor countries” (2010:1). This not only left Africa in a state of uncertainty, but it also plunged Africa into a miserable plight where processes of economic growth and prosperity proved futile.

Several economic policies such as Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) were implemented in Africa with a view of extricating Africa from dire poverty and indebtedness. These policies have, however, been continuously subjected to various objections and criticisms. Their objectives were to reorientate the economic policies of Africa into a market economy model. This was achieved through cuts in government spending; removal of imports control; devaluation of currencies; tight-fisted control of money-supply; and privatisation. Critics argue that these policies have not merely thrown Africa into turmoil, but they also left Africa's development initiatives unfulfilled by worsening the conditions even further. Shah posits that many developing countries are in debt and poverty partly due to policies imposed by international institutions (Shah, 2010:1). In fact, they promoted an increased dependency on richer nations. The SAPs had certain conditionalities which ought to be followed by African states in order to get loans from the IMF and World Bank. Such loans had to be later repaid with interests which made development unsustainable in Africa. Foreign aid was destined to offer technical and financial assistance to Africa. However, finance and technical know-how continues to be the key impediments to growth and development. Lambsdorff (2001) contends that the development aid has failed dramatically in the developing countries. This is so because 'there is no empirical evidence that development aid has improved the situation of the poorest in poor countries in a sustainable manner' (Lambsdorff, 2001:4).

Unlike other African countries, Ghana was one of Africa's success stories after the initiation of comprehensive program of structural adjustments. Dordunoo and Dogbey maintain that "the Ghanaian economy reached relatively stable economic growth with a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate of 4-4.5% per annum in the mid- 1990s" (2002:123). Dordunoo

and Dogbey add that this growth brought about a marked reduction in poverty, and from 1991-92 to 1998-99, the percentage of the poor declined from 52% to just under 40% (2002:123). In Africa, generally, Bigman also acknowledges that the only demonstrable positive effects of globalization were the transfer of technology. However, this is limited by the lack of necessary skills, low investment in reconstruction and development, costs and restrictions on the transfer of technologies. Other proponents of globalization argue that benefits can be seen only after a transition period during which the country's institutions of governance and its legal system need to be restructured (Bigman, 2002:29). This, therefore, suggests that development is lacking in most Sub-Saharan countries partly because of political instability. Political instability is characterised by continued wars, frequent changes in policies, weak institutions of law enforcement, and widespread corruption (Ibid, p49).

Moreover, some researchers adamantly attribute poverty in the developing world to globalisation. Bigman argued that "globalization may improve growth rates, increase productivity, enhance technological capacity, but it cannot redistribute created wealth and income in favour of the poor" (2002:27). Arguably, it is logically correct to say that rich industrial countries have reaped large gains from increased trade, whereas most poor nations have actually become worse off. Generally, it is further argued that globalization does the reverse by distributing wealth and income in favour of the not so poor. In the developing world particularly in the Sub-Saharan Africa, crisis continues to manifest itself in various ways since it is widely accepted that the region did not directly benefit from the globalization. Today, these countries are burdened with much the same structural problems that plagued their economies in the previous century. Further, these problems have been immensely aggravated by heavy debts and the AIDS epidemic (Bigman, 2002:28). The impasse and

dilemma of growth and development in the developing world is exacerbated by trade liberalization and market deregulation. For instance, Bigman posits that “the main cause of poverty is the market, not market failure”, since “markets fail to address strategic interests like food security” (2002:29).

In 2000, the United Nations vowed to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that the group would decide upon. Amongst the key objectives was poverty eradication. On a global scale, the number of people living in poverty is conspicuously and rapidly increasing although there are variations between regions. In this regard, Smith contends that the Sub-Saharan Africa is going backwards (2010:1). As a result, there are 315 Million people who live on less than a dollar a day (Ibid). Further, the average income per capita decreased in 20 African countries during the 90s. Despite all these efforts Africa has invariably continued to be subjected into poverty. According to Hamaner *et al*, energy directed towards poverty reduction would not bear any fruits (1995:561). After calculating poverty elasticities, projecting human development indicators and employing alternative projected long-term regional economic growth rates; Hemaner *et al* further concluded that a reduction in income poverty by 2015 is unlikely for most developing countries. Not surprisingly, they further conceded that the situation in Sub-Saharan Africa is particularly dismal and ignominious, and there is little chance that any of the poverty reduction targets will be met. Instead, the situation may be far worse than the current one. Lambsdorff (2001) strongly believed that poverty in developing countries is a much more serious challenge. According to Lambsdorff, hundreds of millions of people are still trapped in extreme poverty, especially Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.

The country of South Africa is also not exempted from poverty battles. Although it is significantly well-off in comparison to other Sub-Saharan Africa, poverty in South Africa appears to be extremely intertwined with racial divisions. The racial divisions are apparently attributable to apartheid regime which brought about debilitating effects on those who were marginalised. Racial segregation saw black indigenous South Africans being relegated to poor rural areas where there are no proper roads and no proper sewerage, to mention a few. In the South African context, poverty has different degrees extents between rural dwellers and urban dwellers. For instance, rural dwellers are mostly worse off than urban dwellers. In essence, the rural residents are constantly faced with the predicament of poverty. In response to this predicament, several poverty alleviation strategies have been implemented. However, majority of the poverty alleviation strategies have not yielded the intended results. This study, basically, looks at gardening as arguably the major poverty alleviation strategy.

In line with poverty alleviation strategy, several economic policies were adopted by the South African government. These included amongst others, the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) and Growth, Employment, and Redistribution (GEAR). The RDP served as a foundation upon which other programmes were laid because it sought to provide housing, health care and other urgent basic necessities. The GEAR, on the other hand, aimed to ensure economic growth, and to provide employment. In principle, the economic policy seemed achievable and reasonable given its ability to be profit oriented. Strictly speaking, GEAR is therefore not simply a poverty alleviation policy, but was supposed to address economic imbalances that would have an impact on poverty. However, in reality the number of black South Africans continues to be unemployed. According to figures released by Statistics South Africa, jobless rate has increased to 23.5 percent from 21.9 percent (Seria &

Cohen, 2009). In other words, the number of people out of work rose to 4.18 million from 3.87 million (Ibid).

Some responses to poverty include resorting to gardening either home or community gardening. Arguably, gardening is seen as one of the oldest human activities. According to Walter (2003), gardening has become an important part of people's lives around the world and particularly in South Africa. According to Brookes (1991) gardens have become an important means by which the rural poor are able to feed their families and reduce their vulnerability to hunger. Moreover, gardens have become more than just about the production of food. They also perform a social function (Lund; 2004). Fernandez (2003) confirms the complexity of community gardens and identifies three benefits to community gardens, namely social, economic and environmental benefits. Community gardens have become a 'safety net' for many in rural South Africa. They provide for those without formal employment with community based employment (Brookes; 1991, Light et al; 1996).

The other response to poverty by the Southern African countries, including South Africa, was resorting to policy action. Notably, the policy adopted was on food security with the aim of doing away with poverty. The National Department of Agriculture (2002) noted that food security was proposed to ensure that all South Africans have access to sufficient and nutritious food. However, it remains to be seen whether these responses have appropriately and properly yielded the results. Therefore, the study intends to analyse the impact of community gardening in the poverty alleviation process. At the same time, it seeks to analyse the influence of food security as a policy framework of alleviating poverty.

## **1.1 A Brief Description of Ngcolosi, Emahlabathini area**

Ngcolosi is a semi-rural area that is located at Indwedwe virtually 40 KMs outside Durban. Even though it is relatively far from Durban the city, it is located within the same municipality as the city, EThekweni Municipality area. Basic services like water and electricity have long been provided by the municipality although newly built houses still lack water and electricity. The nearest city or town to people of Ngcolosi is Pinetown although the minority prefers Hillcrest. It is divided into four sections, namely, Emahlabathini, Wushwini, Mshazi, and Nqetho, respectively. The focus of this study is on Emahlabathini. This is so because community gardening is prevalent in that community. The area is blessed with one of the beautiful dam in KwaZulu-Natal which is known as Inanda Dam. Ideally, this dam should practically be used as a tourist destination. However, it is used mainly for swimming which does not bring any significant change in the area.

Similarly, the area also has a nature conservation area that is locally known as isiqiwi. In the conservation area, there are horses and zebras that are being kept. The isiqiwi is surrounded by electric fence to ensure that animals are safe. Further, the area also has the park. The park is called Mahlabathini Park. The park is next to the Inanda Dam which makes it gleaming and awesome. In fact, the park attracts various tourists from different areas. Within the park, there are people who are involved in doing beadwork. Indeed, they sell their products to the tourists. Thus, one could argue that the area (Emahlabathini) has the potential to become prosperous due to animals that are being kept. The nature conservation area has somehow created job opportunities to the local community. Those jobs are largely criticised for being short term and non-permanent.

These areas will be shown separately by diagrams which are photographs which were taken during the data collection stage. Thus, three diagrams were made. These include an Inanda Dam, Mahlabathini Park, and Isiqiwi, respectively.

### **A Picture showing Inanda dam**



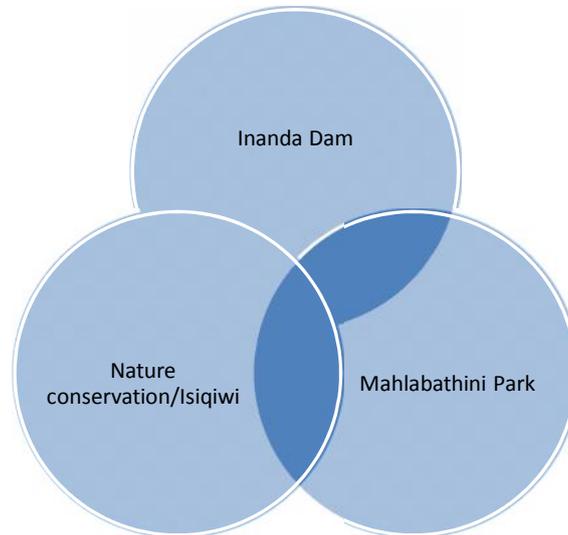
### **A Picture showing Mahlabathini park**



**A Picture showing Nature Conservation area (*Isiqiwi*)**

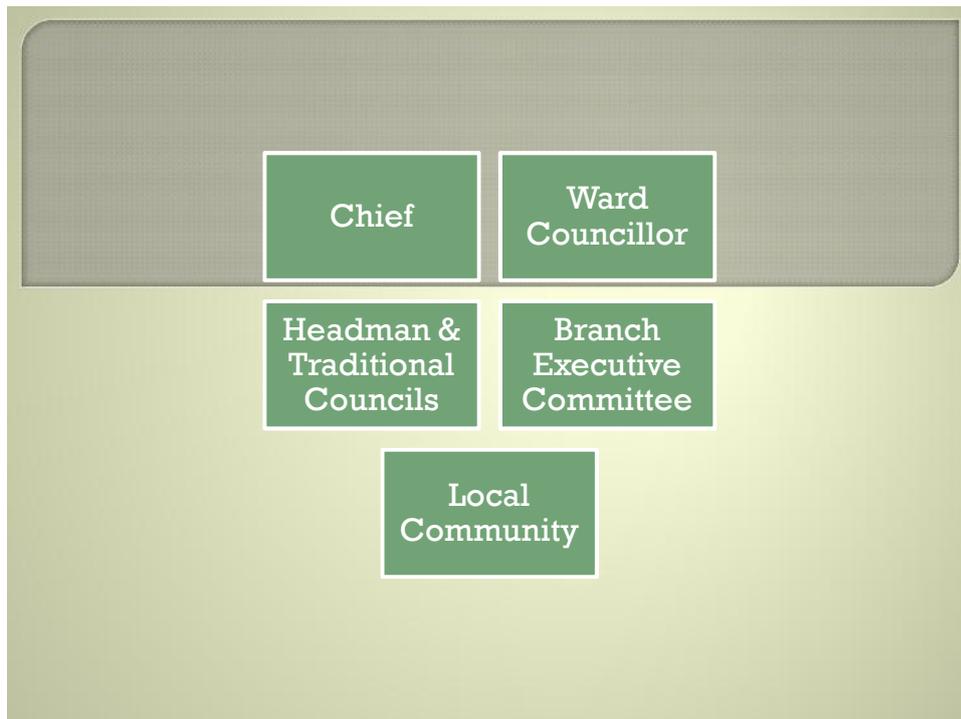


## A Diagram showing the interconnection of beautiful areas at KwaNgcolosi



These areas have a potential to bring lasting job opportunities in the area. However, through interactions with older members of the community it became pretty clear that these contribute fairly poorly in changing the standard of living in the area. Their mere presence has, however, succeeded in attracting some tourism.

## A diagram showing the distribution of power at KwaNgcolosi



### 1.1.1 Leadership Structure

Generally, the leadership structure in the area is divided into two entities - each has its own goals and ambitions although they work collectively and collaboratively to bring about change in the area. The first entity is basically traditional leadership. This, as in many other communities, is merely restricted to one family. In other words, no other family is allowed to take chieftaincy in the area. Ngcolosi is typically a 'clan name' of Bhengu. This means it is the Bhengu's who rule/govern the area. The 'Inkosi'<sup>1</sup> which means chief (Bhengu) has just recently succeeded Inkosi Mangosuthu Buthelezi as the new Chairman of traditional leaders in KwaZulu-Natal House of Traditional Leaders. Traditionally, inkosi is assisted by his

---

<sup>1</sup> Inkosi is the preferred term that is acceptable to the Amakhosi in KwaZulu-Natal. Actually, they do not want to be called "Chiefs" because it reminds them of colonial associations. They prefer to be called by the indigenous referents: inkosi (singular), amakhosi (plural)

subordinates. Normally, his subordinates are Izindunas (headmen) and traditional councillors. Equally, they are entrusted with powers to preside over certain disputes that arise within the area. Headmen settle disputes; for example when neighbours insult each other or if they accuse each other of witchcraft. Their jurisdiction merely covers the *izigodi* or subsection upon which they live. However, more powers are vested on the chief because he can expel people who are seen to be regular transgressors in the area.

As earlier indicated, the other entity is political leadership associated with local government. This leadership is politically entrusted with powers to lead and constantly provide service delivery in the area. According to the constitution, this entity is spearheaded by the local councillor whose term only lasts for five years. But, he can be re-elected if there is no leadership contention within his or her party. Currently, the area is led by the councillor who resides at Embo a nearby community. Just as much as in other communities, ongoing demonstrations over service delivery have become the order of the day in the community. The promises made during the election campaigns have not been entirely fulfilled according to community members. Most complaints emanate from the malpractices and maladministration that is associated with the local councillor. In fact, the area is mainly poverty stricken.

### **1.1.2 The Economy of Emahlabathini**

There are no major statistical indicators of the economy in this area. The general consensus exists, however, that most people living in this area relies primarily on gardening – thus presumably implying that they occasionally sell some of the food obtained from the garden.

The community further generates income from government grants such as pension, child grants, foster care grants, and other grants.

### **1.1.3 Culture**

Even though there are illegal immigrants from countries like Somalia, Zimbabwe, and Eritrea the community is entirely Zulu speaking. In other words, the community is culturally homogenous. They still slaughter goats, cows, and sheeps in honour of the ancestors. Mostly, the members of the community seem to generally follow Zulu culture. However, some sections of the community have increasingly become too westernised. Indeed, Christianity has disseminated to the area because some people no longer slaughter goats, or cows respectively. They argue that it is against the Bible. Other people now celebrate their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday which is also perceived as a symbol of westernisation.

While there is a dam, park and nature conservation area in the community complaints are still forthcoming. Unemployment and grinding poverty are the two enormous challenges that face the community. While skills development projects rarely or barely comes to the community, the community is wholly unskilled – especially the elders. The youth has resorted to heavy drinking due to loneliness and joblessness which is largely seen as intractable and insurmountable. Poor efforts by government departments to rid the community off these challenges have not produced any significant results.

In light of these challenges, most people decided to resort to community gardening to make ends meet. However, these gardens are not supported by the municipality. Some have eventually closed down due to lack of funding and resources to continually maintain them.

## **1.2 Key Objectives of this Study**

The research design was driven largely by the key research objectives which it sought to achieve. These objectives, therefore, form the bases upon which the entire project is laid. They typically steer the direction of the project, and the realisation of the intended outcome. Thus, the following are the key research objectives that informed the undertaking of the study.

- ✓ To determine the impact of gardening projects in poverty alleviation
- ✓ To determine the effectiveness of gardening as a collective effort project
- ✓ To draw conclusions on other possible alternatives

## **1.3 Key Research Questions**

The research design was further motivated by certain key questions. These questions do not merely aim to achieve the objectives of the study but they also aim to ensure that the study has a logic and sequence to fundamentally assist in enhancing knowledge about the importance of gardening in alleviating poverty and other related socio-economic problems. Therefore, the study will aim to continually answer some of these following questions in order to ensure that the goals of the study have been accomplished.

- What is the significance of community gardening?

- What is a difference between home and community gardens?
- What are the social benefits of working in the community garden?
- What are the economic benefits of working in the community garden?
- Are community gardens effective in eradicating poverty in a rural area?
- What are the constraints facing community gardens?

#### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

Most rural communities are actively involved in poverty alleviation projects such as gardening in an effort to do away with poverty. Most commonly, members of garden projects in rural communities do not undergo a special training to equip themselves with required skills to manage and run the project effectively. It is, therefore, crucial to undertake this study in order to determine whether or not gardening projects do make any significant impact in alleviating poverty in rural communities. Basically, Ngcolosi is a relatively big community, and therefore, it has huge sub-sections (called izigodi) within it. So, it is the sub-section of Emahlabathini that will shed light to the study because there are so many gardening projects in that area. In this sub-section, unemployment and poverty is high. As a result, people tend to gravitate towards community gardening to lessen or to curb poverty. Although gardening is generally chosen, it is still difficult to establish how they sustain it because there are no irrigation schemes in place, no resources, and no support from the outsiders. Normally, water is drawn from the dam by buckets which makes gardening time-consuming.

Of all the objectives aforementioned, the key objective of the study was to determine the impact of community gardening in alleviating poverty in a rural area. This needs to be constantly emphasised since community gardens carry out their functions under tremendous poverty in rural areas. Lack of any form of support is one of the pressures that encourage people to desist from entering into gardening.

In addition, community gardening is also believed to help enhance the benefits that accrue to those who participate in it. These are social benefits and economic benefits. Therefore, it is absolutely worthwhile to undertake the study in order for one to be able to decide or ascertain whether there are benefits or not. In other words, the study aims to provide lessons on the significance of community gardening as a strategy that is devised to deal with poverty.

### **1.5 Limitations of the Study**

The study only tries to determine the link between poverty, and gardening as a poverty alleviation strategy at a specific area of KwaZulu-Natal. Therefore, the study will not, by any chance, give a national reflection on the effectiveness of garden projects, but it will only reflect on what is happening in KwaZulu-Natal particularly in the area chosen. The study will cover those groups of people that are involved in gardening, and other households that are not necessarily involved in gardening. The results cannot be generalised to the whole of South Africa, although lessons can be learned for areas with similar characteristics.

## 1.6 Defining gardening

Gardening is one of the oldest human agricultural activities (Walter; 2003). Over the centuries, the reasons for gardening have changed and diversified. Food gardens were initially used solely for growing food for the sustenance of its owners. These days food gardens are used for various reasons including that of producing food for home consumption. Walter (2003) stated that participants of food gardens went into gardening for different reasons. Food gardens, especially community gardens, are used as a catalyst for community building. Food gardens function as informal parks. They are also perceived to have a rich social nature as they are a place where people meet and interact, thus enhance social integration. Nell *et al* (2000) argues that there should be an understanding that food gardening does not only mean the production of vegetables but that “food gardening” also includes the production of chickens, rabbits and these are all done for consumption purposes. It is therefore not a single dimensional system but a rather very complex system (Friedrick; 2004). However, in this study the focus is solely on gardening through soil – examples will be drawn from other types of gardening to give clarifications.

Meanwhile, Gelsi (1999) and Walter (2003) further assert that food gardens are a participatory relationship with a place or the piece of land and they are sites where people produce vegetables and fruit but also use these spaces to educate about agriculture. There are three categories where one can place food gardens, these include gardening as a strategy to transmit cultural heritage, as an enjoyable practice and as a platform to come together with the natural environment (Lackey, 1998). This perspective is held from a social point of view rather than the agronomic point of view.

Furthermore, one of the most important factors or elements of food gardening these days is that food gardens are seen as an imperative tool for improving quality of life (Nell *et al*; 2000). Cassara (2005) stresses this point by stating that for the many (approximately 1.1 billion) poor people living in severe poverty, nature is their lifeline. Therefore these natural resources (especially land) are peoples hope for improving their livelihood options and quality of life. Most importantly, food gardens have become a way of moral and social training for the children (Walter; 2003), in that children are brought in to the food gardening in order to build in some moral principle into them and also some sense of responsibility. Walter (2003) further states that contact with nature, efficiency and manual labour built a strong moral and social fibre for the children.

With reference to Southern Africa, most of rural communities are the victims of and are vulnerable to poverty. Their main coping strategy has been food gardening specifically in South Africa, community gardens were introduced because of the mounting concern over malnutrition (Brooks *et al*; 1991). Malnutrition is clearly one of the manifestations of poverty. Establishing community gardens appears to correspond to South African agricultural policy which states that agriculture in general is the means of increasing incomes of the poorest groups in society through opportunities (Ministry of Agriculture and Land Affairs (MALA), 1998). South Africa annually budgets about R50 million for agricultural projects including community gardens (DAE, 2004).

## **1.7 How is Poverty Conceptualised?**

According to Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999), measurement begins with conceptualisation. This is done so that researchers do not fall into a trap of talking casually about terms that they do not fully understand. Terre Blanche and Durrheim further note that social scientists are generally concerned with measuring constructs (1999:142). They define ‘constructs’ as attributes that have been conceptualised and defined in language, and which have been theoretically elaborated in terms of how they are related to other constructs. Meanwhile, Mouton (1996) contends that ‘conceptualisation’ refers to both the clarification and the analysis of the key concepts in a study and also to the way in which one’s research is integrated into the body of existing theory and research (p.109). In this context too, conceptualisation is done in attempt to garner the definition that accurately and comprehensively defines poverty.

The first thing to understand about poverty is that it is not a simple phenomenon. In fact, it has a series of contested definitions and complex arguments that are embedded in it. Lambsdorff supports this view when he observed that poverty is a manifold phenomenon, and its characteristics differ from country to country, from region to region (2001:4). Hence, even the measurement of poverty is a sophisticated problem in itself (Ibid). Normally, these arguments and definitions tend to overlap and at times contradict each other. According to Milbourne, debates about the definition of poverty have a long history in Britain and the United States (2004:2). Even in these debates, it was evidently hard to reach a consensus as to what entails poverty. However, a mutual understanding and the common ground was reached. It was concluded that at the core of any debate on poverty, there has to be a division between absolute and relative poverty (Milbourne, 2004:2).

### **1.7.1 Absolute Poverty**

In line with the absolute definition of poverty, Alcork (1997) concedes that absolute poverty is linked to subsistence - the minimum standard of living that people need to sustain life. In other words, absolute poverty is about people being without food, clothes, and shelter. Oppenheimer and Harker (1996) argue that absolute poverty concerns biological and physical needs, rather than those involving wider social and cultural needs. Milbourne offers two critics to absolute poverty definition. First, he argued that it is difficult to define the minimum level of absolute poverty if general standards of living are themselves subject to change. Second, he argued that the notion of absolute poverty places little emphasis on social and cultural considerations (2004:3).

### **1.7.2 Relative Poverty**

On the contrary, the notion of relative poverty has become associated with the work of Peter Townsend. Townsend proposed that poverty needs to be defined in broader terms. He stressed that “individuals, families, and groups in the population can be said to be in poverty when they lack the resources to obtain the types of diet, participate in the activities and have the living conditions and amenities which are customary, or at least widely encouraged or approved, in the societies to which they belong. For Lambsdorff (2001), relative poverty definition tends to exaggerate poverty in rich countries. He argues that “if you describe every household with income below 50 percent of the average income as poor, you will get a completely distorted picture of the real situation in many affluent societies” (Lambsdorff, 2001:4).

In addition, Brocklesby and Holland (1998) maintained that the definition of poverty tends to distinguish between ‘community poverty’ and ‘individual poverty’, respectively. According to them, community poverty was defined in terms of community level access to resources (1998:7). This definition is linked to physical isolation, access to safe water, quality of land, social capital. This is defined further in the following:

**Physical isolation:** suggests that the poor in rural areas often lived in isolated communities, with poor quality roads or no roads whatsoever and little external institutional presence.

**Access to safe water:** water is life, unreliable or contaminated water is deemed to be the root cause of much illness.

**Quality of land:** soil degradation, particularly in overcrowded rural areas is perhaps the greatest ecological cause of rural vulnerability.

**Social capital:** this refers to the social networks at household, inter-household, community and societal levels.

In addition, Jazairy *et al* (1992) conceded that poverty has many manifestations that need to be taken into cognisance. Therefore, it is impossible to describe the lives of the poor by means of a single indicator. They proposed four indices to enable comparisons to be made between countries and to help in the design of individual projects to alleviate poverty. These are: food security index, the relative welfare index, the integrated poverty index and the basic needs index, respectively.

**Food Security Index:** this index gives an indication of national, composite food security. Basically, it combines relevant food production and consumption variables (Jazairy *et al*, 1992:27).

**Basic Needs Index:** this index is based primarily on similar indices but including the human development index (Ibid, p26)

More importantly, if one scrutinizes the Ngcolosi community closely, one begins to see that it is important to determine whether or not people have access to food at all times. This not only help in terms of ensuring a greater insight into the problem, but it also ensures that proper programmes and policies are specifically designed to root out poverty. To this end, the food security index examines this further. Most of the households at Ngcolosi are faced with increasing poverty. This creates diseases and poor physical development in the children.

Furthermore, the basic needs index is also most relevant at KwaNgcolosi in terms of deciding on the extent and nature of poverty in the area. Most households still do not have access to clean and safe water. Proper houses are also hardly seen amongst poor families. In fact, most of the houses are built by mud and woods from the bush, and most unfortunately, they could easily be blown away when there is wind. The access to food remains one of the most pressing challenges facing the community. This is due in part to the fact that there is high unemployment. These two indices are most critical and most useful in terms of determining the poverty rates at KwaNgcolosi.

## 1.8 Rural Conceptualisations of Poverty

Jazairy *et al* (1992) further suggested that it is critically important to measure poverty in a rural area. They felt that poverty in a rural area has different ways in which it can be measured. These include, amongst others, material deprivation, isolation, alienation, dependence, lack of decision-making and power, lack of assets, vulnerability, and insecurity.

**Material deprivation:** is measured by inadequate food intake and poor nutritional status of food, poor health and education, lack of clothing, and housing.

**Isolation:** the rural poor often live in remote areas or are far from development and service institutions and so lack sufficient weight to influence political decisions. They lack transport (roads) and communication (Radio, TV) links, and they suffer from illiteracy which cuts off access to information and interaction with political process.

**Alienation:** the rural poor are alienated from growth processes such as new technology. Increasingly, they often lack marketable skills.

**Dependence:** this describes the depressed bargaining power of the rural poor in a world of unequal social relations between landlord and tenant, employer and employee, buyer and seller, respectively.

