



UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL & GEOGRAPHICAL SCIENCES

**FOOD SECURITY AND POVERTY REDUCTION PROGRAMMES:
THE EXPERIENCE OF FEMALE HEADED HOUSEHOLDS
IN A CAPE TOWN COMMUNITY**

MINOR DISSERTATION
in partial fulfilment of the degree
MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY: ENVIRONMENT, SOCIETY AND SUSTAINABILITY

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ABSTRACT

Living in impoverished urban areas, female headed households are most vulnerable to food insecurity. In order to reduce the risk and abate the experience of household food insecurity, civil society (NGO) and government have established numerous poverty reduction programmes and initiatives. However, in spite of ongoing efforts, the proportion of South African households experiencing food insecurity has not decreased but rather plateaued (SANHANES-1, Shisana et al, 2013). In order to address this plateau, the research has answered the question - how do food insecure female headed households experience the contributions of poverty reduction programmes in meeting their food security needs? The purpose of the study has been to add to relevant literature, with the aim of describing what food insecure households consider the contribution of poverty reduction programmes to be in meeting their food security needs. The research had four objectives – to describe (1) what food insecure households believe food in/security is, (2) how food insecure households experience food insecurity, (3) the characteristics of effective poverty reduction programmes from the perspective of food insecure households, and (4) the characteristics of ineffective poverty reduction programmes from the perspective of food insecure households. A descriptive qualitative methodology was used with data gathered through the methods of Photovoice with photo-elicitation interviews, semi-structured interviews, collage, observation field notes and a self-constructed questionnaire. The research participants, five female heads of households, were purposively sampled from a low-income Cape Town community. The research found that participant's food insecurity could not be separated from their lived experience of poverty. Making use of and influenced by Internal and External Drivers, participants were found to actively engage their living conditions with the use of social networks to be of particular importance. Participants experienced the contributions of programmes as *'half a help'*. While programmes did help the participants and their households, that help served to only sustain rather than uplift them out of poverty and towards food security. If the plateau is to be addressed, then this study has argued that local programmes need to better engage their users and join with other multi-scale actors to form integrated poverty reduction programmes which offer more comprehensive, collaborative and dynamic approaches to the realization of household food security in South Africa.

Key Words: Urban Food (In)Security, Poverty Reduction Programmes, Female-Headed Households, Social Networks.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AFSUN - African Food Security Urban Network
CoCT - City of Cape Town
DA – Democratic Alliance
DAFF – Departments of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
DHEW – Department of Health, Education and Welfare
DSD – Department of Social Development
FAO – Food and Agricultural Organisation
GDP – Gross Domestic Product
HH - Household
HIV – Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HFIAP – Household Food Insecurity Access Prevalence
HFIAS – Household Food Insecurity Access Scale
IFSS – Integrated Food Security Strategy
IMF – International Monetary Fund
NGO - Non-Governmental Organisation
NPO - Non-Profit Organisation
NSNP – National School Nutrition Programme
RDP – Reconstruction and Development Programme
SASSA - South African Social Security Agency
SACN – South African Cities Network
SAHRC – South African Human Rights Commission
SANHANES – South African National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey
SPII – Studies in Poverty and Inequality Institute
TRED – Tackling Real Emerging Diseases (Pseudonym for local NGO)
UN – United Nations
ZCC - Zion Christian Church

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Introduction

In 2013, the South African National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (SANHANES-1) (Shisana, Labadarios, Rehle, Simbayi and Zuma, 2013: 147) released a study which found that the proportion of food insecure households in South Africa had halved between 1999 and 2008. However, in spite of continued efforts since 2008, the proportion of food insecure households in South Africa has plateaued. A plateau in national food security has a devastating impact on the quality of life of many South Africans with 26% of citizens currently experiencing hunger and a further 28.3% at risk of experiencing hunger (Shisana et al, 2013: 10). Food security, an aspiration for many South Africans, can be defined as a ‘state in which all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life’ (Food and Agricultural Organisation - FAO, 1996). In contrast, food insecurity – the reality for many South Africans, is described as a ‘form of deprivation and an outcome of vulnerability’ (McLaren, Moyo and Jeffrey, 2015: xii) in which there exists a ‘lack of food to meet daily dietary requirements...[with the available food being of]...limited variety and poor quality’ (Oxfam, 2014: 10). Hendriks and Olivier (2015: 555, 568) describe the present levels of household food insecurity in South Africa as ‘unacceptable’, and argue that while local national programmes such as social grants and school feeding schemes help those ‘suffering or susceptible to hunger or poverty’, the programmes do not offer a comprehensive approach to food security in South Africa. Academics (Hendriks and Olivier, 2015; Crush and Frayne, 2011) and organisations (McLaren, Moyo and Jeffrey, 2015 [SPII]; Oxfam, 2014) argue that there exists a gap in knowledge between those who are meant to be helped by food security approaches and those who design and implement them. Floro and Swain (2013) identify female headed households as those most vulnerable to and impacted by food insecurity. Focussing on a Cape Town community, it was thus the purpose of this study to engage with the female voices of programme users, and to provide greater insight of state and non-state (local) programming through the experiences of female headed food insecure households. It is hoped that in adding voice to the literature that the cause of the plateau can be better identified and appropriately targeted.

