

**FOOD SECURITY AT EQHUDENI (NKANDLA):  
A CASE STUDY OF THE ‘ONE HOME ONE  
GARDEN’ CAMPAIGN AS A POVERTY  
ALLEVIATION STRATEGY**

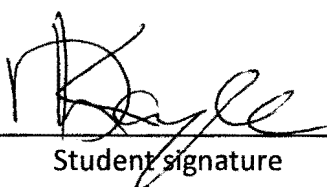
**KHANYISILE NOMTHANDAZO KHANYILE**

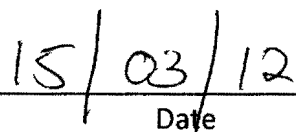
**A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree  
of Master of Social Science (Community Development) in 2011 at  
the University of KwaZulu-Natal in the Faculty of Humanities**

## DECLARATION

Submitted in fulfilment / partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Masters of social Science, in the Graduate Programme of Community Development  
in the School of Built Environment and Development Studies,  
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. I confirm that an external editor was/was not used and that my Supervisor was informed of the identity and details of my editor. It is being submitted for the degree of Masters of Social Sciences in Community development in the College of Humanities, Development and Social Science, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa. None of the present work has been submitted previously for any degree or examination in any other University.

  
Student signature

  
Date

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Editor name and surname (*if applicable*)

## **Dedication**

To my mom, Nomagugu MaZama-Khanyile.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

My heartfelt gratitude goes to the following people for their contribution to the success of this study:

- This study would not have been successful without the God Almighty.
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## **ABSTRACT**

Food security exists when the issue of poverty is addressed. Simultaneous access to different forms of capital ensures sustainable livelihoods. On the other hand, food insecurity is interwoven in unemployment and illiteracy, especially amongst adult women. Food insecurity is also deeply rooted in the lack of access to food and non-availability. This compromises the livelihoods within communities

The study is concerned with the current state of poverty that remains stagnant, bringing about food insecurity, despite the food security campaigns that have been launched in South Africa. The aim of the study is to establish whether the 'One Home One Garden' campaign is unique compared to other campaigns in trying to fight food insecurity. It further inquires about access to the resources necessary to make gardens a sustainable source of livelihood.

In order to fulfil these inquiries, qualitative research was undertaken at Nkandla in a section called eQhudeneni within two subsections, Nsingabantu and Mjonisini. This research was based on the examination of the impact of the 'One Home One Garden' campaign as a poverty alleviation strategy.

The study found that poverty, which contributes to food insecurity, has not been addressed by the campaign. Households suffer from chronic food insecurity given the high levels of poverty in the area. 'The One Home One Garden' campaign is not sustainable because it does not address the holistic needs of gardening, such as access to organic seeds and water and furthermore it is in any case seasonal.

Research obtained showed that people's perceptions are that the seeds are genetically modified based on the appearance of the produce, and also that they do not reproduce. The study viewed home gardens as a tool capable of addressing food insecurities, but, highlighted that it does not fully address all aspects, rather it upholds that poverty needs to be tackled holistically. In addition, it emphasises that for people to have a sustainable livelihood there should be designated market places from which they can sell their produce.

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## **Acronyms**

AEARD	-	Agriculture, Environmental Affairs and Rural Development
CRDP	-	Comprehensive Rural Development Programme
CSG	-	Child Support Grant
GEAR	-	Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy
GMF	-	Genetically Modified Food
HIV	-	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IDP	-	Integrated Development Plan
IFSS	-	Integrated Food Security Strategy
KZN	-	KwaZulu-Natal
MDG	-	Millennium Development Goals
MTSF	-	Medium Term Strategic Framework
NCOP	-	National Council of Provinces
NGO	-	Non-Governmental Organisation
PCD	-	People Centred Development
RDP	-	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SADC	-	Southern African Development Countries
SALDRU	-	South African Labour and Development Research Unit
SLA	-	Sustainable Livelihoods Approach
UNDP	-	United Nations Development Programmes
OHOG	-	‘One House One Garden’

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1. THE STUDY

Food security has been a growing concern since the 1970s (IPCI, 2006). Hence, the World Food Summit in 1996 committed itself to the fight against food insecurity and acknowledged it as an infringement of human rights. In 2002, during the Earth Summit briefing, the urgent need to fight food insecurity was highlighted.

Internationally and at a national level, there have been numerous attempts to confront food insecurity. Dlamini (2005, p48) notes that the Integrated Food Security Strategy (IFSS, 2002) asserts that, "South Africa has been able to meet its food demand for the last twenty years, but there is about thirty five percent of the total population still vulnerable to food insecurity." Interventions have been implemented by agricultural institutions to deal directly with the challenge of food insecurity (Alamgir and Arora, 1991 cited in Dlamini 2005). Despite these attempts, food insecurity is still deep rooted in communities, particularly poverty stricken households<sup>1</sup> in rural areas.

This study aims to ascertain appropriate strategies for livelihoods responsive to food insecurity and poverty within households in Nsingabantu and Mjonisini, as examples of households in rural areas. Aliber 2003 notes that "there is an increase in the number of people living in poverty in South Africa since the end of apartheid in 1994". This study explores home gardening as a response to the dual dilemma of food insecurity and poverty in general through a case study of the 'One Home One Garden' (OHOG) campaign, a KwaZulu-Natal provincial government initiative that fights poverty and food insecurity at a household level.

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<sup>1</sup> A household refers to no specific family set up. It denotes people living together and cooking from one kitchen.

The analytical mission of this thesis is grounded in the examination of food security as a concept behind food campaigns initiated by provincial government, such as Xoshindlala, Lestema, Sibuyele emasinimi, etc. that have assumed that home gardening is an appropriate intervention to fight poverty, and thus food insecurity at a household level (Cairns and Taylor 2003, p3). It further examines the quality of food, given the prominence of cabbage and spinach in the household gardens, and the level of micronutrients contained in the food produced in relation to food security.

The study also focuses on how people feel about the available resources provided by the government relating to gardening in an attempt to ensure food security in their households. This is based on field observations and people's perception of the produce. The produce from the gardens has raised an inquiry about the authenticity of the seeds they receive as part of the campaign. The inquiry is based primarily on the observation that their seeds do not reproduce and they fear that it may have a negative environmental impact. Seeds are suspected to be 'not original', as the locals would say. This could imply that the seeds may be genetically modified. This is against the background of the Genetically Modified Organism Act no.15 of 1997 that was promulgated and implemented to regulate the use of Genetically Modified Food in South Africa, (GMF Act, 1997). Apart from the negative impact that genetically modified foods (GMF) have on the environment, the harvest has been said to increase, which is positive. It is worth bearing in mind that GMF are essentially laboratory produced and their full impact on the human physiology is not fully known. To complicate matters, several components of the community studied are on medical treatment for various ailments and the interaction of their medication and GMF, whose nutritional value is weak, is yet to be studied by the scientific authorities. Also, as much as the harvest increases, research has not shown how long it takes for GMF food to exit the human body and any long-term effects it might have (Panse, 2010). Having said all this, in this study the OHOG strategy is analysed exclusive of any nutritional value, or lack thereof, which the food may possess owing to it being GMF or organic. The study will merely assess this strategy on the basis of its ability to meet human food security needs, as well as the sustainability of the environment for future generations (Warburton, 1998).

## **Objectives of the study**

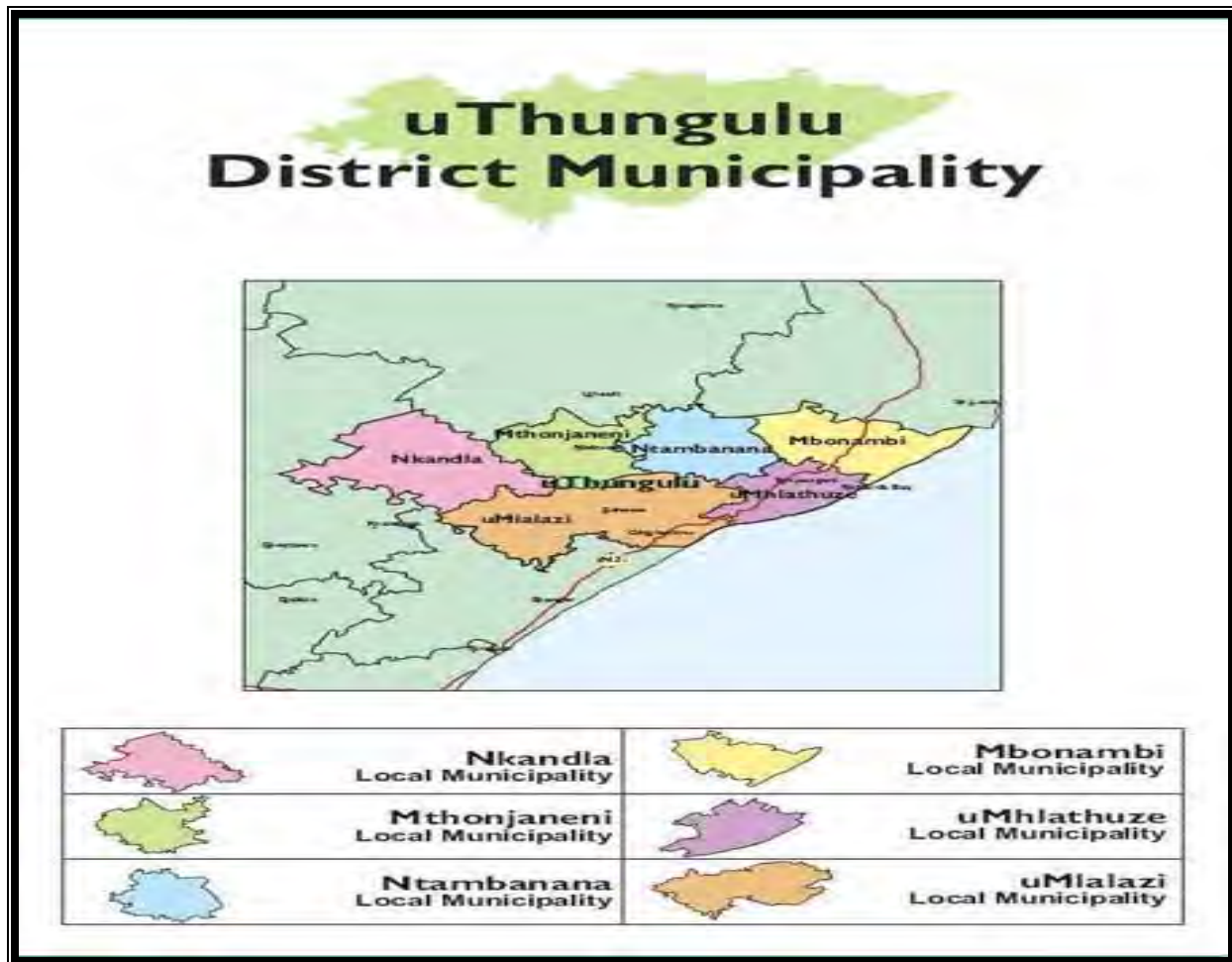
In an attempt to measure if the OHOG campaign fights poverty and food insecurity the study has the following objectives:

- To critically assess the OHOG campaign as a sustainable poverty alleviation strategy at eQhudeni.
- To ascertain the perceptions of people towards the campaign.
- To establish the uniqueness of the OHOG campaign vis-à-vis other poverty alleviation strategies.
- **Research question**

To what extent does the OHOG campaign as a poverty alleviation strategy ensure sustainable food security at eQhudeni?

## 1.2. NKANDLA AND EQHUDENI

The study is based at Nkandla. Nkandla is an area in the KwaZulu-Natal province in South Africa. It is one of six local municipalities located within the north-eastern part of uThungulu District Municipality (See figure 1).



**Figure 1:** Municipal Demarcation of uThungulu District Municipality

Source: Demarcation Board online: [www.dermacation.co.za/infoindex.as](http://www.dermacation.co.za/infoindex.as)

Nkandla is landlocked by Ulundi to the north, Nquthu in the northwest, Msinga in the west, Umvoti in the southwest and Maphumulo in the south. It is estimated to have a population of 133,602 of which 57% are women and the population density is 64 people per square kilometre. Nkandla is characterised by a high level of unemployment and high levels of illiteracy

(Nkandla IDP 2005/2006). It is also a deep rural area populated by predominantly isiZulu-speaking people. 80% of the land is under the Traditional Authority, held in trust by the iNgonyama Trust. There is an acute shortage of government basic services.