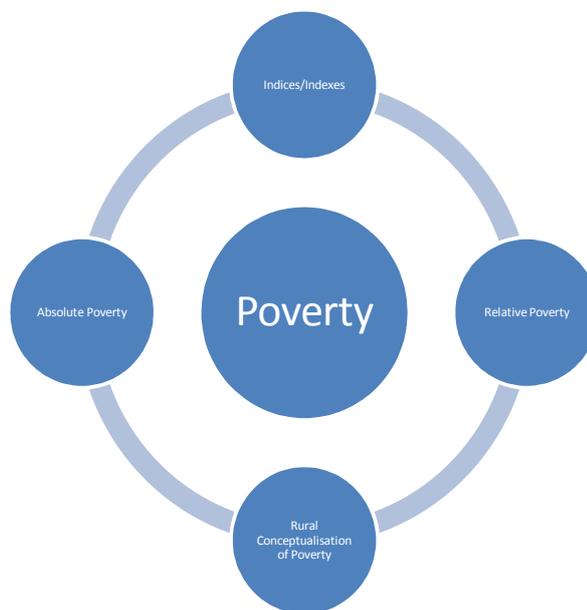
**Lack of decision-making power and freedom of choice:** these phenomena are well recognised all over the developing world although detailed data are difficult to come by.

**Lack of assets:** this forces the rural poor to work at a very low level of productivity.

**Vulnerability:** exposure to external shocks and internal social conflicts can quickly and significantly change the poverty status of rural households.

However, the focal point of research is on gardens as one of the means to cope with an important indicator of poverty – the material deprivation which appears to be important in both absolute and relative poverty indicators. Even so, other indicators such as isolation, alienation, lack of assets will also be considered as they may impact or contribute on poverty in various ways. Finally, the above indicators seem to reflect the realities on the ground at KwaNgcolosi community since most people are alienated or isolated from new technologies.

**A diagram illustrating the relationship of poverty definitions**



## **1.9 Short description of chapters**

### **Chapter Two**

This chapter begins by outlining the historical context and analysis of poverty. The historical context basically dissects the apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa. It includes regime change and its impact on poverty. Meanwhile, this chapter seeks to demonstrate the statistical indicators of poverty in the current South Africa.

### **Chapter Three**

This chapter starts off by presenting the theoretical framework. In this regard, sustainable livelihoods theory will be described and its relationship with poverty will also be clearly demonstrated. The policy context and directions that South Africa has taken in an effort to eradicate poverty will be analysed next. Thus, food security will be briefly described here. Meanwhile, this chapter goes on to analysing the current or existing literature on home and community gardening as poverty alleviation strategies adopted by rural communities.

### **Chapter Four**

This chapter seeks to explain succinctly why certain research approaches or methods were chosen over others. This chapter furnishes facts/reasons as to why such methods are deemed effective than others. Population size and sampling methods are also going to be critically explained here.

### **Chapter Five**

This chapter clearly presents informant's views with regards to the usefulness of community gardens. In particular, a close scrutiny and interrogation will be on informant's views concerning the social benefits associated with community gardens. This chapter begins by discussing, in all respects, the significance of community gardens, and conclude by looking at social benefits in particular.

## **Chapter Six**

This chapter further presents informant's views with regards to the usefulness of community gardens. In particular, a close scrutiny and interrogation will be on informant's views concerning the economic benefits associated with community gardens. This chapter not only focuses on economic benefits, but it also looks at differences between home and community gardens, and the constraints associated with community, respectively.

## **Chapter Seven**

While this chapter summarises the entire work, it also provides recommendations for further investigations and an answer to the central problem. In short, this chapter will seek to offer concluding remarks.

# Chapter Two

## The South African Poverty Profile

*'Society means a shared life. If some and not others are poor, then the principles on which life is shared are at issue: society itself is in question'* (Halsey, 1985: xxiii)

As earlier established, South Africa is not immune to the economic and political problems that undermine advances in the pursuance of non-sexist, and non-racial democratic country. While colonialism has been a common experience in Africa, South Africa differs slightly in that its challenge of apartheid was only recently adequately dismantled in 1994. Other African countries have been largely subjected to religious and ethnic conflicts. For example, the Rwandan genocide of 1994, the ongoing civil strife in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Sierra Leone, Liberia, Sudan, and Somalia. Meanwhile, the persistent fight over the control of oil resources in Niger Delta cannot go unnoticed because it further creates ethnic rivalries in Nigeria. In the SADC region, the political instability and economic meltdown of Zimbabwe cannot be neglected as it continues to impede sustainable developments efforts in the neighbouring states. The Zimbabwean crisis has attracted international attention. However, regional efforts to bring down the level of crisis have utterly failed. Even so, international responses have generally failed to bring about required changes.

In South Africa, the political infighting within the ruling party that was discernable ahead of the 2007 ANC National Elective Conference in Polokwane has also undermined the party's willingness and reputation to eradicate poverty. In fact, this disarray shifted the ruling party's focus away from the poor to its internal disputes. In this faction, President Jacob Zuma

emerged as President Thabo Mbeki's successor. This led to the formation of Congress of the People (COPE) which was largely dominated by disgruntled ANC members. The alliance which includes ANC, SACP and COSATU remained intact although there are continued speculations for divisions. A majority of political analysts even questioned the credibility of the ANC leadership those that are in government and those that are within the party.

These conflicts seem to have successfully precluded prosperity and consolidation of democracy, thereby rendering African states ungovernable. The apartheid regime had purposefully created/entrenched divisions among racial groups in South Africa. This ultimately led to hostilities among race groups. In the South African context, the effect and burden of poverty was felt slightly differently across all racial groups as some groups were more privileged than others. This chapter begins essentially by outlining the historical context of apartheid in South Africa, and its impact on current poverty rate. The chapter further dissects the current statistical indicators of poverty in the post-apartheid South Africa, thereby trying to implicitly and expressly make a comparison between apartheid South Africa and post-apartheid South Africa.

## **2.1 The Historical Overview: The Apartheid Context**

Apartheid is officially an Afrikaans word which refers essentially to 'apartness'. In the South African scenario, apartheid was technically designed as a system of legal racial segregation that was enforced by the National Party government between 1948 and 1994. The RDP report (1996) noted that the socio-economic and political system of apartheid or 'separate development' was the culmination of processes of colonisation and settlement in which

Europeans subordinated the indigenous population and gained control of much of the land. Through this 'apartness', the rights of the majority non white inhabitants of South Africa were reduced and minority rule by whites indisputably took dominance. This legislation ensured that inhabitants of South Africa are now divided according to race groups ("white", "blacks", "coloureds", and "Indians"). Blacks were deprived of their citizenship because they could not elect the government of their choice. It was only the whites who had a franchise.

In the midst of these challenges, blacks were segregated to exceedingly volatile and dehumanising conditions in the homelands. Ideally, the homelands were supposed to be places where Africans carried on their traditional way of life while awaiting the call to come to the cities as labourers (Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), 1996:88). The biggest problem was that homelands were not such a place. Instead, they were too small and their resources were too degraded to support an active subsistence sector (Ibid). Further, the RDP report argued that the existence of subsistence agricultural sector in the homelands was an important tenet of apartheid. During this period, subsistence agricultural production only accounted for 6 per cent of the total income of rural families (Ibid). Accordingly, this was confirmed from the 1992 Income and Expenditure study of KwaZulu-Natal and the 1993 National Rural Energy Survey.

Blacks were merely exposed to Bantu education which undeniably put them at a less privileged and inherently inferior position than their counterparts. Faced with these challenges, blacks decided to go to townships and rural areas. In rural areas, a majority of blacks lives in abject poverty. According to May, approximately half of South Africa's

population can be categorised as poor (1997:21). Under apartheid regime, the unemployment rate was considerably high amongst blacks because they had not possessed the necessary skills to do the job efficiently. As a result, they worked long hours and earned something that is disproportionately lower than what they should. Inevitably, the economy of the country plummeted due to sanctions that were imposed upon the government.

The apartheid regime ensured that there was severe disparity in the access and entitlement to resources. According to the RDP report (1996), these inequalities significantly limited the life chances of the majority of the population. Thus, any understanding of the South African society must start from an evaluation of these divisions and disparities across communities, areas, and sectors (RDP report, 1996:23). Insofar as this report was concerned, the transformation process which the democratically elected Government of National Unity has embarked on to overcome the backlog of opportunities denied in the past to the black majority of South Africans will be long and inherently arduous.

## **2.2 The road to Democracy in South Africa**

The political change in South Africa during 1990-94 had coincided with the radical changes in the international arena. Therefore, any change brought about in South Africa had to be in line with the changes in the international community. During this period, crisis in Eastern Europe, and the change in relations between world powers have brought the issue of negotiated settlements to the fore (Turok, 2008:33). Indeed, South Africa had to follow suit in regard to negotiated settlements. In view of the collapse of Eastern Europe, the doctrines of globalization and neo-liberalism, with their free market philosophy, were rampant. As a

consequence, Turok (2008) argued that communist parties around the world either liquidated themselves or became marginalized.

It should be said that apartheid in South Africa was deeply rooted on racial categorisations. The road to democracy was not easy as people like Nelson Mandela, Govern Mbeki and others had fought almost singlehandedly to win back their country of origin. Thus, a violent struggle necessitated the creation of armed struggles as defence mechanisms to fall back on. The Umkhonto Wesizwe of the ANC and Poqo of the PAC were accordingly established since the ANC and other political parties were banned. Views, however, differed between the continued reliance on armed struggles given their failure to achieve desired outcomes. Some people, including President of the IFP Mangosuthu Buthelezi were advocating for a non-violent resolution (the talks). Mandela and others were detained owing to their alleged attempts to overthrow the government. The state of emergency was declared around the country. This not only infuriated the neighbouring states, but it also incensed the international community at large. In reaction to this event, the international community imposed sanctions on the South African government.

Importantly, the rapid growth of resistance and the strength of the Mass Democratic Movement during the late 1970s and 1980s, in conjunction with an enduring economic crisis and increasing international pressures have compelled the apartheid government to reconsider the importance of talks. Instinctively, the apartheid government began the process of wholly dismantling the adverse and repressive regime. In February 1990, the liberation movements

were unbanned. Henceforth, a process of releasing political prisoners was set in motion and the drastic and responsive mechanisms were created for the return of political exiles.

Following the return of political exiles and the unbanning of the native political organisations, the first general elections were held in 1994. The ANC emerged victorious with Nelson Mandela becoming the first democratically elected president. Therefore, the elections paved the way for freedom which Mandela and his fellows had long been fighting for.

### **2.3 The Post-Apartheid Context: The ‘New’ South Africa**

With the demise of apartheid in 1994, so many challenges still lie ahead. Apparently, this period marked the beginning of the ‘New’ South Africa and an end to hostile and volatile apartheid past. While South African democracy is still at an embryonic stage, it has already begun to lead by example in Africa. South Africa’s democracy is currently internationally acclaimed and recognised. Most recently, Turok argued that “for the first time in Africa, change was introduced electorally – by voting out of the top echelon of the ruling party – not by coup, nor by assassination and neither by the substitution of that party by another” (2008:13). This transpired when six of the most important personalities in the ANC and government stood for election to leading positions and were all voted down in the National Elective Conference in Polokwane 2007 (Ibid). This created a positive image about the strength and legitimacy of South African democracy. As a result, South Africa serves as a symbol of other countries that undergoes difficult and protracted political transitions. Munslow and Mc Lennan (2009) asserted that the first decade of democracy was

characterised by symbolic and real change in a range of policy areas. They further argued that almost every aspect of public policy and social service was subjected to review and revision.

However, the greater struggle since the early post-apartheid days has been the continued effort to undo the economic hardships of the system of racial exclusivity. In this regard, the arrangement that was reached between political parties in 1994 was none other than that of Government of National Unity (GNU) which was spearheaded by former President Nelson Mandela of the African National Congress (ANC). The ANC-led GNU included members of the National Party (NP), members of the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), members of different races and faiths, and women. In fact, the then newly-elected President Nelson Mandela was determined to ensure good race relations. As a result of this arrangement, political violence rapidly subsided and extremist groups withered ([http://www.capetown.at/heritage/history/newSA\\_gov.htm](http://www.capetown.at/heritage/history/newSA_gov.htm)). Officially, the GNU was entrusted with powers to oversee a new South African constitution. Immediately, various independent commissions were set up. These include, amongst others, Human Rights Commission, Gender Commission, Truth and Reconciliation Commission. In this way, the truth of many abuses came to light which helped to resolve much of the bitterness and secrecy of the past (Ibid). These commissions were created to uphold the values enshrined in the constitution.

As earlier indicated, the RDP became the centrepiece of ANC's policy. Historically, the RDP programme was drafted by the mass democratic movement led by the ANC. The ANC came into power whilst there were key powerful shifts in international relations, and these changes

had a huge impact on development approaches adopted at the time. Technically, the RDP was tabled at the first open conference of the ANC in South Africa held in Durban in July 1991 (Turok, 2008:75). The plan recognised that the democratic state would inherit a situation in which the vast majority of black people were still denied access to basic needs, and that there would be no easy way of providing millions of houses, jobs, and proper education for all. According to Turok (2008) it was argued that development is a process which involves three interrelated aspects:

First, it involves changing the social power relations that exist at the moment, so that power is distributed equally among all the people. Second, alongside the process of building real democracy there needs to be an improvement in the material conditions of the majority, ensuring greater access to food, clothing, shelter, incomes, jobs, health and education for all. Third, democracy and an improvement in the quality of life must be related to a fundamental restructuring of the economy along a new growth path, to allow for a sustainable process of change and growth in the economy (Turok, 2008:76).

According to Turok (2008), the need for RDP arose from two considerations – namely, the economic crisis had resulted in increased levels of unemployment, violence, crime, and social disintegration, and so COSATU wanted all parties to commit themselves to restructuring the economy. Secondly, it believed that the right to vote would be meaningless if not accompanied by the right to proper housing, education, and health (Ibid, p.88). Indeed, according to this plan, 300 000 new houses were promised each year, access to clean water, sanitation and electricity, health, education and welfare, jobs through public works schemes, and a massive re-distribution of land (Ibid). As a consequence, such promises, including ‘jobs for all’, led to high expectations. Affirmative Action was also introduced to redress the imbalances of the past. Some blacks became wealthy while others remained the same.

Similarly, there was also an introduction of GEAR as a policy to remedy the economic problems that faced the country after liberation. Through this policy, economic transformation was supposed to rest upon four objectives: investment must create jobs; there should be a strong bias towards labour intensive investments; there should be strong emphasis on small business development; and human resource development (Report of the ANC 50<sup>th</sup> National Conference, 1997:43, cited in Turok, p.11). The international environment demanded free market liberalisation, and it was prepared to obstruct any contrary major reforms. As a consequence, Turok observed that this was a situation that required caution and compromise in pursuing economic change particularly with respect to industry and mining. According to Wright (2001), GEAR was a macroeconomic strategy that was adopted by the Department of Finance in June 1996 as a five year plan aimed at strengthening economic development, broadening of employment, and redistribution of income and socioeconomic opportunities in favour of the poor.

Having inherited major imbalances in the macro-economy, the GEAR was used by government to make substantial adjustments (Turok, 2008:115). To achieve this:

It began to pay particular attention to monetary policy, which was primarily focused on the value of our currency but also impacts on interest rates, the exchange rate, money supply and access to credit. All this influences investments, household consumption, government expenditure and balance of payments. The aim was for monetary policy to be steered towards lower interest rates, because high interest rates affect investment negatively and increase interest payments on government debt (Ibid)

However, there were several critics that were levelled against government. For instance, critics maintained that the macro-economic equilibrium was a necessary but not sufficient condition for economic advance (Ibid, p.116). Further, other critics argued that employment-

creation was the correct point of departure in a developing country, rather than macro-economic concerns. Consequently, other critics argued that increased spending on social services as well as infrastructure would lead to growth, employment, and improvements in living standards (Ibid).

## **2.4 Reactions of COSATU and SACP to GEAR**

The policy frantically sought to achieve economic growth rate of 6 percent by 2000, relaxation of exchange controls, and reduction of budget deficit to below 4 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). As a consequence, the government succeeded in lowering the budget deficit, and inflation (Wright, 2001:2). Yet, South Africa's growth rate remained at 3 percent which falls far short of 6 percent that was initially planned. Likewise, COSATU also levelled criticisms against the GEAR. Severe criticisms first emerged from the fact that GEAR was not properly discussed in parliament during its introductory stages. It is argued that the policy was only introduced briefly to parliament the evening before it was tabled in the national assembly. The finance committee members were refused the opportunity to see a copy in advance of the tabling (Turok, 2008:116). Critics of GEAR pointed out that even if the so-called macro-economic fundamentals were brought into balance, there was no certainty that the masses would benefit without a clearly articulated strategy to this end. (Ibid, p.117). COSATU fervently believed that the GEAR has failed to deliver promised results (Wright, 2001:2). SACP and COSATU believed that GEAR was furthering neo-liberal market policies in response to IMF and World Bank pressure. According to COSATU, the GEAR (with its stringent monetary and fiscal targets) conflicted with the goal of the RDP of

growth based on job creation, meeting people's needs, poverty reduction, and a more equitable distribution of wealth. Rather, it created bitterness and distrust in the Alliance.

However, most researchers tended to agree that the first five years of democracy did not achieve many of the ambitions set out by the ANC. According to Munslow and Mc Lennan (2009) the legacies of apartheid combined with widespread poor budgetary and financial management, and a massive backlog in provision tended to limit opportunities for social development and expanded delivery. Another reason was that the country inherited state delivery which was fragmented, authoritarian, and hierarchical and rule bound (Munslow and McLennan, 2009:2). The other reason was attributed to the fact that there was a spread of criminality throughout the country. Further, this created fear. Meanwhile, affirmative action strained relations even further. As a consequence, these factors adversely discouraged needed foreign investment. They also depressed white confidence, and thus encouraging a wave of emigration by young white professionals. Munslow and Mc Lennan concluded that

“the government was required to facilitate economic growth and ameliorate poverty while managing the democracy-delivery interface” (2009:2)

Moreover, apartheid may be seen to be over but the realities on the ground seem to suggest that nothing has changed fundamentally. According to Turok (2008), South Africa continues to record high levels of inequality in the world. Indeed, as he argued, this is reflected in the Gini coefficient that indicates serious inequality (Turok, 2008:12). Poor people have not been sufficiently drawn into productive activities – particularly in the former homelands and urban townships (Ibid, p.13).

At the same time, the Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) has not benefitted the poorest of the poor. Although the BEE is in accordance with the objectives of the Freedom Charter in terms of opening up opportunities for all the historically disadvantaged people of South Africa it has not been productive in terms of empowering and uplifting the poor (Turok, 2008:139). Instead, the BEE has inadvertently led to the enrichment of the few. Indeed, the critics argue that the BEE has made a little or no impact on the poor. This has generated criticisms that it goes against the sharing values of the Freedom Charter, and the ANC's claim to be a movement for the "poorest of the poor".

Meanwhile, Munslow and Mc Lennan (2009) further pointed out that although there are certain fundamental achievements that were made after democracy, many people in South Africa are still poor and excluded. This is particularly so due to entrenched racial inequalities of apartheid in education, health and social development. This, as far as they are concerned, is combined with regional underdevelopment which seems difficult to shift.

In an attempt to remedy the situation, the government introduced the 'developmental state' in 2004. Obviously, this was done to constantly manage the ever-present demand for social development and relief for the poor by providing social security and managing economic growth. However, Everatt (2009) conceded that "tackling poverty as a priority in South Africa is probably one of the very few areas where consensus exists across political, racial and other lines of division" (p155). Everatt (2009) further pointed out that the poverty of the rural areas is staggering – and at an aggregate level it is more than twice that of urban areas

and the gap between them is rapidly growing. Everatt believes that there is no consensus reached on how poverty can be resolved because it is not clear:

“how poverty is understood, how it is defined, who is or who is not poor, what exactly to do about poverty, who has what role to play, and so on” (2009:155)

Hence, this lack of clarity in terms of whose prerogative it is to resolve poverty is also exacerbating the situation even further. As a matter of principle, one could argue strongly that government cannot do much alone without the necessary support from the Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs, and Non Profit Organisations (NPOs), and all other stakeholders.

## **2.5 Poverty in South Africa**

Many people still fervently believe that although apartheid was legally abolished, its effects still remain. Poverty, coupled with other adversities, remains the greatest challenge confronting South Africa since the acquisition of freedom in 1994. This is precisely so due to the lingering effects of institutionalised segregation which locked black South Africans out of the economy to a large degree. There seems to be uncertainty on whether poverty has worsened or not. For example, Creg Ruiters of the Institute for Social and Economic Research at Rhodes University noted that “absolute poverty is not as bad as it used to be under apartheid”(cited by Nduru, 2006:1). But, “relative poverty between the rich and the poor is increasing” (Ibid). According to Schwabe (2004), “new estimates of poverty show that the proportion of people living in poverty in South Africa has not changed significantly between 1996 and 2001 meaning that it is still worse” (p.1). However, those households living in poverty have sunk deeper into poverty and the gap between rich and poor has widened (Ibid).

But nevertheless, poverty is an inherently and hugely contested concept. Some researchers postulate that “arguments over how poverty should be conceptualised, defined and measured go beyond semantics and academic hair-splitting” (Terrace, 2007:5). Terrace further suggested that the conceptualisation, definition, and measurement of poverty in a society is like a mirror-image of the ideals of that society (Ibid). Terrace further advocated that it is vital that the concepts, definitions, and measurements of poverty, as well as being theoretically robust, are appropriate to the society in which they are applied (Ibid). According to Meth (2006), poverty is also political partly because it relates to the allocation or distribution of resources. It is also political because it reflects the impact of past and present policy choices. Presently, poverty discourse mainly draws from complex and contradictory underlying assumptions about what people are supposed to need in order to live.

After 1994, a number of seminal reports on poverty were commissioned by various bodies including the office of the former Deputy President (Thabo Mbeki). These included the 1995 Key Indicators of Poverty in South Africa, the Participative Poverty Assessment – South Africa report and the Poverty and Inequality Report, both published in 1998. In fact, these studies and reports were part of a national commitment to eradicating poverty that was embodied in the “War on Poverty” declared by then President Nelson Mandela on behalf of the state, together with civil society organisations in 1996.

Therefore, enquiry into levels of poverty amongst South Africans is not new. According to Magasela (2005), levels of poverty amongst the white population formed the basis of the first Carnegie Commission Inquiry into Poverty during the Great Depression in an attempt by the

government to address the “poor white problem” in 1928. The Second Carnegie Commission Inquiry into Poverty in South Africa was held, and this was followed by the 1993 “Project for Statistics on Living Standards and Development” undertaken by the World Bank and South African researchers for the African National Congress who wanted a definitive assessment of the extent of poverty within the country prior to taking office (Magasela, 2005)

In addition, most researchers argue that the eradication of poverty in South Africa has been largely considered to be silent and questionable. For instance, former President of South Africa (Thabo Mbeki) also acknowledged that the country has not done enough in terms of eradicating poverty:

“Endemic and widespread poverty continues to disfigure the face of our country. It will always be impossible for us to say that we have fully restored the dignity of all our people as long as this situation persists. For this reason the struggle to eradicate poverty has been and will continue to be a cornerstone of the national effort to build the new South Africa” (2004).

Furthermore, poverty seems to be an insurmountable barrier in South Africa as it unstoppably continues to make its presence felt. Several studies have been conducted in attempt to determine the poverty scenario in South Africa. For example, Luyt (2008) argued that:

“Poverty headcount rate in South Africa (based on poverty line set at R250 per person per month in 2000 Rand values, or roughly \$35 per month) was 50.1 percent in 1993 and 44, 4 percent in 2006, which represents a decline of 5, 7 percent over the first 12 year period of South Africa’s new democracy”.

In fact, various researchers agree on the fact that more than a decade after the end of apartheid, nearly half of South Africa’s population continues to live in poverty (Ibid). Indeed, the extent of poverty in South Africa remains disputed, but there is a general consensus that income inequality uniformly indicates the widening gap between the rich and the poor. In

regard to this, income inequality is particularly salient among different race groups (Luyt, 2008:1). Luyt further argued that:

“Whether using an expanded (higher) or narrow (lower) definition, unemployment rates in South Africa are exceptionally high. Since 1994, South Africa has continued a primarily capital and skills intensive economic development path, and its moderate growth rate has failed to absorb unskilled workers in anywhere near enough numbers to reduce overall unemployment in ways that contribute significantly to poverty reduction” (2008:2).

Currently, South Africa spends an amount equivalent to almost 7 percent on education, yet its education system is failing to produce school leavers with adequate work related skills in sufficient numbers. According to Luyt (2008), South African schools are simply not producing outputs commensurate with state expenditure, particularly when viewed in terms of the potential for improved education to alleviate poverty. As a result, South African students continue to display low levels of literacy and numeracy when put to test.

Meanwhile, South Africa’s global Human Development Index (HDI) ranking has fallen dramatically. Basically, it was in the 90<sup>th</sup> position in 1994, and it has dropped to 121<sup>st</sup> (out of 177 countries ranked by the United Nations Development Programme) in 2005 (Luyt, 2008:2). This is largely attributed to the decline of life expectancy and to high rates of violence. In fact, South Africa has the highest reported rates of violence particularly against women and children in the world. This alone seems to be a major stumbling block towards achieving some of the desired objectives and outcomes.

Most importantly, May (1997) agreed that throughout the rural areas, there is deep poverty and deprivation, particularly but not only- in the former homelands. In South Africa, people

are much poorer in rural areas than in the cities. Further, Bresciani and Valdes also acknowledged that poverty is usually more widespread and more intense in rural than in urban areas (2007:4). However, there are varying arguments with regard to what is generally conceived as 'rural'. May defines 'rural' as the sparsely populated areas in which people farm or depend on natural resources including the villages and small towns that are dispersed through these areas (1997:6). Indeed, almost three quarters of the poor live in the rural areas in South Africa.

According to the statistics, the poverty rates of South Africa's nine provinces differ significantly, as do those of the urban and rural areas of the country. In 2005/06 the poverty rates ranged from 24.9% in Gauteng and 28.8% in the Western Cape to 57.6% in the Eastern Cape and 64.6% in Limpopo. The three provinces with the highest poverty rates (KwaZulu-Natal, the Eastern Cape and Limpopo) are also relatively populous – at the time of IES2005, they housed 47.4% of the South African population. It should come as no surprise then that fully 60.1% of poor individuals lived in these three provinces. The incidence of poverty, however, was much higher in the rural areas of South Africa – 59.3% of poor individuals were rural dwellers despite the fact that the rural areas housed well below one-half of the South African population.

In addition, the incidence of poverty differs significantly or markedly among the different population groups in South Africa. The poorest ten per cent of South Africans, of whom 77 per cent are Africans living in rural areas, are responsible for just one per cent of consumer spending in the country. Munslow (2001) believes that economic empowerment has

extensively enhanced the rising black middle class. In spite of this empowerment, Munslow strongly believes that a large sector of the black population remains in abject poverty (2001:501). Nduru (2006) also contends that “while there has been a significant and rapid advance of Africans into and within the middle strata, the reality is that the population belonging to the strata among Africans is 7.8 per cent, while it is 15.6 per cent for Coloureds, 20 per cent for Indians and 33 per cent for Whites”. Yet, Nduru (2006) goes on to argue that blacks constitute 78 per cent of South Africa’s population of 46.9 million, whites constitute 9.6 per cent, Coloureds 8.9 per cent, and Indians 2.5 per cent respectively.