1.2. The Right to Food: Implications for Policy

South Africans have a constitutional right to food; the state is thus obligated by law to address issues of food insecurity in the country. According to the South African Human Rights Commission, the right to food provides that citizens have access to food and to feed themselves through either purchasing or producing food (South African Human Rights Commission, 2014: 3). The state has made provision for this right by increasing the purchasing power of impoverished individuals and households through the social grant system which pays out one or more of seven different grants to almost 17 million South Africans on a monthly basis (SASSA, 2016). The state has also established several policies, from a 2004 national school feeding scheme to the 2002 Integrated Food Security Strategy (IFSS) which was reviewed and replaced by the 2013 National Policy on Food and Nutrition Security.

Although the state has introduced and implemented several policies, they do not constitute a comprehensive approach to food security in the country (Hendriks and Olivier, 2015). One issue hampering South African food policy design is that of a rural bias in international food security trends which situates food insecurity as a rural issue solved through increased production of agricultural goods. While the food insecure do also exist in rural areas and sufficient food supply is an element of food security, rooting policy in a rural / food production approach sidesteps pertinent urban access concerns and limits the realization of the constitutional right to food in an urban South African context.

It is important that policy includes and effectively addresses issues of urban food access as the majority (and an increasing amount) of South Africans live in urban areas (United Nations, 2015). Furthermore, South Africa is food secure in terms of agricultural production but not in terms of food access (Hendriks and Olivier, 2015) making urban access issues like food deserts, food prices, employment and transport networks increasingly relevant (Hendriks and Olivier, 2015; Battersby and Crush, 2014; McLaren, Moyo and Jeffrey, 2015; Oxfam, 2014). Given the context of South Africa and the possibilities of policy design and implementation to either help or hinder the pursuit of food security, it has been the intention of this study to add to the available urban food security literature. The study has engaged with those living in the urban informal and asked that they share their experiences of food insecurity and access concerns as they engage with the outcomes of policies - state and civil society interventions (poverty reduction programmes).

1.3. Integrated Poverty Reduction Programmes: Including Voices from the Grassroots

In 2011, the African Food Security Urban Network (AFSUN) published the results of a survey which indicated that 80% of surveyed households in three low-income areas of Cape Town were 'moderately or severely food insecure' (Battersby, 2011: 13 A). Of those impacted by food insecurity, female headed households are recognized as being the most vulnerable (Floro and Swain, 2013).

According to Hendriks (2014), the current assortment of public programmes in South Africa have not 'improved the levels of nutrition among the food insecure...despite significant increases in participation of the food insecure in the social security system' which suggests flaws at both a policy design and programme implementation level. Hendriks (2015) also writes that food insecurity is a 'problem with multiple manifestations...[which makes it]...a problem requiring comprehensive approaches'. While calls for a multilateral, cooperative and collaborative approach exist, the South African government continues to not 'reflect the daily realities of hunger and deprivation' in their policy development (Barrientos, 2011; McLaren, Moyo and Jeffrey, 2015; Hendriks and Olivier, 2015: 560). The lack of grassroots inclusion in policy design is a concern given that when the depths of food insecurity are misdiagnosed, responses are poorly targeted. It is thus argued that the experience of food insecurity, a symptom of poverty¹ and daily deprivation, needs to be better understood in order to improve how policy is designed and programmes are implemented (Hendriks, 2015).