Nkandla has good climate for agriculture, which is confirmed by the production of Ntingwe tea in the region. This tea is exported all over the world (Local Economic Regeneration Strategy for Nkandla Local Municipality, 2005). Water is plentiful in the area and rivers are mostly full for the better part of the year. However, it remains a challenge for households to draw water for domestic use owing to a lack of proper water and sanitation systems. People have to walk long distances in search of fresh water. Springs are a safe and reliable source of water, compared to the nearest rivers, which are infested with crocodiles and other lethal aquatic animals. The people also share rivers used for the purpose of consumption with livestock. The status quo remains in spite of the formation of the local municipality and the demarcation of wards in the year 2000. Research respondents said that they were hoping for improvements in the infrastructure as part of falling under the jurisdiction of a municipality.

Nkandla and its sections have a concurrent leadership system between the municipality and the traditional leadership. Trust farms, on the other hand, do not have a chief, but have local leaders and a municipal councillor. eQhudeneni, the unit of analysis herein is a trust farm. One of the participants said that the place was named after a mountain, which resembles *iqhude* (a cock). A local official claimed that eQhudeneni was established by people relocated from various places, such as Newcastle and Dundee. According to the municipal demarcations, eQhudeneni is located in municipal ward number eight.

This ward is further dissected into traditional *izigodi* (subsections). There are thirteen *izigodi*<sup>2</sup> under the eQhudeneni section, viz. eJabavu, Masangomnyama, Ntshiza, eZimpisini, kwaNgqulu, eSijibeni, eKombe, eMathengeni, Green City, Mzimhlophe, Gonzaca, Nsingabantu and

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<sup>2</sup> Izigodi is plural for isigodi.

Mjonisini. Participating households in the OHOG campaign are situated in Nsingabantu and Mjonisini. Each *isigodi* (subsection) has its *induna*<sup>3</sup>. Households in eQhudeni within these sections are widely scattered amongst the hills, (See figure 2).



**Figure 2:** A household on the hilly terrain at eQhudeni.

Most of the houses in the area are constructed with mud and sticks and the roofs are either made out of rusted and worn out iron sheets or are thatched. Households are remote from the local transport routes. Access to public transport routes poses a challenge. Locals have to walk long distances on a gravel road to the nearest taxi stop. For them to make it in time for the two taxis available a day, they have to wake at the break of dawn. These minibus taxis get them to KwaBaloyi (a central local minibus taxi rank that serves eQhudeni and the surroundings) where they can catch another minibus either to Nkandla, Nquthu or Dolwane. These are surrounding economic nodes. If a resident misses the minibus, they place themselves at the mercy of

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<sup>3</sup>Induna is a local authority reporting to a local traditional leader.

passing motorists for a lift to KwaBaloyi, Nkandla or Nquthu, depending on the destination of the vehicle. If all else fails, they have to take a two-hour walk to KwaBaloyi.

### **1.3. THE COMMUNITY OF NSINGABANTU AND MJONISINI**

#### **Poverty**

Poverty is rife in Nsingabantu and Mjonisini and people are engulfed by hunger. In most of the households, not a single person is employed. This is no different from other rural parts of South Africa where families are dependent on the Child Support Grant (CSG), Old Age Grant or Sick Grant for food and other household commodities (Cairns and Taylor, 2001). These are grants provided by the government as means of mitigating poverty. In this area, as is common among traditional Zulu people, it is not uncommon to find families living with extended family members. Given the high unemployment rate in the area; the grants run out long before the next monthly payout. This makes it impossible for the family to meet its required dietary needs. The process of accessing food within households is chiefly facilitated by the availability of financial resources. Running out of financial resources exposes households to hunger. Thus, other facets of life such as health and education are affected as a consequence.

Poverty in this area has also resulted in some children not going to school. Parents who are not employed find it a challenge to fulfil school requirements such as the payment of fees and the purchase of school uniforms for their children. This is due to the fact that there are no employment opportunities in the area. These circumstances pose a negative impact on children. It is for this reason that children who are of school going age do not attend school. Those who do attend school do so on empty stomachs and are faced with the daunting challenge of conquering the long distance to and from the nearest schools on a daily basis. This has resulted in a high level of school dropouts, which contributes to the already high illiteracy levels in the area. However, being illiterate and poor has not changed certain core social identity aspects of the community. For instance, crime levels are far lower than in townships, and here ancestral worship is still the predominant form of religion.



### **Ancestral ceremonies: occasion of food consumption and social identity**

Ancestral ceremonies are ceremonies performed for the ancestors by the living. Ancestors are those family members who have passed on. In ancestral ceremonies, the *impepho*<sup>4</sup> is burnt before a goat is slaughtered. These ceremonies are important because, whilst they fulfil ritual needs, they are also events where community members come together to share food. An assortment of foods and drinks are served to everyone, in very liberal quantities. In many of these ceremonies, neighbours bring more food from their own homes as a contribution to the hosting family. The point is that these traditional ceremonies require the very resources that are in short supply, i.e. money and food. On the other hand, they seem important for social cohesion and as occasions of communal food consumption.

Planning for a function is costly, therefore the hosts of the ceremony need to save up money prior to the function and other family members pool money together. This money is taken from the little each family member has, either from social grants or other sources, such as migrant workers. The timing of most ceremonies is after month end, which means that a significant portion of the income is consumed in one shot, so to speak. Food that could be stretched for a whole month between a few members of the family lasts much less time whilst the rest of the month is characterized by starvation. It is against this background that the religious practices contribute to food insecurity. On the other hand, no community deserves to be deprived of ceremonial activity due to poverty.

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<sup>4</sup> Impepho is a dried, fragrant plant used to invoke communication with the ancestors.

## Gardens

The Premier of KwaZulu-Natal Dr Zweli Mkhize launched the OHOG campaign on the 18<sup>th</sup> July<sup>5</sup> 2009 at eQhudeni, (Earth Highlights newsletter 2009, p1). The campaign upholds Section 27 (1) (b)<sup>6</sup> of the Constitution. It is also a critical instrument through which the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of 'eradicating extreme poverty and hunger' (United Nations Development Programme) is being met. It is resuscitating the indigenous means of food production whilst at the same time it also reduces the burden on the state of people who are dependent upon it. There was however training that needed to be offered to participants for this specific project to ensure that certain standard methods and proven scientific techniques were used.

### Coping strategies and gardens

With the implementation of social grants, households found relief in terms of ensuring access to available food. These grants vary depending on people's requirements and government criteria for qualification. At eQhudeni, the CSG is the most prominent and it usually sustains the entire family. One of the respondents mentioned that the grant is meant for children but ends up not benefiting the intended recipient. Research participants disclosed that even social grants fall short and do not meet all their households' needs. This is particularly so because unemployed extended family members are also dependent on the household.

In the households where there are senior women, they have opted for subsistence farming to complement the social grants (Cairns and Taylor 2001, p5). This has always been the case since subsistence farming had always been practiced before the emergence of the grants. Their gardening practice is based on their indigenous knowledge and the extent of involvement and success varies widely amongst the households, with some having shunned the practice

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<sup>5</sup> 18<sup>th</sup> July is the former President Nelson Mandela's birthday. This day is called a Mandela Day; when everyone is asked to do something good for another person.

<sup>6</sup> Everyone has the right to access to food and water.

completely. One of the reasons that some people shifted away from it is due to the fact that it is labour intensive. The youth, in particular, abandoned gardening with the implementation of social grants since some think of gardening as being below their dignity. They (the youth) are ignoring the fact that the gardens have been able to support families and that the surplus produce has been distributed to those who do not have enough to eat, which perpetuated the spirit of *ubuntu*<sup>7</sup>. An opportunity to learn farming for possible economic benefits is thus lost by the very segment of the community that needs it the most, and which could afford the labour.

### **Description of the campaign**

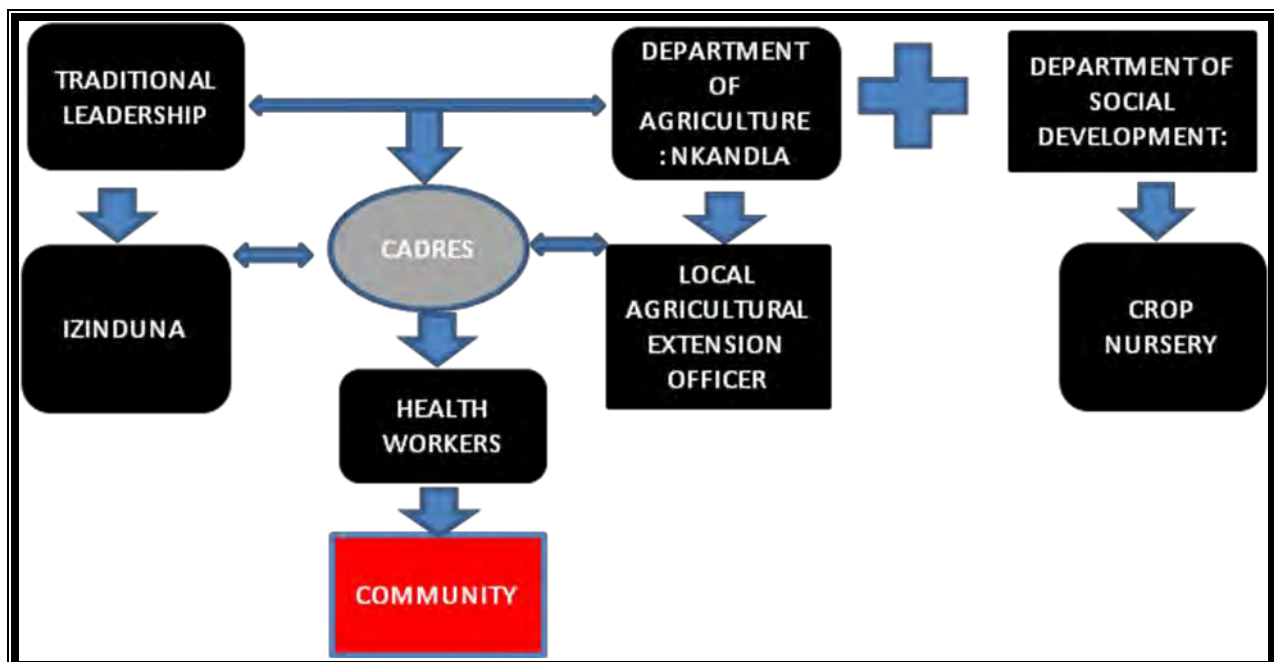
The Department of Agriculture, Environmental Affairs and Rural Development (DAEARD) of Nkandla is the overseer and provides extension support as part of its contribution towards fulfilling its mandate. The Department of Social Development (DSD) implemented the flagship project: the crop nursery. The nursery was meant to provide crops for the campaign participants, so they would not have to buy them. The purpose of this initiative was to ensure the continuity of the campaign.

Continuity of the campaign guarantees the fulfilment of its objectives, which are to fight poverty and food insecurity at a household level. In choosing households to take part in the campaign, the government criteria included the unemployed, child-headed households, physically challenged people who cannot be employed, the elderly and sick people (KwaZulu-Natal provincial government Food Security Model for 2009).

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<sup>7</sup> A person is a person because of others. In this context the hungry would not be left to die by not providing food for him or her.

The Food Security Model states that every chosen household has to have a garden to ensure that people have access to food. Cadres<sup>8</sup> were responsible for recruiting households to participate in the campaign and several government departments have committed themselves to ensuring its success (**See figure 3**). These cadres decided that ten households would be part of the campaign. Three households were chosen from Mjonisini and seven from Nsingabantu. An official from the DAEARD said that as a way of continuing the campaign more households (families) are to be chosen to be part of the campaign in future.



**Figure 3:** Existing community structures at eQhudeneni that work together to make the OHOG operational.

During the implementation phase, participants were given elementary gardening tools, fencing wire, and poles to prevent livestock from gaining access to gardens, by the DAEARD. Fencing the gardens was the first priority. Lyne and Hendricks (2009, p37) state, “lack of fencing is a serious threat to production”. Most of the livestock in the area is widely scattered, as there are

<sup>8</sup> Cadres are volunteers from the community. They work together with government departments to convey the concerns of communities. Each *isigodi* (it is a section in isiZulu language) has its own cadre.

no designated grazing fields. The livestock ends up grazing from the gardens where people have their plantations. An agricultural extension official stated that a three-day training course was provided for the participants before embarking on the gardens. To kick-start the campaign, crops were rolled out to participants the night preceding the launch of the campaign the next day. Participants were subsequently given seeds to continue. From the seeds they make seed beds, from which they get crops. However, participants said that when they ran out of seeds, their gardens do not produce, since these crops do not reproduce. One of the participants claimed that they have never received any crops from the nursery. An official confirmed that the crop nursery was unsuccessful.