In August 2008, the South African government launched the national War on Poverty Campaign to reduce poverty among the country’s poorest citizens. In fact, the most deprived households identified in the poorest wards were visited periodically during the campaign by a team of professionals and community workers to identify their specific needs and to accelerate access to government services and to provide safety nets (<http://www.southafrica.co.za/about-south-africa/health/social-development/>). The general belief is that the success of tackling poverty and social exclusion requires that every sector plays its part. In other words, poverty is a multi-dimensional phenomenon, and it requires joint initiatives to effectively weed it out.

## **2.6 Poverty in the context of Ngcolosi, eMahlathini**

At grand scale, poverty continuously appears to be the huge hindrance facing not only the South African government, but also neighbouring states due to the integration of the economy. Nationally, poverty undoubtedly undermines the successful transition to

democracy that was witnessed in 1994. Locally, Ngcolosi is not entirely different in this regard. This is due in part to the fact that it is a rural area where there is no infrastructural development. In this area, poverty is extremely high due to many contributing factors. Contributing factors could include: lack of job opportunities; lack of education; lack of government or Non-Governmental Support, and lack of proper technical know-how. The Community-Based Organisations (CBOs) also urgently need support in order for them to be able to continue with their activities. Most importantly, there is no effective coordination or partnership between political and traditional structures in the area. Together, these contributing factors have worsened the extent and nature of poverty in the area.

## **2.7 Critics of poverty measurements/indicators**

The definition and measurement of poverty is not an easy task or an end in itself. Rather, it is the means by which the level of poverty in a society at a given time can be determined in order to inform policy and programmes intended to reduce, alleviate, and ultimately eradicate poverty. Furthermore, it is important to measure during the eradication process in order for one to be able to determine whether the desired goal was accomplished or not. However, measurements themselves are supposed to be scrutinised. This is in part due to the fact that they often fall short in terms of strategising. Therefore, it increasingly becomes imperative to interrogate the measurements partly because they are accused of omitting the key things whilst they are doing their calculations. Likewise, the accuracy of definitions, and the appropriateness and reliability of measurements are, therefore, extremely important.

To begin with, there have been numerous critics destined to investigate the ways in which governments measure poverty. Interestingly, one on-going critique is of the types of income that are included in (or excluded from) the poverty measure. Wills (2000) stated that by failing to include income that many low-income people receive in the form of public assistance, some critics maintain that the extent of poverty is over-stated. Another important critique of the official poverty measure is that it is seriously flawed in continuing to assume that families spend one-third of the budget on food (Wills, 2000:1). This, as Wills observed, may have been true when the measure was devised thirty years ago, but it is not an accurate reflection of current realities. Realistically, families no longer spend one-third of their income on food and two-thirds on other basic needs. According to Wills (2000), food now accounts for one-sixth of the family budget.

In addition, the poverty measures also fall unconsciously short because most of the expenses that many families regard as crucial elements of their household budget are simply excluded from consideration in the poverty calculation. Furthermore, a key issue that critics of poverty measure have run in to is cost (Ibid). To this end, most attempts to establish a new measure of poverty would result in higher numbers of people being counted as poor. The counter-argument is that correcting all of the acknowledged problems in the poverty count, however, would increase the total number of the poor. Wills briefly conceded that:

In recent years there have been more fundamental challenges to the poverty measure. Concerned that the poverty rate is far too low, community-based organizations around the country have advocated for "living wages." These groups have argued that instead of using "poverty" as the standard to measure people's economic well-being, we should develop a measure of "living wages." Policy and research institutes around the country have developed living wage budgets that take into account the full range of costs required for families of different sizes to maintain a decent standard of living. The bottom line is that the current system of measurement is out-dated and seriously underestimates the count of the number of poor people in this country. If the

government were to acknowledge the true extent of poverty, it would need to dedicate a greater share of its resources to pay the costs of programs to help the poor. It is unfortunately cheaper to use an outdated system of measurement so that fewer people will be in poverty by government standards (Wills, 2000:1).

Meanwhile, several other critics argue that gender needs to be taken seriously at all times whilst measuring poverty among the population. To this end, Andaiye (in Tang Nain and Bailey, 2003) has observed that while male poverty is often linked to unemployment, female poverty can exist where women work full time due to women generally, being located in low paying jobs. In this context, he further argued, it is important to compare women's and men's earnings and access to credit and property ownership, and in all these areas, particularly earnings women are at disadvantage compared to men. Further, studies in other parts of the world suggest that there is an inequality in terms of access to the resource within the household. Thus, this inequality in terms of resource distribution also relegates women to the inferior position relative to men.

## **2.8 KwaZulu-Natal Development Planning**

The province of KwaZulu-Natal has not remained silent whilst poverty and other challenges continue to impose pressure. In essence, the agenda of development and planning constantly features prominently on government's plan of action. KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) is widely regarded as one of the major contributors in South African economy as a whole. Indeed, the issue of development is taken seriously of late. To this end, government has a mandate to restructure the process of development and service delivery in the province (Economic Cluster, 2006:2). More importantly, this is going to be achieved through the three spheres of

government, the different government sectors, and the active participation of government's partners in the business community and organised labour. However, as the Economic Cluster (2006) argued, the key challenge government faces is to align and harmonise these structures, and the fiscal, financial, and human resources at its disposal so that it can achieve the overarching goals of eradicating poverty, creating employment, and laying the foundation for accelerated economic growth. The problem of poverty and unemployment in KwaZulu-Natal, it is argued, needs a holistic approach in order to be at best eradicated or at least reduced. The Economic Cluster (2006) agrees generally that poverty and unemployment have remained adamantly chronic and rapidly rising in the province. Possibly, one aggravating factor could be that the province remains largely rural and is home to greatest numbers of poor people. Thus, it is important to be mindful of these challenges whilst providing strategic direction in the province.

In response to these twin challenges, the province has its own defence mechanisms, embodied in its growth and development strategy. As such, this strategy is referred to as Provincial Growth and Development Strategy (PGDS) – now called the Provincial Spatial Economic Development Strategy (PSEDS). As one could reasonably expect, this strategy has a crucial role to play in giving effect to government's developmental state by growing the economy; reducing unemployment; eradicating poverty; and ensuring greater social inclusion and cohesion (Economic Cluster, 2006:2). Actually, the concept of developmental state is rooted in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that were adopted by the United Nations. It is clearly spelt out in these goals that there should be:

- Eradication of extreme poverty and hunger;
- Achievement of universal primary education;
- Promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women;
- Reduction in child mortality;

- Improvement of maternal health;
- Combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases;
- Ensuring environmental sustainability; and
- Developing a global partnership for development (Economic Cluster, 2006:9).

In addition, KwaZulu-Natal has strengths and weaknesses that can be generally used to test its ability to achieve some of the desired goals. To begin with, the province seems to be formidable because it is located in the eastern seaboard which is rich in natural resources. Typically, this gives the province the comparative advantage in many respects. Secondly, KZN has the strongest comparative advantage in the agriculture; transport and communication; manufacturing and tourism sectors. KZN is further supported by the well-developed first-world type infrastructure. Traditionally, this provides investment opportunities (Economic Cluster, 2006:13).

By contrast, the province also has strong weaknesses that continue to derail development and economic growth. The Economic Cluster (2006) has identified several weaknesses that undermine growth in the province. These weaknesses include, amongst others:

First, the relative under-performance of the economy taking into account its potential. Although KwaZulu-Natal is the most populous province (20.6% of the population), it contributes only 16.3% to GDP (compared to Gauteng's 33.8%), indicating low levels of productivity. In fact KwaZulu-Natal only ranks fifth in terms of GDP per capita; the relative stagnation of agriculture, despite its strategic importance to the social and economic development of the province, and the extremely favourable natural endowment which the province enjoys (agriculture's contribution to the GGP has steadily declined over the last decade in percentage terms, with accompanying persistent declines in employment averaging 0,5% per annum from 1994 to 2004); the endemic problem of rural underdevelopment (the second economy), with high levels of poverty, unemployment, especially in rural areas; the historical imbalance in the socio-economic composition of society which has contributed to widening the gap between the first and the second economy; a weak, small business (SMME) sector, lacking in skills, access to finance and with a poor entrepreneurial record; skewed and unequal spatial development; the largely rural nature of the province and dispersed settlements, with a topography which adds to the cost of development and infrastructure provision; poor coordination, synergy and integration between

departments, spheres of government and between municipalities and traditional authorities; a critical shortage of professional skills, such as engineering and project management, which are critical for economic growth; the slow pace of land restitution and redistribution programmes compounded by the unsustainability of many land reform initiatives owing to insufficient skills transfer and capitalisation; the lack of access to financing for small scale entrepreneurs and SMMEs owing to the inflexibility of the formal financial institutions; and finally, a variety of social factors such as the high infection and prevalence rates of HIV/AIDS, unemployment, low human capital and development indices, a high rate of crime, poor quality of education and high numbers of out-of-school children (Economic Cluster 2006:16)

In short, poverty in South Africa along with Ngqolosi community is still perceived to be the greatest challenge. The policies such as RDP and GEAR that were adopted by the new government in an effort to reduce the rate and extent of poverty have not sufficiently yielded the results. They were severely criticised by the COSATU and SACP for not being in favour of the poor. However, it is also worth mentioning that government implemented these policies due to the political and economic conditions that unfolded in the international during the period 1990-1994, where the issue of negotiated settlements came to the fore. The measurements or indicators of poverty have also come under scrutiny in this part of the study. For instance, it is argued that they occasionally fail to measure what they are supposed to measure in determining the nature and extent of poverty in any given society.

Most interestingly, the province of KwaZulu-Natal also has its own strategies that are in place in dealing with poverty. Its location in the eastern seaboard has been defined as the viable strength of the province whilst the overall under-performance of the economy of the province has been defined as the weakness. Most importantly, it is believed that the province is under-performing given the perceived potential.

# Chapter Three

## Literature Review

The comprehensive understanding of debates surrounding poverty requires critical engagement with possible causes of it. However, critical engagement also requires the criteria which it can be used to analyse poverty. Thus, in measuring the nature and extent of poverty, it is often advisable for one to apply certain theories and policies that are deemed relevant to ensure that his/her measurements are accurate and appropriate at all times. As such, the move towards understanding the causes of poverty should be underpinned and informed by consideration of studies that have been done in the field of poverty. Revisiting works by other scholars helps to make sure that the research itself is not out of line. It also helps one to overcome definitional problems. There is also a need to consider the experiential aspects of poverty – a gap on which is what you can claim your study to fill.

In view of that, this chapter typically begins by essentially talking about the theoretical framework. In principle, theoretical framework assists vastly in providing greater understanding about the phenomenon that is being investigated. In this regard, ‘sustainable livelihoods’ approach is used to demonstrate the conditions under which poor and vulnerable people live. The theory concerns itself immensely with poverty rates and how they came about. The central thesis of the theory goes beyond examining the existence of poverty. For instance, the theory explores the conflation of different deficiencies that cause stress on people’s lives.

On the contrary, food security prescribes the manner in which food intake must be measured at all times in order to decide whether a person is poor or not. Typically, food security is an international measure or assessment standard of food intake to ensure that healthy food is taken seriously at all times. Thus, food security in this regard is used to explain South Africa's response to the challenge of poverty. This is done in part to ensure that the measure is both internationally and locally relevant. However, there are dubious challenges that continue to confront the food security efforts in South Africa. For instance, it has been earlier argued that the basic needs of people in rural areas are not addressed properly through the basic needs index. The index considered access to food, clothing and shelter. Thus, this justifies why food security and gardening deserves a particular consideration in dealing with the needs of the people. This is particularly so because it is in people's control.

Moreover, this chapter also reviews various bodies of literature on community gardens. More specifically, the chapter investigates their usefulness. In this regard, a particular reference has also been made to home gardens as a way of differentiating between the two. Finally, critics of community gardening have also been put forward to show that the strategy also has its own adversities.

Furthermore, other alternatives that have been instrumentally used by government to do away with poverty directly or indirectly also come to the fore in this chapter. These include amongst others, Child Support Grant (CSG), Foster Care Grant (FCG), Zibambele Public Works Programme (a KZN initiative).

### **3.1 Theoretical Framework: Sustainable Livelihoods**

The comprehensive understanding of the situations of poor people can be obtained from theories that best explain the poor people. A special reference can be made to ‘sustainable livelihoods’ approaches. This section aims to solve definitional problems and how the theory of sustainable livelihoods came about. In the process, the arguments that sustainable livelihoods theorists advocate are clearly revealed. However, critics pertaining to sustainable livelihoods are also revealed in this section to warn or guide whoever intends to apply the theory.

Firstly, the study uses ‘sustainable livelihoods’ as a theory upon which it is based. This is so because sustainable livelihoods approaches are widely seen as a way to improve the understanding of livelihoods of poor people. However, currently, there is no universally accepted definition of sustainable livelihoods which one can point to if one needs an explanation about sustainable livelihoods. Attempts, however, have been made to come up with a widely accepted definition. For instance, Chambers and Conway (1992) cited by Hussein (2002) defined livelihoods as something that: “comprises capabilities, assets, and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, while not undermining natural resource base” (2002:14).

Secondly, the sustainable livelihoods framework places people, especially the rural poor people, at the centre of a web of inter-related influences that affect how these people create a livelihood for themselves and their households. Further, Ashley and Carney defines

sustainable livelihoods as “a way of thinking about the objectives, scope, and priorities for development, in order to enhance progress in poverty elimination” (1999:6). Basically, sustainable livelihoods aim to assess how poor people achieve lasting improvements in their lives. For a livelihood to be sustainable, it must be people centred; responsive and participatory; multi-level; conducted in partnership; and dynamic. The livelihood concept has its origins in earlier development theory and research such as integrated rural development planning, food security initiatives, rapid rural appraisal, participatory rural appraisal and new understandings of poverty and well-being (Satge, 2002:3). According to Solesbury (2003), the concept first appeared in research literature in the 1980s, and in the late 1990s it had become one of a trio of principles that underpinned UK development policy. Further, there are two broad approaches to defining livelihoods. Shackelton and Cousins (2000:3) identified one view as an economic focus on production, employment and household income. The second view appeared as uniting concepts of economic development, reducing vulnerability and incorporating principles of environmental sustainability while building on the strengths of the poor (Shackelton and Cousins, 2000:3).

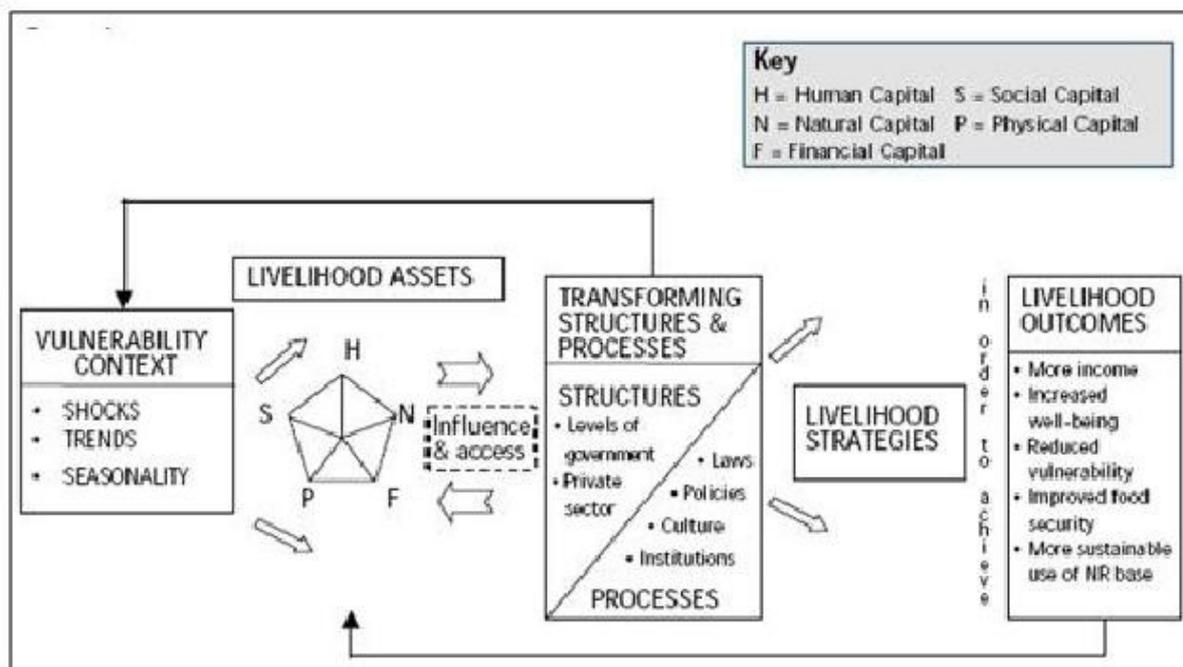
Thirdly, most researchers advocate for the application of sustainable livelihoods in development initiatives because of its successes and ability to grasp local conditions of the poor. Solesbury (2003) argued that sustainable livelihoods approach was well aligned with its political and institutional context. Solesbury (2003) further noted that sustainable livelihoods approach was in tune with wider shifts in approaches to development through the 1980s and 1990s; towards a focus on human-wellbeing and sustainability rather than economic growth. The sustainable livelihoods also succeeded in the attention of key policymakers in donor institutions in the early 1990s (Solesbury, 2003:4). In addition, Krantz (2001) argued that the

sustainable livelihood concept offers a holistic approach to poverty as it takes into consideration poor people's ability to make a living in an economically, ecologically, and socially sustainable manner.

Finally, according to Carney (1999), there are significant challenges to sustainable livelihoods that derail/hinder progress and efficiency. For instance, food security remains a key concern; resource degradation in rural areas is an acute problem; livelihoods approaches have little to say about distributional issues, though there is an implicit assumption that the emphasis will be on the poorest; and the sustainable livelihoods approaches build on lessons of past rural development efforts and the findings of various research studies. Other criticisms includes sustainable livelihoods' failure to deal with processes of economic globalisation, power, and politics, changing environmental conditions, and the lack of long term vision for rural development economies (Johnson, 2009:1). Satge (2002) further argued that one significant limitation of past development approaches was that they assumed there was no diversification between rural households - that is rural households had a singular way of making a living. In this regard, they were caught napping.

However, in my view, the criticisms are reading too much into the theory. In other words, they are not necessarily fair in describing the underlying factors. The theory itself posits that development projects should be centred, and driven by people in order for them to be successful, but conditions such as resource degradation, and food security can not be monitored by the theory. The sustainable livelihood aims to examine the challenges of the poor at an international level regardless of whether resources are being degraded or not.

**Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (DFID, 1999, p.46)**



**3.2 Policy Context: Food Security**

The right to food is one of the most constantly spoken about in international human rights documents. Yet, it is one of the most often neglected and violated ones. Clover (2003) noted that targets set by the World Food Summit in 1996 for the reduction of hunger have largely failed, despite food production having grown faster than world population. Further, Clover (2003) attributed the failure of action plans to faulty analysis and faulty actions.

Since the challenge of poverty seems to be critical and rapid in most parts of South Africa, certain responses are required to all the stakeholders involved in curbing poverty. In fact, poverty is a multi-dimensional phenomenon that requires attention from government, civil society organisations, and business organisations. Therefore, an attempt to phase out poverty should be an integrated and well-coordinated effort from all spheres.

Meanwhile, poverty appears to be the international phenomenon that requires internationally and locally relevant solutions. This is so partly because challenges that face Africa seem to have a spill-over effect. In other words, if poverty was going to be completely eradicated in South Africa, the poorest from the neighbouring states would inevitably flock to South Africa for better means of survival. In response to a rapidly increasing poverty, the South African government has devised food security as the plan to fight against poverty.

As previously indicated, poverty in South Africa varies from one race to the other, and from location to location. The apartheid regime has adversely impinged upon native South Africans, although some researchers argue that indigenous black South Africans were better off during apartheid era than they are during the democratic dispensation. Sarvaes rightfully said that “while poverty levels may have remained constant during the last decade, the percentage of people living in seriously vulnerable situations seems to be increasing rather than decreasing” (2008:33). Sarvaes further argued that the gaps between the very poor and the poor have become painfully visible (2008:33).

Various responses have been applied with a view of at least eliminating poverty. Food security stood out as one of the enormous and hugely debated responses in South African cycles. Backerberg (2009) acknowledges that “life in rural areas of South Africa is complex and is characterised by many inconsistencies” (p.1). Therefore, food security was proposed to extricate poor South Africans from poverty huddle. Basically, food security is part of the section 27 of the constitution in South Africa. The constitution clearly states that every citizen has a right to have access to sufficient food and water, and that “the state must by legislation and other measures, within its available resources, avail to progressive realisation of the right to sufficient food” (National Dept. of Agriculture, 2002:5).

Food security as a concern was apparently included in the package of Reconstruction and Development Policy (RDP) in 1994. However, in that package food security was generally considered to be slightly urgent and crucial as opposed to other policies that were included in the RDP. In line with the RDP, food security was identified as a priority. According to food security requirements, government reprioritised public spending to focus more on improving the food security conditions of historically disadvantaged people (National Dept. Agriculture, 2002:5). According to the Department of Agriculture, the RDP policy has resulted into:

Increased spending in social programmes of all spheres of government such as school feeding schemes, child support grants, free health services for children between 0-6 years, for pregnant and lactating women, pension funds for the elderly, working for water, community public works programme, provincial community gardens initiatives like Kgora and Xoshindlala, land reform, farmer settlement, production loans for small farmers, infrastructure grant for smallholder farmers, and the Presidential tractor mechanisation scheme (2002:5).

In addition, Bonti- Ankomah defined ‘food security’ as access by all households at all times to adequate and nutritious food for a healthy and productive life (2001:2). Bonti-Ankomah

further maintained that food security can be said to have two major components: ability to be self sufficient in food production through own production; accessibility to markets and ability to purchase food items. (2001:2). According to the National Department of Agriculture, ‘food security’ is defined as physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food by all South Africans at all times to meet their dietary, and food preferences for an active and healthy life (2002:15). The department further noted that the definition should also comprise three distinct but inter-related components:

Food availability: effective or continuous supply of food at both national and household level. Food access or effective demand: ability of nations and its household to acquire food on sustainable basis. Reliability of food: utilisation and consumption of safe and nutritious food (2002:15)

Generally, the threat to food security often arise when a combination of factors individually and collectively place food systems under pressure. According to Bonti-Ankomah, these include: climatological, ecological, socio-economic, and political factors (2001:2). Together, these factors interact with such factors as market and access to credit, the availability of sustainability of technology, the terms of trade, pricing policies, and other idiosyncratic factors to threaten food supply (Ibid). On the contrary, the National Department of Agriculture firmly believes that South Africa faces food security challenges because:

It has to ensure that enough food is available to all, now and in the future; the second, is to match incomes of people to prices in order to ensure access to sufficient food for every citizen; the third, is to empower citizens to make optimal choices for nutritious and safe food; the fourth, is to ensure that there is adequate safety nets and food emergency management systems to provide people that are unable to meet their foods needs from their efforts (2002:5-6)

This remains the biggest challenge the country has ever faced in its transition period because only when poverty is reduced can the country claim to be representing the poor.

### **3.3 How does food become insecure?**

Since food security emphasises regular access to nutritious food, it is often complicated to meet that condition if you are poor. Thus, the lack of proper food at all times leads to food insecurity. First, the regular intake of similar food stuffs which is nutritionally weak often amounts to adverse effects physiologically and psychologically. And, sometimes there is no intake of food at all. Together, these actions often lead to food insecurity. According to Habicht *et al* (2004), food insecurity is characterised by hunger, malnutrition, and undernourishment. In this context, hunger covers a spectrum from short-term physical experience of discomfort to chronic food shortage to severe and life-threatening lack of food (Habicht *et al*, 2004:1). Further, malnutrition is concisely defined as a condition brought about by insufficient intake of nutrients to meet biological requirements. In essence, they argue that malnutrition is mostly seen when there is inadequate intake of macro- and micro-nutrients, respectively. Originally, food insecurity was used to describe the instability of national or regional food supplies overtime (Ibid). Most recently, it has been expanded to include a lack of secure provisions at the household and individual level (Ibid).

### **3.4 Contextualising food insecurity in South Africa**

In the South African context, people who are most vulnerable to food insecurity are certainly those who reside in rural areas. Backerberg (2009) noted that 19 million people in South Africa are rural survivalists with traditional agrarian lifestyles. These, Backerberg further noted, are mainly black South Africans who still adhere to tribal customs (2009:1). Of those 19 million people (at least 15 million individuals) live under conditions of poverty with food insecurity, low income and education, lack of acceptable housing and adequate services

(Ibid). Therefore, material income for rural livelihoods is mostly obtained from remittances from family members in urban areas, wages, pensions, and social grants (Ibid). Meanwhile, it is estimated that 39 percent of South African population is vulnerable to food insecurity. Bonti-Ankumah (2001) noted that food insecurity is highest among the African population and rural households. Furthermore, provinces with high stunting rates are also provinces with large rural population.

Moreover, Clover (2003) noted that food insecurity and hunger are closely related to poverty and inability to purchase food. Precisely, this is so because most people buy food rather than producing it. Clover (2003) also noted that there are very few people, including small farmers, who are entirely self-sufficient in production. In December 2002, a conference was held at Abuja, in Nigeria. It was essentially earmarked for seeking urgent measures to check Africa's severe food crisis (Clover, 2003:7). It was generally agreed in this conference that action plans to address food security have continued to fall well short. Further, it was agreed that faulty analysis have led to faulty actions. This conference aimed specifically at emerging with relevant and responsive policies. However, not much has been done by way of implementing some of the policies that they agreed on.

Although South Africa is generally perceived to be food self-sufficient unlike other developing countries, food security is a big concern. Amongst poor households, particularly in the rural areas, a significant number may be considered resource poor (Bonti-Ankumah, 2001:3). As a consequence, women and children bear the long-term consequences of food insecurity because of the negative impact on their learning capacity and productivity in adult life (Ibid). Further, McLachlan and Kuzwayo (1997) had identified inadequate intake and

diseases as the most key problems facing South Africa particularly rural communities. In support of this, Bonti-Ankumah (2001) added that poor nutritional status reduces the immune system and increases individual's susceptibility to infections. This is also premised upon the basis that there are not many viable livelihood strategies particularly in rural areas. As a result, rural households are constantly dependent on wage incomes. In fact, poor nutritional intake often leads to food insecurity.

Due to food insecurity and other related challenges, rural communities often resort to gardening in an attempt to fend off for themselves. Large numbers of people in rural areas often perpetually rely on support grants and wage incomes. Not surprisingly, these do not go a long way in terms of eradicating poverty and fighting diseases that are associated with poverty. Although some households resort to home gardens, others opt for community gardening so that they will work collaboratively with their neighbours. Thus, community gardens are going to be assessed in relation to home gardens in order to see how these complement or destabilise each other.

### **3.5 Home gardens versus Community gardens**

The bodies of literature that have been extensively visited in this study are those that focus exclusively on gardens as a poverty alleviation strategy. Most frequently, the available literature tend to distinguish between home gardens and community gardens. For example, Nell *et al* (2000) noted that home garden is a piece of land in a homestead (can be in front or behind the house) that is used mainly for agricultural production and own consumption. Thus, the size of the plot may vary from household to household. In the contrast, community garden

is a plot of land that is allocated by local authority for a group of farmers or community and is used for agricultural production; for individual consumption; and commercial uses (Patel, 1991 and Holland, 2004). Therefore, this section deals specifically with the types of benefits that are associated with gardening and the challenges to gardening as a poverty alleviation strategy both at home gardens and community gardens. However, particular reference will be made repeatedly on community gardens because they are a major focus of the study.