The greater inclusion of grassroots voices is supported by civil society organisations like that of Studies in Poverty and Inequality Institute (McLaren, Moyo and Jeffrey, 2015: 152) and academics like Crush and Frayne (2011: 538) who both argue for more investment in household level qualitative in-depth studies as means of adding the voice of grassroots to quantitative studies and government policies. Oxfam (2014: 7) also supports the work of Hendriks (2015), arguing that missed opportunities to improve food security action have occurred because the 'voices, realities and aspirations of food-insecure citizens have been missing from the debate about food insecurity and hunger'. One such example is that of the recent 2013 Food and Nutrition Security Policy which Moyo (2015) argues was 'drafted under a veil of secrecy' by the Departments of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) and Social Development (DSD) who

¹ For the purposes of this research, poverty will be defined as: 'the inability of individuals, households, or entire communities, to command sufficient resources to satisfy a socially acceptable minimum standard of living' (May, 1998: 3)

avoided real engagement with civil society when they decided to hear input from only five of the twenty organisations who had applied to attend the public consultation on the policy. The failure of the 2013 Food and Nutrition Security Policy to adequately include and represent public voices means that it is doubtful that it has the capacity to formulate a comprehensive approach to food security in the country (Hendriks, 2014).

It was thus the intention of this study to give voice to those grassroots female headed food insecure households living in the urban informal who make use of poverty reduction programmes as a means of encouraging greater programme cooperation, collaboration and integration from the ground up.

1.4. Social Networks, Aspirations and Capabilities

The absence or insufficiency of formal programming leads many households to access supplementary support through civil society and NGO programmes (Battersby, 2015). As these programmes are located locally, they should in theory be better attuned to the actual lived experiences of the people they work with. Every South African has a constitutional right to food, and government seeks to enable this right through social safety nets and the facilitation of civil society (NGO) initiatives in the form of poverty reduction programmes. While these programmes do help, they are not yet fully integrated, cooperative or collaborative as they often do not include the voices of those most impacted by food insecurity (Hendriks and Olivier, 2015). Calling for a change in current policy positions to better reflect real urban food insecurity issues and their causes, encouraging and finding improved ways to create and support multi-sectoral cooperation and collaboration and working to include more actors from the grassroots is particularly pertinent when one considers that 13 million (or 1 in 4) South Africans regularly experience hunger (Oxfam, 2014: 2). It is thus important that government engage communities, not only to hear their experience of food insecurity but also how they perceive the programmes meant to facilitate their pursuit of food security. Furthermore, in developing policies and programmes, government and civil society should also engage with how individuals and households are surviving now through their use of coping strategies and social networks. Listening from the grassroots up, programmes should seek to meet users where they are, building on their capacities so that individuals and households can achieve that which they aspire to - food security.

1.5. Study Problem Statement

In spite of ongoing government and civil society led initiatives, the proportion of South African households experiencing food security has reached a plateau (SANHANES-1, Shisana et al, 2013). Poverty reduction action is being limited by mistargeted policy, a lack of multi-sector collaboration and a weak understanding and appreciation for the real issues of food insecurity in the country (Hendriks and Olivier, 2015; Oxfam, 2014; McLaren, Moyo and Jeffrey, 2015). More needs to be known about how food insecure (female headed) households experience their food insecurity, what they do to survive and how they perceive and experience poverty reduction programmes that target food and nutrition.

1.6. Study Purpose

The purpose of the study is to supplement local 'large-scale quantitative, statistically representative surveys' (Crush and Frayne, 2011) with the intention of contributing to relevant literature. Qualitative studies are valuable in that they generate deep data, rounding out the more objective data gathered by quantitative surveys and creating a more holistic depiction of the issues at hand.

1.7. Research Question

How do food insecure female headed households experience the contributions of poverty reduction programmes in meeting their food security needs?

1.8. Research Aim

To describe what food insecure households consider the contribution of poverty reduction programmes to be in meeting their food security needs.

1.9. Research Objectives

1. To describe what food insecure households believe food in/security is²
2. To describe how food insecure households experience food insecurity
3. To describe the characteristics of effective poverty reduction programmes from the perspective of food insecure households
4. To describe the characteristics of ineffective poverty reduction programmes from the perspective of food insecure households

² The level of participant food in/security was assessed during the first meeting using HFIAS (Coates, Swindale and Bilinsky, 2007).

1.10. Summary

This chapter has provided a rationale for more in-depth qualitative study regarding how food insecure female headed households experience the contributions of poverty reduction programmes in meeting their food security needs. It has argued that South Africa's food security plateau should be addressed from the grassroots up, working with vulnerable households and multi-level actors to best target the cause and solution to household food insecurity in the country.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

This chapter starts with a review of the importance of food (in)security to any countries development agenda. International food security policy is then briefly introduced before a look at the possibilities and challenges of South African national food policy to address food insecurity in the country. Serving as a mitigating force on food insecurity, social safety nets are then discussed followed by an example and review of the South African social grant system, a state safety net and supported poverty reduction programme. The benefits and challenges of an integrated approach to poverty reduction programmes is discussed, arguing that there exists a gap in current programme design and implementation that can be filled by more comprehensive and collaborative initiatives which include input from programme users. Providing greater context for the research site, household urban food (in)security in Cape Town is then reviewed followed by a discussion on food coping strategies and the role of women and social networks in Cape Town. The work of Wilkinson-Maposa (et al, 2005) is highlighted, providing a theoretical model of social networks which reflects the communicated and observed actions of the research participants. The literature review then concludes, discussing the influence and potential of programme user capabilities and aspirations to address issues of local food insecurity and poverty reduction programme design and implementation.