### **Background to Nsingabantu and Mjonisini community life**

The forced removal of people under apartheid laws forced people into poverty due to their being removed from areas where they have access to services (Group Areas Act of 1950 Act No. 41 of 1950). The community of eQhudeneni found it a challenge to access services. If people wanted a better life for their families men had to migrate to big cities, such as Durban or Johannesburg. This had a detrimental effect by tearing the family fabric apart. Some men would end up being taken up by the city life and forget about their families in the rural areas. The family would be exposed to poverty as a result. This situation, combined with the legacy of apartheid still prevails at Nkandla. At eQhudeneni women head most of the households. Women have the responsibility of rearing children. This is the main reason that illiteracy is so rife amongst women. Four of the female research participants said that they do not know how to read and write because they had never been to school.

Lack of skills as a result of illiteracy means that most women are unemployed. Some have resorted to alcohol. It has become acceptable within the community of eQhudeneni for women to publicly consume alcohol. Most of them are unemployed and are dependent on the social grants for their survival; for them to support their habit they buy alcohol with the grant. This pushes households further into food insecurity. They justify their consumption of alcohol as a way of escaping the realities of poverty and a way of reliving boredom. The rolling out of social

grants has had both positive and negative effects. Social grants have weakened social behaviour amongst women.

It is worth noting that the community of eQhudeni has never been agrarian; but it has relied heavily on land for food production. One could say that the social grants have contributed to the shift from agricultural practices. This shift, coupled with the small amount of the grant (two hundred and fifty Rand) has resulted in households being exposed to chronic food insecurity.

#### **1.4. THE STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS**

Chapter one presents the study and main arguments contained in the thesis, including the objectives, and the study area where the campaign is implemented. It also examines the community's social activities for analytical purposes. It concludes with the structure of the thesis. This chapter of the thesis informs the reader as to what to expect in the thesis as a whole.

Chapter Two reviews literature relating to the study. It begins by making pertinent definitions and makes a case for the study to be conducted and what knowledge gap it is supposed to fill. It also examines the outlining factors that contribute to food insecurity. This chapter depicts the progress that has been made with regard to food security both internationally and nationally. Chapter Three discusses the methodology that was applied during the data collection process.

Chapter Four discusses poverty at eQhudeni. This chapter critically argues that no single definition will fit all the contexts. It further argues that poverty is determined by the people who live in it. Acceptable social and economical indicators are not cast in stone when it comes to poverty. The chapter concludes by appreciating that poverty is unique. Lastly, it examines steps taken by Government to curb food insecurity.

Chapter Five discusses home gardens as a strategy for maintaining livelihoods. It shows how home gardens have sustained the lives of people and raises the question of genetically modified foods.

Chapter Six draws conclusions from the study.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0. INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter serves as a background for the study by introducing the concepts that inform the study. Food security, poverty and food insecurity are such concepts. The literature on these concepts will be explored to show the ways in which food insecurity has been tackled with the aim of attaining food security.

Food security, according to the World Food Summit in 1996 is a:

Situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for active healthy life.

The food security status within households and for individuals is disturbed by poverty. Poverty implies an inability on the part of households and communities to achieve socially acceptable living standards, (The Draft Concept Framework towards Poverty Eradication in the Eastern Cape, 2009). This phenomenon impacts on the livelihood of households, individuals and communities being able to meet the requirements of the food security concept. Unfavourable economical status, factors such as culture and ethnicity, have a bearing on individuals' access to food within households, as will be discussed below. Each of these factors has the effect of minimising access to food. Consistent minimal access informs the notion of food insecurity among households, individuals and communities. It is against this background that the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA) provides the framework for this study. The SLA is an offshoot of the Sustainable Development Theory, which emphasises the sustainability of the environment. The SLA is crafted for poor communities. It has been defined as having simultaneous access to capital, which informs the approach



## **2.1. FOOD INSECURITY AND POVERTY**

Food insecurity is a phenomenon that comprises a lack of access to available food and an unsustainable food supply, which has been exacerbated by poverty. Contrary to this, food security is defined as meeting all the required dietary micronutrients to enable a person to lead a healthy lifestyle, (FAO, 2006). The effects of food insecurity vary from household to household, individual to individual, and community to community (Lentz and Barret 2009, p1). An unstable economy, especially one with high unemployment rates, affects the food security status of a household.

Lack or loss of employment results in a household facing food insecurity (Sen 1981, p147). High rates of unemployment in the area and within the households at eQhudeneni have reduced access to food. The minimal access they have to food means that food items are generally of low quality due to their limited food budget. Apart from the unfavourable economical factor, cultural diversity negatively impacts on household access to food through food distribution patterns.

Cultural dictates have an impact on food insecurity within traditional households (Lentz and Barret 2009, p3). During the food distribution process variables, such as age and gender, constitute criteria, to a large extent, on which food distribution is based within a household. Observations from eQhudeneni during their ceremonies were that males were the first to be given food and were given the exclusive parts of the ox, such as the liver and ox kidney. This is despite the fact that such portions have a high nutrition value and are specifically recommended for women who ovulate every month so as to prevent anaemia, and for children for the prevention of stunted growth (Iannelli, 2009). Women and children, however, were the last to be given food. Culture, in this instance, has limited access to food for excluded groups within households and it has exposed them to food insecurity. Skewed distribution patterns of food are not the only factors that contribute to food insecurity.

Ethnicity is amongst the factors that regulate the food items consumed within any particular ethnic group. It has transpired through research that access to food is entrenched within a

complicated nexus of cultural, social, and economic and [ethnicity] terrain, (Ngagah, 2009). Ethnic groups determine their food groups. Certain food types consumed within an ethnic group may not have all the required nutrients for a healthy lifestyle and perhaps not fit the definition of food security. Food preferences are a reflection of people's indigenouness. Households in a specific ethnic group are subject to food insecurity if their group has eliminated certain food groups from their diet. Elimination of these food groups could expose them to food insecurity if they are essential to the full development and functioning of the body.

It is worth noting that the elimination of certain food groups could be due to geographical location, (Ramphela and Wilson 1989, p34), as some areas are not suitable for certain crops. Geographical location impacts on people's diet, through either the limited choices available, or no choices at all. Once a food group has been habitually eliminated, it is more likely that people will forget all about it. It then gets labelled as a food group that is not ethnically consumed based on fallacious reasons.

At the community of eQhudeneni, the primary cause of food insecurity, however, is lack of household income. Sen (1981, p4) states that, "a person's ability to avoid starvation will depend both on his ownership and on the exchange entitlement mapping [wage] that he faces". If the people of eQhudeneni had a fair opportunity to employment, starvation would not be part of their lifestyle.

Sen (1981) suggests that the lack of an exchange entitlement has an effect on an individual's ability to acquire food. A slight change in the exchange entitlements result in a general decline in food supply (Sen 1981, p4). At eQhudeneni, this is the case, as most of the individuals are not employed; and this has posed a dilemma in trying to avoid starvation by accessing available food. This makes it difficult for them to meet their dietary needs.

Availability of food in this context denotes tangible food items at a person's disposal for consumption purposes. Lentz and Barret, (2009, p7) state that, "food is plentiful at the global level". This statement is contrary to what is happening on the ground. People suffer food

insecurity due to lack of access to available food within their households. In South Africa, 14 million people are affected by food insecurity (Dladla 1997, p4). In KwaZulu-Natal 1, 3 million people are food insecure (Mkhize 2009, p1 cited in Earth Highlights 2009). The availability of food is threatened by external factors, such as climate change (floods, droughts, etc), which they find it a challenge to recover from (Chambers 1989, p1) cited in Lentz and Berret (2009, 7). These factors minimise the chances for households and individuals to access food.

Food availability in the shops in the vicinity of unemployed individuals, does not translate into food security, (Williams, undated). The economic downturn impacts negatively on the possibility of accessing food in shops. Unemployment plunges individuals into starvation, (Sen 1981, p47). In eQhudeneni, there are no shops, but there are home-based enterprises which serve the locals. But the locals are finding it a challenge to support their local enterprises due to being unemployed. The availability of food is of no use because individuals lack purchasing power. Food that is available at the shops does not qualify the definition of food insecurity.

To escape the effects of food insecurity some individuals may opt to migrate in order to escape the impact of poverty (Sharma 1992, p6). Takada (2006, p11) states that, “poverty not food availability is the major driver of food insecurity”. Numerous authors have viewed food insecurity as a by-product of poverty. Research has shown that poverty is a threat to food security, (Lentz and Berret 2009, p22). Having said this, the World Bank has put forward what has been accepted as an absolute definition of poverty, ‘living under one dollar a day’ (Frye, 2005). This definition assumes that with one dollar a day, one can acquire food for immediate consumption. It is worth noting that this definition is not an umbrella definition that fits all contexts. This definition however, continues to exclude those who do not operate in a money economy. For example, money is not as valued in a rural setting as it is in an urban one. Poverty in the rural setting is defined by deprivation in terms of not having a herd of cattle, goats and other livestock, including ownership of land. This measure of poverty would not hold water in an urban area. This shows that poverty is defined by the location in which it occurs.

The Draft Conceptual Framework towards Poverty Eradication in the Eastern Cape (2009) defines poverty:

As an inability of individuals, households and communities to command sufficient resources to satisfy a socially acceptable minimum standard of living. It is more than merely income insufficiently. It includes lack of opportunities, lack of access to assets as well as social exclusion.

This is the operational definition for this study. Poverty levels are measured by various means, which vary from context to context. Measuring poverty and defining it according to a specific context crafts the concept to fit the context better, (Kehler 2000, p40). Sen (1981, p9) in narrowing the definition by the World Bank defines the poor as those whose “consumption standards fall short of the norms, or whose incomes lie below that line [poverty line]”. Sen emphasises consumption levels to capacitate the establishment and determination of poverty levels. This definition seems to be restricted to an individual’s consumption levels. Individual and households’ consumption patterns are different. This definition based on consumption level is unilateral and economically based; hence does not fit this context of eQhudeneni.

Further, it ignores the fact that poverty is only measured according to economical standards, but is categorized to absolute and relative terms, having taken into consideration other factors, (Sen 1981, p17). Absolute poverty is when there is nothing at all within a household or community at large. Some of the households at eQhudeneni are experiencing absolute poverty; their houses are filled with old and broken appliances which serve as ornaments in their ‘lounge’ areas. On the other hand, relative poverty is when there are features of poverty such as periodical hunger. Regardless of how poverty is categorised, Ramphele and Wilson (1989, p15) argue that, “poverty is not one-dimensional, [but] it has many faces.” This denotes that poverty is a conundrum of negative factors. Witbooi (33, p23) cited in Ramphele and Wilson (1989, p14) illustrates why Sen’s definition of consumption levels falls short of the norms by stating that poverty:

Is not knowing where your next meal is going to come from and always wondering when is the council going to put your furniture out and always praying that your husband must not lose his job. To me that is poverty.

Witbooi illustrates that living under the state of poverty is being uncertain about what might emerge in the future. Being poor is to live on the margins and at risk of being eroded by vigorous social forces, which have power over you.

In conformity, May (2010) refers to poverty as amidst plenty. This means that poverty has multiple factors that converge and form poverty. Lack of or no income, unemployment, illiteracy, and ill health with no immediate medical attention are all factors that inform poverty. Consistent insufficient income within a household to meet its necessities denotes poverty. Lack of skills and capabilities due to illiteracy is another aspect of poverty. Illiteracy breeds individuals who do not have skills and who are not economically viable. In return, this situation creates dependency on the government. In eQhudeni, most of the households are recipients of government social grants.

The interweaving of all these poverty indicators culminates in dependency and social exclusion (May et al. 2000, p21) cited Kehler (2000, p39). Social exclusion leads people to experience poverty differently, due to different coping strategies or lack thereof. It remains true, however, that being poor is to live in terms of a specific deprivation of a need that would potentially provide a better lifestyle (Sen 1981, p15). The community of eQhudeni is living in poverty due to the fact that a considerable number of young individuals are illiterate, unskilled and unemployed. The state of poverty in the area has caused young women to continually procreate out of wedlock so as to be able to access the CSG. Considering the factors that have been mentioned regarding poverty, the community of eQhudeni is trapped in the vicious cycle of poverty.

Poverty is theoretically and practically not static (Baulch and Hoddinott, 2000 cited in Maxted and Zegeye, 2009, p9). Changes in the environment either by relocation or natural disaster

bring change to the phenomenon practically. If the locals resided closer to the public transport routes, they would have easier access to social services which are essential for their well being (Dasgupta and Wealer, 1992, p119 cited in Kehler 2000, p39). Secondly, changes in the cultural dimensions have the impact of either increasing or decreasing poverty. Change of culture means the adoption of new trends which normally come at a cost; a cost which households are unlikely to afford, making them fall into the deep trenches of poverty which are rooted in their community.

The state of poverty is dynamic. Some households and individuals move out of poverty whilst others move into poverty, (Castro 2002, p1). Unforeseen changes in employment status or an individual who has been employed under harsh conditions and occupies a low-paying job, who then loses that job, leads to poverty. Sen (1989, p45) notes that, “the fall of endowment exposes people to poverty”. On the other hand, people who have been poor and unemployed who find employment, experience an improvement in their living conditions. The permeable membrane of poverty allows for osmosis, where people move in and out of poverty, regardless of the end results. This point emphasizes the fact that poverty is not static.