In fact, most literature tends to look impartially on home gardens and community gardens. This is particularly true since Herbach (1998) rightly pointed out that gardens should not be viewed in a single dimensional manner. Rather, Herbach proposed that they should be viewed in all aspects of their being and the benefits they bring. Home gardens are essentially those gardens that are found in the home. Community gardens are not similar to home gardens because they inevitably include the element of sharing. Patel (1991) and Holland (2004) define community gardens as open spaces that are managed and operated by members of the local community. In other words, community gardens can be divided into individual plots, and planted with vegetables, and occasionally, these plots are shared by families (Patel, 1991). According to South African National Department of Agriculture and Environmental Affairs (1999), community food gardens are a portion of land that is to be utilised by a group of people to produce fruits and vegetables with a minimum number of five people participating. Walter (2003) posits that community gardens are more than just a piece of land, they are about both the collective and individual effort of participants. Furthermore, an important characteristic about community gardens is that every community garden is different from the other, and gardeners themselves decide on how to run the garden. Thus, literature to take precedence in this study is the one that focuses on community gardens. The

home gardens will be referred to in a broader examination of garden's contribution to food security.

According to the World Resource Institute (WRI) (2005) there are currently more than one billion people in the world living in rural areas. Most of these poor rural people rely on the ecosystem as a lifeline and the possibility of a better life. As part of the ecosystem, food gardens have become a significant factor in rural peoples' lives across the globe. They are important because they supply individuals with sustenance they need for everyday living. In many ways South Africa reflects the world situation. More than 16 million people in South Africa are living in poverty, and most of these people are in the rural areas and they are usually female-headed households (Ministry of Agriculture and Land Affairs (MALA), 1998). According to the MALA (1998) increasing food production of the small-scale farmers will improve poor people well-being and thus reducing their vulnerability to poverty. The potential of small-scale agriculture has been recognised in many developing countries including South Africa, for their ability create employment, thus generating income and contributing vastly to household food security in poor people's lives (Hedden-Dunkhorst *et al.*, 1999).

Most importantly, a major breakthrough was the development and growth of home gardens. The policy however does not mention homestead farms, but only mentions commercial (mono-cropping) farms (MALA; 1998). On the contrary, small-farms have become an ideal strategy for the rural development the last half century (Ashley *et al.*, 2001). Home garden growth however should be encouraged to significantly contribute to the livelihoods of the

rural poor. The reason for growth to be encouraged is that agricultural production, which includes vegetable and livestock farming, is the primary source of livelihoods for a large number of households in rural areas (MALA, 1998). Community gardens as the greatest investments in our society, they are seen as an important element of wealth creation among the poor (Sotshongaye, 2000). From an increase in the production in these community gardens, the agricultural sector would realise a significant rise in the economic benefits of small-scale farmers (MALA, 1998).

Admittedly, the other most important hindrance is that most of the arable land is still in the hands of the few – the whites. This makes agricultural practices to be unproductive especially in rural communities some of whom their land was taken away forcibly. The land can be perceived as a posing a serious threat in any agricultural practice.

However with the intensification of agricultural production, issues of labour would come into play (Stone, 1990). Notwithstanding the significant importance of, the investment in and the expected contributions from community gardens in rural areas, little research has been conducted on community gardens in rural areas. Much of the published literature about community gardens is based on the positive social, economic and environmental effects of community gardens on urban livelihoods. Study of the role of community gardens in rural livelihoods has been largely neglected.

Similarly, community gardens are used in rural communities in an effort to combat and eradicate poverty. However, Bresciani (2007) also rigorously supports the view that the severity of poverty is much higher in rural areas than it is in urban areas. According to Income and Expenditure Survey, about 84% of rural households had monthly incomes of less than R2 500 with 62% reporting monthly incomes of less than R1000 (Bonti-Ankomah, 2001:4). Bresciani concedes that in developing countries the majority of the poor still lives in rural areas (2007:42). Further, May, in Cousins B. (2000) stresses that many poor families appear to value subsistence agriculture. Thus, gardening is undertaken as a hedge against the lean season and serves a critical supportive function at a particular time of the year (May, 2001:24). Bresciani also acknowledges that agriculture and agricultural-related activities provide most of the employment in rural areas (2007:42). Jazairy, Alamgar, and Panuccio (1992) support this view rigorously. They maintain that the rural poor are involved in small-scale agriculture, livestock and fisheries, waged labour in all sectors, trade, crafts and services, small-scale enterprises and micro-enterprises (1992:14). Due to active participation in small-scale agriculture, rural poor are able to increase their productivity, income, and thus the quality of life also increases (Ibid, p.15)

Additionally, most researchers agree that both home and community gardens are essentially earmarked for a wide range of purpose including home food consumption, nutrition, income, training, social cohesion, and even preserving the tradition. Further, Lund (2004) and Friedrich (2004) noted that gardening is no more production of vegetables, but it has in fact become a complex system with various functions and uses. Friedrich (2004) further acknowledges that there is insufficient research endeavours on the complexity of community

gardens. In other words, Friedrich states that there is a need for further research on the complexity of gardens.

In addition, most scholars tend to share a similar take on the reasons that force people to enter into gardening. Fernandez, 2003, Walter, 2003, and Department of Environmental Affairs and Agriculture, 2004 argue that the primary reason for entering into a garden is to produce food. However, different people may use gardens for different reasons. Shannon (1996) is a witness of this when he expands that other people enter into gardening because they want to be active participants in the production of their own food. Generally speaking, food garden projects address social, economic, and environmental objectives.

Scholars also share a similar sentiment that gardening can effectively produce social capital. Firstly, Glover (2004) contends that community gardens are where social capital is produced, accessed, and used by community networks. Social capital indicates community networks, and it is often based on trust, reciprocity, respect, and solidarity. Smith *et al* (2005) further adds that gardens are regarded as a place where people organise and build networks. Indeed, these connections include people who trust each other, and this could effectively form a powerful community asset (Putman, 2000 and Glover, 2004). The mutual trust, according to Sherer (2004), further builds community strength through social capital.

In some instances food gardens are used for aesthetic reasons; they are used to beautify the surrounding, with all the green and colours (Westphal, 1999). This is not only in urban

environment, even the poor have aesthetic needs, needs of enjoyment and also the basic needs (Nell, 2000) and these needs are realised in the food gardens. However food gardens are more than just about beauty; to a number of people food gardens mean moving away from a poverty stricken to a slightly better environment (Fernandez, 2003). She further emphasises this point in stating that this is because food gardening is more than just about producing food; it performs a number of activities.

Accordingly, food gardens are exceedingly crucial in terms of psychology. Herbach (1998) highlights other uses of food gardens, identified are the internal and non-economic aspects to gardening, these include the enhancement of a person's psychological, spiritual and physical sense of well-being. Gardening is about getting in touch with oneself. The focus of a person is reshaped through his/her active involvement in gardening. They also create jobs. In fact, food gardens contribute towards the creation of farmer jobs, as farmers are "employed" in the gardens they utilize, although returns may vary based on the climate (Shannon, 1996). They are a way of creating informal employment at a low capital investment (Shannon, 1996). And Light *et al* (1996) refers to as community based employment; because people are then employed in their own backyards and also in the communal spaces that are provided for them.

Furthermore, the social networks and connections serve multiple purposes within the community and community gardens. They include an exchange of labour and material, but most importantly the exchange of knowledge (Fernandez, 2003). By people interacting

together, they learn to share their aspirations, information, challenges, threats and fears thus leading to growth within individuals and community (Delgado, 2000, Fernandez, 2003).

Likewise, food gardens further serve as an educational system because in some countries they are used to teach biology to young students and also teach them job and life skills (Herbach, 1998). They also help people to learn to be active participants in their development (Patel, 1991) they become more than just passive recipient. Hall (1999) puts emphasize by saying people learn to be active participants in creating their own external environment, they become decision makers and workers in changing their own surroundings. This means that the people work their soils and make their surroundings to what they want them to be.

Moreover, the FAO (2006) states that food gardens allow people to practice what is referred to as “experiential learning”, where people learn by doing rather than being given something. Food gardens further teach people to be self-sufficient, and to be self-reliant (Gelsi, 1999). Gardens teach them to be able to produce enough for their family consumption and probably have something left over to sell without needing help form another person. It also teaches them to be able to identify and mobilize redundant resources (Gelsi, 1999). Food gardens teach them the skill of independence, where they do not have to wait for someone to help them but be able to take to help themselves (Patel, 1991). Gardening therefore stimulates peoples’ own interests in improving their own livelihoods their own ways, thus making them sustainable (FAO, 2006).

The food gardens are deemed to be profoundly significant as they provide a variety of benefits. For example, they offer recreational services. Typically, recreational services are a further addition to the benefits of food gardens identified by Fernandez (2003). Recreation is an opportunity that is provided by the food gardens and all that is needed for the people to be aware of the benefits food gardens bring to them (Nell *et al*, 2000). Gardening to some is a leisure activity encouraged by some form of interests, namely income generation and social interaction (on community gardens) (Gelsi, 1999).

Importantly, Herbach (1998) highlights that food gardens are places for natural retreat. They are places where people can have fun and perform certain enjoyable family activities (Shannon, 2004). Furthermore they also create a sense of awareness of the beauty of nature, thus leading to appreciation of natural things (Herbach, 1998). Patel (1991) concludes that food gardens improve the quality of life for its participants. This means that they provide nutrition to the people, help them enhance or change diets and most of all they improve people's health, furthermore it allows the people to get themselves into economic activities, which improves their economic status as well (Patel, 1991). Therefore food gardens provide more than just social objectives, they also provide economical and environmental objectives (Fernandez, 2003).

Meanwhile, Fernandez (2003) further identified a few environmental services that are provided by the food gardens. In this regard, environmental services include the food gardens acting as a pollution sink and even improving the air quality. Hall (1999) further adds to this by stating that food gardens further add to ecological regeneration, as people utilize land for

agricultural purposes. Three environmental objectives are discussed: Ecological regeneration, Environmental care and Permaculture.

Most certainly, food gardens (as many researchers observed) also effectively facilitate ecological regeneration. Hindle (2006) further stated that ecological regeneration plays a very important part in human development, which means food gardening has a fundamental role in human development. This view of ecological regeneration incorporates human needs and values as an important part of the natural process (Hindle, 2006).

Undoubtedly, food gardens serve as an enabling environment for environmental care. Thus, food awareness creates some sense of awareness of the environmental care; this would include soil conservation and also reducing soil erosion. This type of attitude towards food gardening is said to lead to environmental management (World Resource Institute (WRI), 2005). In addition to environmental management food gardens also promote permaculture (Gelsi, 1999). Typically, permaculture as defined by Bill Mollison (1991) is a design system for creating sustainable human environments. It is more than just about plants, animals, buildings and infrastructures (water, energy, communications), but about relationships created between them as they are placed in a landscape (Mollison, 1991). Indeed, permaculture is basically about the harmonious integration of the environment and the people. The integration is done in trying to provide food, shelter, energy and other material and non-material needs. It is therefore what Gelsi (1999, 5) refers to as “a holistic approach to sustainable food production.” Food gardens whether communal or homestead should be integrated into the policy for the betterment of poor peoples’ well-being.

In the context of South Africa, MALA (1998), states that the past South African Government policy supported primarily commercial farmers in their agricultural initiatives. The support was in a form of subsidies, grants and aids for fencing, dams, houses, technical advice, special credit facilities and tax relief (MALA, 1998). This then led to the marginalisation of small-scale farmers, where small-scale farmers were considered to be involved in “non-productive and non-economically viable agriculture” (MALA, 1998). Contrary to the focus of past policy, the majority of rural South Africans engaged in variations of indigenous agriculture. It is a very labour intensive type of agriculture making human capital a vital element in the intensification of Agriculture in South Africa (Stone, *et al*, 1990). Generally, human capital development among the majority of farmers was not part of past policy. According to Scerri (2009), for poverty to be eradicated there has to be an investment in human capital.

During the same period and since the early 1960’s there has been a shift in agriculture among small-scale farmers. This was a shift from livestock farming to vegetable gardening based on the decrease of number of cattle. The decrease in the number of cattle meant that there was a decrease in milk supply, which then led to widespread malnutrition within the rural areas. The shift led to the emergence of vegetable gardens with self-help approaches being imposed on the participants (Brooks, 1991).

**Table 1: A table showing different types of food gardens**

Type of garden	Description
<b>Traditional gardens</b>	These gardens are formed as a result of a history of adaptation by plants to their local

	needs and conditions.
<b>Kitchen gardens</b>	These are particularly small gardens that are grown to improve meals.
<b>Mixed gardens</b>	This is an integration of a number of things; this would include poultry, livestock and fish ponds. It is therefore more than just an ordinary garden because it also provides opportunities for waste transformation and nutrient cycle.
<b>Agroforestry gardens</b>	Takes full advantage of the scarce resource (e.g. land) through multi-layer cropping, including trees, vines and root trees.
<b>Floriculture gardens</b>	This is a market inclined garden. It includes potted and ornamental plants for households. The decision about the type of plant being grown is entirely up to the household.
<b>Market gardens</b>	These are made to meet market opportunity and demand; these include seasonal fruits and vegetables that people might need.
<b>Nurseries</b>	Are solely for the propagation and selling of seedling and plants. The plants are sold on local demand expectations. For example seasonal field crops

Cited from: London-Lane, C. (2004). *Livelihoods grow in gardens*

**Table 2: A table showing different types of community gardens**

Community garden model	Description
<i>Single community garden for educational and demonstration purposes with support provided to participants/farmers.</i>	These gardens were established for education and demonstration purposes. The communal garden site is where farmers gather and get knowledge and also technical training. The technical support for the farmers is also provided on the homestead/individual gardens.
<i>Community gardens tended collectively</i>	The community gardens are a single large plot and not divided into individual plots. The entire plot is looked after by the participants of the garden. This enhances collective effort and interaction amongst the farmers.
<i>Gardens used for training in garden skills</i>	These gardens are used to educate people on how to grow vegetables. The produce is usually sold to local market and the proceeds are used to fund the garden and to support other farmers.
<i>School gardens</i>	Gardening is built into the school's curriculum. This involves nutritionists who will teach pupils about food guide pyramid. The garden is tended by the students.
<i>One-on-One relationships</i>	This type of gardening takes experienced farmers and groups them with unskilled but interested farmers. The inexperienced farmers gain technical knowledge from the experienced farmer. It also creates some bond or forces interaction amongst the farmers. This garden utilises the human capital that is already available in the community.

<i>Gardens affiliated with existing entity.</i>	The idea behind this garden is that it is established in an already existing entity (church, clinic, and etc). The people associated with that organisation are the ones that tend the garden. This was because it looked to create a sense of ownership by the people in the organisations.

Cited from: Sullivan, A. F. (1999). *Community gardening in rural regions*.

### **3.6 Community gardens in KwaZulu-Natal**

The province of KwaZulu-Natal is seen to be highly and actively involved in farming activities. However, the most distinguishing feature is that farming community in KwaZulu-Natal is diverse and complex. It consists of a collection of groupings including household food security farmers, farmers producing in excess of household consumption, the developing commercial farmer and the agri-business industries (DAE, 2004). KwaZulu-Natal had approximately 31 957 garden members and 1 049 community gardens by the end of 1991 (Brooks, 1991). Eight years later' by the end of 1999, the number of community gardens more than doubled with a similar increase in participants. There were 2 635 community gardens covering 2 055 ha with estimated 51 700 participants (FAO, 2000). Small-scale agriculture is practiced by a large number of individuals in KwaZulu-Natal, even though it does not contribute much to the GDP of the country. People enter into it because it has become a safety net. Participants would include both the individual homestead gardens and the community gardens farmers (Brooks, 1991).

Historically, the establishment of community gardens however is said to lie in the creation of the South African reserves (Brooks, 1991). The reserve system was brought about by the British colonists who invaded what was then referred to as Zululand in 1879 (Brooks, 1991). According to history; community gardens in KwaZulu-Natal dates back to more than thirty years (Vaughan, 1997). The community gardens were brought about by a decrease in a number of cattle and thus the decline in milk. The decline led to malnutrition for a number of people in the rural areas (Brooks, 1991). The situation then shifted farming from livestock to vegetable farming to curb the situation. The establishment of community gardens however is said to lie in the creation of the South African reserves (Brooks, 1991). This is so because the available land is inadequate.

### **3.7 Critiquing community gardening**

Bresciani criticizes agriculture as a poverty alleviation tool, in the sense that agricultural growth can alleviate poverty only temporarily (2007:42). Rural communities in South Africa and within KwaZulu-Natal rely in part on food gardens for their well-being. Scholars suggest that these gardens may not be able to give the rural communities great income, but they invest a lot of time and labour on them. They are the major practice in most rural households because of the benefits that they bring. Evidence clearly indicates that rural people rely on food gardens. Furthermore, there are high expectations placed on them in terms of poverty alleviation, etc. Notwithstanding the apparent importance of food gardens, there is a lack of researched information about rural gardens.

Moreover, there are also seasonal challenges which lessen and destabilises the effect of community gardening in terms of alleviating poverty. Occasionally, there are seasons where no drop of rain is witnessed. As a consequence, vegetable growth is stifled as it frequently requires water. The weather in KwaZulu-Natal is particularly detrimental to the food gardens because it is not favourable at all. Indeed, since agriculture and farming is an activity of people, attention must first be given to their capabilities. This study, therefore, attempts to provide information on gardening, while at the same time; it seeks to address the current information gap.

### **3.8 Alternative Poverty Alleviation Strategies**

There are various poverty alleviation strategies in South Africa that have been implemented to get rid of poverty. In fact, some policies are nationally relevant while others are locally relevant. The most fundamental policies that are deemed crucial in alleviating poverty are discussed here. These include, amongst other things, child support grant, foster care grants, and Zibambele Expanded Public Works Programme.

#### **3.8.1 Child Support Grant**

Since its introduction in 1998, most researchers noted that it has gone an extra mile in terms of addressing and alleviating poverty in South Africa. Goldblatt (2006) argued that the Child Support Grant (CSG) has been rolled out rapidly. It now reaches 7 million children. Goldblatt further maintained that the grant has had a significant impact on the alleviation of poverty by

increasing children's access to food, education, and health care (2006:1). However, not all poor children are able to access the grant. Goldblatt maintained that "the way in which the grant is implemented is not always consistent across provinces or even within provinces" (Ibid). Usually, the CSG increases proportionally to the national budget.

### **3.8.2 Foster Care grant**

Actually, the South African constitution gives special protection of the children without parents. The government takes this responsibility to provide social assistance to children whose parents and caregivers are unable to support them. Basically, the Foster Care Grant (FCG) is a monthly income support to adults who have fostered children (under the age of 18). Usually, the amount changes in every year. It is now at R710 per month.

### **3.8.3 Zibambele Expanded Public Works Programme**

The Zibambele group is basically an initiative of the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Transport aimed at uplifting or empowering local women. It aims to alleviate poverty in rural settings. The membership of these groups consists predominantly of poor or widowed women. The Zibambele group is traditionally not mandated to build new roads, but to maintain the existing local improper roads.

Most interestingly, grants have generally improved the living conditions of those people who solely rely on them. In fact, they rightfully stress that they can be viewed as a viable source of income due in part to the fact that there are continuous regardless of their value. However, a close scrutiny of the successes and failures of these projects have been done by various researchers in different disciplines. On the positive note, researchers argue that the majority of households in rural areas have no formal income apart from the social grants. On the negative note, these grants have come under fire. Researchers believe that these are merely fire-fighting measures that do not contribute substantially in the betterment of people's lives. For instance, Turok argued that:

Although social reforms such as RDP houses, the provision of clean water, and the increases in social grants have been welcomed by the poor, they have not had the cumulative effect of releasing millions from poverty (2008:14).

All in all, as Turok observed, the ANC was seen not to have delivered economic transformation, but only piecemeal palliative reforms (Ibid, p.15). Furthermore, criticisms argue that there has not been any redistribution of land in favour of the poor. Most of the arable land is still in the hands of the minority (the whites). Generally, this could be the only way to ensure self-reliance and independence since poor people have a passion for farming.

# Chapter Four

## Research Methodology and Methods

In research, the appropriate approach often leads to anticipated and required results, and thus it ultimately leads to the answering of the central research questions. Basically, there are two most commonly used research approaches in the field of social science research. First, there is qualitative approach which is mostly viewed by scholars as being relatively interpretive in nature. Second, there is also quantitative approach which typically concerns itself with measurements and statistical information. Traditionally, research approaches often intermingle with certain methods. Methods actually aim to collect data in a most efficient and convenient way possible. In this study, approaches and methods that are used will be dealt with here. In other words, this pertains to the reasons why chosen methods or approaches are deemed effective over others. The reasons as to why such methods or approaches were chosen will be provided here. This study is a synergy of the two approaches as distinguished from other studies that focuses primarily on one approach. Sampling techniques and the reasons behind their selections will be accordingly presented here. Consequently, methods of data analysis used are going to be demonstrated here. The reasons regarding their appropriateness and suitability are going to be shown logically.

As previously indicated, the study applies two research approaches or paradigms. However, a distinction should ideally be drawn between quantitative and qualitative research before one embarks on any particular research project. At the surface level, quantitative and qualitative researchers base their conclusions on different kinds of information and employ different techniques of data analysis (Terre Blanche and Durrheim, 1999:42). Quantitative techniques

are solely based on numbers and statistical types of data analysis. On the contrary, qualitative researchers frequently collect data in the form of written or spoken language, or in the form of observations that are recorded in language and analyse the data by identifying and categorising themes (Terre Blanche and Durrheim, 1999:42). Further, qualitative methods allow the researcher to study selected issues in depth, openness and detail as they identify and attempt to understand the categories of information that emerge from the data (Ibid). In contrast, quantitative methods rely on a series of predetermined categories, usually embodied in standardised quantitative measures, and use this data to make broad and generalizable comparisons.

## **4.1 The Qualitative Paradigm**

### **4.1.1 Case Study**

The study carefully employs case study as one of the methods. In accordance with this method, organisations studied in detail suddenly become the cornerstone of a case study. Jackson (2009) has rightly observed that “case study is an in-depth study of one or more individuals in the hope of revealing things that are true of all of us” (p.85). Jackson further maintained that this method is highly advantageous as it often suggests further hypothesis for further studies (Ibid). Further, a case study deemed to be most suitable for a proposed study because it allows the researcher to focus on a specific situation and attempt to identify the various interactive processes at work (Vuliamy, et al, 1990). The case study method is generally considered to be appropriate because it can effectively penetrate situations in ways that are not always susceptible to numerical analysis (Cohen et al, 2001). Merriam (1988) adds that case studies get as close to the subject of interest as they possibly can, partly by

means of direct observation in natural settings, partly by their access to subjective factors (thoughts, feelings, and desires).

Although case studies have been recommended for this study, case studies cannot always be applied astutely and academically as it is subjected to tremendous objections and criticisms due to their setbacks in certain scenarios. It is considered highly objectionable because it is generally argued that case studies may be problematic precisely because the individual unit (i.e. person, household, group) being observed may be atypical. Thus, any generalisations made to the general population may be erroneous. Usually, case studies are prone to problems of observer bias despite attempts made to address reflexivity (Cohen et al, 2001:184). Cohen and others further argue that case studies are not easily open to cross-checking hence they may be selective, biased, personal and subjective.

The case study approach was used in this study so as to fully understand the community garden groups. In other words, community gardens were regarded as cases which were destined for the purposes of this study, and an insight was needed regarding their formation and their goals.

#### **4.1.2 Semi-Structured Focus Group Interviews**

The focus groups are prudently applied to ensure open dialogue between members of organisations. According to Jackson (2009), focus group essentially concerns interviewing 6 to 10 individuals (p.93). A discrepancy is also made here. For example, focus group

interviews used at KwaNgcolosi were not necessarily structured. Rather, they were semi-structured. Structured interviews often tend to unnecessarily limit the researcher's flexibility and innovativeness around the topic. By contrast, semi-structured allows for open discussion, and it also fosters conversation and a two way communication (Davis-Case, 1990). Further, semi-structured focus group interviews allow participants to answer in any way they choose, and to respond to each other. Semi-structured interviews unlike structured questionnaires are characterized by general questions or topics. These general questions become the basis for more specific questions, which need not be prepared in advance. This allows for the researcher and respondent to be flexible to probe for details (Davis-Case, 1990; Leedy, 2005). Semi-structured interviews are mostly used in the PRA exercises. There is no set of questionnaire that is compiled but the interview is systematic, it builds from central issue or context. The direction of the interview is guided by the interviewer to their desired direction in order to obtain relevant data (Mudhara *et al*, 2004). The reason for using this type of tool (semi-structured focus group interviews) is so that the group can provide their own comments and **so that** they feel free to contribute to the conversation as the mood is relaxed. Such group of people is usually composed of relatively homogenous people with similar background. Participants discuss the problem or issue, its causes and also their perception on how the problem should be solved (Mudhara *et al*, 2004). Finally, the interview enable participants – be they interviewers or interviewees – to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live, and to express how they regard situations from their own point of view (Cohen *et al*, 2001:267). Through focus group interviews, I was able to extract lots of information from the informants regarding poverty in the area, and the usefulness of gardening in fighting poverty.

But nevertheless, the focus group interviews remains inextricably linked with loopholes. These loopholes create suspicions and considerations in applying focus group method. Loopholes become conspicuously clear if the focus group is not properly monitored. In fact, if the group is not properly monitored, one or two participants may dominate the discussion thereby precluding equal participation from members involved. As such, focus group interviews create squabbles amongst groups as other members are generally scared to talk about their own opinions especially in issues relating to leadership styles in the organisation. However, there were no squabbles encountered in the study.

#### **4.1.3 Individual Interviews**

Individual interviews were conducted to leaders of organisations because it was realised that in a focus group setting they could not express or disclose the detailed information about the community gardening. These were also unstructured to allow for flexibility of the researcher. Further, the leaders of organisations preceded the researcher in terms of delving into the issues. Thus, through the use of individual interviews, the researcher was able to bridge information gaps that may have emerged in a focus group setting – especially the specifics of the organisation. However, individual interviews are always susceptible to individual bias and subjectivity. Usually, the respondent projects his or her image in a positive manner while divulging the information that is seen to be confidential within the organisation.

#### **4.1.4 Recording**

Recording has without a doubt formed a critical part of data collection. The researcher has systematically applied a simple technique where he listened intently on the conversations and jotted down some key points (field notes) or concepts concurrently to ensure that no data is inadvertently omitted. This is absolutely useful since recorders occasionally fail to capture all the conversation. Thus, putting down some points acts more like a watchdog to ensure that fields notes and conversations complements each other. This has worked efficiently since it proved to be absolutely essential during transcription.

#### **4.1.5 Transcribing**

The transcription has proven to be absolutely critical in shaping the direction and the character/substance of the entire research project. This is particularly so because the entire community was predominantly Zulu speaking. So, interviews were conducted in isiZulu, and subsequently back translated into English during transcription. Basically, transcription entailed listening intently to what was being said in the conversation and swiftly jotting it down appropriately and properly to avoid information distortion.