2.2. The Importance of Food (In)Security

As an evolving concept, contemporary perspectives on food security foreground the complexity of the food system and its multi-level impacts on society through the highlighting of six dimensions: 'food sufficiency, nutrient adequacy, cultural acceptability, safety, and certainty and stability' (Coates, 2013: 188). In contrast to the six dimensions, food insecurity is defined simply as 'limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods...[acquired]...in socially acceptable ways' (Cook and Jeng, 2009: 3). The dynamic interaction between food security and insecurity is central to the development of a country because it acts as both a cause and consequence of multiple societal, economic and political factors that determine the rate and direction of individual and societal progress (FAO, 1996). The importance of including food security in the development agenda of a country becomes apparent when, for example, the links between food insecurity, health and development are

considered. Food insecurity does not operate within a vacuum, it directly influences nutrition which in turn impacts physical, mental, emotional and developmental health (Cook and Jeng, 2009; Centre for Hunger and Poverty, 2002; Hendriks, 2015). Despite becoming food secure later in life, those citizens that were food insecure as children continue to struggle with their physical and mental health into adulthood as a long term consequence of malnutrition during their formative years. The long term impact of malnutrition forms a cycle of impoverishment, in which food insecure children generally struggle to achieve at school and later in the workplace, often holding down low income positions (Cook and Jeng, 2009). While “not all poor people are food insecure, poverty and food insecurity do overlap” (Cook and Jeng, 2009: 7) - the effect of a lowered income can in turn influence an individual’s and/ or household’s purchasing power, resulting in a cycle of food insecurity and poverty. Food security can thus be understood as an important element of a healthy society as, without adequate and good nutrition, affected citizens can become trapped in an inter-generational and perpetuating cycle of poverty and inequality (Centre for Hunger and Poverty, 2002). Poverty reduction programmes seek to break the cycle between food insecurity and multi-generational poverty. They are implemented at national, provincial and local level and their designs should be informed by contemporary and contextualised interpretations of food security and its supposed attainment.

2.3. Food Security Policy: Possibilities and Challenges

How food security is understood influences how the policies which determine food security action are designed (Hendriks, 2014). Although there have been multiple conceptual shifts in food security thinking, current policy has arguably not adapted and does not adequately and fairly reflect the contemporary and projected future needs of the food insecure. For example, Crush and Frayne (2011: 530) discuss how a rural bias that is supported at the international level by actors such as FAO, the United Nations and the World Bank echoes in policy at the ‘regional and national level in Africa’. Characterised by a call for improved agricultural production, the rural food security bias sidesteps, obscures and even ignores the high urbanisation rates throughout Africa. With more Africans projected to live in urban rather than rural areas by 2030, it can be understood that having a rural and production (rather than access) based policy is short sighted (Crush and Frayne, 2011).

The 2015 South African Cities Network (SACN) report affirms the findings of Crush and Frayne (2011). Influenced by international trends prioritising agricultural production and rural areas, South Africa's national level focus on food security has been on production with the SACN report finding that 'national policies and strategies neglect the urban' (SACN, 2015: 5). A realignment of policy is imperative considering the national census found that 22.5% of surveyed households experienced difficulty in accessing food with 32.4% of those living in the urban informal experiencing hunger and a further 36.1% were at risk of experiencing hunger (Statistics South Africa, 2014: 59; Shisana et al, 2013: 10). With the majority of South Africans (64.3%) already living in urban areas and an annual increase rate of 1.6% (United Nations, 2015), the country's policy should be addressing how food insecure individuals can better access the food available within the country. This is particularly important considering that South Africans have a constitutional right to food and the state is thus obligated, within reason using available resources, to address the issues of food insecurity in the country. However, the state has a bad track record of food policies with the 2002 Integrated Food Security Strategy (IFSS) being widely deemed a failure before it was replaced in 2013 by the National Policy on Food and Nutrition Security.