It is, however, worth noting that the state of deprivation disturbs the equilibrium of the household's access to food. It denies households and the individual a contented lifestyle and the right to food. The above discussion illustrates that the conglomeration of numerous factors determines the food insecurity status within each household, individuals and the community at large. On the other hand, at face value food security is a concept that means food is readily available for consumption regardless of its quality and access to it.

## 2.2. FOOD SECURITY

There is no absolute definition of food security. The concept is embedded within the ambit of the environment, the quality of food and eating patterns, etc (Pemberton, undated). The concept of food security has evolved over time. In 1974, the World Food Summit saw food security as assuring the availability and price stability of basic foodstuff. In 1983, the FAO defined the concept as ensuring that all people at all times have both physical and economic access to the basic food that they need. In 1986, the World Bank focused on temporal dynamics of food security. In 1996, the World Food Summit noted the multidimensional nature of food security and that it includes food access, availability, food use and stability, (IPCI, 2006). For the purposes of this study, the operational definition provided by the World Food Summit in 1996 is adopted.

Studies indicate that access to food is embraced within the notion of physical and economical capability. Access in the long-term view, considers the sustainable future supply of food (Sharma 1992, p2). The notion of access to food is arguably subject to external circumstances. Economic variations are external factors, which have a direct impact on each household's attempting to access food (Williams, undated). High unemployment rates cripple purchasing power of households. Mhazo et al. (2003, p23) note that, "employment is the main mechanism through which the majority of the population gains access to food". In households where no one is employed, especially in eQhudeneni, they depend on the government grant. The government grant has, however, been seen by its recipients to be insufficient for a household to be able to purchase food. This is against the background that a considerable amount of a household's income goes towards the buying of food (Purchase 2010, p13). Insufficient income denies people the chance to have physical access to food.

Physical access to food is the ability to reach food (Sharma 1992, p2). Access to food is determined by external factors, such as unemployment, also physical access to food is determined by factors such as the walking distance to the nearest shop within the context of eQhudeneni. Sharma (1992, p2) outlines other broad possible factors that might disturb physical

access to food, such as war, civil strife, poor infrastructure, and inadequate logistics for food distribution and market imperfections. As eQhudeneni is located in a remote area far from transport routes with poor infrastructure, it poses a challenge for the locals to have physical access to food. As a solution, there are the home-based enterprises such as *spazas*<sup>9</sup> that are not properly supplied with stock due to area's difficult terrain and remoteness (Sharma 1992, p2).

Geography also has an effect on maintaining sustainable access to food (Richelle 2009, p7). Lentz and Barret (2009, p5) describe hunger as "physical discomfort caused by lack of food". Despite ample food availability, many households do not have access to food due to unfavourable economic terms such as being unemployed, etc (Sen, 1981; Maxwell, 1996; May, 1998; Schmidt, 2005). Food availability refers to the quantity of suitable quality food available from various levels of production, i.e. domestically or commercially, (FAO, 2007). USAID (1992, p2) however acknowledges that there are constraints to food availability such as inadequate agricultural knowledge, inadequate agricultural inputs and disease constraints. At eQhudeneni there is periodic non-availability of food that is orchestrated by the above-mentioned constraints. Regardless of these constraints in the access to food, the government of South Africa has taken upon their shoulders to address these challenges by incorporating potential solutions within the scope of national policies.

### **2.3. POLICY CONTEXT**

In South Africa, after 1994, a policy of food security was implemented and it aimed at fighting the effects of poverty and food insecurity. The issue of food security in South Africa is embedded in the Food Security Policy of 1997. This policy is an offshoot of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) of 1994 and it has embraced international objectives by pledging its commitment to The World Summit Plan of Action in 1996. It is also upholding the

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<sup>9</sup> A Spaza is a home-based enterprise which sells bread, milk and other basic foodstuff to local households.



Southern African Development Community (SADC) provisions in an attempt to fight food insecurity.

The objectives of this policy are to curb the effects of apartheid and are congruent with the country's Constitution Section 27 (1) (b). The Food Security Policy identified food security as a basic need that should be met. According to the objectives of the policy, food security is achieved by ensuring accessibility, availability and the utilisation of food required for leading a healthy lifestyle.

The objectives of the food security policy, under the RDP, continued with the adoption of the Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy (GEAR). There has been an emphasis on stabilising the economy, thus the creation of employment opportunities with the view to improve food security (Dladla 1997, p3). Research has proven that employment enables access to food. Bonti-Ankomah (2001, p4) argues, "For those who are employed, wages tend to be low to sustain them and their families". The quality of the job determines the food security status of a household.

It is why the Agriculture White Paper 1995 focused on embracing those who were previously excluded by apartheid discriminatory laws. Most of the populace that was excluded live in the rural areas where they are stricken by poverty, and most of them are women-headed households (Bonti-Ankomah 2001, p4 and Dladla 1997, p5). The policy acknowledges hindrances in ensuring food security for the target group. The challenges are linked to an inability to match incomes and prices to ensure access to food for everyone and enabling consumers to make food choices for optimal health and nutrition (Dladla 1997, p8). Low incomes are exacerbated by the vast inequalities in South Africa. The Southern African Regional Poverty Network 2004 Report notes that between the years 1996 to 2001 "[t]he poverty gap has grown faster than the economy, indicating that poor households have not shared the benefits of economic growth". This trend continues to put people in poverty.

As part of the continued struggle to fight food insecurity and poverty, the Department of Agriculture launched the IFSS in 2002. The purpose of the IFSS is to ensure sustainability of food supply and fight food insecurity at a household level. The IFSS' objectives are to:

- (a) Increase household food production and trading,
- (b) Improve income generation and creation of job opportunities,
- (c) Increase safety nets and emergency management systems, and
- (d) Improve nutrition and food safety.

[www.sarpn.org.za/documents/d0000497/P444\\_IFSS.pdf](http://www.sarpn.org.za/documents/d0000497/P444_IFSS.pdf) [16/06/10]

It is under the auspice of the IFSS that initiatives such as Xoshindlala (Chase Away Hunger) in KwaZulu-Natal was launched in 1998 and implemented in 1999. A decade later Lestema, a national food security campaign, was launched and implemented. This umbrella body includes themed campaigns such Kgora in the North West, Sekhukhune in Limpopo, Masibuyele Emasimini (let us turn our hands back to tilling the land) in Mpumalanga, and Xhariep in the Free State, ([www.info.gov.za](http://www.info.gov.za)). Siyazondla in the Eastern Cape was formed in 2008 and the OHOG campaign in KwaZulu-Natal was formed in 2009. This is not part of Lestema (this is discussed in Chapter 4). As part of development by the government and a call to fight food insecurity, the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP) was launched in 2009. It is operating under the Medium Term Strategic Framework of 2009-2014. The prime objective is to halve poverty and unemployment by 2014 (CRDP document 2009, p4). The CRDP places strong emphasis on rural development and rural communities that are prone to poverty and effects thereof.

Rural communities, in trying to address their situation, Dladla (1997, p6) acknowledges that, "poor households combine their resources in a variety of ways to enable them to meet a minimum level of living". In pursuit of achieving a better lifestyle, households are capable of

utilising resources at their disposal. These are used in trying to improve their situation and have a sustainable effect on their lifestyle.

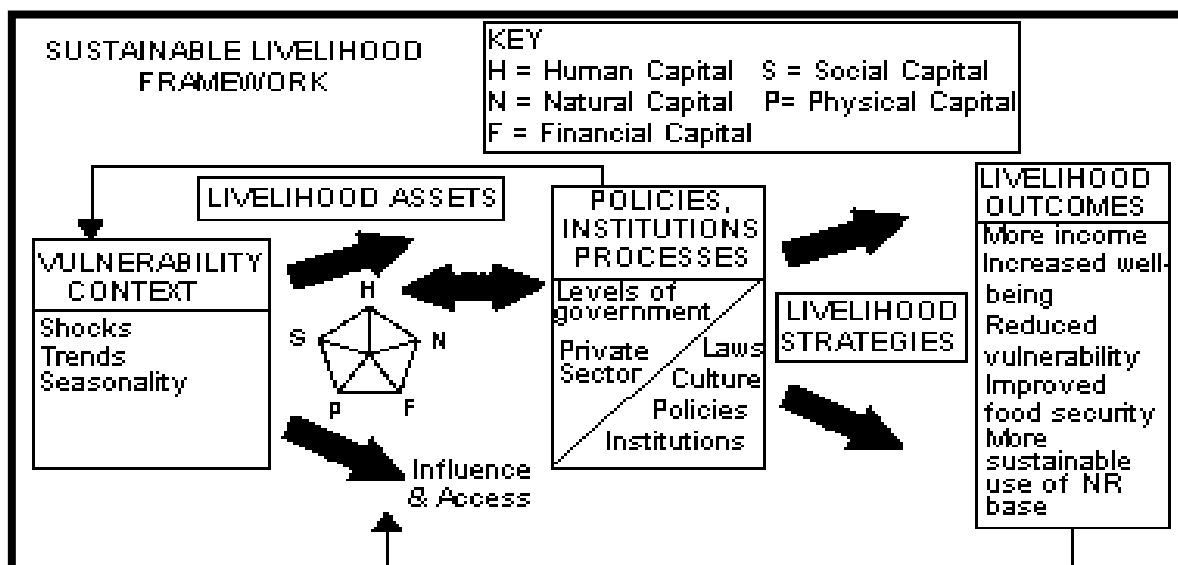
#### **2.4. SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS AND FOOD SECURITY**

The practice of ensuring sustainable livelihoods is referred to as the Sustainable Livelihood Approach (SLA). The SLA is conglomeration of units such as people, their capabilities and their means of living, including food, income and assets (Chambers and Conway 1991, p1 and Simelane 2010, p8). For sustainable livelihoods to be achieved, these units ought to work in unison, with the end result being sustainability.

This approach stems from the Sustainable Development Theory. Sustainable development places emphasis on the sustenance of the environment to ensure sustained lives in the future. This theory highlights the importance of caring for the environment to enable the present generation to meet their needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs (Warbuton 1998, p3). SLA is the framework on which this study is based. This approach allows for a better understanding of poor communities and the intricacies that inform their livelihoods.

The SLA is characterized as being people-centred. It places focus on people. The SLA seeks to help people support themselves, both now and into the future (Castro 2002, p1). Chambers and Conway (1991, p2) note that sustainable livelihoods must have five kinds of capital for it to be sustainable. These are human capital, natural capital, financial capital, social capital, and physical capital (Chambers and Conway 1991, p2).

Capital denotes an element that contributes to the achievement of livelihood sustainability (See **Figure 4**). A sustainable livelihood is achieved when households and individuals have equal access to the combination of each type of capital, so as to acquire adequate food (Mhazo, 2003, p23). Each type of capital does not exist in isolation but is interwoven with the aim of achieving wholesome results. There are five types of capital that constitute the SLA, viz. human capital, natural capital, financial capital, social capital and physical capital.



**Figure 4: Sustainable Livelihood Framework**

**Source:** Department of International Development, *Sustainable Livelihoods Guidance Sheets*

Human capital constitutes skills and other personal development opportunities. A considerable number of households at eQhudeneni are occupied by people who have not been exposed to such opportunities. Due to the impoverished state of the area there is a propensity towards a scarcity of skills. These realities are impediments to their capability to sustain their livelihoods (Chambers and Conway 1991, p2). The status quo is a fertile ground for exposing people to vulnerability and shocks (natural disasters), with subsequent food insecurity if they are not able to recover from these kinds of shocks.

Land at eQhudeneni is a natural capital capable of helping people to recover from shocks and stresses. The area is known for its suitable soil for agriculture. Research has, however, ascertained that households and individuals have shifted away from homestead farming practices as a means to sustain their livelihoods. This shift is circumstantial. Firstly, there are few financial resources to purchase seeds for gardens, due to unemployment. Secondly, there is dependency on the government social grants. Depending on land as an option for food has been sidelined.

The shift from practicing agriculture has an effect on the social capital in the area. Social capital is informed by relations, trust and reciprocity, to mention but a few (Chambers and Conway 1991, p2). Reciprocity instils the spirit of *ubuntu*. The shift from agriculture and the heavy reliance on social grants makes it difficult for one person to look after the next person due to the monetary value attached to items. Social networks and structures are disturbed. At eQhudeneni the culture of reciprocity is slowly diminishing.