### **4.2 The Quantitative Paradigm**

#### **4.2.1 Sampling**

A sampling is meticulously chosen to ensure that it observes the population that the study intends to observe. Terre Blanche and Durrheim argue that sampling involves decisions

about which people, settings, events, behaviours and / or social processes to observe (1999:44). The main concern in sampling is representativeness. According to Mouton, representativeness is the underlying epistemic criterion of a 'valid', that is, unbiased sample (1996:110). In other words, the aim is to select a sample that will be representative of the population about which the researcher aims to draw conclusions (Terre Blanche and Durrheim, 1999:44). Basically, population is defined as the larger pool from which our sampling elements are drawn, and to which we want to generalise our findings. In regard to sampling, age and gender were not important for the purposes of the study. Rather, group considerations were absolutely vital. To this end, only members of community gardens were considered. Other participants were drawn from the community regardless of age and gender.

#### **4.2.2 Study Population**

The population that forms the basis of the study or the units of analysis are members of the community gardens. They are being studied regardless of age and gender but provided that they are active in community gardening in the study site. Members of community gardens are studied along with other members of the community who resides in the study site.

#### **4.2.3 Non-probability Sampling**

Basically, non-probability sampling essentially refers to any kind of sampling where the selection of elements is not determined by the statistical principle. Berg (2004:34) argues that non-probability sampling techniques offer the benefit of accessing sensitive or difficult-to-reach study populations. In this study, the non-probability sampling technique used is the

convenience sampling. According to Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999), researchers often use convenience samples of undergraduate students or people who volunteer to participate in the research. The questionnaire is selectively chosen to address information gaps relating to demographics and other statistical evidence. Questionnaires largely aim to ask closed questions about any variable as opposed to open questions. As a result, they do not allow the researcher to probe even further in order to get to the climax of the discussion.

#### **4.2.4 Participatory Observation**

Furthermore, the participation observation has helped in terms of exploring the respondents' personal circumstance. Observation is particularly imperative in all research activities because it has been characterised as “the fundamental foundation of all research methods” in social and behavioural sciences” (Adler & Adler, 1999:389). According to Gelsi (1999), participatory observation has an element of “descriptive observation”, which consists of “question-observation”. This meant that questioning the activities performed in the garden and the answer could be derived from the way people do things. Actually, the researcher visited some of the homestead farms and visited the community garden group members in their home and to observe their cropping practices both at their homesteads and community gardens.

Traditionally, this method clearly involved deliberate investigation of the activities performed in the gardens while expecting answers that might be in the way people do things. In fact, the participant observation tool was used in conjunction with the individual and also group discussion to enrich the data collected. Literally, it meant being observant of the activities

farmers engaged in. As a consequence, the participant observation eliminates any part of formality in people's eyes, thus the participants were free to share information that was vital for the research.

Similarly, Bailey (1978) argued that observational data are attractive as they afford the researcher the opportunity to gather 'live' data from 'live' situations. Actually, in observation studies the investigators are able to discern ongoing behaviour as it occurs and are able to make appropriate notes about its salient features (Bailey, 1978 cited by Cohen et al 2001:188). In fact, observations are useful for understanding the physical, social, cultural, and economic contexts in which study participants live. Through observations, researchers can also uncover factors that are important for a thorough understanding of the research problem but that were unknown when the study was designed. The observations were unstructured in order to allow flexibility of thought and adaptation to conditions that would prevail unimaginably. Thus according to Nisbet & Watt, interviews often provide important data but in most cases they reveal only how people perceive what happens, not what actually happens (1980:13). As a consequence, observation can be useful in discovering whether people do what they say they do.

But nevertheless, participant observation is seen to be extremely time-consuming. Since it involves documenting the data, it is difficult to write down everything that is important while you are in the act of participating and observing. Further, it is seen as an inherently subjective exercise while research requires objectivity. Thus, filtering out personal biases may take some practice during observation exercises.

### 4.3 Data Analysis

Researchers have failed to come into agreement about what data analysis actually means (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996:6). Ideally, data analysis issues should be carefully considered when designing a study, since the aim of data analysis is to transform information (data) into an answer to the original research question. In a bid to come up with a definition, Wolcott (1994) used the term transformation to refer to strategies of dealing with data. Wolcott categorised the process of data transformation into three types - namely, description, analysis and interpretation (1994:34). Data analysis means, according to some authors, data handling while for others it means categorising and interpreting the data. Meanwhile, Miles and Huberman defined data analysis as three linked sub-processes: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (1994:16). Thus:

Data reduction involves data evaluation and coding. Data display refers to the ways that the reduced data are displayed in diagrammatic, pictorial or visual forms in order to show what those data display (Ibid)

In fact, careful consideration of data analysis strategies ensures that the design is coherent, as the researcher matches the analysis to a particular type of data, to the purposes of the research and to the research paradigm. According to De Vos (2005), data analysis is an attempt to bring order, structure and meaning into the mass of data collected. Thus, sense is made so that an interpretation of the larger meaning of the data can be made (De Vos, 2005:333). Since the study employed both qualitative and quantitative approaches, it is of utmost importance to say that such approaches are analysed differently by different data analysis methods. This is deliberately done to ensure a great deal of appropriateness, coherence and relevance.

### 4.3.1 Content Analysis

From the outset, qualitative approaches have been inherently interpretive. This requires methods of analysis to be considerate in terms statements, speeches, and texts. In this context, content analysis is used principally to analyse qualitative data. In fact, content analysis is a research tool used to determine the presence of certain words or concepts within texts or sets of texts (<http://writng.colostate.edu/guides/research/content/>). According to Kothari, content analysis is concerned with investigating the contents of documentary and verbal materials (1990:137). Indeed, content analysis is basically collecting and organising information systematically in a standard format that allows analysts to draw conclusion about the characteristics and meaning of recorded material (Alreck and Settle, 1995:271) In the similar vein, Rugg and Petre define content analysis as being “what is said in a text, how it is said, and how often it’s said” (2007:157). Texts refers broadly to books, book chapters, essays, interviews, discussions, newspaper headlines and articles, historical documents, speeches, conversations, and advertising. Frequently, this method of analysis relies on patterns, repetition of arguments, etc.

The content analysis method has various advantages. These advantages include that content analysis:

- Can allow for both quantitative and qualitative operations
- Can provides valuable historical/cultural insights over time through analysis of texts
- Is an unobtrusive means of analysing interactions
- Provides insight into complex models of human thought and language use

However, the content analysis method is seen to have certain loopholes that need to be guarded against when one applies it. In other words, one has to be constantly mindful of the disadvantages that are associated with content analysis. These disadvantages include that content analysis:

- Can be extremely time consuming
- Is subject to increased error, particularly when relational analysis is used to attain a higher level of interpretation
- Is inherently reductive, particularly when dealing with complex texts
- Can be difficult to automate or computerise
- Tends too often to simply consist of word counts

[\(http://writing.colostate.edu/guides/research/content/\)](http://writing.colostate.edu/guides/research/content/).

In applying the content analysis in this study, the data collected through semi-structured, one-on-one interviews were meticulously coded through a process of interrogating the text, organising into chunks, and segmenting the sentences or paragraphs into units of meaning, so that concepts pertaining to the same phenomena could be named and categorised (Cresswell, 2009:186). As a matter of fact, the researcher consistently ensured that the texts that have similar weight and meaning were put together. In a similar vein, those texts that somewhat differed in meaning were also put together to ensure that no data was omitted.

On the contrary, the quantitative approach has certain methods that help profoundly in analyzing the data. In particular, the Special Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) is used to fundamentally refine and authenticate the quantitative data. Indeed, this meant that

frequencies had to be accordingly deduced, and numbers had to be entered into the computer. In fact, numbers were entered into the Microsoft Excel. Frequencies were analysed through the use of tables and paragraphs.

Similarly, the testing of results followed shortly after the analysis to ensure that such results are valid and reliable. This was done in an effort to comply with the general rule that research results should be as reliable and valid as possible. In fact, there is no need in the first place for a researcher to undergo any research activities if such activities are not going to ensure 'validity' and 'reliability'. Reliability refers to the extent to which results can be repeated, and the dependability of a measurement instrument, that is, the extent to which the same results can be arrived at using the measurement instrument on repeated trials (Terre Blanche and Durheim, 1999:88). On the contrary, 'validity' in a qualitative paradigm is based solely on determining whether the findings are accurate from the point of view of the researcher, participant, or the readers of an account. According to Marshall and Rossman (1995:143), all researches must meet criteria against which the trustworthiness of the project can be evaluated.

Furthermore, there are certain rules/recommendations that need to be followed in ensuring prudent analysis of data. For instance, Gibbs in Cresswell (2009:190-191) proposed a multiplicity of reliability procedures that researchers can follow to ensure that their research is intractably consistent and reliable. These includes, amongst others, checking transcripts for mistakes; ensuring that the coding of data is consistent; cross checking codes developed by different researchers in a team by comparing results; finally, communicating with members

of the research team through regular meetings, and sharing analysis. In complying with these recommendations, the researcher applied the first two recommendations whilst he relied on the assistance of the supervisor in complying with the other two recommendations.

Traditionally, researchers who adopt a quantitative approach place too much emphasis on validity and reliability as the possible determinants of accuracy and conclusivity of their findings. On the other hand, researchers who adopt qualitative approach place too much emphasis on “trustworthiness”, “authenticity”, and “credibility” to refer to validity (Cresswell, 2003:195-196). Consequently, validity or credibility according to Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999:61-62), refers to the extent to which the research conclusions can be sound.

### **4.3.2 Triangulation**

Triangulation technique was cogently applied in an effort to draw conclusions that are reasonably valid and reliable. Basically, triangulation is a concept of using two or more instruments to collect data on a phenomenon under study (Arksey & Knight, 1999:22). This was particularly so because a great majority of studies tend to advocate for this. In essence, triangulation bridges issues of reliability and validity in research results (Glesne & Peshkin 1992). The main inspiration towards using this technique is that the weaknesses of one research instrument are offset by the strengths of the other instrument. Indeed, combinations of methods provide both breadth and depth in the results of the phenomenon being studied (Moore, 2000:16). Technically, triangulation entails testing one source of information against another to strip away alternative explanation and to prove a hypothesis. In this study, the

researcher employed semi-structured focus group interviews along with observations in order to ultimately compare verbal information with a written transcript. More importantly, it is argued that using both qualitative and quantitative methods could contribute to a better understanding of the concepts being investigated (Morse, 1991:121). Thus, triangulation is one of the ways of strengthening confidence in research findings.

However, triangulation is also subjected to severe criticisms. Critics argue that using both paradigms in a single study can be “expensive, time-consuming, and lengthy” (Cresswell, 1994:7). For researchers to apply this technique, they need to get some sort of funding because their studies will take forever to finish.

Finally, the researcher obtained permission to conduct surveys and interviews both focus and individual from the relevant authorities and participants through informed consent. This was done in an attempt to ensure that the researcher does not violate the rights of the participants in any way.

# Chapter Five

## Social Benefits of Community Gardens

### 5.1 Overview

The level at which community gardens contribute to people's lives vary from person to person, and from household to household, respectively. While the minority advocate for disengagement with garden activities due to hidden agendas, the majority remains unscathed and committed when it comes to advocating for the use of community gardens. The inspiration and ambition to join and disjoin community gardens is largely determined by personal or household circumstances rather than peer or community pressure and external factors. At aggregate level, the existing literature has shown that community gardens should not be discarded or neglected owing to their diversity and complexity. Indeed, the literature further argues that community gardens have a multitude of interrelated uses. As such, these uses often include environmental, social, and economic uses, to mention but a few. This chapter seeks to focus solely on the significance of community gardens whilst also prioritising the social benefits that accrue to those who partake in such an activity. The so-called 'social benefits' is going to be deduced from the results acquired through the survey among community garden members in conjunction with members of the community who are not necessarily linked to any community garden or any activity of that sort. Furthermore, 'social benefits' are also going to be illustrated through constant analysis of semi-structured focus group interviews along with individual interviews.

In short, the chapter begins by careful illustration of the histories of the organisation interviewed as these provides the basis upon which the study was based. Each organisation is described in detail so as to provide and demonstrate the motive or the reasoning behind its formation. Meanwhile, a short description of the number/s of people interviewed jointly (in case of focus groups) or individually (in case of individual interviews –particularly with leaders). A brief summary of data collection activities will also help in explaining what actually transpired on the field.

## **5.2 Historical backgrounds of community gardens interviewed**

### **Phaphamani**

From the outset, Phaphamani garden has focused on planting various vegetables - especially carrots, cabbages, spinach, potatoes, chillies, maize and so on. According to members, certain plantations blossom when it is a particular season. Thus, they plant in accordance with seasonal changes. This organisation officially came into being in 1991. It comprises of both male and females although in many occasions men only come when their mothers or partners who are fulltime members have certain commitments. The garden has a proper fence to protect the food. Further, the organisation was established by one member who is now regarded as the oldest and most knowledgeable when it comes to running the garden. She serves as the chairwoman. In a separate interview with her, she indicated that poverty was rapidly increasing in the area that is why she felt motivated to embark on a new project to curtail poverty. The garden has its own constitution which sets out the code of behaviour.

### **Sibusisiwe Co-operative**

This co-operative is similar to Phaphamani garden in terms of gender diversity. The food stuffs that they grow are also virtually similar except that their community garden is currently closed due to lack of support. Indeed, they have decided to use the home garden of their member in order to keep their food going while the old and communally owned garden is closed. It is closed because there is no fencing to prevent the animals from jumping over into it. Members stressed that there is no financial back up which members can fall back on should situations of that nature starts manifesting themselves. This garden was established in 2005 with a view of adding nutritious food to the groceries, and also to provide some kind of support to the orphans. This, according to members, is seen as a moral duty. Similarly, members who were present have rightfully and sadly pointed out that they are not working. Therefore, gardening is seen as a major backbone in terms of bringing well-being to the members.

### **Inkosiinathi Co-operative**

Unlike previous gardens, this one was basically formed by the community members who contributed substantially during its formative stages right up to the normative, and maturity stages, respectively. The Inkosiinathi was established in 2005 and is identically similar to Sibusisiwe Co-operative in terms of birth and existence. Like the Phaphamani garden, this garden also has the constitution which contains the rules and regulations which are confined to all the members of the garden. Basically, this garden has been confronted with challenges time and again. The lack of institutional support from the relevant structures has stood out as the formidable obstacle that has led to the eventual closure of the garden. In fact, there is no

fencing in this garden. Thus, currently, members are relying on their own home gardens as a possible replacement of community garden. However, they stressed that they have always been begging for support from the chief, local counsellor, and others, but there has not been any move towards responding to their requests. In other words, members argue that there was no response.

### **Ethembeni**

Even though this garden has fencing, water is the major daunting obstacle. This is particularly the biggest problem since the garden is predominantly run by elderly people who are required/ mandated to draw water from the dam using the buckets. Unlike other gardens which are relatively young, this garden was formed in 1983. It has been in existence for 27 years. Arguably, this makes it the oldest garden amongst the gardens studied. All five members who were interviewed collectively ranged between 60s, 70s, and 80s respectively. This garden is dissimilar to other gardens in terms of gender. In fact, it only comprises of females – especially elderly ones. The leader of the garden is also from the royal family. In terms of size, the garden is big enough since most of the space is not used. The main plantations of the garden include onions, cabbages, carrots, spinach, chillies, sweet potatoes, and potatoes, etc.

**Table 3 Community gardens and the year in which they were established**

Year	Community garden established
------	------------------------------

1983	Ethembeni garden
1991	Phaphamani garden
2005	Inkosinathi Co-operative
2005	Sibusisiwe Co-operative

### 5.3 Data collection activities

The survey was conducted immediately after the interview with members of community gardens so that the researcher would only go to their households for observational purposes only. Half of the survey was conducted on other community members who have not participated in the focus groups interviews in order to make a distinction between people who are actively involved in community gardens and those that are not. Four community gardens were interviewed using the semi-structured focus group format. From these groups 22 members were present in total. These groups were Phaphamani, Sbusisiwe co-operative, Inkosinathi co-operative, and Ethembeni – with Sbusisiwe only 4 members were present, Phaphamani only 5 members were present, Ethembeni 5 members, and Inkosinathi Co-operative 8 members were present respectively. Thus, in reality 22 households were represented since they came from different households. The attendance may have been slightly higher, but given the variety of commitments they are engaged in it was less than initially envisaged. Meanwhile, other 20 members were drawn from community members who have no affiliations whatsoever in the community gardens at eMahlabathini. Among those that are regarded as non community garden member, were some who neither affiliated to other organisations nor they have home gardens at home. This chapter begins by

presenting the data from the survey, followed by the data from the semi-structured focus group discussions with members of the community gardens.

#### **5.4 Diagrammatic presentation of information**

The data obtained at the study came in various ways. Some of the data was accompanied by the pictures to further add value and confidence in it. The pictures were taken so as to provide a pictorial idea of what actually transpired in the field. The following pictures helps to provide greater understanding about the variety of garden projects that may be found at Mahlabathini, KwaNgcolosi.

#### **A picture showing a working community garden**



The community gardens are normally characterised by big buckets which are used to momentarily keep water before irrigation. In fact, water is collected from the dam using small buckets that can be carried by head, and then they are poured into these buckets. As the picture indicates, community gardens are divided into slots. Most frequently, these slots are

relatively equal both in length and breath. Each member that is accorded with a slot is confined to the rules and regulations that are applicable to all the members of the garden. Further, these gardens are also very far from homesteads which have, at times, derailed the garden activities. The researcher has randomly asked the members of the community gardens whether or not they are happy with the space allotted to them. In response, they unequivocally said no arguing that the space is so small to sufficiently cover the different types of their plantations.

### **A picture showing a closed community garden**



Some of the gardens have actually resorted to closure. As the picture indicates, closed community gardens are mainly characterised by growing weeds which creates an impression that nobody has touched them for quite some time. As such, the closure is mostly attributed to lack of relevant support from relevant structures. In fact, of the four community gardens interviewed two have decided to close down owing to dwindling support. As a consequence,

other members are struggling to make ends meet. For instance, a member of the closed garden has pointed out that

“I used to rely on this garden for food and other purposes, and now that it is closed I find it difficult to grapple with costs of living. More especially, my husband is also not working so we now have to rely on begging from the neighbours” (A member of the closed community garden)

The other member of the closed community garden has also pointed out that

“It is difficult to start my home garden since I cannot afford to buy the fence. I hate asking people to look after their cattles because they will say that I must put the fence to avoid altercations” (Another member of the closed community garden).

### **A picture showing a home garden**



Cited from M. Ndlovu (2007). *Towards an understanding of the relationships between homestead farming and community gardens at the rural areas of Umbumbulu, KwaZulu-Natal*, Pmb: University of KwaZulu-Natal

This garden, unlike the community gardens, is very close to the household. Thus, it is safer and more accessible as opposed to the community garden which is far away, and nobody is keeping an eye on it. On a similar vein, this garden allows the owner or most commonly the

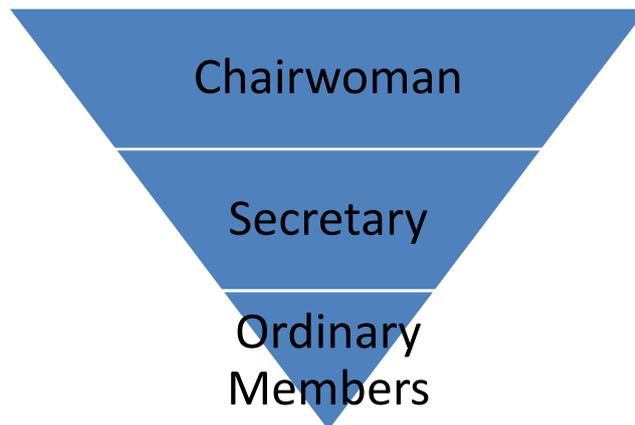
entire household to create the size that they feel comfortable with. However, home gardens are vulnerable to uncontrolled harvesting whereby everyone can have access to the food without having secured an approval from one who is charge of the garden.

### **A picture showing common community garden activities**



Garden activities vary from garden to garden depending to a large degree on what members agree on. In fact, different vegetables are ploughed differently. For example, some vegetables that needs to be kept underneath the soil until such time that they can grow on their own. This practice is often referred to as “mulching”. This practice is revealed to show some of the skills that are shared by members of community garden. In regard to this, members stressed that they did not know much about gardening when they came. Indeed, most of the skills they have were learned through the exposure to community gardens.

**Figure 5: A graph showing leadership structure of community gardens**

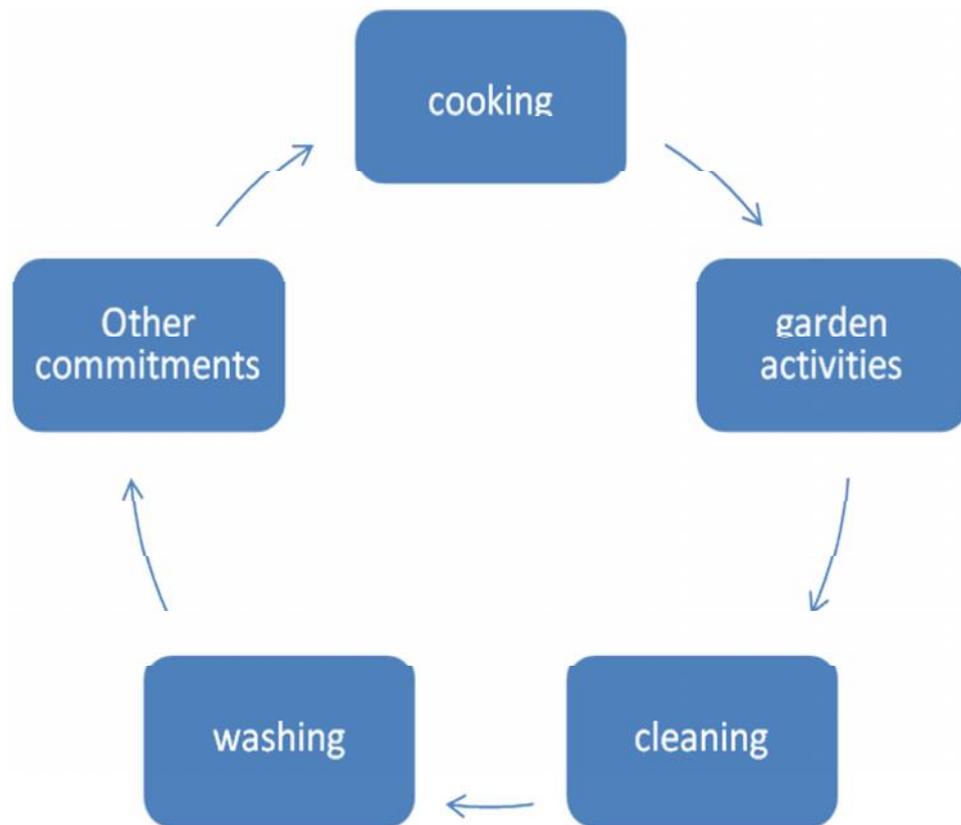


All of the community gardens interviewed are led by women. This is attributed to various reasons – especially women appear to be self-starters and generally, they are interested in anything that brings food to the table. Some are in the leadership positions due to their length of service. For example, chairwoman of the Phaphamani has been with the organisation since its inception. In fact, she contributed tremendously in the formation of the organisation. While others have sacrificed their fields for garden purposes, others have created gardens as a charity organisation where food is given free of charge to the orphans and other neighbours who seem to suffer. Chairwomen normally take decisions about the future of garden projects and they deal with issues relating to funding and the sustainability of the organisation. Secretaries are also most important as they take notes whenever there is a meeting, and they accept new members with the approval of chairwoman. In light of the above graph, it has

been clear that from the perspective of the community gardening. Furthermore, this graph also indicates that community gardens are dominated largely by women. According to research participants, women are tasked with bearing children and the maintenance of the household activities along with garden activities while men are assumed to be working. Thus, gender is also key in terms of providing analysis of garden activities.

### **Figure 6: Activities members of community gardens are involved in**

Based on the conversations with the community garden members, they all stress that it is not only garden activities that takes their time. They stressed that cooking, washing, cleaning; garden activities all contribute to their daily functions. Now that most of them are old, these activities have become unbearable. Other commitments include attending to organised within and outside the community. As such, these meetings may from time to time have a bearing on their lives.



### 5.5 Community Gardens at Emahlabathini

Three of the gardens examined for this study were situated at the bottom of a valley. In each valley there is a permanent source of water from the dam. The gardens are placed almost central to the neighbouring homesteads; usually these homesteads have members in the community garden. The land utilized for the community gardening is usually owned by one of the members of the same community garden (Agergaard *et al*, 2006).

The community gardens produce are usually for home consumption, but when there is surplus farmers do sell vegetables to the neighbouring community. *Igeja* (hand hoe) is one of the primary implements used in the community gardens and homestead farms. The capital for

this usually comes for the household income. Other input like fertilizers, fencing and seeds are usually from an external support such as Department of Agriculture.

The activities in the community gardens are both communal and individually driven, in that an individual has an individual plot within the bigger community garden and the plot is serviced by the individual only but there are regulations and rules on how the individual works within the communal space. There is no set rule that the community gardens have to be organically farmed, as there are some who utilize artificial manure and those that use kraal manure.

Most importantly, the data collected from four community gardens seems to reflect similarities and dissimilarities in many ways. However, the researcher has noticed that there were too many overlaps in the conversations shared with members of community gardens although there were some remarkable differences in certain points. In particular, they all agreed that water is the huge obstacle. One participant asserted that

“we have a problem with our machine that pipes water from the dam to the garden,...so we are using our heads to draw water from the dam”

In a similar vein, other community gardens are experiencing greater difficulties that deprive them of their limited resources – especially, their inadequate financial resources. For example, two participants argued that

“we have decided to hire small boys who will fetch water from the dam for us. The dam is too close, but we can’t carry water from the dam because we are very old, and some of us have been doing it for over 7 years so are tired. We normally pay these boys R10 for each drum of water that is filled that means we end up paying R20 every day because each drum covers one plot while our gardens are two plots for each member. Therefore, we rely on our pensions to pay these boys”

“when I come back from the garden I often sleep early due to tiredness and the fact that the garden itself is too far. We have water cans that we bought ourselves while other gardens are well-catered for”.

While the two gardens have the fence to protect themselves against animals, the other two have eventually closed down due to lack of fencing and other necessities. Instead of continuously using the community garden, one participant pointed out that

“our garden became a place where animals are able to feed themselves day and night because we have no fence to protect our food. Due to this problem, we have decided to use the home garden of one of our members because it has fence and it is quite safe”

One garden used to have a machine which is used instrumentally to draw water from the dam, the other three had no machine. The machine has not yet been fixed and it is taking forever to fix it which means that they all draw water from the dam using their heads. While two groups were mainly led by the elderly, the other two consists of people from 20s to 60 years of age. In fact, the youth is not involved in gardening at all, yet, they are also likely to benefit from the food that comes from the garden. The elderly accused the youth of not taking responsibility in self-created or self-controlled projects such as gardening. The males are also less participative when it comes to associating themselves with gardening. Of all the interviews conducted with community gardens, each garden has one man present and the rest were females. The men merely or normally get involved either because they own the area in which the garden is built or they assist their wives.