The 2013 National Policy on Food and Nutrition Security is a joint venture between the Department of Social Development and the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. It seeks to address several food security challenges including inadequate food safety nets, nutrition education, land use and food production, storage and distribution. While it was hoped that the new 2013 policy would better address food insecurity, those who have already reviewed its contents and current implementation are not confident that that will be the case. Criticism of the policy includes its lack of community representation and fair deliberation processes given that the voices of those most affected by food insecurity were effectively left out during the policy design phase (Moyo, 2015). A further criticism of the policy is that it is limited by a rural (production) bias which sidesteps the increasing challenges of food security in South Africa's growing cities (Oxfam, 2014; McLaren, Moyo and Jeffrey, 2015). Given the challenges and approaches provided by the policy, food security remains framed as an issue of food insufficiency rather than one of access. It should be noted that while the policy does make repeated mention of the importance of food access, it appears to stumble through how to explain the access dimension of food security before finally settling on the idea that if more

food is available, (through production and state provision) then food access must also improve. In effect, the solutions presented are minimalist and largely slanted in favour of increased food production and social safety nets which ultimately neglects the nuances of food access – particularly in an urban setting.

The potential negative impact of a poorly designed and mistargeted policy becomes evident when one considers the existence of South Africa's food security plateau (Shisana et al, 2013). While the plateau can be addressed through policy and action, the SACN (2015) report suggests that current policy is not appropriately and adequately addressing the issues and needs of the food insecure. This is supported by Hendriks and Olivier (2015) who argue that there is currently no comprehensive approach to addressing food insecurity in South Africa. While food policy has arguably failed to adequately address issues of food access in South African cities (Frayne et al, 2010), social safety nets and state run programmes have contributed to filling the gap. Initiatives like the social grant system help to alleviate poverty, and in so doing have had a positive impact on South African food security levels (Altman, Hart and Jacobs, 2009)

2.4. Social Safety Nets and State Run Programmes: South Africa's Social Grant System

Social safety nets are state supported systems consisting of programmes and initiatives that are 'designed to alleviate food and financial insecurity' (Diana, 2014). According to Conning and Kevane (2002), social safety nets help to ease poverty by protecting households from collapse and promoting long term national growth. They also play a developmental role through maintaining household consumption levels, facilitating investment in assets and strengthening the agency of recipients (Barrientos, 2011). Social safety nets are organised into three categories: social insurance, social assistance and informal insurance (van der Berg, Siebrits and Lekezwa, 2009). In developing countries like South Africa, the impetus has been on developing social assistance programmes as they provide most for the impoverished (Barrientos, 2011). The South African national and provincial government, in response to high levels of poverty, inequality and food insecurity, has established and implemented multiple social assistance strategies and programmes. The implemented social assistance initiatives have had positive effect, for example between 2001 and 2009 the Western Cape National School Nutrition programme (NSNP) increased the number of school children reached by their feeding scheme from 64 392 to 200 000 (Labadarios, Mchiza, Steyn, Gericke and Maunder, 2011). While the

NSNP and other initiatives have assisted many, the most effective social assistance safety net contributor to improving household food security is arguably that of South Africa's Social Grant System (Altman, Hart and Jacobs, 2009).

Social grants help to support and maintain household security through acting as any other normal income, used to pay for everything from electricity to school fees and food (van der Berg, Siebrits and Lekezwa, 2009). The grants are well targeted at vulnerable populations, covering children (Child Grant, Foster Child Grant), the elderly (Old Age Pension Grant), the physically and developmentally disabled (Disability Grant), war veterans (Veteran Grant), and those requiring specialised care (Care Dependency Grant, Grant in Aid) and temporary relief (Social Relief of Distress). Each of the social grants comes with its own financial value and applicant criteria, both of which have changed over time to include more vulnerable South Africans and better financially provide for them. The ability to implement and scale up the grants has been a major benefit to the programme with action at a national level having an immediate and direct impact on household security. Although social grants have helped to improve household food security since 2001 (Altman, Hart and Jacobs, 2009), the system faces challenges such as poor administrative capacity, corruption and fraud, with employees and recipients of grants abusing the system to their advantage. While provincial departments of social development oversee social welfare services, the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) is tasked with the disbursement and administration of grants. Established in 2004, SASSA has made a visible effort to provide better service delivery through improving coordination and administrative standards and combating fraud and corruption (van der Berg, Siebrits and Lekezwa, 2009). Although SASSA has worked on improving their service delivery, the social grant system is susceptible to regular attacks such as the skimming of grants by employees (BlackSash, 2014; GroundUp, 2015).