Lack of access to financial capital poses a challenge (Chambers and Conway 1991, p2). Financial capital are the resources that contribute to people's lives in an effort to sustain their livelihoods, such as credit, savings, insurance, and welfare payments. At eQhudeneni, households and individuals lack insurance, credit and savings due to being unemployed. This creates vulnerability on the part of the household and individual. This situation is rooted in apartheid policies, which sought to segregate, and which excluded those in the rural areas from financial resources. The scars of this inheritance have disfigured the community of eQhudeneni. It also makes it difficult for this community to have sustainable incomes because they do not make investments. This opens them to food insecurity.

Lack of participation in the local economy means that physical capital in the area is non-existent. Physical capital denotes human-made material resources (Chambers and Conway 1991, p3). eQhudeneni is characterised by a lack of infrastructure, especially tarred roads. Gravel roads pose a challenge to service delivery to the community. There is a culture of depending on purchased food, but the poor transport system means that food is only delivered sporadically

(Richelle, 2009). During days where it is a challenge, in fact almost impossible, to reach the people, even if households had the money to purchase food they would still be exposed to food insecurity.

Given the definition of the sustainable livelihoods, and the status of eQhudeneni, the factors indicate that sustaining the livelihoods within these communities is still a challenge, taking into consideration all converging factors that impact negatively on the kinds of capital that could otherwise be considered helpful in ensuring sustainability in their livelihoods. Households and individuals do not have simultaneous access to capital and that affects their food security status. Davies (1996, p15) cited in Chadwick (undated) provides a detailed understanding of the dynamics of the livelihoods in relation to food. These fit within the context of eQhudeneni:

- (a) **Livelihood systems and security:** encompass a broader range of factors than household food systems and security to explain how and why producers pursue particular mixes of strategies to confront food insecurity.
- (b) **Entitlements:** to explain different sources of food and the range of calls on them within households and livelihood systems.
- (c) **Vulnerability:** to explain the nature and intensity of food and livelihood insecurity.
- (d) **Resilience and sensitivity:** useful in analysing changes in levels and intensity of vulnerability to food insecurity within different livelihood systems.
- (e) **Livelihood system diversity:** to account for variation in the nature and intensity of vulnerability, depending on the different ways in which people acquire access to food.

Out of the five dynamics of livelihoods, for the purposes of this study two dynamics: (b) and (c) have been chosen to be operational. These dynamics depict factors that contribute towards food insecurity, thus prevent the sustainability of these livelihoods. In terms of entitlements, if a household or individual lack entitlements they are likely to be exposed to food insecurity. Entitlements could be exchanged for another commodity, in this instance food (Sen 1981:47). Lack of entitlements for exchange creates vulnerability in relation to food security within a household and in individuals. The intensity of this vulnerability depends on entitlement

availability or non-availability. An entitlement such as a wage is a reliable source of ensuring food security within a household and of the individual (Bonti-Ankomah 2001, p4). The SLA is able to ensure food security, if households and individuals have adequate access to all kinds of capital simultaneously. This access would also contribute to the strengthening of their capabilities, i.e. to do things for themselves (Chambers and Conway, 1991). By strengthening the capabilities of people, the SLA is proving that it is people-centred. By being people centred the SLA does not do things for people but it advocates for people to participate in their own development.

Participation, as matter of fact, is one of the principles of community development. Participation capacitates people to be involved in their own development (Freire, 1970). It facilitates the relationship between people and their development programme. Spiegel (1970) cited in the Ohio State University Fact Sheet (undated) notes that, “[...] participation is the process that can meaningfully tie programs to people”. In other words, participation creates a bond between people and their development. It is through this bond that people assimilate skills, which could contribute to bettering their livelihoods.

### **Participation as empowerment tool**

Participation in this instance serves as a source of knowledge for those who have participated in an effort to eliminate social ills (Christensen and Robinson 1980 cited in the Ohio State University Fact Sheet, undated). Heberlein (1976) cited in the Ohio State University Fact Sheet, (undated), notes that, “public involvement results in better decisions”. Involvement of the people in the planning and implementation of any developmental programme lubricates the process for the better articulation of people’s needs. Participation is a sign of belonging; consequently it provides for social identity and boosts the self-esteem of the citizen (Dresbach, 1992; Passewitz, 1991). Participants take ownership of their development by their involvement. Their involvement engraves the notion of people-centred development.

### **People Centred Development as a fundamental community development principle**

People-centred development is a bottom up approach, which involves people. Korten (1990, p2) notes that, “people are real social actors of positive change.” This means that people are responsible for their development. The emphasis is on people taking the initiative to change their status quo, using available resources and assets (Korten, 1990, p1). When people have been involved in their development, it brings about self-reliance. Self-reliance is a proven method of achieving independence through skills or knowledge that has been acquired (Fonjong and Fonchingong 2002, p1).

In applying these two principles in the situation of eQhudeni, participation is required so that the community can be self-reliant and independent. In this community participation could enhance independence and ensure sustainable livelihoods.

## **2.5. CONCLUSION**

This chapter defines and contextualises the concept of food insecurity, poverty and food security. Reference has been made to the literature on the subject of food insecurity, poverty and food security. The contextualisation of these concepts is crafted in a manner that fits the context of eQhudeni. The state of food insecurity affects households and individuals.

Food insecurity is defined as the lack of access to food, no food availability, and instability of the food supply. The literature shows that rural areas are most affected by this phenomenon. Lack of access to food in rural areas is determined by economic and cultural factors, geographical location and ethnicity. The economic factor of unemployment leads to food insecurity. Culture and ethnicity influence food insecurity, based on the values and principles of that culture and ethnic group. Geography contributes to food insecurity. The remoteness of the area impacts negatively on access to food.



Food insecurity is commonly related to poverty, mainly as a result of unemployment. Poverty contributes to food insecurity within a household or of an individual. Lack of income, or a low income, exacerbates food insecurity. Positive changes in the economy have the potential to address food insecurity within households and of individuals. Studies show that most of the income within households goes towards the purchase of food. The reliable income which households have access to is the government social grant. The grant runs out during the course of the month, and food insecurity occurs.

This study is based on the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach. Human, natural, physical, social and financial capital is at the core of the SLA. For a household or an individual to be deemed as having sustainable livelihoods they ought to have simultaneous access to these kinds of capital. Indicators from the community of eQhudeneni are that there are no sustainable livelihoods. Their access to these kinds of capital is either scarce or non-existent. For communities to change their status quo, the principles of participation and people-centered development have to be upheld.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0. PRELIMINARY VISIT**

Before the actual data collection process for the main study; a preliminary study was undertaken in April 2010. At that time the 'One Home One Garden' campaign was eight months in existence. The aim and purpose of the visit was to see if gardens do exist where they were said to exist and to find out the actual number of households participating in the campaign. It was established that there were ten households included in the campaign. Households participating in this research are at Nsingabantu and Mjonisini, which are subsections of eQhudeneni. At Mjonisini there are three households with gardens and at Nsingabantu there are seven. One of the households in Nsingabantu has two gardens due to its big family size; this brings the number of gardens to eleven.

The other intention of the exercise was to establish a relationship with community members and local authorities to facilitate future visits and establish trust; secondly it was introduce the study to be conducted in the community. Prior to this, arrangements had been made via the Department of Agriculture working with the Local Agricultural Extension Officer. The Local Agricultural Officer took the researcher around whilst introducing her to campaign participants. On her departure the researcher made a request to come again and collect data. A new appointment was set up for the data collection process depending on proposal approval from the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

### 3.1. DATA COLLECTION

#### Interview process

In July 2010 a full data collection process was undertaken over a period of a week. The campaign was eleven months in existence. The intention of staying for a while at the research site was to get as much information as possible through interviews, observation and through a participant observation exercise, i.e. working with participants in their gardens (**See figure 5**).



**Figure 5:** Participant and the researcher during data collection

Skewed gender involvement in the gardening process makes women dominant in the study, with only three men interviewed. Prior to the participants responding to the questions, it was made known to them that the exercise is voluntary. The consent form was read out to them and they signed to give consent to participate in the study. The researcher kept the signed

consent forms and duplicate copies were left with participants. Out of the eleven campaign participants, there is one aged female, one physically challenged male and one physically challenged woman. All are actively involved in their gardens.

The interviews were done on a one-on-one basis. The interview guise was used to gain extra information from participants. The interview process was conducted in the isiZulu language. The questions were written in English but were translated by the researcher into isiZulu during the interview process. The questions were translated one by one throughout the interview process. Guarding against causing any potential embarrassment amongst participants for being illiterate; the researcher took notes while the participant was responding to the question being asked. The interview guide for campaign participants had eleven questions. The questions were open-ended; this was to extract as much information as possible. The questions corresponded directly with the objectives of the study and care was taken to ensure that participants answered the main question. Participants often gave additional information. This assisted in creating a clearer picture of why the gardens were introduced and weighing up if they have lived up to the expectation of the intended recipients. The duration of the interviews varied, but roughly they would take thirty minutes each.

The interview guide for *izibonda* had five questions. The aim of interview with the *izibonda* were to find out if the campaign had been necessary in the area; this was also to measure the government's response in relation to people's needs and the sense of urgency in responding to them. The questions were designed to ascertain how they, as local authorities, view the campaign and also find out if it has any positive impact according to their views with regard to meeting the objectives of the campaign. It was discovered that the *isibonda* feels that the gardens have a positive impact in terms of ensuring the food security of the households which were chosen; and they did alleviate poverty. The *isibonda* however felt that if more houses could be made part of the campaign the effect and impact of food insecurity could be lessened. The interview with the *isibonda* lasted approximately 25 minutes.

### **Willingness to participate**

Research participants from the research site were willing to participate in the study. It was noted that they are not yet research repellent. They initially thought that they were going to gain something for partaking. At first they did not understand the mission of the research, despite prior explanation given by the Agricultural Extension Officer upon the introduction of the researcher to the community that the study was to contribute to knowledge creation at the University. Once they understood the mission of the study they dismissed their thoughts of gaining something. When the researcher approached a household with a garden; neighbours would come around hoping also to be asked questions. People wanted to participate when they thought that by participating there were incentives to be gained. It was also explained to them that the interviews were for those who have gardens in their households under the OHOG campaign.

### **Accessibility to research participants**

The people of eQhudeneni were easily accessible. The researcher would make an appointment the day before so as to ensure their availability for the next day. Appointments were usually in the morning; people usually run their errands during the course of the day. When the researcher arrived in the morning, people would be waiting. Even *izibonda* were easy to get hold of.

## **3.2. CHALLENGES FACED DURING DATA COLLECTION**

eQhudeneni has a mountainous topography. Some of the households are located on top of the mountains and they are far from transport routes; this made it difficult for the researcher to reach some of the households. Nonetheless a way was made to get to those households. The difficult access to people has led them to think that this is the reason for the lack of government services. Households with gardens are dispersed all over the area, resulting in a long walk to reach households. Some of the households had dogs that were keen on biting anyone suspected to be trespassing. When the researcher had finally gained access to a

household, household members would be sitting around a wood fire, as it was during the winter. The researcher would go inside a homestead filled with smoke. The researcher would be sneezing and coughing throughout the interview process. Her eyes welled up with tears because of the smoke inside the house. The interview process would therefore take more time than had been budgeted for.

### **3.3. CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, the preliminary visit ascertained that the gardens were in existence. A relationship between community members and the researcher was established to prepare for the data collection process. Research participants were willing to participate in the study and they gave more information than asked for in the interview guide. The interviews were conducted in the isiZulu language. There were, however, challenges in accessing the households due to the mountainous topography; hence difficult access to some of the households. As a result, people in these areas are under the impression that the reason why government services do not reach them is due to their location. Some of the people believe that the topography of eQhudeneni has crafted poverty for the area.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **POVERTY AT EQHUDENI**

#### **4.0. INTRODUCTION**

The aim of this chapter is to outline poverty, poverty indicators and the impact of poverty at eQhudeni, looking specifically at Mjonisini and Nsingabantu which are subsections of eQhudeni. The eQhudeni community is mantled by the different factors of the conundrum of poverty, which continue to unfold as economic challenges trickle down to the social arena. As discussed in Chapter Two, studies have shown that poverty is a broad concept with multiple meanings and it manifests itself in different forms. To illustrate this Ramphele and Wilson (1989, p14) compare poverty to illness. Illness manifests itself in different ways and requires treatment. Poverty, like illness, has different causes and indicators. Economical and social factors establish and validate if there is poverty in the area. Poverty factors are predominantly linked to the current economic situation. An unfavourable economic situation negatively impacts on jobs; hence households and individuals suffering from food insecurity.

#### **4.1. OBSERVATIONS AND PERCEPTIONS OF POVERTY FROM eQHUDENI**

##### **4.1.1. Unemployment**

###### **(a) Social grants**

Unemployment is arguably a root cause of poverty and other social ills; but they actually work in tandem. Insufficient income undermines the ability to have sufficient resources to satisfy a socially acceptable minimum standard of living (Sen 1981, p47; May 2000, p5, cited in Kehler 2000, p39). EQhudeni has a significant number of households with unemployed family members. Unemployment has led to households being dependent on social grants. Social grants range from the old age pension, to the sick pension, to the Child Support Grant (CSG). May (2010, p10) points out that “social grants make an important and direct contribution towards the reduction of poverty”. This statement does not hold water for most of the

households as they are still living under poverty. Most of the households at eQhudeneni rely on the CSG. Despite the CSG, households still live in poverty, thus creating food insecurity.