Furthermore, one garden stressed that they do get seeds from the Department of Agriculture while the other three receives no support from the department. In their view, the department

has neglected them while it keeps on making a whole range of unfulfilled promises. As far as they are concerned, government officials seldom come to the area, and after that they disappear without trace. The other problem, according to a participant is that

“other gardens tend to receive preferential treatment over others, and we do not know why this happens....in other areas they are provided with uniforms, resources even the tractors while we have been waiting in vain for such support”

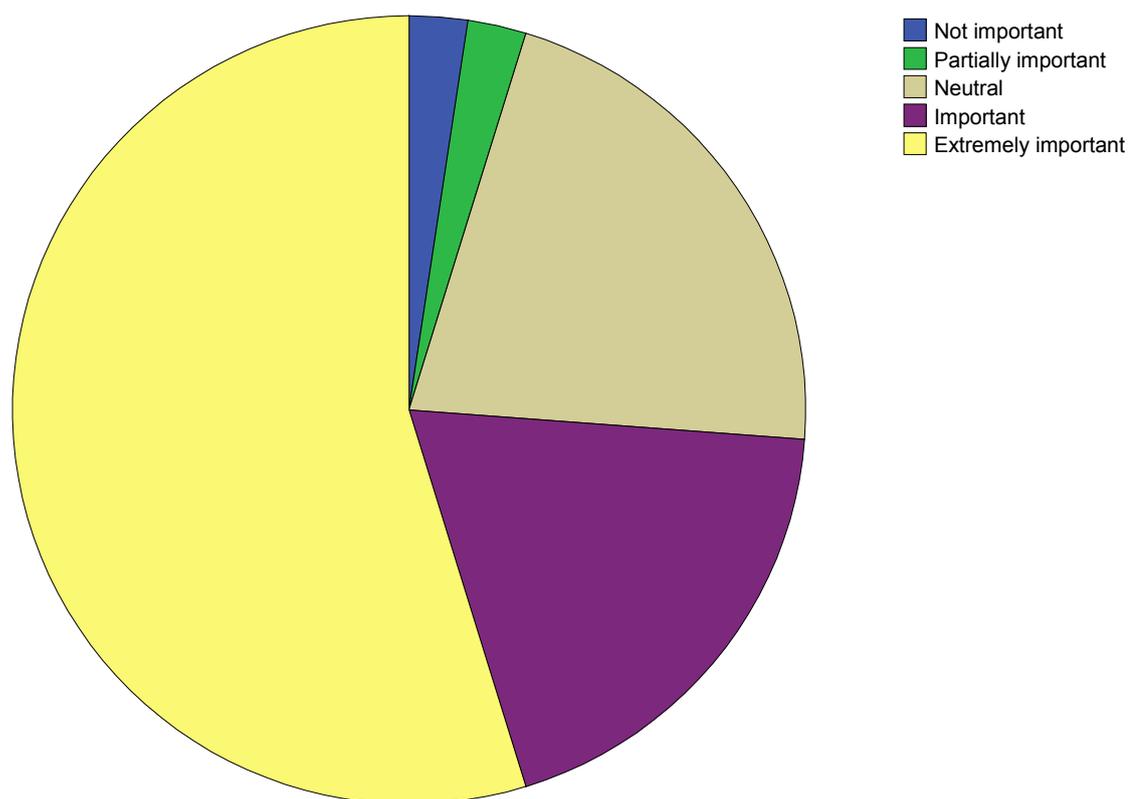
**Table 4: Key Purposes of Community Gardens according to groups interviewed**

<b>Community Garden</b>	<b>Purposes</b>
<b>Phaphamani</b>	To eradicate poverty; to find means of survival; for consumption; to learn from each other;
<b>Inkosingathi Co-operative</b>	To come together to fight poverty; to gain information about managing one’s garden
<b>Sibusisiwe Co-operative</b>	It serves as a self-created job; to alleviate the grinding poverty; to work with neighbours so as to build a strong relationship.
<b>Ethembeni garden</b>	To supplement food from the market; for consumption; To provide the orphans with something to eat; and also to extend a helping hand to our relatives

**Figure 7: The importance of Community Gardens**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not important	1	2.4	2.4	2.4
	Partially important	1	2.4	2.4	4.8
	Neutral	9	21.4	21.4	26.2
	Important	8	19.0	19.0	45.2
	Extremely important	23	54.8	54.8	100.0
	Total	42	100.0	100.0	

**The importance of community gardens**



The vast number of participants has agreed that community gardens are extremely important in terms of fighting poverty. 54.2 percent of the participants agreed that community gardens are extremely important. In line with this percentage, 19.0 percent (eight participants) have

also added that community gardens are important. While 21.4 percent of the participants were neutral, 2.4 percent (one participant) argued that community gardens are not important. Further, 2.4 percent of the participant (one participant) actually felt that community gardens are partially important.

In line with the literature, the data collected has interestingly shown that gardening is extremely important as a coping mechanism against poverty, unemployment and other socially-related issues. This is despite the fact that gardening has certain constraints and problems that impede its growth, and its prosperity. Based on the literature used and the data collected, one could safely argue that community gardens are useful, and can be trusted in reducing the extent of poverty.

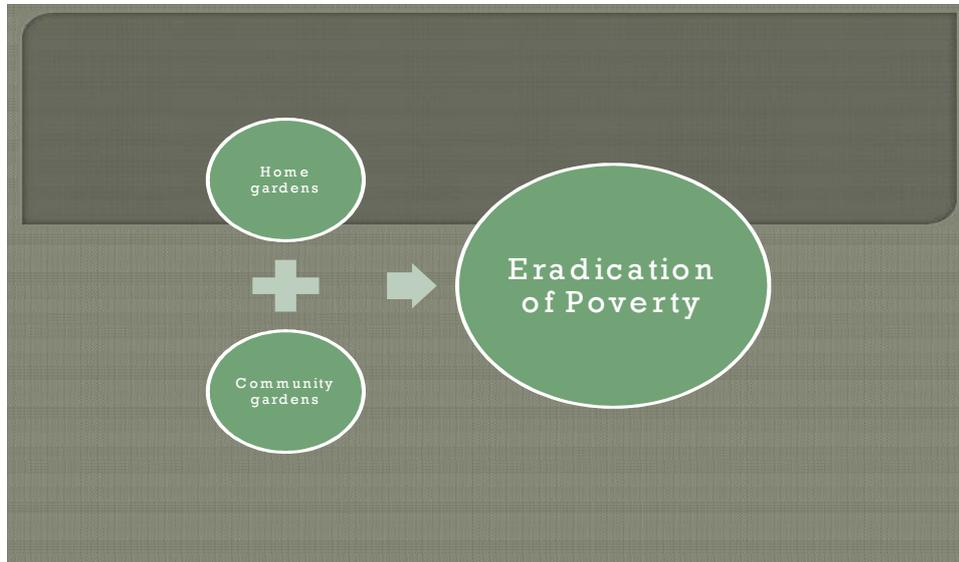
**Table 5: Summary of Differences between home and community gardens**

<b>Homestead food garden</b>	<b>Community food garden</b>
Located within the homestead and therefore easily accessible.	Far from homes and therefore accessibility is sometimes a problem.
Individual effort	Collective effort with other members of the community.
There is no one to share knowledge with from outside the household.	Knowledge is shared amongst the community garden members.
No extension officer, so there is no taught knowledge.	Taught knowledge by the extension officer.
No constitution that governs the farming.	A constitution that governs the way they use the community garden.
One works alone, therefore there is no competition.	Working together builds constructive competition, which in turn builds confidence.
There is high safety since it is located within reach of everyone in household	There is no safety since it is far away from the household
Usually, large in size	The member only uses plots allocated to him or her

Allows for further expansion since it is your area	No space for expansion
There are close to water tapes at home	There are no water tapes instead you use buckets

Most strikingly, the literature argued that community gardens are basically communally owned. The data collected has successfully confirmed this because nobody enjoys a sense of control or ownership in the community gardens all members are treated equally. The plots that are allotted to members of community gardens are ridiculously small, and members have to abide by certain rules. By contrast, a sense of control and independence is enjoyed when one has his/her own home garden. The land is massive when it is a home garden and there are no rules or regulations that are confined to the home gardening. This further confirms the literature that defines home garden. Both literature and data equally agrees more especially in terms of bringing about benefits. The literature further argued that it is difficult to solely rely on gardening since members are not skilled. Interestingly enough, the data demonstrated that they have the potential to learn from each other.

**Figure 8: A General consensus exists between home and community gardens**



The common ground that is reached by most organizations is that gardens may differ in size and in location but their main aim is to eradicate poverty. The overlap here is that their focus is on fighting poverty in different ways. Home gardens allow one to plant whatever you like while community gardens are communally owned.

## **5.5 Differences between community and home food gardens in detail**

### **5.5.1 Homestead farms**

Most of the farmers expressed that they use the homestead farms for personal consumption and also sell the rest to the markets if there is any left. It must however be understood that for the members of the EFO (Ezemvelo Farmers Organisation), this is entirely different. The

EFO has an established market (Woolworths) for amadumbes, this resulted in amadumbes being the main crop for the homestead farms as it has economic value.

Homestead farms rely primarily on rainfall and do not require substantial supplementary irrigation. This means that the homestead farms are at their most productive state in the rainy seasons of the year. One of the greatest elements to come with homestead farms is that it is a walk away from the household. Therefore it is of convenience as a member of the family can just go out and pick whatever is needed anytime of the day. Moreover attending to it is easy because it is just a short walking distance away.

Homestead farms however are often large and require a substantial amount of time to tend. This to people is the biggest challenge to the farmers (usually women), but they are able to cope with this situation as they have assistance from their family members (children and male figures within the family).

## **5.6 Reasons why people enter into community gardens**

The drive towards community gardens seems to vary dramatically from person to person depending on his/her personal circumstances. The overwhelming majority of those who enter community gardens seem to pinpoint or specify the most important reasons that drove them into this activity. Most frequently, hunger has appeared important in terms of attracting people to join community gardens. This is motivated mostly by high percentages of participants who unanimously agreed that community gardens add a significant value insofar

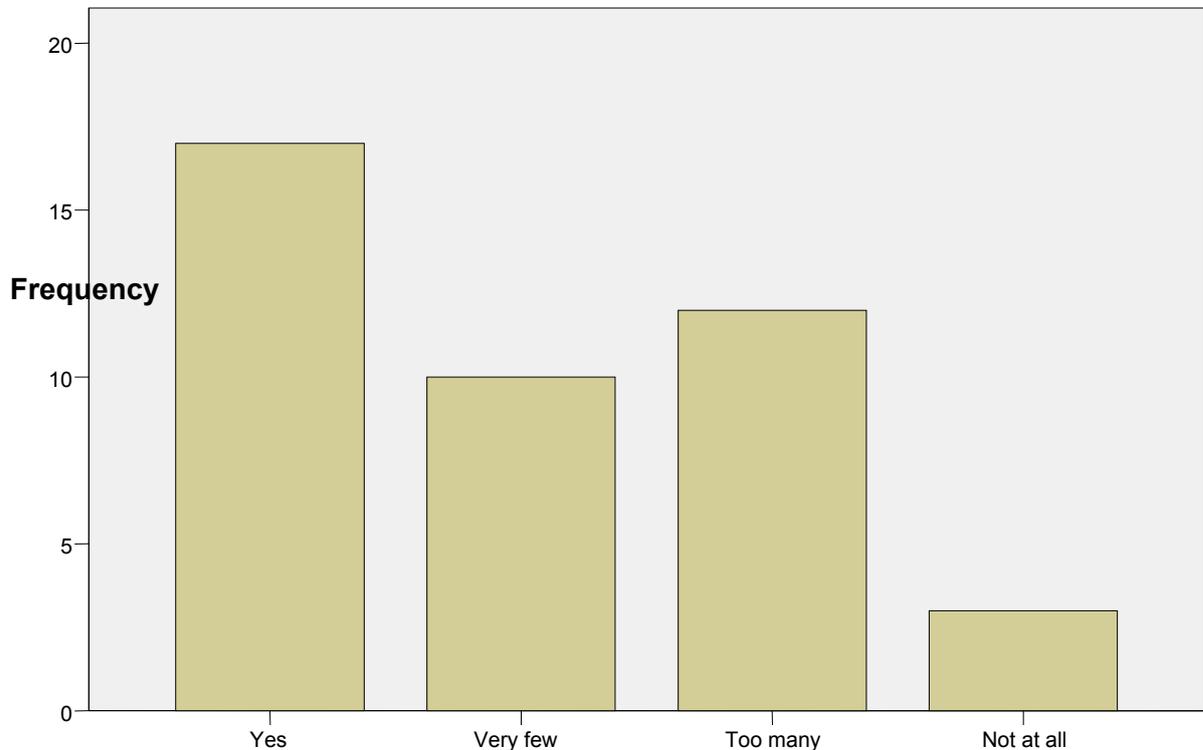
as reducing the rate of poverty is concerned. Thus, food became the second most important factor that drives participation in community gardens. Mostly, members of community gardens have pointed out that they entered in order to produce food for home consumption purposes. Similarly, income generation has also appeared to be a significant driving factor that actually propels people to join community gardens. Normally, income is generated when they begin to sell the surplus of the food produced. However, participants – particularly members of community gardens have pointed out that their main aim is not to sell. In this context, social benefits will actually shed some light in determining the reasons that makes people to join community gardens.

**Figure 9: Social Benefits associated with community gardens**

**Social benefits of working in community gardens**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	17	40.5	40.5	40.5
Very few	10	23.8	23.8	64.3
Too many	12	28.6	28.6	92.9
Not at all	3	7.1	7.1	100.0
Total	42	100.0	100.0	

### Social benefits of working in community gardens



Judging by the manner in which respondents have responded to whether or not community gardens do bring about social benefits, it is clear that community gardens carry a significant weight in terms of bringing these benefits to the people. In fact, 40.5 percent (seventeen) of the participants were of the view that community gardens bring about social benefits to those who partake in community gardening activities. Further, 23.8 (ten) of the participants felt that there are no social benefits that are associated with community gardens. Meanwhile, 28.6 (twelve) percent of the participants felt that there are too many social benefits that could be attributed largely to community gardens. Consequently, only three participants (7.1 percent) felt that there are no benefits at all.

## **5.8 A summary of social benefits**

### **5.8.1 Learning**

Furthermore farmers perceive community gardens as giving them the platform where they learn to garden. The training is important because it enhances their knowledge as farmers and as individuals. They learn the different techniques that are involved when it comes to farming or gardening.

### **5.8.2 Collective effort**

Farmers learn from each other in the community gardens. Because every individual has a unique skills and knowledge, these are shared amongst the members of the community. For example Mr. Maphumulo (Masakhane community garden group) has skills and technology that member of the community garden do not have and these skills and technology he shares with the community garden group. It is in instance like these that farmers share knowledge amongst themselves and thus assisting each other, whereas had they not been in community garden these technologies and skill would not have been learnt.

With community garden one does not work in isolation, one works with other members of the surrounding community. Therefore this allows for help to be given when and if it is needed. Within this context (community garden) it is easier to ask for help because the farmers that one is working with are within the same boundaries and follow the same set rules. The boundary and the rules therefore forge another form and type of community.

### **5.8.3 Savings on buying vegetables**

The farmers entered into community gardens so that they can sustain/feed themselves, participants would now be able to put something on the table without necessarily having to buy them. The respondents/participants highlighted that with growing their own crops they are able to go to their gardens and gather a few fresh vegetable that would be cooked and eaten as meal.

### **5.8.4 Fresh and healthy food**

Secondly they identified growing their own “fresh, healthy and nutritious vegetable”. This helped them with their achieving food security; they state that being able to produce for their own food helped them reduce their vulnerability to hunger. What is more appealing was that the farmers believe that they were not poor because they are able to produce food for themselves.

In the community gardens people produce vegetables and a variety of vegetables. The introduction of community gardens also meant the production of a range of vegetables that people did not grow. So to them, this means they have gained healthy foods, however this does not mean that their traditional crop was not healthy. This whole notion comes because they are able to supplement and complement what they had in their homestead farms.

### **5.8.5 Interacting with other**

Farmers further identified the ability to interact with members of other community food gardens, whom may also be part of the community as another reason for entering community

food gardens. This then means some types of affiliations are formed within the community members, so this is not only in the community garden context but also in a community as a whole. These affiliations are then good for developing social capital and also social networks within the community.

Most of these members have common goals even though they come from different backgrounds. They have come to develop a sense of consideration for one another despite their individual differences and as result they all became like companions. As individuals farmers entered community gardens because they felt it helped them to become self-reliant; they have become the masters of their own fate. Some organizations are dominated by relatives, for instance, Phaphamani. Others are made up of neighbours.

#### **5.8.6 Survival**

An interesting statement made by the farmers was that community gardens have helped them regain their “survival” from the soil. This meant that the soil had been realized as the primary source of their livelihoods. They have further identified uplifting the community as one important aspect to community food gardening, this was done through community greening and also donating food to those who are in need.

#### **5.8.7 Sharing knowledge**

Participants share knowledge amongst themselves within the community garden, but more than that, community garden members do share some knowledge amongst other community gardens. However, it was found that some of the gardens have not made contact with other

gardens and this has not helped them because knowledge is only limited to the group that they are involved in.

Farmers mentioned that there are details which some members might not be familiar with; then community gardens would become a platform for participants to engage in what is termed as “action teaching/learning” exercise. This is where the most knowledgeable of the participants/farmers (of the community garden) would help others in bridging any information gap they might have concerning farming methods and practices.

#### **5.8.8 Producing food**

Secondly the participants chose the production of food as the second most significant part of community gardens. Most farmers disclosed that they entered community gardens to produce food. Food production, however, is not only just a social benefit for the community garden farmers; it is also mentioned as an economic benefit. Food production would therefore be categorized as *socio-economic* factor.

#### **5.8.9 Working together**

In the community gardens farmers work with one another, this is a benefit because a farmer has someone to converse with. In addition to that they get knowledge from each other. So this benefit of community is closely linked to sharing knowledge. But moreover this benefit is as a result of the need of being co-exist. This serves as a motivation to the farmers so they do not doubt themselves and their potential, and as Sherer (2004) states isolation breeds cynicism.

#### **5.8.10 Co-existence**

The farmers also identified co-existence one of the most important aspect to community gardens. Co-existence was explained as having relationships with people amongst the community and also forming some sort bonds with each other. This therefore according to the community garden members strengthen the links between the members of the community and those in the community gardens. Thus, community garden experiences form relationships amongst the neighbouring households, but also with some of the community gardens and their members.

#### **5.8.11 Government support**

Surprisingly enough some farmers mentioned that they entered into community gardens because of the incentives that are provided by the government departments. People have this belief that “the government helps those who are united” and that is basically the reason why some would have joined together to form community food gardens. It is not that there is support but they think they can be considered if they come together rather than as individuals.

#### **5.8.12 Socio-economic benefits of community gardens.**

Farmers have identified a number of social and economic benefits, but they have also indirectly identified four socio-economic benefits. The socio-economic factors identified were food, yields, education and feeding the family.

#### **5.8.13 Food**

Food was the most important socio-economic benefit the members have identified. This is an economic and as well as a social benefit because people grow food together and this exercise

has allowed them to interact with each other, thus forming bonds and relationships. Furthermore food that is produced may be sold to markets and thus making it an economic commodity. They have mentioned that the first particular reason they entered community gardens was so that they can be able to produce food for themselves. This has been made possible by them entering into the community gardens.

#### **5.8.14 Education**

Another socio-economic benefit that was identified was that of education. Education is meant in a sense that they learn how to grow their own food. Farmers are in a hands experience and so they learn by doing. Furthermore they are taught and trained new knowledge and techniques by the extension officers in the community gardens, this then would align education to social benefit.

Education does not only end there, but people also believe that they use the income they get from the gardens to send their children to schools where they will get educated for a number of things. The community gardens also play a role in educating the children how to grow their own food. This is done indirectly as the parents would send children to the fields to do things and in that sense they learn about growing food.

Finally, the community gardens seem to have a significant value particularly in terms of people's lives. Their impact does not go unnoticed as participants generally agreed that their lives have improved through their exposure to community garden activities. The graph below aims to provide a statistical indication of the participant's views towards community gardens.

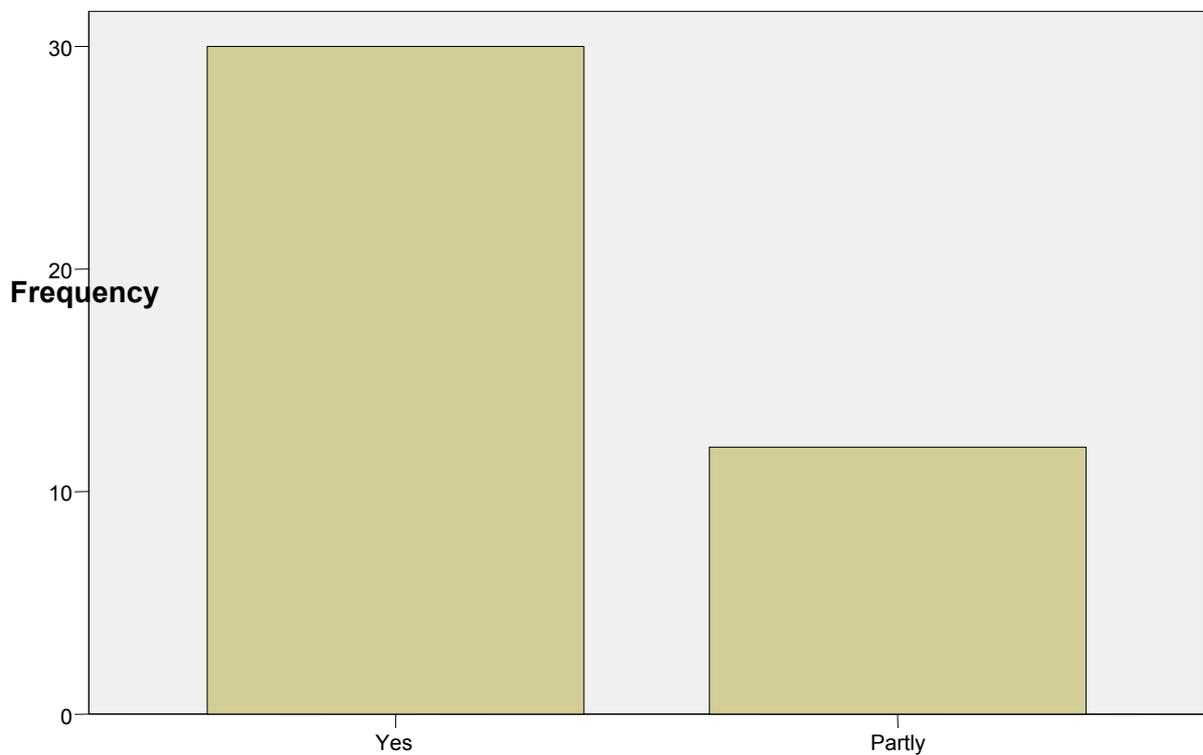
Interestingly, the members of community gardens have similar sentiments with regards to the usefulness of community gardens and their impact in their lives.

The literature has clearly identified the uses of community gardens as being neither social, economic, nor environmental, respectively. It is in this context that the data collected will be dissected through these aspects whether it objects the literature strongly or it is in favour of the literature. Interestingly enough, the data collected seem to concur perpetually with some of the social benefits identified in the literature. In particular, the participants indicated confidently that community gardens creates links or networks between through interaction with each other. This is defined as the social capital. The community further intensified the relationship between literature and the data when they unanimously agreed that community gardens are mainly destined for eradicating poverty. Thus, as the literature indicated, community gardens are mainly for home consumption. Educationally, the literature argued that community gardens actually create space for gaining knowledge as farmers constantly interact with each other. The data supported this view strongly precisely because member's community gardens have indicated that they gain knowledge from each other. In terms of health, the literature indicated clearly that gardens provide highly nutritious food to both members of community gardens and those that beg or rely on them. In keeping with this claim, the data re-affirmed vastly when participants conceded that gardens add a nutritionally valuable food in their lives.

**Figure 10: The impact of Community gardens in changing people’s lives**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	30	71.4	71.4	71.4
Partly	12	28.6	28.6	100.0
Total	42	100.0	100.0	

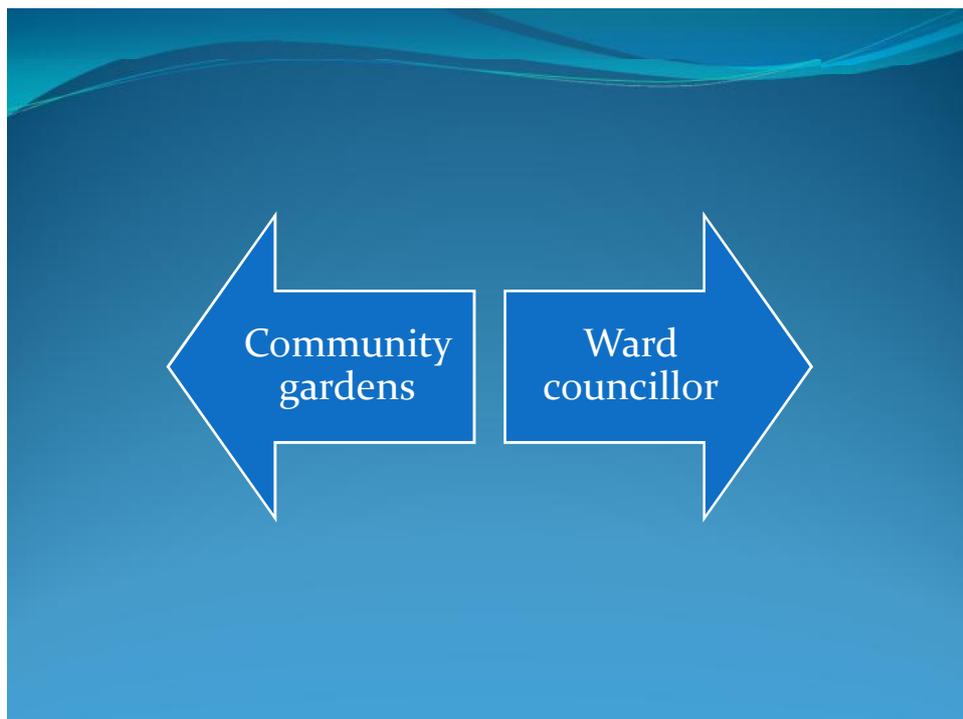
**The impact of community gardens in changing people's lives**



Undoubtedly, the vast majority of the participants conceded that community gardens do change people’s lives – particularly those who are involved in them. Of the 42 participants interviewed, 71.4 percent (thirty participants) evidently agreed that community gardens are absolutely critical in changing people’s lives. By contrast, a significant minority of the participants actually thought that community gardens do not change people’s lives. As a consequence, 28.6 percent of the participants (twelve participants) **did not believe that**

community gardens improved their lives. In their view, community gardens do not change people's lives.

**Figure 11: Outward relationship between ward councillor and community gardens**



The relationship continues to sour between community gardens and a local councillor because the counselor has failed to keep his promises. One community garden has argued that he came to their garden with a multitude of promises. However, none of those promises have been kept.

### **5.8 Reasons why people do not enter into community gardens**

The non community garden members expressed varied responses when asked why they do not enter into community gardens. Some people desist from community gardens due to

misinformation, emptiness of ideas and stereotypical ideas. But after all, they did indicate that community gardens are absolutely crucial. This part looks at the reasons that dissuade members of the community from joining community gardens.

### **5.9.1 Hatred**

The pace with which food gardens grow differs from member to member depending on one's fortune. Other members may be envious when one's food grows faster than it was envisaged. As a result, the extreme dislike of the member may be witnessed in various ways. For instance, other members change attitudes towards him or her.

### **5.9.2 Gossiping**

The community garden is perceived as a platform where neighbor-related matters are openly and surreptitiously discussed. Most members of the community (non community garden members) have confessed that they are poor but they do not like to be associated with gardening because they will be blamed for gossiping. This is especially true when one member resigns from one group to join the other.