Social safety nets should not create dependency but rather work to sustain and uplift households and communities however, that is not always found to be the case. Poverty is multidimensional (Barrientos, 2011) which can mean that when one issue is addressed, other issues can become amplified. Hendriks (2015) relates this to the pursuit of food security, writing that 'the economic, social, environmental and political systems related to food are inextricably inter-connected: eliminating one cause of food insecurity may bring to light a more deeply

rooted cause of which the original insecurity may have been a symptom'. In this way, social grants can both address and potentially perpetuate poverty and food insecurity. For example, Klasen and Woolard (2008) found that receiving the pension grant can attract additional unemployed members in to a household. The increased pressure that the new members place on resources can over time plunge the original household and pension grant recipient in to a deepened state of poverty.

A further challenge faced by the social grant system is the high unemployment rate in South Africa (26.7% - Statistics South Africa, 2016) which, along with the recent global economic downturn, has seen a steady increase in the demand for the grant. In response, the government has broadened the application criteria and increased the value of each grant (van der Berg, Siebrits and Lekezwa, 2009). However, the government will only be able to sustain this current trend of social spending if the GDP of South Africa grows at an annual rate of 3% or more (Bisseker, 2015). Currently, the IMF has forecast the growth of South Africa at 2.5%, leaving a question mark as to the financial sustainability of the social grant system (Zwane, 2015). The possibility of the social grant system collapsing as a result of insufficient economic growth and poor planning poses a threat to the livelihoods of millions of South Africans and further emphasizes the need to improve how the social grant system, in conjunction with other state and local programmes, currently addresses poverty and food insecurity.

2.5. An Integrated Poverty Reduction Approach: Benefits, Challenges and Grassroots

Hendriks and Olivier (2015: 555) describe South African household food insecurity levels as 'unacceptable', and argue that while government run social assistance initiatives (like that of the social grant system) offer some relief for impoverished and food insecure households, they do not yet reflect an integrated and comprehensive approach to addressing food insecurity in the country. Hendriks and Olivier (2015: 568) thus write that 'an enforceable and comprehensive food security policy, legislative framework and implementation strategy are urgently needed in South Africa to guide the establishment of a comprehensive national food security strategy and appropriate programmes to address hunger and poverty to progressively achieve the targets set out for national growth and development and realise the right to food enshrined in the Constitution'. These authors recommend that, going forward, the South

African government should start by addressing the gaps in its poverty and other food related policies. Simultaneously, the state should be looking at how best to coordinate and integrate existing social assistance schemes like that of the social grant system and the NSNP.

Hendriks and Olivier's (2015) recommendation is supported by Barrientos (2011) who argues that given the multi-dimensional nature of poverty leading households to experience difficulties in several areas at the same time (from unemployment to health and food insecurity) poverty reduction initiatives should either be multi-faceted or coordinated with other initiatives. A mixed approach to poverty intervention has been gaining traction, labelled as integrated poverty reduction programmes (Barrientos, 2011). These social assistance initiatives seek to combine a range of interventions that are focussed on the poor. While integrated poverty reduction programmes place greater demand on resources and capacity through requiring coordination between and consolidation with multiple initiatives, they also hold significant potential to effectively and holistically address a range of poverty associated challenges including that of food insecurity. Furthermore, while a mixed top down approach could be effective, including initiatives and knowledge from the NGO and informal sector (grassroots) would be of greater benefit.

Hendriks and Olivier (2015) can be used to understand the SANHANES-1 report (Shisana et al, 2013: 147) which found that between 1999 and 2008, programmes established by state and non-state actors were able to halve the proportion of food insecure households in South Africa. However, since 2008 and in spite of continued programme efforts, the proportion of food insecure households in the country has not improved further. In essence, the SANHANES-1 report finds that in spite of the relief that state and non-state programming efforts provide, food security levels in South Africa have plateaued. There thus continues to exist, despite contemporary approaches, challenges to making food more available and accessible to a greater number of citizens (Shisana et al, 2013).

The argument made here is that South African cities are struggling against policies which do not best represent the contexts in which they are to be implemented. Furthermore, there is a lack of formal coordinated effort (in practice, and not just policy) to address urban food insecurity holistically through multiple programmes or Integrated Poverty Reduction Programmes

(Hendriks and Olivier, 2015). Where efforts have been made to tackle food insecurity from a mixed programme (NGO and government) top down position, there still exists a gap for more engagement of local issues (Kiggins and Erikson, 2013), an understanding of the experiences and perspectives of urban household food insecurity and the role that the informal sector can play in improving the South African food system and shaping related poverty reduction policies.