In many households, the CSG is the sole source of income. The CSG ends up not benefiting the intended beneficiary, but the rest of the household. Nomalanga Masango\*<sup>10</sup>, from Nsingabantu said: “*angisebenzi, imali engiyitholayo eyeqolo lezingane zami ezimbili. Iyona imali engithenga ngayo ukudla nezidingwana zalayikhaya*” (I am not employed; the only money I get is the child support grant for my two children. It is that money I use to purchase food and other household commodities). Looking from Masango’s situation, children are likely to experience stunted growth as a result of the lack of nutritious food in their diet and scarce availability. The CSG cannot sustain the livelihoods of a household, especially where there are extended family members who are unemployed and dependent on the grant. The livelihoods of a household are not sustainable due to a lack of access to other useful capital such as financial and natural capital, which could enhance their livelihoods. This state of affairs contradicts May (2010, p10) and Agüero, Carter et al. (2009, cited in May 2010) who claim that:

The child support grant has been shown to produce substantial reductions in stunting of young children and this is likely to produce, in turn, substantial increases in those children’s productivity and wages once they grow.

Children who are the intended beneficiaries do not benefit. The direct opposite of what has been stated by May and Agüero, Carter et al. takes place. Observations from Nsingabantu as reflected through the case of Masango are not unique to that household, but are an overriding theme and the *modus-operandi* of the households under the campaign. This does not mean that social grants are dysfunctional, but it creates a strong argument for the fact that poverty ought to be contextualised and it should not be assumed that it could be responded to using one method alone.

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<sup>10</sup> \* Names have been changed.



At eQhudeneni social grants have only touched poverty, because it is still engrained in the society. Lack of access to different capital to enhance their livelihoods is poverty related and it disturbs the social equilibrium and continues to downgrade the quality of lives. It shall be noted that poverty creates undesirable, inhumane living conditions within households. It also indirectly moulds relationships (such as cohabiting of young girls with older men) within households in a manner, which would not have happened, had poverty not been a catalyst.

**(b) Conditions indicating general poverty**

Poverty has resulted in overriding unemployment, which means that people cannot refurbish their households' buildings. This is linked to a lack of exchange entitlements, which they could have access to, had they have been employed (Sen 1981, p3). Exchange of entitlements denotes money that could have been used in exchange to gain commodities that could be utilised to gain and maintain a healthy lifestyle, thus sustaining livelihoods. In the case of eQhudeneni lack of financial exchange entitlements, such as wages, means they cannot renovate their buildings.

A significant number of households at eQhudeneni have dilapidated buildings; this is not limited to those participating in the study, but a general representation of most of the houses in the area (**See figure 6**). As a way of life in the area there is heavy reliance on wood as fuel to prepare food and keep warm especially during the winter season. The continuous use of wood fire scotches walls, and the thatch or zinc roof.



**Figure 6:** One of the delapidated houses at Mjonisini captured during data collection

Apart from that, poverty has contributed to the trend of cohabiting in the area. According to observations and inquiry; cohabitation, especially amongst young women is exacerbated by the effects of poverty; specifically hunger. The practice of cohabiting is prevalent amongst women who are unemployed. The young women are cohabiting with men who are older than them. Predominantly women who are cohabiting are from the households which are living in absolute poverty where there is nothing to sustain the livelihoods and poor access to food. It is for this reason that they see older men as their salvation to their problem of hunger. Phumzile Mkhize\* of Mjonisini is 21 years of age and lives with Mr Kubheka\* who is physically challenged. He works as a traditional healer specialising in children and also as an untrained motor mechanic. His businesses are not vibrant. His daughter is expecting and is a high school dropout. She is the same age as Mkhize, the 'wife'. It was ascertained from Mkhize that the reason why she

lives with Kubheka whom she had known for three weeks is: “*Njengoba ngihlala la angisalali ngingadlile. Uma ukudla kungekho, ubaba<sup>11</sup> uyasizamele ukudla ukuze silale sidlile. Ekhaya kithi siphila ngokucela komakhelwane. Ngelokho ingakho kungcono ukuhlala la*” (As I live here my days of going to bed on an empty stomach are gone. When there is no food, *baba* fends for the family so we can eat. At home where I come from, we live by asking from our neighbours. So it is better to live here). Poverty and unemployment are a fertile ground for such practices amongst women.

As a result, cohabiting relationships perpetuate illiteracy amongst women. Once a woman has given herself up to cohabit with a man, she eventually gives up school and takes up a role of being a wife. Illiteracy amongst women increases the chances of them not entering the job market, and jobs are already scarce in the area. SALDRU, (1995) cited in Thwala (2003, p1) shows that unemployment amongst women is thirty five percent compared to that of men, which is 25 percent in South Africa. With the age gap between women and their ‘husbands’, women are vulnerable to abuse from their partners whom they are dependent on. It is difficult for them to leave such relationships and it continues to exclude women from accessing education.

### **(c) The relationship between lack of education and patriarchy**

For women to be able to change their status quo, education and skills ought to be part of the equation. Taylor and Cairns (2001, p3) note that at Nkandla there are high levels of illiteracy. Literacy as part of education and skills serve as a tool to facilitate initiatives to change the status quo, (Kehler 2000, p3). In general, education and skills increase the chances for women to be employable. At eQhudeneni it could have the same effect. It also bridges the gap of

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<sup>11</sup> In this context ‘*baba*’ denotes a husband figure. In IsiZulu a husband is called ‘*ubaba*’ by his wife. It is a sign of respect and arguably taking a submissive role as a wife.

inequality between women and men. Inequality is crafted and engraved on the non-availability of access to commodities by women.

At eQhudeni lack of access by women to commodities is hindered by responsibilities, which they have been entrusted with, such as the rearing of children and the food supply within their households. Most of their male counterparts are either urban, migrant workers or not employed; yet they make crucial household decisions based on their being head of the household. Most of the households in the area have a broken family structure, and are headed by a woman.

The entire day-to-day economic survival falls on the shoulders of a woman who is illiterate and unemployed. Being illiterate and unemployed promulgates powerlessness amongst women. The poor status of women is entrenched in illiteracy, dependency, inequality and powerlessness. Some of these factors pose a challenge for households headed by women to fend for themselves. The above-mentioned factors also expose the household to hazardous factors, which may negatively impact on their well-being. Lack of basic services in the area compounds the problem of poverty. This is discussed below.

#### **(d) Lack of basic services and poverty**

A poor sewerage system within a household causes and perpetuates outbreak of diseases (Ramphela 1989, p131). At eQhudeni, the households of Mjoniseni and Nsingabantu do not have a piped water system. This means that they do not have flushing toilets. The sanitary facility in the area is the pit latrine system. This system does not require water as the faeces sink into the ground. But when it rains and water pours through the dilapidated roof of the pit latrine and there is an overflow. When the rain has stopped the contents of a pit latrine sometimes spill over to the surface. The contents of a pit latrine increase the chances of food contamination, resulting in the outbreak of disease, due to children playing with those contents.

Apart from the pit latrines, in the yards of households there is general untidiness and children in particular are exposed to unhygienic conditions. Given this situation, most of the children in the area have mucus and chronic influenza. Within the households there are no designated places to discard rubbish.

At eQhudeneni community dumping sites still remain a challenge. In the yards of the households, there are old vehicles, which are no longer in working condition and other scrap metals. These vehicles and scrap metals pose a danger to children. Children play inside them with their broken windows and sharp rusted protruding metals. These vehicles also have the potential to house dangerous reptiles such as snakes. These cars are a symbol of status to their owners; that they once owned a motor vehicle. Another symbol of status are empty bottles of alcohol, especially whiskies, displayed as ornaments in their 'lounge' areas. On the other hand, empties of alcohol indicate the prominence of alcoholism.

#### **4.1.2 ALCOHOLISM AS ONE OF THE RESULTANT SOCIAL ILLS**

Alcoholism is the voluntary action of embarking on consumption of alcohol and consequently positions one in 'exclusion'. The poor tend to look for means to escape poverty via short cuts. The short cut referred to here is alcohol. Alcohol has become the route to escape of poverty amongst people. People who consume alcohol think that its effect could help them escape the realities of their lives and perhaps solve their problems. Ndaba (2009, p9) notes in Ramphela and Wilson (1981, p160) that "alcohol has a numbing and care-diminishing effect which makes life more tolerable for those who have to struggle daily for the bare necessities of living".

The acute alcohol consumption in the area can be explained in two ways: firstly, people consume alcohol with the hope of escaping the reality of poverty. Lastly, they consume alcohol out of pleasure and for relief from boredom. Given that people are not employed, and that the culture of working in the gardens is slowly diminishing to extinction especially amongst the youth, they are likely to be suffering from boredom. Msizi Mpanza\* said that, "*Njengoba umuntu engaqashiwe, uma ungekho emsebenzi engadini uyake ahambe ayobheka ukuthi akukho angakuthola emzini yabantu okuwutshwala, noma abazigayele bona. Lokhu kuwuku*

*qeda isizungu nosizi*" (As one is not employed, if there not much to be done in the garden I visit the neighbours in search of alcohol, even home made. This fights boredom and the realities of poverty). Ramphela and Wilson (1989, p160) affirm that, "boredom hangs like a dark cloud". This sort of thinking cements poverty within communities.

At eQhudeneni there is a combination of unemployed people and excessive drinking habits. This combination has the potential of perpetuating human suffering. The people of eQhudeneni have surrendered themselves to alcohol. This type of behaviour further pushes people into poverty. The further people are pushed into poverty by alcoholism, the more remote they become from accessing resources and services, which could better their lives. There is a vicious cycle between poverty and the social ills it causes. It is possible for one to draw a correlation between alcoholism and apartheid. On the other hand, apartheid was a coercive power that removed people from accessing services. Yet both ensure further poverty by blocking access to services and resources.

#### **4.1.3 THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION STRATEGIES**

Numerous initiatives such Xoshindlala, Lestema, Asibuyele Emasimin, etc have shown that it is difficult for people to escape poverty. The government has introduced different interventions to fight and mitigate poverty especially in the rural areas. In an effort to fight food insecurity, Xoshindlala (Chase Away Hunger), a food security and poverty alleviation campaign, was launched in 1998 and implemented in 1999 in KwaZulu-Natal. A decade later Lestema a national food security campaign was launched and implemented. This umbrella body encapsulates themed campaigns such Kgora in the North West, Sekhukhune in Limpopo, Masibuyele Emasimini in Mpumalanga and Xhariep in the Free State ([www.info.gov.za](http://www.info.gov.za)). Siyazondla in the Eastern Cape was formed in 2008 and the OHOG campaign in KwaZulu-Natal was formed in 2009 and is not part of Lestema. The Siyazondla in the Eastern Cape and Siyavuna (we are reaping) in KwaZulu-Natal are a response to the resolution taken at the World Food Day in 2006 in Pietermaritzburg to invest in agriculture for food security (Integrated Food Security and Nutrition Programme (IFSNP) 2006, p1).

## 4.2 PROJECT TYPES

### Xoshindlala

Xoshindlala was a multi-faceted project that was launched by the Department of Agriculture provincially in collaboration with external funding due to constraints from the government's side, (Vision 2020 for the Province of KwaZulu-Natal). One of its primary projects was to address food insecurity in the province via community gardens (Singh 1998, p1). It was a KwaZulu-Natal project. The project collapsed in 2001. One of the reasons that seemed to have contributed to its collapse was that it did not have a specific focus on which it invested effort with the hopes of returns on investment, (**See Table 1**). The Xoshindlala had various developmental initiatives, which contributed to the fight against poverty. Community gardening was one such initiative. The aim was to fight food insecurities at a household level through community gardens (Singh 1998, p1). The projects identified in the 1999/2000-budget year and in varying stages of implementation include the following:

Animal production (ruminants) Dairies
Animal production (non-ruminants) Broilers Piggeries
Awareness campaign
Cookery/Baking
Capacity Building
Entrepreneur development
Deciduous fruit
Demonstrations

Field crops
Handcraft
Infrastructure
Integrated Planning
Irrigation
Larger Irrigation Schemes
Liming
Nursery
Marketing
Sewing
Soil conservation
Veld and pasture
Vegetable production
Youth Agricultural Projects

**Table 1:** Types of projects

[http://agriculture.kzntl.gov.za/publications/books/xoshindlala\\_book/xoshindlala\\_vision\\_2020.htm](http://agriculture.kzntl.gov.za/publications/books/xoshindlala_book/xoshindlala_vision_2020.htm)

From what has transpired with regard to the evolution of home gardening, the government launches campaign after campaign, having not established if the campaign is benefiting the intended recipients. Pressly (2010, p1) asserts, “the government appears to be battling to come to terms with poverty”. This could emanate from the overlapping of campaigns and lack of checks and balances on the progress of each campaign. Secondly, the shortage of funds and



the inclusion of external funding, which may propound their own ideas, could lead to failure of the campaigns. Xoshindlala is not an exception to this.