### **5.9.3 Conflict**

Some sections of the community believe that where there is more sharing and partnership conflict is always a high possibility – particularly if it involves money. So, they decide to keep themselves away from the conflict.

#### **5.9.4 Stereotypes**

Other community members tend to refrain from community gardens due to stereotypical ideas. Community gardening is often seen to be closely associated with females and older people. For example, one male participant argued that “I can’t enter into community gardening because it is for females and elderly people” (Non community garden member). On a similar note, community gardening is associated with poor people who are not educated enough. Two participants rightly said that

“Community gardens are for poor people...how would people react if they see me with a hand hoe while they know that I am educated” (An educated young Non community garden member).

“If you use community gardens people tend to think that you are living from hand to mouth. In other words, the community tends to undermine you” (a Non community garden member).

#### **5.9.5 Stress**

Community gardening is believed to cause a major stress since you work under no support. Yet, your services are extremely important. It is stressful because it also consumes most of the time whilst you received no support even from your children.

### **5.9 Constraints Facing Community Gardens**

“Being a member of a community garden is not hustle-free, you are always faced with problems that are within your control, and some even extend beyond your control” (A community garden member)

Sadly, community gardens often blossom during the time when nobody keeps an eye on the livestock. Thus, they are always in jeopardy of being tarnished or interfered with. This part deals specifically with principal, serious and less serious problems that were identified by community garden members. It is also imperative to be mindful of the fact that most community gardens are led and run by older people who find it difficult to complete the garden activities. They also find it difficult to walk from their households to the garden. These problems include amongst others, distance, fencing, birds, and water, respectively.

### **5.10.1 Distance**

One of the drawbacks about these community gardens is that they are not easily accessible. What this means is that community gardens are usually some distance away from the homesteads. So community gardens unlike the homestead farms are an inconvenience as one has to travel to get to them. However for the point of clarity community gardens are not quite that far, because the distance from home to the community garden does not even exceed a kilometre. As previously mentioned these gardens are “neighbourhood gardens” as the households involved in these gardens are in close proximity.

### **5.10.2 Fencing**

This remains the intractable challenge even in those community gardens that are surrounded by fence because it needs to be constantly changed and upgraded to face the animals. Some gardens (in fact two) do not have fence at all. These are Inkosinathi Co-operative and Sibusisiwe Co-operative. As a result, they decided to close down because there were no

support mechanisms in place. The culture of keeping a close eye on the livestock has waned or dwindled so that is why animals have become the challenge.

### **5.10.3 Birds**

The birds were often treated by most gardens as unavoidable and daunting culprits. This was particularly so because they could easily fly over the hedge unscathed or without being harmed. Yet, it is impossible to kill them. **Scarecrows** like human beings (made up of plastics) have been placed in community gardens to intimidate or to guard against the birds.

However, one participant argued that

“the birds are too clever because they could recognise an immovable object from a distance. They continue to eat our food regardless of what we do” (Ethembeni garden member).

### **5.10.4 Water**

This is mainly considered a principal problem facing community gardens. Although most of them are built next to the dam it is difficult to fetch water from the dam to the garden. Three of the gardens interviewed are in close proximity to the dam but the members are too old to carry water from the dam. Instead, they desperately need the water tapes inserted into their gardens. One garden (Sibusisiwe Co-operative) is quite far from the dam and it has decided to close down.

### **5.10.5 Irrigation**

Moreover community gardens have viewed as needing attention with regards to irrigation, unlike homestead farms that rain fed. Community gardens require that there be constant irrigation and therefore it depend on individuals' ability to irrigate. This however is not a difficulty as all of the community gardens are usually placed near a permanent source of water.

### **5.10.6 Land**

The land is also a major constraint facing community gardens just like the water. Land is not readily available, but the members who want to start a community garden are supposed to consult with headmen or Inkosi for that matter. It is also hard to find a land that is amenable to ploughing since rainfall is usually a big problem.

The literature argued that community gardening only alleviate poverty temporarily. This is so because community gardens are generally seen to be unable to bring great income in the rural households. Against this background, the data collected seem to argue that community gardens receive top priority in terms of curbing poverty although there are seasonally challenges that they face. For example, the rainfall sometimes simply refuses to come. However, the members of community gardens seem to agree that the whole idea behind them is not so much about making money. The data further argued against the literature in terms of its timeline. One organisation has been in operation since 1983 which disproves the fact that they community gardening only helps momentarily.

# Chapter Six

## Economic Benefits and Institutional Support of Community gardens

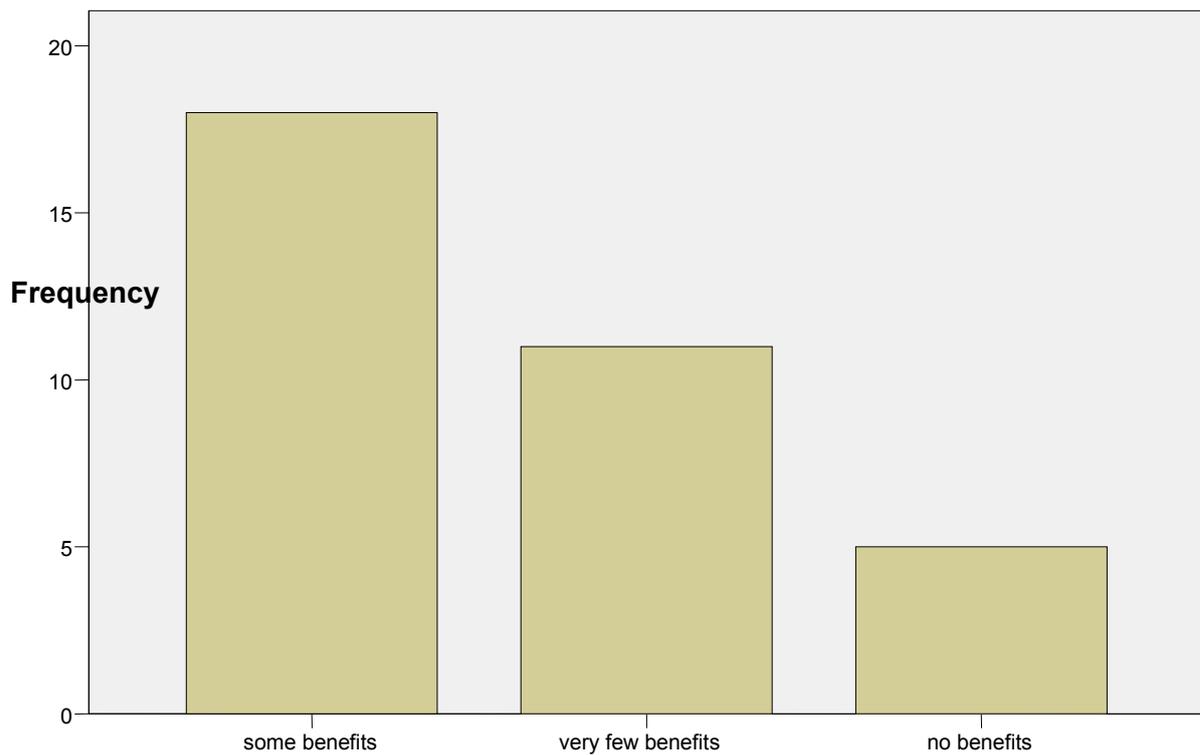
### 6.1 Overview

The community gardens cannot be merely viewed in terms of bringing about social benefits; their terrain exceeds social benefits. Community gardens also make a member to be able to benefit financially by freely choosing to sell the produce. To a larger degree, community gardens have been able to create economic opportunities for people who are unemployed. This, however, is a contested terrain since most organisations interviewed stressed that their top priority is solely home consumption and extending help to the orphans. This chapter aims to reveal the economic benefits that are associated with community gardens. Actually, the aims of this chapter are threefold – namely, to discuss economic benefits that accrue to members of community gardens; to discuss institutional support that is needed in order to enhance the performance of community gardens as well as to review these against poverty and unemployment levels in the community.

**Figure 12: Economic benefits of working in a community garden**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	some benefits	18	42.9	52.9	52.9
	very few benefits	11	26.2	32.4	85.3
	no benefits	5	11.9	14.7	100.0
	Total	34	81.0	100.0	
Missing	System	8	19.0		
Total		42	100.0		

**Economic benefits of working in a community gardens**



Given the high percentage of the participants who thought that community gardens carry economic benefits, one can safely say that they are exceedingly useful. Basically, 42.9

percent (eighteen) of the participants were of the view that community gardens are bearable due to the economic benefits that are attributed to them. This percentage suggests that community gardens are essential at Mahlabathini. By same token, 26.2 percent (eleven) of the participants felt that community gardens have very few economic benefits that are associated with them. Not surprisingly, further 19.0 percent (eight) participants held the view that community gardens do not carry economic benefits at all.

## **6.2 A summary of economic benefits**

### **6.2.1 Commercial purpose**

Farmers believe that the community garden is different because they use the community garden products for economic benefits. This is because the farmers state that they sell the vegetables they get from the community gardens. Here it must be understood that not all the farmers mentioned that they sell the produce from the community garden. The only community garden group that said they actually go out and sell the produce was the Phaphamani community garden group. This group is able to supply a market. The markets identified were the community at large, the local stores and also Isipingo (where they go as hawkers) Even though the rest of the community gardens do sell, it is usually in small quantities and within the community.

According to participants, the community gardens produce more, which also helps them with having excess to sell. This would then also be aligned with the first section that dealt with food. Because this meant that people produced more food than they need for sustenance. The rest is therefore sold and profits are gained.

### **6.2.2 Competition**

An interesting factor that came out in the survey was that of competition. According to one of the farmers, competition was important to keep the garden going but most importantly to keep the farmers motivated. It was explained that seeing one member succeed makes another wonder how he can better himself and his production. Since each and every member has his/her own plot, it creates competition within the community garden. Therefore healthy competition is quite important for community gardens to succeed. Further competitive edge creates confidence within the community garden. Another person feels like they have to do more work in order to conform to everybody. An example used was that another person becomes motivated when they look at their neighbours fields and therefore strive for theirs to look more or less the same.

### **6.2.3 Income generation**

Community food gardens have allowed people to generate some sort of capital. Farmers have identified these gardens as a way for generating income; they do this by selling their produce to nearby informal markets or even within the community. A community food garden played an integral part in the generation of income for its members. This would be explained further in the next section of economic benefits to community food gardens.

### **6.2.4 Employment creation**

Similarly, the farmers identified employment opportunity as another important economic benefit. Farmers mention that being in the community gardens have allowed them to feel as if they are employed. They have also identified that there are opportunities to employ other

community members in their gardens. This helps those in need and also without employment. These employment opportunities could include: fetching water from the dam; and working the garden, respectively. Indeed, fetching water is mainly done by young boys who charge a particular amount per wheelbarrow or bucket.

In line with the literature, the data collected has indicated that community gardens have been able to create job opportunities for a vast majority of community members. Community gardens have successfully absorbed many poor rural communities. However, the data collected indicates clearly that emphasis is not on profit making as one could reasonably expect. The strong emphasis is on helping orphans and other people in need of food. But eventually, the surplus is sold out to whoever wants to buy it. In the process, money is generated which is used to buy other food stuffs from the market which are not available in the gardens.

### **6.3 Lack of Institutional Support to gardening**

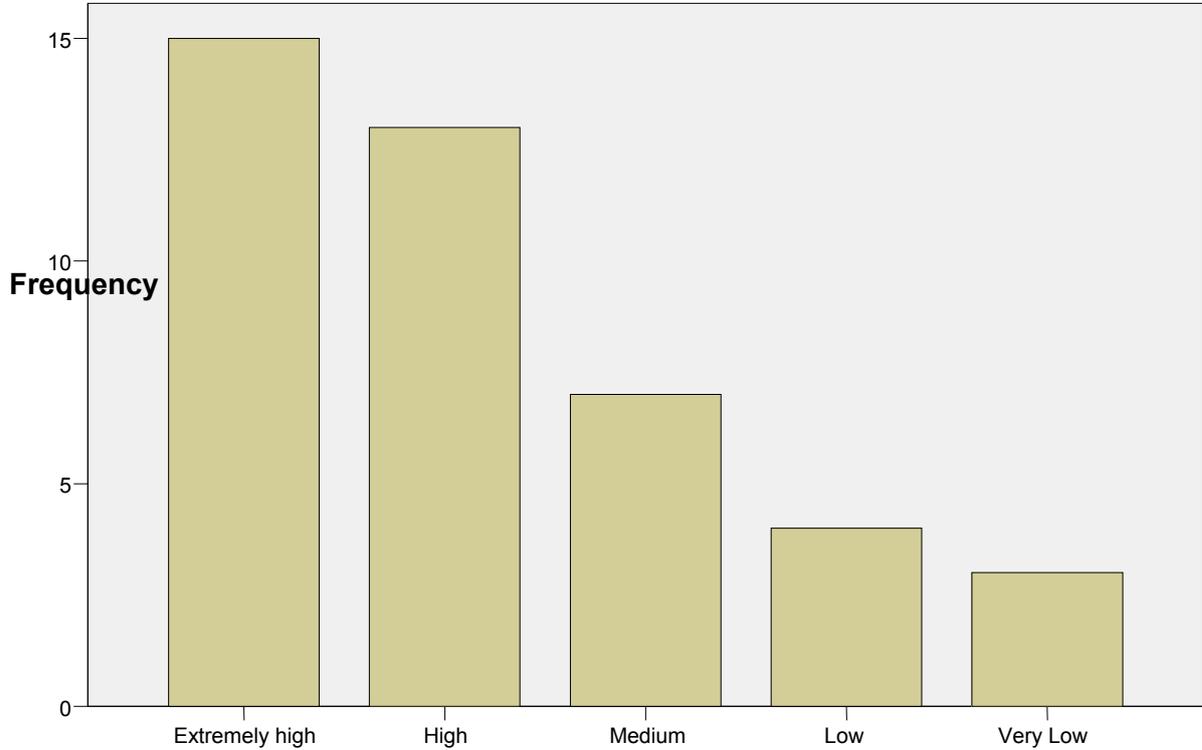
The progress in community gardens is not hassle-free as they are constantly impeded by poor assistance from relevant structures. The typical example that came to light in this study is the poor relationship between community gardens and the local councillor. Ideally, the local government is closer to the people in need of services, and it is a duty of local government through municipalities to work with communities. In this regard, the councillor should begin to be more responsive, in conjunction with Inkosi, to the needs of community gardens. The reason is that the councillor presumably has strong networks with government departments that can be of greater assistance to the community garden members. Also, there is a need for

water which frustrates and discourages community garden members which are elderly. This creates expense for them because they have to pay for the services of those who assist them. In attending to this challenge, every garden should be provided with water tapes or alternatively, generators as a short term solution to speed up the availability of water. Fencing should be made available by the relevant structures to avoid the situation where gardening becomes extinct. Monitoring and evaluation should also be applied by the relevant departments to ensure that whatever assistance they provide actually meets the objectives of the recipients. Since most members of community garden are illiterate, they need to be equipped with certain skills so that they will be able to manage their gardens properly.

#### **6.4: Rate of poverty in the Community**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Extremely high	15	35.7	35.7	35.7
	High	13	31.0	31.0	66.7
	Medium	7	16.7	16.7	83.3
	Low	4	9.5	9.5	92.9
	Very Low	3	7.1	7.1	100.0
	Total	42	100.0	100.0	

**Figure 13 The rate of poverty in the community**



The graph indicates an appallingly and unmanageably high rate of poverty in the community. The graph seems to be consistent with high levels of unemployment in the community. In fact, 35.7 percent (fifteen) of the participants interviewed seem to share a similar sentiment with regards to poverty in the area by emphasising that it is extremely high. By the same token, 31.0 percent (thirteen) of the participants also felt that poverty is high in the area. Indeed, only 16.7 percent of the participants actually felt that poverty is neutral. Further, 9.5 percent (four) participants were of the view that poverty is at a low level in the community. Consequently, only 7.1 percent (three) of the participants who felt that poverty is at a very low level in the community.

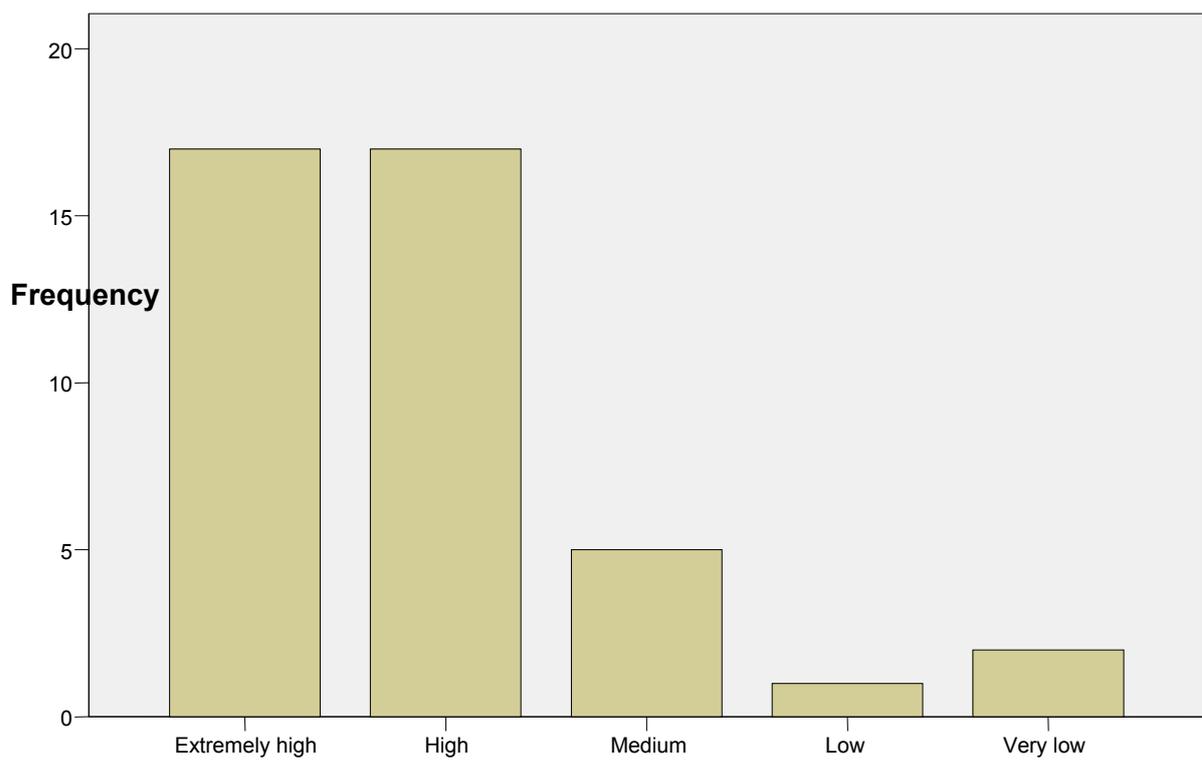
No matter how you look at the statistical data presented, it is clear that the rate of poverty is genuinely and exceedingly high. At aggregate level, there seems to be a general consensus between community garden members and non community garden members that poverty is rapidly increasing. On the one hand, community garden members have clearly shown their latitude and strengths in combating poverty. On the other hand, non community garden members have made little or no progress in terms of curbing poverty due to their lack of commitment. When one tries to strike a balance between community garden members and non community garden members in their efforts to fight poverty, the balance does not come to light. The poverty in the area is increasing at an alarming rate, and the youth has accustomed itself with excessive drinking habits.

Literature relating to poverty – especially in rural areas is still most relevant in terms of gaining an insight into the plight that exists in rural areas. The literature identified the gap that widens rapidly between the rich and the poor, and ultimately the literature demonstrated that the poor are largely located in the rural areas across the developing world. Both literature and data tally on that poverty in rural areas poverty is high and unmanageable in the sense that the economic benefits of gardening are only survivalist. The literature showed that gardening actually adds value in coping with poverty. The participants stressed that they entered into gardening in an attempt to fight poverty.

## 6.5: The rate of unemployment in the Community

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Extremely high	17	40.5	40.5	40.5
	High	17	40.5	40.5	81.0
	Medium	5	11.9	11.9	92.9
	Low	1	2.4	2.4	95.2
	Very low	2	4.8	4.8	100.0
	Total	42	100.0	100.0	

**Figure 14 The rate of unemployment in the community**



The graph indicates that perceptions of the rate of unemployment have rapidly and significantly increased in the community. Statistically, 40.5 percent (seventeen) of the participants actually felt that unemployment is extremely high in the community. Furthermore, evidence is obtained from another 40.5 percent of the participants who thought that unemployment is extremely high in the community. If one were to tally these percentages, one would have obtained a percentage of 80 since they both agree that unemployment is extremely high. On the contrary, 11.9 percent (five) of the participants felt that unemployment is at a medium level in the community. Meanwhile, 2.4 percent (one) of the participants were of the view that unemployment is at a low level in the community. Finally, 4.8 percent (two) of the participants actually thought that unemployment is at a very low level in the community.

Unemployment is considered to be the highest problem facing South Africa. It is often seen as the catalyst of poverty. In the eMahlabathini community, the rate of unemployment is so high among all age-groups – but, especially high among the youth. Thus, community garden members generally aim to remedy the unemployment situation that has proven to fall out of control. This is observable by mere observation as one walks in the community. This was particularly noticeable during the researcher's visits to their households.

The literature argued strongly and consistently argued that a vast majority of people in the developing world are poor. Further, it argued that as a result of their socio-economic status, they find themselves in deep rural areas where there is no development. In line with the literature, the data has shown that there are significantly high levels of unemployment in rural areas. Community gardens are mainly run by elderly people who are no longer economically

active. The youth participated fairly unevenly in the study whilst they are the most vulnerable in terms of unemployment.

In conclusion, it is evidently clear that profits actually mean money that is generated after selling the food surplus. In this context, profit merely helps as a survivalist strategy not as the money that can be used to buy anything that the household may want. In other words, the economic benefits help in altering the situation of the poor, but not enrich the poor. Possibly, this is because of the constraints that community gardens have that impact adversely on their performance in changing the people's lives. Thus, poverty is reduced minimally.

# Chapter Seven

## Conclusions and Recommendations

### 7.1 Introduction

The study has sought to examine the impact of community gardening more especially in alleviating poverty in the rural area. Ngcolosi community (particularly Mahlabathini area) has been used in this study to showcase the impact of community gardening. The chapter aims to make a final analysis and definitive conclusions on whether indeed community gardens simply alleviate poverty or there is scope for serious economic development through these ventures.

In an attempt to sum up the entire work, the researcher aims to draw conclusions based on firstly the summary of the entire work – particularly the effectiveness and ineffectiveness of community gardens along with the major constraints/challenges that they are facing. Secondly, this chapter aims to elucidate the gaps and areas that need further research. Thirdly, this chapter seeks to revisit the central research questions by discussing the implications of data on the theory whether or not the theory is still most relevant. Fourthly, food security as a policy framework will be revised in connection with the new data collected and consequently, the researcher also aims to offer possible recommendations that can be taken into account in dealing with community gardens. Finally, the need for an intervention will be critically scrutinised since most organisations interviewed have had different problems that they are faced with.

The bulk of the work has focused primarily on community gardens as one of the viable defence mechanisms available in rural areas to curb the problem of poverty. As such, the literature coupled with the data collected on the field has tried to place unemployment as the main (not the only) cause of poverty in rural areas. The literature started off by providing the context within which community gardens are undertaken. Through contextualisation, it became clear that many rural communities are facing similar problems in terms of development and access to new technologies. As a consequence, rural communities tend to gravitate towards community gardening in an attempt to survive for themselves, and mostly because of community gardens' perceived ability to provide highly nutritious food which is needed to strengthen the human body. Further, the community gardening is seen as unifying the community both at household and individual level. The working definition of community gardening should, as the argument has shown, include things like inclusivity, working together, knowledge production, and sharing as the defining features of community gardening. Community gardening is inclusive in the manner that it caters mainly for the poor, but everyone is accepted regardless of financial status or otherwise.

Additionally, there are vast differences and overlaps between community gardens and home gardens. To start with, the differences have shed some light on the insight and thoughts surrounding the phenomena of gardening. It has been argued that while community gardens are small in size home gardens are large and they allow for further expansion in the future. Also, community gardens are not accessible while home gardens are accessible. It takes longer for one to get to the community garden while it does not take long to get to the home garden. Further, community gardens create space for working together and space for interaction. By contrast, there is no such space under home gardens since the member is

alone. It is further argued that community gardens are communally owned while home gardens are individually owned.

In the meantime, there are significant overlaps between the two garden types. Firstly, they both aspire towards producing nutritious food. Secondly, they both do not receive support. The kind of support that is needed may vary greatly, but generally community gardens would want to receive institutional support. In essence, institutional support can come from government, training, and from community leadership. In this regard, some community gardens have actually closed down due to lack of fencing. Those who have home gardens often use their money to ensure that there is proper fencing in place. Thirdly, members of community gardens also have home gardens. As a consequence, they gain knowledge from the community, and they transfer that knowledge into managing their own garden at their households. In the end, it is clear that these gardens need each other for survival.

Similarly, the study has shown that community gardens are in fact reliable in terms of coping with the level of poverty to most of the households in rural areas. This is reinforced by the growing number of elderly people who are determined to partake in community gardens. A high number of people interviewed were of the view that community gardens are absolutely crucial in alleviating poverty and changing their lives. Indeed, most of the participants in the study have advocated for the use of community gardens regardless. This is so because of the social, economic, and environmental benefits that are associated with community gardens. However, community gardens fail to deal with poverty in a sustainable way because they rely heavily on rainfalls. If the rain has suddenly stopped, gardening becomes a difficult task

because water is fetched from the dam or river. Further, community gardens also do not have necessary resources to facilitate their activities.

Firstly, social benefits were identified accordingly. These benefits included amongst other things, working together or collaboration between; interaction with each other; education; food; survival; and coexistence to mention but a few. The involvement in community gardens allows one to be able to meet regularly with neighbours so as to work together and discuss the matters that affect the community together. In the process, the knowledge is gained because the member gets to know the new skills that are useful in a community garden setting. Furthermore, a member of a community garden is able to fight against poverty which is largely seen as pressing issue across rural communities. As a consequence, the individual is able to live a fairly sustainable life through active involvement in garden activities. The involvement in garden activities is also widely seen as a physical exercise because the body muscles gets to be regularly stretched which is good for healthy living. Thus, these benefits seem to heighten the spirit amongst those who intend entering into community gardens because they will be able to survive through them.

Secondly, economic benefits that are associated with community gardens were also identified, although all community garden members have agreed that their focus and aim is not on making profit. The economic benefits include: income generation; employment creation; and commercial purpose, respectively. Those who partake in community gardens are able to generate income through selling the surplus. The income is used instrumentally to buy what is not available in a community garden so as to support the food obtained from the

garden. Thus, community gardens have created employment opportunities for people who were not employed at the time of joining them. However, these economic benefits are achieved inadvertently by community gardens because their main aim is to alleviate poverty not to make profit.

Thirdly, community gardens have been seen as rendering environmental services. In this regard, community gardens constantly act as a pollution sink by improving the quality of air. In fact, community gardens have varied objectives environmentally. Most notably, community gardens add significantly to ecological regeneration as people utilise land for agricultural purposes. In light of these of environmental uses, it is absolutely clear that community gardens do not only add value to the wellbeing of its members but they also add value to things that directly affects people's lives in a manner that is not noticeable. However, this was more discernable in literature than from research participants. The environmental benefits of community gardens were implicit in the conversations of research participants, but they never really felt comfortable with them.