While literature indicates that policy and programmes are limited, misguided, and to a degree effective, there exists a gap of how local initiatives are experienced by those who use them – and what their perspectives are on the benefits and failures of programmes aimed at alleviating their multiple vulnerabilities including food insecurity. This information gap is acknowledged by Hendriks and Olivier (2015: 560), who state that the findings of current surveys ‘do not reflect the daily realities of hunger and deprivation’. Crush and Frayne (2011: 538) support the observations made by Hendriks and Olivier (2015) and argue that large-scale quantitative, statistically represented surveys need to be supplemented by ‘in-depth qualitative research at the level of the individual, household and community’. Changing focus to include the informal sector, it is important to ask how urban impoverished households engage with programmes (outcomes of policies) and navigate their local food systems. By asking the right questions and genuinely listening to responses, policy designers and programme developers can begin to effectively address South Africa’s household food insecurity plateau from the grassroots up.

2.6. Cape Town Urban Food Security: A Household Perspective

An AFSUN study conducted in 2011 in three low-income areas of Cape Town found that 80% of surveyed households were ‘moderately or severely food insecure’ (Battersby, 2011: 13 A). These high levels of food insecurity in communities across the province and within the city indicate that the food system in Cape Town is struggling to adequately meet the multiple demands placed upon it. As a result, Battersby, Haysom and Tawodzera (et al, 2014) describes the city as food insecure.

According to Battersby (2011 B), urban food insecurity is driven more by issues of access than availability. Crush and Frayne (2011:540) elaborate further describing urban food security to be about ‘access, regularity, food safety and nutritional diversity and quality’. Living in Cape Town,

the urban poor were found by Battersby (2011: 25 A) to access food through 'purchase (from both formal and informal outlets), through formal social safety nets, and through social networks'. Often dependent on their purchasing power to access food, the urban poor can be further limited in their food choices given their geographical position (in relation to formal food sources like supermarkets) and transport options, resulting in food deserts which can perpetuate food insecurity. Furthermore, household food security in Cape Town is not static. Households experience food security highs and lows throughout the year with January and June being two of the hardest months (Battersby, 2011 A). Different social groupings living throughout the city are more or less vulnerable to food insecurity. In particular, female headed households are identified as the most vulnerable to food insecurity – likely as a result of their gendered social positioning (Battersby, 2011 A; Crush and Caesar, 2014). Engaging an area on the outskirts of Cape Town, Battersby (2015) found that the food choices which households make are 'informed by the interplay between household and extra-household factors', with the interaction between personal choice and structural issues also an influencing factor.

Households are important spaces of production and services; they fill a gap in the accessing of resources left by government and civil society (NGOs). Mosoetsa (2011: 17), writing on the dynamics of survival in poor South African households, describes impoverished households as 'crucial but fragile sites of survival'. Often portrayed as passive recipients of aid, the conscious act of survival expresses the agency of the poor. However, it is important that the efforts and communal lifestyle of the poor is not romanticized but rather acknowledged for its potential and its harms. The world in which the poor live and struggle to survive is characterized by instability and conflict. Working as roadside vendors or making use of stokvels (rotating credit circles) and social networks, poor household members do not engage the informal income generating sector out of want but rather out of a deep need. While many living in impoverished communities hope for formal employment, they often find themselves dependent on government safety nets and other (NGO) aid structures. The dependency on unreliable sources of help from the formal to the informal sector creates insecure households which hover on the cusp of collapse (Mosoetsa, 2011; Wilkinson-Maposa et al, 2005; Battersby, 2011 A).

Referencing the work of AFSUN, the State of Cape Town Report (City of Cape Town, 2014) acknowledges a need to support and create private-public partnerships that can address urban

food insecurity. Understanding and engaging with how food insecurity is experienced at the informal household level provides valuable information for policy and programme development. The fluidity of poverty requires skilled survivors, navigators of both the formal and informal sectors, who have learnt how to decrease their vulnerability through the spreading of risk (Mosoetsa, 2011). Households learn to spread risk, including the risk of food insecurity, through the use of a range of coping strategies.