Community gardens have been defined as entities that allow communities to be self-supporting in respect of vegetables, which are sold in informal markets, as a livelihood strategy, (Vision 2020 for the province of KwaZulu-Natal). Since gardens are one of the other projects in the Xoshindlala, they may have been unsuccessful due to theft and unfair distribution of produce amongst members since there was no oversight on the project. Members' pulling out from the project could have led to a reduction in labour. Reduced labour could result in the few remaining behind also leaving the project, thus leading to the closure thereof.

Another negative impact, which could have weakened the support structure within the government in the Xoshindlala, is impatience amongst the structures. The National Council of Provinces (NCOP) (2001, p85) states that:

The Xoshindlala project, which has been introduced by the minister, has not in fact addressed the general problems that we have thus far. It has been dealing with gardening and sewing and we feel that it has not risen to the occasion.

A salient issue, which might have aggravated the NCOP, could be the discerned perpetuation of uneven development, which matches that of apartheid. In the light of Xoshindlala and its scope, given a two-year cycle, which it has revolved around; the statement undermines the project. The project ought to be judged on its progress at least over a minimum of five years (IDP 2009/2010, p10).

On the other hand continued injection of funds into projects might have contributed to the failure of Xoshindlala. Convergence and concentration of funds into different areas might have perpetuated uneven development. It is possible that Xoshindlala projects failed because of the collaboration with external funding bodies that are not as apprehensive of upholding the Constitution as the government is. It could have ended because its time had lapsed. If that is the case the project did not meet one of its objectives which is to boost household food security.

The Lestema in 2008 was an attempt to achieve household food security. The Lestema has been launched in nine provinces.

### **Lestema**

The World Food Day that was held in Pietermaritzburg in 2006 (IFSNP 2000, p1) was the background for the decision to expand the Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS) to all nine provinces. It is stated in the IFSNP document that, “the goals of this initiative was to contribute directly towards food security and it is in line with the strategic goal of reducing food insecurity.” Subsequent to that, in July 2008, during the Agricultural Food Summit it “emphasised the need to adopt the concept of food production projects in order to address food insecurity at a household level”. Lestema’s was proposed as a socio-economic growth strategy to assist people towards their own development, (Taunyane 2009, p1). Lestema galvanized people to take an initiative in ensuring their food security. Siyazondla as part of subsistence farming has improved the income of households and contributed towards food availability.

### **Siyazondla**

Subsistence farming, apart from being viewed as an income-generating instrument, also has a significant impact on diversifying diet (Quinn et al., undated). Diversification of diet places a household in the position of being considered as food secure. The eagerness of the Eastern Cape Provincial government for households to be food secure through supply and access led to the formation of the Siyazondla campaign during the existence of Lestema. There is an overlap between Lestema and Siyazondla. The Agriculture and Rural Development Services Delivery Programme runs this campaign, ([www.agr.ecprov.gov.za](http://www.agr.ecprov.gov.za)). The department is working directly with the people to provide technical support. The support is for people who are under the campaign according to the criteria that were used.

The criteria used were for people who are unemployed breadwinners; Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) infected and affected families, households with a low-income

base, child-headed households and physically challenged people ([www.agr.ecprov.gov.za](http://www.agr.ecprov.gov.za)). The selection process was facilitated by the local agriculture office from databases and other Departments, such as Social Development, Health, Education and the Department of Agriculture ([www.agr.ecprov.gov.za](http://www.agr.ecprov.gov.za)). Prior to the initiation phase production starter packs and garden tools were provided ([www.agr.ecprov.gov.za](http://www.agr.ecprov.gov.za)).

It is not clear if training was provided to guarantee sustainability of the campaign. It is possible that the department assumed that, given that the project was within a rural setting, people would tap on their indigenous knowledge of tilling the land. The campaign seems to be homing in on households, compared to the Lestema campaigns, which have been more of a blanket solution and not been specific to vulnerable groups as the Siyazondla. The Siyazondla aims at addressing each household as an entity. This campaign gives the impression of being a definite tool of ensuring food security (availability) within households in the Eastern Cape Province. As part of the government priority of ensuring food security, the Provincial government of KwaZulu-Natal in 2009, launched the OHOG campaign, which is different from the Xoshindlala and Lestema, but it shares characteristics with Siyazondla.

#### **4.3. CONCLUSION**

Unemployment is arguably a root cause of poverty and other social ills. Lack of income undermines the ability to have sufficient resources to satisfy a socially acceptable minimum standard of living. Based on observation, the CSG at eQhudeni is benefiting the recipients and other members of the household. The CSG is the only source of income in most of the households at eQhudeni. The income from the CSG does not meet all the households' requirements, including food. Unemployment has forced people to live in dilapidated buildings.

As the result of poverty, there is a trend for young women to live in cohabiting relationships with older men as a way of escaping poverty. Cohabiting relationships are perpetuating the culture of illiteracy amongst young women. Young women when they are cohabiting with older

men give up and take up the role of being fulltime 'wives'. That is how illiteracy, especially amongst women, is perpetuated. Alcoholism is also an indicator of poverty in the area. Those who are unemployed and miserable find refuge in alcohol. It is a short cut to escape the realities of poverty. This being the case at eQhudeneni, it is worth noting that the government has put in place programmes that have been aimed at alleviating poverty. Home gardens have been considered as a measure to fight poverty at a household level, thus improving livelihoods.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### HOME GARDENS AS A STRATEGY FOR LIVELIHOODS

#### 5.0. INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims to show how home gardens have been a strategy for livelihoods for households at eQhudeneni; under the food security and poverty alleviation campaigns, which have been launched by the KZN Provincial government. Food security studies and initiatives such as Xoshindlala, Lestema etc have shown that home gardens are a strategy for livelihoods that involves certain capabilities. Livelihoods denote assets and capabilities which people employ in order to enhance their lives. Osmani (2003) cited in Simelane (2010, p9) describes capabilities as the ability of people to lead the kind of life they desire. In other words, capabilities are elements, which are assembled in order to reach a desirable lifestyle. May (2000) cited in Simelane (2010, p9) goes a step further to enumerate capabilities which ought to be at hand to reach the desired outcome of a better a life, namely, human capabilities, natural resources, social and institutional assets and human-made assets. Out of these four capabilities, there seems to be a strong emphasis on the human capabilities.

Human capabilities are contributory factors, which holistically contribute towards achieving a desired lifestyle. Within this context under the ambit of livelihoods, assets signify land. Land is a backbone of any community even if it is not an agrarian community. Soil fertility and good climate at eQhudeneni have the potential for agriculture. Yet despite this, Nkandla still falls prey to food insecurities (Bonti-Ankomah 2001, p2 and Jacobs *et al* 2009, p348). The Earth Highlights Newsletter 2009 points out that, “eQhudeneni was identified as the hardest hit by poverty and hunger”. As an attempt to uphold the Constitution<sup>12</sup>, different food security and poverty

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<sup>12</sup> Section 27 (1) (b) Everyone has the right to have access to sufficient food and water; and

alleviation campaigns have been launched in different provinces. At eQhudeneni a food security and poverty alleviation campaign was launched.

For the launch of the campaign, identified households, selected according to criteria, were initially given food parcels; later they were given seeds and pesticides. Seeds given by the DAEARD were proven to germinate more quickly compared to natural seeds, which people have been utilising. This raises the question of the seeds being genetically engineered.

### **5.1. ASSOCIATION BETWEEN POVERTY AND HOME GARDENS**

Food security studies on homestead gardening perceive home gardens as an instrument with which poverty can be alleviated and the livelihoods of households and individuals can be improved (Von Braun, 2007 cited in Lyne and Hendriks 2009, p1). Home gardens at eQhudeneni were implemented as a responsive measure to poverty, thus food insecurities. Poverty at eQhudeneni is characterised by unemployment, lack of food and poor health with no immediate medical care. The high rate of unemployment exposes people to food insecurities (Ramphela and Wilson 1989, p45). It is against this background that the food security and poverty alleviation campaign was launched in the area. It is therefore possible to deduce and draw a correlation between poverty and food insecurity.

Lack of employment and dependency on social grants puts people at the margins of being food insecure. Due to the high level of unemployment at eQhudeneni households have an income of less than one thousand rand a month (Cairns and Taylor 2001, p3). This economic status has the potential to deprive the household of a contented lifestyle and physical development of their bodies. For the body to reach its optimum performance and growth there should be adequate access to food. Gardens are not helping the situation because the produce is not always readily available. Social grant payouts are another source of food income poverty alleviation measure, and it takes a long time before the next payout. In the interim, households lack access to food, thus plunging them into food insecurity (Sen 1981, p43). Also the grants do not satiate the households' needs such as paying school fees for children or refurbishment of

the households' buildings , which are in a dilapidated state. The reason being that all the money is directed towards purchasing of food.

The scarce income which households have access to does not see them through to the end of the month. This is contrary to what Jacobs et al. (2009, p345) and Pressly (2010, p20) say about the social grant having played a crucial role in reducing poverty within households. It is contrary to the objectives and aim of the OHOG to fight poverty and food insecurity at a household level. This status quo at eQhudeneni is linked with a dependency on the social grants and with the shift from agricultural practices. At eQhudeneni access to social grants has contributed to the indolence of people to work in the gardens to sustain their livelihoods. Households at eQhudeneni are reliant on social grants for their survival. One of households from Nsingabantu under the OHOG has two gardens because of its large family size. Within that household there are fifteen family members who are not employed. The family's source of income is from four child support grants. Each child receives a grant of two hundred and fifty every month up until a child reaches the age of 18 ([www.blacksash.org.za](http://www.blacksash.org.za)). This puts the monthly household income at one thousand rand.

With this minimal income, trying to stretch it to meet all the food requirements till the end of the month, the households would purchase an eighty-kilogram economical brand of mealie meal, tinned foodstuff, no meat and no vegetables. It is here then the home garden would make a slight difference if there is produce; but that is not the case with the gardens. The idea behind purchasing the big size of the mealie meal is that with it one can cook *phuthu*<sup>13</sup>, soft porridge in the morning and *isigwaqane*<sup>14</sup>. The mealie meal is considered to be the staple food in their diet. Even if one does not have *isishebo*<sup>15</sup> they eat *phuthu* without anything, for them it is about filling up their stomachs with no considerations for nutritional value. The tinned

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<sup>13</sup> Phuthu is mealie meal put in boiling water and stirred up until it is stiff. It is usually eaten with gravy.

<sup>14</sup> Isigwaqane is a mixture of beans and uphuthu.

<sup>15</sup> Isishebo is either a curry or stew eaten with uphuthu or rice.

foodstuff purchased upon receipt of the CSG is meant for *isishebo* and does not last up to end of the month. This is due to the low quantity of the items bought in trying to save up for other commodities and school fees.

Another factor, which contributes to low quantity and quality of food purchased is the transport cost from their homes to either Nkandla or Nquthu. Sixty rand return is the cost of transport to the nearest towns. Nomvula Cebekhulu\* said: *“Izingadi sezisizile ukuthi kube khona isishebo uma sesiphelile lesi esisithengile futhi nendlala ziyayiqeda uma kuvume kahle ukudla; khona akujwayelekile.”* (Gardens have helped us a lot to have food when we have run out of the *isishebo*. They also fight hunger if there has been a fair harvest, it is rare, however, that we get a fair harvest).

Observations from the households involved in the campaign reflected that there is chronic food insecurity due to vulnerability to high food prices which people are unable to meet given their poor financial status, (Jacobs et al. 2009, p351). The food insecurity has been defined by the FAO as the “people who are unable to meet their minimum food requirements over a sustained period of poverty, lack of assets and inadequate access to productive or financial resources”. Given the status quo of the income falling short within households, home gardens are their salvation to fight hunger and food insecurity. It is worth noting that in some households, food insecurities have been curbed with the implementation of the campaign. But some of the households still experience food insecurity. Food insecurity varies in the degrees of its effects and impacts on the lives of people (Jacobs et al. 2009, p351).



As much as food insecurity exists within households, it was noted that household members are no longer as active as they use to be in the past according to one of the respondents in Mjonisini, and that this fact has resulted in a low yielding harvest. This has been, arguably influenced by the rolling out of social grants especially the CSG. One of families that were involved in the campaign abandoned (**See Figure 7**) their garden. The neighbours say that it is because the recipient was a girl child, who did not have enough experience on taking care of the garden.