However, community gardens cannot bring out the desired outcomes if they are not supported. All the community garden groups interviewed have stressed that they receive no support from the structures such as municipalities, traditional and local governance. More than anything, the biggest challenge that seems to stifle their growth and expansion has been the lack of water. Of the four community gardens interviewed, none of them had water taps. Traditionally, water is the most important resource that community gardens need not only for their survival, but also for making sure that food produced is at a high quality. Further, land is

also a biggest challenge because it is owned by the traditional authorities who may at times decline to voluntarily offer it to the community garden members without thorough negotiations. Also, fencing has been largely labelled as the second most inhibiting factor. The lack thereof has resulted in the closure of two community gardens which translates into fifty percent because they were four community gardens altogether that informed the study. Meanwhile, birds were also dubbed as a serious problem because it is quite difficult to guard against them since they can fly over the fence. Furthermore, community gardens are generally seen to be inaccessible because most of them have been located next to the dam whilst most households are very far from the dam. In fact, the dam is quite far from other members of community. The reason for this is that the dam is the only source of water that is available to them to water their gardens. Most members of community gardens are unfortunately old. Thus, the walk to a community garden inevitably increases the chances of fatigue and exhaustion.

In addition, the requirements for food security are not constantly met by rural communities. However, the literature has shown quite clearly that through the introduction of food security policy, the situation in South Africa as a whole has been altered. For example, benefits include the introduction of Xoshindlala projects and the introduction of feeding schemes in South African schools. Therefore, various benefits have accrued to children from poor households. Further, the feeding scheme does not only bring food to the learners, but it seeks to beef up the nutritional balance in their bodies in order to be able to fight against issues of under nutrition or malnutrition, and poor levels of concentration in class. According to Bonti-Ankomah (2001), South Africa as a whole is generally food secure. Not surprisingly, it is primarily rural areas in South Africa that generally lag behind in terms of food security. This

is mainly attributable to their inability to purchase food and lack of material income. As a consequence, rural communities are generally perceived to be food insecure. Food insecurity, as the literature has argued, is caused by shortage of food intake that amounts to malnutrition or other diseases. On the other hand, the food security policy seeks to demonstrate some of the true realities that exist in rural areas in South Africa. The only significant problem is that its approach is mainly driven by bread and butter issues while the challenges that face the youth – especially those that are in schools in the community seem to go beyond. While the policy prescribed feeding schemes in South African schools, some learners cannot cope with buying school uniforms every year.

Similarly, unemployment has been portrayed as considerably high in rural areas because of the fact that rural areas are isolated and alienated from infrastructural developments that take place in urban areas. Further, rural areas are worse off in terms of accessing new technologies such as advanced computers which can help to improve their lives. The case study of Ngcolosi, eMahlabathini has re-affirmed and confirmed this since the majority of the community has no easy access to new technology. Their life stories seemed to indicate that their kids only get to touch the computer once they lay their feet at university level. Most of the households cannot afford to buy new technologies. In the Ngcolosi community, people resort to community gardening so as to remedy the life threatening circumstances that they are confronted with. As has been argued previously, community gardening has been able to fight unemployment in the area.

Moreover, poverty cannot be ignored in rural areas given the effect it has on the wellbeing of the rural dwellers. Since poverty is associated closely with rural communities, Ngcolosi has proved this to be utterly true since the rate of poverty was ranked high. It is shown in the study that there are various definitions of poverty that can be applied differently in an effort to understand what poverty means. Also, the study made it clear that there is no generally or universally accepted definitions of poverty. Rather, a person who undertakes a study on poverty, using rural community as a focal point, should consider reviewing rural conceptualisations of poverty. Basically, these conceptualisations carefully explain the different types of causes of poverty in rural settings. For instance, material deprivation, and alienation could be the major causes that constitute poverty in rural areas.

Most of these people attested to have been struggling prior to entering into community gardening. However, upon joining they said that their lives have changed. For example, they stated that they are able to sell the surplus of food in order to get an income which is used to buy candles or salts. This, therefore, suggests community gardens are absolutely vital when they are measured against other poverty alleviation strategies. Furthermore, their effectiveness can easily be tarnished by the constraints that have been established. The other most important factor is that community gardens constantly encourage collectivism as opposed to individualism. Collectivism encourages sharing of ideas and learning from each other. In the process, this makes people to be tolerant of each other since they come from different backgrounds. From the individualist's point of view, problems are most likely to be encountered because there is no proper information sharing.

Although community gardens are deemed to be highly and sufficiently effective in terms of reducing poverty some people prefer not to enter into community gardens. Usually, a majority of them tend to dissuade each other not to enter because they feel that they will be vulnerable to hatred, gossiping, conflict, and stereotypes. The idea behind this is that community garden exposes one to different people, some of whom are jealous. These are internal problems that cannot be identified easily. However, one begins to notice them through closer observations as they manifest, and occasionally as members of community gardens have said, they eventually lead to conflicts.

## **7.2 Implications for theory**

More importantly, the data collected seem to have certain implications for the sustainable livelihoods theory. The theory tries to prescribe the manner in which poor rural communities can be able to extricate themselves from poverty. It further suggests that for any livelihood to be sustainable, it needs to have certain characteristics. These include the fact that it must be people-centred; responsive and participatory; multi-level or conducted in partnership; and dynamic. These requirements have been successfully met by the manner in which community gardens are designed, membership, participation, and their responsiveness to challenges such as unemployment and poverty. First, most community gardens are largely driven by people who use them not by other stakeholders. Second, community gardens have been deemed by the members to be highly responsive in terms of eradicating poverty because members can eat, and members can sell the surplus that is obtained from community gardens. Third, the participation amongst members of community garden is equal. Fourth, community gardens are also multi-level led because they do not discriminate on the basis of socio-economic

status. Fifth, community gardens aim to ensure good working relationships by ensuring partnership which is achieved through interaction and knowledge sharing amongst members. In this context, the theory has been able to define garden activities, the goals that are being set, and partnership that is used in making sure that those goals are accomplished. The theory is still most relevant in terms of understanding the extent of poverty in rural areas and the coping mechanisms that are used.

The theory has been useful in getting greater insights about various dimensions that exist in the community. For instance, the engagement in community gardening strengthens the physical and social capital among different households. This helps in ensuring social cohesion and inclusion. Lastly, partnerships between households are also enhanced. However, the challenges of the community can better be understood by applying this theory because it has been able to showcase the fact that stress levels are high on the community garden members and other non-community garden members due to challenges such as poverty and unemployment. These challenges create a severe stress because coping mechanisms such as gardening are also in need of support which has been hard to come by.

Furthermore, the lack of social networks and partnerships between Community-Based Organisations, traditional leadership and local governance seem to have a potential to make local economic development impossible. In particular, the outward relationships between the local councillor and the members of community gardens are some of the ingredients for lack of local economic development. Other biggest challenges are land and water which seem to

derail progress and advancement in the community. However, the theory fails to explain how these issues can be resolved – particularly, the lack of water and land.

### **7.3 Recommendations**

First and foremost, there has to be further research done on the possible avenues/sources of funding (other than government) that can be used by members of community gardens to avoid closing down their gardens. The study created an impression that community garden members do take a responsibility by fetching water, and helping each other even though there is no strong fence. All of them have never mentioned other avenues of getting assistance other than in government. The study is needed that can investigate other potential funders or alternatively that can reiterate the importance of partnerships between community gardens, traditional and local governance. Secondly, since community gardens create social capital or social networks, it is important to investigate the impact that can have on community building. Thirdly, since community gardens normally give their surplus to orphans, it is important to investigate the impact of this on the lives of orphaned children.

As it has been previously argued, monitoring and evaluation should also be applied accordingly by the relevant departments such as the municipality to ensure that whatever assistance they provide actually meets the objectives of the recipients. The other thing is that most members of community garden are illiterate; therefore, they need to be equipped with certain skills so that they will be able to manage their gardens properly.

## **Bibliography**

- Adler, P.A & Adler, P. (1999). Observational techniques. In: Dinzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. (eds). A Handbook of Qualitative Research, Thousand Oaks, C.A: Sage
- Alreck, P.L & Settle, R.B. (1995). The Survey research handbook: guidelines and strategies for conducting a survey. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New York: McGraw-Hill
- Anand, S & Morduch, J. “Poverty and the Population Problem”, in Livi-Bacci, M. & De Santis, G. (1998). Population and Poverty in Developing Countries, Oxford: Clarendon Press
- Arksey, H & Knight, P. (1999). Interviewing for social scientists: an introductory resource with examples, London: Sage
- Ashley, C. and Carney, D. (1999). Sustainable Livelihoods: Lessons from early experience, London: Russell Press Ltd
- Backerberg, G. (2009). Improving Rural Livelihoods with Rainwater Harvesting and Conservation on Communal Croplands in South Africa: Opportunities and Obstacles, Pretoria: Routledge
- Barry, B & others. (2009). Reducing Global Poverty Patterns of Potential Human Progress volume 1, New Delhi: Oxford University Press
- Berg, B.L. (2004). Qualitative Methods for the Social Sciences, 5<sup>th</sup> Ed. California: Pearson
- Bhalla, S.S. (2002). Imagine There’s no Country Poverty, Inequality, and Growth in the Era of Globalization, Washington DC: Institute for International Economics
- Bigman, D. (2002). Globalization and the Developing Countries Emerging Strategies for Rural Development and Poverty Alleviation, London: CABI Publishing
- Bigsten, A, Kebede, B, Shimeles, A, and Taddesse, M. “Theory and Methods of Poverty Analysis”, in Bigsten, A, Shimeles, A and Kebede, B (2005). Poverty Income Distribution and Labour Markets in Ethiopia, Addis Ababa: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet
- Bonti-Ankomah, S. (2001). Addressing Food Insecurity in South Africa, Paper presented at the SARPN conference on Land Reform and Poverty Alleviation in Southern Africa, Pretoria: The National Institute for Economic Policy
- Bresciani, F. & Valde’s, A. (2007). Beyond Food Production The Role of Agriculture in Poverty Reduction, UK: Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
- Brocklesby, M.A & Holland, J. (1998). Participatory Poverty Assessments and Public Services: Key Messages From the Poor, Swansea: Centre for Development Studies, University of Wales
- Brooks, S. and Friedman, M. (1991). Community gardens in KwaZulu-Natal: A pilot study, Investigation report 68. Institute of Natural resources. University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg.

- Carney, D. (1999). Sustainable Livelihoods Approaches: Progress and Possibilities for Change, Ontario: Finesse Print
- Coffey, A & Atkinson, P. (1996). Making Sense of qualitative data: complementary research strategies. Thousand Oaks, C.A: Sage
- Cousins, B. (2000). At The Crossroads Land and Agrarian Reform in South Africa into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Cape Town: Programme for Land and Agrarian Studies (PLAAS), University of the Western Cape
- Coetzee, J.K, Graaf, J, Hendricks, F, and Wood, G. (2001). Development Theory, and Practice, Cape Town: Oxford University Press
- Creswell, J.W. (2009). Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches, (3rded). California: Sage
- Creswell, J.W. (2003). Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches, (2rded). California: Sage
- Davis-Case D, Grove T, Apted C. (1990). The community's toolbox: The idea, methods and tools for participatory assessment, monitoring and evaluation in community forestry, Rome: Food and Agricultural organization of the United Nations
- De Lange, M, Adendorff, A, and Crosby, C.T. (2000). Developing Sustainable Small-scale Farmer Irrigation in Poor Rural Communities: Guidelines and Checklists for Trainers and Development Facilitators, Water Research Commission Report No. 774/1/00, Pretoria: MBB Consulting Engineers
- Department for International Development, (1999). Sustainable Livelihoods Guidance Sheet, New York: International Development
- Development Bank of Southern Africa, (2000). Impact of Public-Private Partnership on the Poor: The South African Experience, Business Unit Development Paper 142, Pretoria: Halfway House
- De Vos, A.S (2005), "Combined quantitative and qualitative approach", in De Vos, A.S, Strydom, H; Fouche, C.B. & Delpont, C.S.L. (eds), Research at grassroots for the social sciences and human service professions, (3rded) .Pretoria: Van Schaik
- Farrington, J. & others. (1999). Sustainable Livelihoods in Practice: Early Applications of Concepts in Rural Areas, UK: Dept. of International Development
- Fernandez, M. (2003). Cultivating community, food and empowerment: urban gardens in New York. Project course paper.
- Gelsi, E. J. (1999). Gardening in the street: Sociality, production and consumption in Northey Street City Farm, Canada: Office of Urban Agriculture.
- Glesne, C & Peshkin, A. (1992). Becoming qualitative researchers: an introduction, White Plains, NY: Longman

- Glover, T. (2004). Social capital in the lived experiences of community gardeners issue 26, volume 2, p 143-162. Tylor and Francis group.
- Godwyll, F. & Kang, S.Y. (2008). Poverty, Education and Development, New York: Nova Science Publishers, Inc
- Griffith, G. (1994). Poverty Alleviation for Rural Women, Sydney: Avebury
- Herbach, G. (1998). Harvesting the City: community gardening in greater Madison, Wisconsin. Madison food system project working paper series MFSP 1998-01. City farmer, Canada's office of urban agriculture.
- Holland, L. (2004). Diversity and connections in community gardens: a contribution to local sustainability, issue 9, volume 3, P 285-305.
- Hussein, K. (2002). Livelihoods Approaches Compared: A Multi-Agency Review of Current Practice, Ontario: Finesse Print
- Hughes, C. (2009). Sustainable Livelihoods and pro-poor market development, UK: Centre for Development Studies, University of Bath
- Jajairy, I & others. (1992). The State of World Rural Poverty An Inquiry into Its Causes and Consequences, London: IT Publications
- Karelis, C. (2007). The Persistence of Poverty Why The Economics of the Well-off Can't Help The Poor, New Haven: Yale University Press
- Kothari, C.R (1990). Research methodology: Methods and techniques, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New Delhi: Wishwa Prakashan (A division of Wiley Eastern Limited)
- Krantz, L. (2001). The Sustainable Livelihood Approach to Poverty Reduction: An Introduction, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA)
- Lambsdorff, O.C. (2006). The Welfare State: Poverty Alleviation or Poverty Creation?, Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations
- Ledwith, M. (2005). Community Development A Critical Approach, UK: University of Bristol, The Policy Press
- Light J. Stoltz B. McNaughton D. (1996). Community based employment: experiences of adults who use AAC. AAC Augmentative and Alternative Communication. Volume 12. Department of communication disorders and the department of education and school of psychology and special education, the Pennsylvania state University, University Park, Pennsylvania USA.
- Livi-Bacci, M. (1999). Population and Poverty in Developing Countries, Oxford: Clarendon Press
- Lund, F. (2004). Livelihoods (un)employment and social safety nets: reflections from recent studies in KwaZulu-Natal. South African Regional Poverty Network.
- Mann, M. (2000). Land Reform and Agrarian Change in Southern Africa An Occasional Paper Series No.15, Cape Town: University of the Western Cape

- Martins, J.H. (1993). Salient Features of Poverty in South Africa, Research Report No 198, Pretoria: Bureau of Market Research
- May, J. “Constructing the Social Policy Agenda: conceptual debates around poverty and inequality”, in Padayachee, V. (2006). The Development Decade? Economic and Social Change in South Africa, 1994-2004, Cape Town: HSRC Press
- May, J. “The Structure and Composition of Rural Poverty and Livelihoods in South Africa”, in Cousins, B. (2000). At The Crossroads Land and Agrarian Reform in South Africa into the 21 st Century, Cape Town: Programme for Land and Agrarian Studies (PLAAS), University of the Western Cape
- Middleton, N. & others. (2001). Negotiating Poverty New Directions, Renewed Debate, London: Pluto Press
- Milbourne, P. (2004). Rural Poverty Marginalisation and Exclusion in Britain and the United States, London: Routledge
- Miles, M.B & Hubberman, A.M (1994). Qualitative data analysis: an expanded source book. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Thousand Oaks, C.A: Sage
- Moore, N. (2000). How to do research: the complete guide to designing and managing research projects, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. London: Library Association Publishing
- Morse, J.M. (1991) Approaches to qualitative-quantitative methodological triangulation. Nursing Research 40 (1)
- Munslow, B & McLennan, A. (2009). The Politics of Service Delivery. Johannesburg: University of Witwatersrand Press
- Munslow, B. “Making Development Sustainable”, in Coetzee, C. & others. (2001). Development Theory, Policy and Practice, Cape Town: OxfordUniversity Press
- National Department of Agriculture, (2002). The Integrated Food Security Strategy for South Africa, Pretoria: Dept. of Agriculture
- Nell W. Wessels B. Mokoka J. Machedi S. 2000. A creative multidisciplinary approach towards the development of food gardening. Development debate and practice. Development Southern Africa. Volume 17, No 5. December 2000
- Nisbet, J.D & Watt, J. (1980). Case study, Rediguide 26, University of Nottingham School of Education
- Padayachee, V. (2006). The Development Decade? Economic and Social Change in South Africa, 1994-2004, Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council Press
- Putnam, R. B. (2000). Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of the American community, New York: Routledge
- Redpath, J. (2007). Parallel Lines Policies Relevant to Child Safety in South Africa, Cape Town: Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention

- Satge, de R. (2002). Learning About Livelihoods: Insights from South Africa, UK: Oxfam
- Satge, de R. (2002). "Livelihoods Analysis and the Challenges of Post-conflict recovery", in Clover, J. and Cornwell, R. (2004) in Monograph\_no102
- Schwabe C. 2004. Fact file: Poverty in South Africa. Human Sciences Research Council. GIS Centre, Human Research Council
- Shackleton, S.E, Shackleton, C.C & Cousins, B. (2000). "The Economic Value of Land and Natural Resources to Rural Livelihoods: case studies from South Africa", in Cousins, B. (ed). At The Crossroads: Land and Agrarian Reform in South Africa into the 21 st Century, Cape Town: Programme for Land and Agrarian Studies, University of the Western Cape
- Shannon, J. (1996). Sowing and reaping borrowed land: Garden city Harvest's community gardens. Environmental studies. The University of Montana
- Sherer, P. (2004). Park power. Land and people, available at [www.tpl.org/pforp](http://www.tpl.org/pforp), accessed on the 23-04-10
- Smith, S.C. (2005). Ending Global Poverty A Guide to What Works, New York: Palgrave Macmillan
- Solesbury, W. (2003). Sustainable Livelihoods: A Case Study of the Evaluation of DFID Policy, London: Overseas Development Institute
- Stilwell, T. & Atkinson, D. (1999). The Economic Rationale and Modalities for Rural Infrastructure Development: developmental local government in rural service delivery, Development Paper 140, Development Bank of Southern Africa
- Stone, G. D, Netting, R. C, Stone, P. M. (1990). Seasonality, labour scheduling, and agricultural intensification in the Nigerian Savanna, American Anthropologist, new series, Vol 2, No. 1. March 1990, pp 7-23.
- Tang, K. & Wong, C. (2003). Poverty Monitoring and Alleviation in East Asia, New York: Nova Science Publishers, Inc
- The Rural Development Task Team (RDP) & Dept. of Land Affairs, (1997). Thriving Rural Areas Rural Development Framework, Cape Town: CTP Book Printers
- Teppo, A. (2004). The Making of A Good White A historical ethnography of the rehabilitation of poor whites in a suburb of Cape Town, Helsinki: Helsinki University Printing House
- The World Bank, (1988). The World Bank's Support for the Alleviation of Poverty, Washington DC: The World Bank
- The World Bank, (1992). Namibia Poverty Alleviation with Sustainable Growth, Washington DC: The World Bank
- Thomas, P. "Communication and the Persistence of Poverty: The Need for a Return to Basics", in Servaes, J. (2008). Community for Development and Social Change, London: SAGE Publications

Van Cotthem, W. (2010). Sacks Gardening in Urban and Rural Areas, Internet Article, available at: F:\gardening.mht, Accessed 20 February 2010

Wolcott, H. (1994). Transforming Qualitative data: description, analysis, and interpretation, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Zegeye, A and Max Ted, J. Our Dream Deferred The Poor in South Africa, Pretoria: UNISA Press

### **Internet Sources**

Economic Cluster (2006). KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Growth and Development Strategy, First Draft by Economic Cluster. Accessed: 12 November 2010

Wills, J (2000). How We Measure Poverty: A History and Brief Overview, <F:\Critiquingpovertymeasurements.mht> Accessed: 12 November 2010

Goldblatt, B. (2006). Implementation of Child Support Grant A Study of Four Provinces and Recommendations for improved service delivery, Children's Institute, University of Cape Town, <F:\Childsupportgrant.mht> Accessed: 25 September 2010

Habicht, JP *et al* (2004). Conceptualization and Instrumentation of Food Insecurity, A paper presented for National Academy of Sciences workshop, 15-16 July 2004, by Cornell University Accessed 12 November 2010

Clover, J. (2003). Food Security in Sub-Saharan Africa, African Security Review 12 (1) Accessed: 25 June 2010

Seria, N & Cohen, M. (2009). South Africa's Unemployment Rate Increases to 23.5% (Update 2),

Available at:

<<http://www.blomberg.com/apps/news?pid=newsarchive&sid=aoB7RbcZCRfU>> Accessed: 18 April 2011

Sarvaes, N (2008), Population below Poverty line Country Ranks, available at: <http://www.photius.com/rankings/economy/population-below-poverty-line-2008-1.html>

Accessed: 16 October 2010

Shah, A (2010) Sponsoring a race to the top : the case for results-based intergovernmental finance for merit goods, Policy Research Working Paper Series 5172, The World Bank.

Available at:

[www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org) Accessed: 13 July 2010

Smith, J (2010) Facts on poverty in Africa

<http://www.helium.com/items/989607-facts-on-poverty-in-Africa>

Accessed: 20 June 2010

## Appendix A: Informed Consent Form

Date:

Respondent Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Study Name: **Community Gardening as a Poverty Alleviation Strategy: Ngcolosi Community, Emahlabathini area**

Purpose of the Research: The research aims to collect data on community gardens about the nature and extent of poverty in the area, and basically, it aims to see how organisations contribute to poverty alleviation.

**Risks and Discomforts:** We do not foresee any risks or discomfort from your participation in the research.

**Benefits of the Research and Benefits to You:** We do not expect any benefits, and there are no benefits that will accrue directly to you.

**Voluntary Participation:** Your participation in the study is completely voluntary and you may choose to stop participating at any time. Your decision not to volunteer will not influence the nature of your relationship with the researcher either now, or in the future.

**Withdrawal from the Study:** You can stop participating in the study at any time, for any reason, if you so decide. Your decision to stop participating or to refuse to answer particular questions will not affect your relationship with the researcher or any other group associated with this project.

**Confidentiality:** All information you supply during the research will be held in confidence and unless you specifically indicate your consent, your name will not appear in any report or publication of the research. Your data will be safely stored in a locked facility and only research staff will have access to this information. Confidentiality will be provided to the fullest extent possible by law.

**Questions About the Research?** If you have questions about the research in general or about your role in the study, please feel free to contact Professor Pearl Sithole at 031 260 2288. This research has been granted ethical clearance by the university's Research Ethics Committee.

### Legal Rights and Signatures:

I, .....consent to participate in a study. I have understood the nature of this project and wish to participate. I am not waiving any of my legal rights by signing this form. My signature below indicates my consent.

**Signature** .....**Date**.....  
Participant

**Signature**.....**Date**.....  
Investigator

## Appendix B: Survey questionnaire

### Individual Questionnaire

Respondent Code.....

Name of Organisation: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Demographics of Respondent

1. Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Position in the Household \_\_\_\_\_
2. Gender      Male 1      Female 2
3. Marital status:

Married	1
Single	2
Widow/widower	3
Divorced	4
Separated	5
Living together with partner	6
4. Do you have any disability:

Yes	1
No	2
5. Level of highest education:

No education	1
Primary	2
Secondary	3
High School	4
Tertiary	5
6. Are you working?

Not working	1
Working	2
Self-employed	3
Temporary Job	4
7. If not working, how do you make money?

I grow vegetables in the garden	1
I hunt wild animals	2
I do fishing	3
Informal trading	4
Social grants	5

Other: Specify, \_\_\_\_\_

- |                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| 8. Total household monthly income |   |
| No income                         | 1 |
| 1-499 Rands                       | 2 |
| 500-999 Rands                     | 3 |
| 1000-1999 Rands                   | 4 |
| 2000-2999 Rands                   | 5 |
| 3000-5999 Rands                   | 6 |
| 6000 Rands or more                | 7 |

## Community Gardens

1. Do you use community gardens?
 

Yes	1
No	2
  
2. If you use them, why?
3. If you do not use community gardens, why?
4. Apart from you, is there anyone else in the family who uses community gardens?
 

Yes	1
No	2
Not many	3
There are many	4
5. What is the difference between home gardens and community gardens?
6. Do you have a home garden?
7. How often do you work and plough it?

## Community Gardens on Poverty

1. Why do you partake in a community garden?
  
2. What is the importance of community gardens?
 

Not important	1
Partially important	2
Neutral	3
Important	4
Extremely important	5
  
3. In your opinion, do community gardens alleviate poverty?
 

Yes	1
Partly	2
No	3

Explain: \_\_\_\_\_
  
4. Do community gardens change people's lives?
 

Yes	1
Partly	2
No	3

How? \_\_\_\_\_

5. Are there any social benefits of working in community garden?

- |            |   |
|------------|---|
| Yes        | 1 |
| Very few   | 2 |
| Too many   | 3 |
| Not at all | 4 |

Explain: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Are there any economic benefits of working in a community garden?

- |            |   |
|------------|---|
| Yes        | 1 |
| Very few   | 2 |
| Too many   | 3 |
| Not at all | 4 |

What benefits? \_\_\_\_\_

7. Would you like to be part of a community garden project?

- |     |   |
|-----|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| No  | 2 |

8. If yes, why?

9. If no, why?

### **How do you see the rate of poverty in your community?**

- |                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| It is bad               | 1 |
| It is extremely bad     | 2 |
| It is neutral           | 3 |
| It is acceptable        | 4 |
| It is highly acceptable | 5 |

### **How do you see the rate of unemployment in your community?**

- |                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| It is bad               | 1 |
| It is extremely bad     | 2 |
| It is neutral           | 3 |
| It is acceptable        | 4 |
| It is highly acceptable | 5 |

# Interview Guide for a semi-structured focus group interview

Organisation Code.....

Name of Organisation \_\_\_\_\_

## **Purpose of the organisation**

- ❖ What is the purpose of the organisation?
- ❖ What was the primary or central motive for people to join this organisation?
- ❖ Who initiated the organisation?
- ❖ How long has it been in existence?

## **Organisation's policy towards poverty**

- ❖ What is the value of community gardens in eradicating poverty?

## **The benefits involved in community gardening**

- ❖ What are the tangible benefits that are involved in this type of gardening?
- ❖ What are the intangible benefits that are involved in this type of gardening?
- ❖ What are the social benefits?
- ❖ What are the economic benefits?
- ❖ What are the methods of benefiting?

## **The constraints/challenges facing community gardens**

- ❖ What are the major constraints to community gardening
- ❖ How can the organisation plan to overcome these constraints?

**Appendix C: Map of Ethekewini Municipality where Ngcolosi is situated**



Map of KwaZulu-Natal with Ethekewini highlighted where Ngcolosi community is situated