**Figure 7: Abandoned garden at Mjonisini**

Another contributory factor is that some women are no longer working in the garden because of the old age and ill health. This is viewed in the light of agricultural practice being labour intensive. Elderly women predominantly head households in the area, and their time for working in the garden have passed. It is generally a woman's duty to provide the household with food. This has been a cultural division of labour. Five female respondents confirmed that they work in their gardens. The youth in these households view gardening as something for the elders. Their thinking is moulded by the knowledge of the availability of social grants, which a significant number are recipients. Pressly (2010:20) notes that, "black women suffer from a higher poverty rate now than they did nine years ago". At eQhudeneni there are predominantly black women and subjected to poverty and food insecurities.

According to the respondents some of the households at eQhudeneni have been involved in indigenous gardening practices on a subsistence scale. They make claims that it is a livelihood strategy and it fights food insecurity, thus fighting poverty.

The manner in which poverty has been depicted at eQhudeneni does not conform with the definition provided by the World Bank of a poor person as one who lives on less than one dollar a day. The local leader once mentioned that for them to have enough food in the household is enough than having money in the pocket; it is against this background that poverty at eQhudeneni has not been ascertained and measured using monetary value. At eQhudeneni poverty has been defined according to availability of food in the gardens and rearing of livestock. The gardening practices have been a strategy for livelihoods in the sense that, when people have reaped and if there is any surplus then they sell the produce. Money obtained from such activity would be used for other household commodities. The strategy of home gardening has been a safety net for poor people who cannot afford to till their land but at eQhudeneni is not a reliable source of acquiring food.

## **5.2. THE OHOG CAMPAIGN**

The OHOG campaign is aimed at addressing food insecurities and poverty within households in KwaZulu-Natal (Johnson 2009, p1). During the initiation phase, food parcels were handed out, seeds and fertilisers followed thereafter (Mthembu 2009, p1). The campaign aims at easing the level of dependency of people on the government. Utilising existing natural resources would enable people to meet their basic needs, thus easing the burden on the government. The assumption has been that being involved in the production of their own food directly would fight hunger within their household. In response to this assumption, people who were selected to be involved in the campaign, for them gardens are more of a kitchen garden because they provide meals and just improve the supply of food within a household. This translates into them working in gardens (Mchunu cited in Staden 2009, p3).

Mchunu (in Staden 2009, p2) estimate the cost of seeds required for the gardens in US dollars. This raises the question of seeds being imported from the United States of America, and therefore being genetically engineered. The company Monsanto of the US are 'leaders in growth of global harvest from seed technology to harvested crops ([www.monsanto.co.za](http://www.monsanto.co.za))'. The effects of the produce from these seeds on the body have not been established. The researcher observed that the spinach in the gardens of the people who are participating in the campaign is very light green compared to the usual dark leafy spinach. Even the campaign participants said that this spinach is different from the dark leafy one they are used to and that it even tastes bitter. The participants also mentioned that these seeds don't reproduce like the ones they are used to. Once they have germinated into crops, there can be no crop rotation. This forces them to purchase each time they want to start a garden.

The question of these products being organic remains unanswered, the inquiry further seeks to ascertain the effect the food produced has on people who are on different medical treatment. The inquiry specifically lies in knowing what happens in the body of a human being who is on medical treatment which is chemically based and who simultaneously consumes food that is presumed to be genetically modified. This could have a detrimental effect on the human immune system, albeit not major. It shall be noted that this study is not aimed at establishing that inquiry.

Also people who are given these seeds are not sure about their compatibility with the environment. Given that these seeds might be genetically engineered, the sustainability of the environment is in question. As much as these seeds increase the yield and fast track the production of food, (Lindeque 2009, p1) they may have implications for the sustainability of the environment and the lives of the people. Panse (2010) mentions that, "no one can make any accurate predictions about the long term effects of genetically modified foodstuff on human beings and the environment".

This inquiry seeks to examine the objectives of the campaign against the background of food that is presumed to be genetically modified. The gardens are providing households with just enough food supply, but the food that is provided is not secure given the limited variety in the gardens, hence does not fit the definition of food security. It may also degrade the capability of the environment for the future; given the suspicion that the seeds are genetically modified.

The campaign is a strategy for livelihoods that has not brought any significantly positive difference within households and individuals under the campaign. Kubheka\* one of the respondents confirmed this by stating that, *“uma sivune kwaba kuningi ukudla ezingadini, siyaye sikudayise, kodwa akujwayelekile* (if we have reaped excessively from the gardens, we normally sell surplus, but that happens rarely). In ensuring that the campaign continues the Department of Agriculture is providing households with things like watering cans, manure, hose-pipes and tools used in the garden. Except for this extension support, the department is not providing any expert guidance. Regardless of the department’s efforts people still rely on their indigenous knowledge for gardening.

### **5.3. CONCLUSION**

Home gardens were implemented as a responsive measure to poverty and food insecurity. Lack of employment and dependency on social grants puts people on the margins of being food insecure. The small income which households have access to does not see them through to the end of the month. Food insecurity in the area is exacerbated by high food prices which people are unable to meet given their weakened financial status, as mentioned above. The manner in which poverty has been depicted at eQhudeneni has been defined accordingly to the context. Poverty in the area affects the food security status of the household. There are, however, sceptics regarding the issue that seeds are genetically modified. This is based on observation and people’s comments on the spinach being of a light complexion compared to the known, dark green leafy spinach. The researcher was unable to obtain answers to this question. Also the gardens are not a wholesome response to the community needs.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **CONCLUSION**

#### **6.1. WERE THE OBJECTIVES ACHIEVED?**

This study ascertained that the campaign has not yet alleviated poverty in the community of eQhudeneni. Poverty is a multifaceted phenomenon. At eQhudeneni poverty is still stagnant, given all the indicators that have been outlined in the previous chapters. People's perceptions towards the campaign are that, as much as it has been implemented, they complain that the seeds, which the department gives them, do not reproduce. If they have reaped their produce and they wish to continue their gardens then they need to purchase more seeds that reproduce in order to support crop rotation. In general they feel that the campaign has not yet met their expectations due to other facets of poverty, which remain untouched, such as unemployment and lack of services, especially medical care.

The research established that the OHOG campaign has the potential to address poverty given the strong support structure from the officials and the commitment from the people. This is in view of the fact that if participants could have allocated a market space where they can sell their produce and contribute to the local economy, thus improving the infrastructure. The purpose of the market could serve two purposes; firstly to contribute to the local economy; secondly to ensure a sustainable food supply within their households.

#### **6.2. THE CAMPAIGN AS A RESPONSIVE MEASURE TO FOOD SECURITY AT EQHUDENI**

Food security has been defined by the World Food Summit in 1996 as the:

Situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for active healthy life.

The campaign is meant to address poverty, thus food insecurity in the community of eQhudeni. It has provided food minimally though within households, which have been living with a lack of food and suffering from hunger. In between the seasons, households are exposed to hunger. Households sometimes run out of food and this reverts them back to the state of food insecurity. The importance of saving food in barns or any other form of storage has not been emphasized with a view to the future. The campaign is responsive in the short-term, rather than the long-term. The question of availability against this background does not hold water, because food is available seasonally.

Concerning access, households and individuals have found it easy to access food, given that they are involved in the production thereof. There is physical access to food. They have also had economic access, because if they have surplus produce they sell to their neighbours but that happens rarely. With the money gained from such sales, they are able to buy food commodities, such as condiments that they do not have within their households. The ability to access food via economic means has also been made easy through access to social grants especially the CSG.

Even after all avenues have been explored, households still find it a challenge to meet their food demands. As it has been discussed in chapter one, there is still a strong culture of communities living with extended family members. Because of this situation, the household food supply is always marginal given that these extended family members are not employed. In situations like these, the campaign has not been responsive to the needs of the people of eQhudeni.

This study has also questioned the seeds, which are supplied to people, apropos their being genetically modified. It further questions the compatibility of these seeds with the environment. The combination of these factors leave the questions regarding any nutrition in the food consumed from these seeds unanswered and do not provide answers on the impact that these seeds have on the environment, with the long term view of sustainability.

Having outlined all the above, it is possible to deem the community of eQhudeneni as suffering from chronic food insecurity which Braun (1992, p6) defines as follows:

As persistently inadequate diet caused by the continually inability of households to have access to food either through market or through production and high and further highlights that food insecurity is deep rooted in poverty.

At eQhudeneni there is persistent poverty that is also caused by the area's mountainous terrain. Community members believe that this is one reason that makes it difficult for households to have access to services and proper infrastructure from the government. The findings of the study suggest that home gardens are not a viable way of addressing poverty, given its multi-faceted phenomena.

#### **6.2.1. ASSESSMENT OF THE PROGRESS, SKILLS TRANSFER AND SUSTAINABILITY OF THE CAMPAIGN.**

The point of entry in the campaign was in the eighth month of its existence and data was collected when it had reached its' one year anniversary. Given that households had enjoyed produce from their gardens, a difference should have been seen in the improvement of their food supply. The progress on food supply in the households is rather slow. One out of the eleven gardens one garden has been abandoned. This does not mean to say that the gardens that remain are flourishing, they also have minimal produce, due lack of labour from some of the participants. However, some households have active gardens, but one household has a flourishing one. Against this background, the home gardens have partially met their original objective of fighting poverty, thus food insecurity at a household level. The success of home gardens should be based on the level at which people participate. Participation for them denotes actively working in their gardens. They believe that it is through working in their gardens that skills can be transferred from the elderly to the younger generation. When these women pass on, the campaign may lose its ability to sustain the livelihoods of the people. The lack of skills transfer amongst the youth from the elderly may compromise the future sustainability of the campaign. Given that the campaign has now been in existence for

fourteen months during the last phase of data collection, the campaign is producing food, but it is not consistent. This shows the mismatch between the food security policy and implementation on the ground.

In conclusion, food security is attainable when there is a sense of urgency in addressing the poverty that causes food insecurity. Home gardens are just one measure that touch only one aspect of poverty and leave the rest unattended. The unattended aspects then affect the means that are implemented and blur their efforts.



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## **APPENDIX 1**

### **QUESTIONNAIRE FOR 'ONE HOME ONE GARDEN' PARTICIPANTS**

- 1. HOW DID YOU GET INVOLVED IN THIS CAMPAIGN?**
- 2. WHERE DID YOU GET SEEDS AND/OR CROPS FOR YOUR GARDEN?**
- 3. WHO IS IN CHARGE OF THE GARDEN, AND WHY?**
- 4. DID YOU SUFFER FROM FOOD INSECURITY (HUNGER) AND POVERTY BEFORE THIS CAMPAIGN?**
- 5. BEFORE THE CAMPAIGN, DID YOU HAVE ANY OTHER SOURCES OF FOOD?**
- 6. IS THERE FOOD SUSTAINABILITY FOLLOWING THIS CAMPAIGN?**
- 7. HAS POVERTY BEEN ALLEVIATED FOLLOWING THIS CAMPAIGN?**
- 8. FROM YOUR GARDENS DO YOU HAVE ANY SURPLUS? WHAT DO YOU DO WITH THE SURPLUS?**

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE LOCAL AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION OFFICER**

- 1. HOW WERE HOUSEHOLDS CHOSEN FOR THIS CAMPAIGN?**
- 2. DO YOU THINK THIS CAMPAIGN HAS ALLEVIATED POVERTY WITHIN THE CHOSEN HOUSEHOLDS AND ENSURED FOOD SECURITY?**
- 3. SINCE THE CAMPAIGN WAS INITIATED HAVE THE LIVES OF THE PEOPLE BEEN IMPROVED?**
- 4. DOES THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE PROVIDE ANY MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THESE HOUSEHOLDS TO ENSURE SUSTAINABLE FOOD SECURITY?**
- 5. IF THERE IS ANY SURPLUS, WHAT DO THEY WITH IT?**
- 6. DO YOU THINK THAT THIS CAMPAIGN WOULD CONTINUE TO SUSTAIN THESE HOUSEHOLDS IN THE COMING YEAR?**

### **APPENDIX 3**

#### **QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ISIBONDA**

- 1. WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THIS CAMPAIGN?**
- 2. DO YOU THINK THE SELECTION PROCESS OF HOUSEHOLDS USED FOR THIS CAMPAIGN WAS FAIR?**
- 3. DO YOU WISH OTHER HOUSEHOLDS COULD BE INCLUDED IN THIS CAMPAIGN?**
- 4. DO YOU SEE ANY IMPROVEMENT IN THE LIVES OF THE PEOPLE IN RELATION TO FOOD INSECURITY/ HUNGER AND POVERTY?**
- 5. WHAT DO YOU THINK MUST HAPPEN WITH ANY SURPLUS PRODUCE?**