2.7. Food Coping Strategies and Women

Food coping strategies, such as meal size reduction, are applied at different levels of vulnerability or risk of entitlement failure. A range of food related coping strategies have been identified such as ‘food stretching, food rationing, food seeking and food anxiety’ (Norhasmah et al. 2010: 48). Each of the four strategies is used at different stages of vulnerability or risk of entitlement failure. On an increasing vulnerability continuum, food seeking and anxiety would be used first, then food stretching and finally food rationing – suggesting that food quantity is favoured over food quality. In short, households manage their food security through balance and compromise. The extent and duration of the use of coping strategies determines the magnitude and severity of suffering experienced by a household (Kimani-Murage, Schofield, Wekesah, Mohamed and Mberu, 2014). Women, as household leaders in resource management and caregiving, will increase their own vulnerability and suffering as they, out of necessity, employ coping strategies at personal cost for the benefit of the household (Floro and Swain, 2013). Food insecure households with similar dynamics also tend to adopt the same coping strategies with, for example, women skipping a meal in order to prioritize the feeding of their children - otherwise known as maternal buffering (Frankenberger and McCaston, 1998).

In South Africa, the use of coping strategies in an urban setting is closely linked to income or the lack thereof (Grobler, 2014; Crush and Caesar, 2014). In Cape Town, in response to ‘multiple and cumulative deprivations’ (Battersby, Haysom and Tawodzera et al, 2014: xiv), households tend to make use of three broad strategies: consumption smoothing, income generation and resource augmentation. Collectively, these strategies are meant to stretch limited food resources, find additional sources of income for the purchasing of food, and make use of other

means to source either food or income for food through for example, social grants and networks.

Social grants have been shown to improve the purchasing power and access to food of women, and by proxy female headed households (Labadarios et al, 2011). However, as indicated previously, South Africa's social grant system is not without its faults – particularly when issues of fraud and corruption hinder the efficient disbursement of allocated amounts (BlackSash, 2014; GroundUp, 2015). The instability of the social grant system, a formal safety net, and the shortfalls in other government and NGO social assistance initiatives can often mean that individuals and households are left alone with the burden of their food insecurity. The informal sector steps in to areas that the government and civil society (NGOs) have yet to go, with households generating food supplies through social networks which allow them to borrow, barter and take now/pay later (Battersby, 2011 A; Wilkinson-Maposa et al, 2005).

2.8. The Use of Social Networks

Formal and informal safety nets are not mutually exclusive but should rather work together to reduce poverty (Narayan, 1999). In order to achieve social and economic well-being, Narayan (1999) argues that states should seek to support informal safety nets through inclusive development and investment in the organizational capacity of the poor. Informal safety nets, according to Devereux (1999: 13), are 'dominated by redistributive transfers' in which households share and receive goods and assistance amongst themselves (horizontal) and with those above and below them (vertical). The sharing of resources is common in South Africa with Everatt, Habib, Maharaj and Nyar (2005: 282) describing the country as a 'giving society', with the act of giving being more common among poor South Africans than the rich. Categorized by the authors as philanthropy, the act of giving can be inspired by religious beliefs and a sense of obligation to one's community and (extended) family (Everatt, Habib, Maharaj and Nyar, 2005). A report compiled by Citizen Surveys (2004: 1) for the Building Community Philanthropy Project found that South Africans 'of low wealth have a well-defined sense of philanthropy'. According to the survey findings, the most common type of help provided was the giving of food followed by the sharing of money. Help is provided by 'actors' such as family, friends, neighbours and organisations like churches and local clubs and comes in two main forms: material and non-

material. Material help refers to tangible items like cash and food and non-material help can be anything from the sharing of time, knowledge and moral support to physical labour (Citizen Surveys, 2004). The report by Citizen Surveys (2004) also found that women were more active than men in establishing help or social networks, women found more innovative and practical ways to supplement their income through for example joining formal and informal clubs and societies many of which were household-centric like grocery and exchange clubs. The findings of Citizen Surveys (2004) are supported by Gilchrist and Kyprianou (2011) who describe the connections between help actors as a social network. Social networks, according to Gilchrist and Kyprianou (2011: 3) support 'extensive, complex and dynamic systems of exchange, influence and interaction...[and they]...shape how incomes, assets and resources are acquired and shared'.

Battersby (2011: 25 A) argues for the existence of strong social networks within the poor areas of Cape Town, citing as evidence that within the previous year those surveyed by AFSUN had accessed food through sharing meals (44%) with and borrowing food (29%) from neighbours and other households. For Gilchrist and Kyprianou (2011), social networks can be both helpful and harmful through either creating or restricting opportunities. Although they can be restrictive, the use of social networks to source resources also emphasizes the agency of individuals and the productive nature of households. Wilkinson-Maposa (et al, 2005) refers to social networks in South Africa³, describing the exchanging of help (material and non-material)⁴ as 'horizontal philanthropy'. In contrast to a vertical relationship, which occurs from the top down when the giver is rich and the receiver is poor, horizontal philanthropy occurs between people with a shared condition – both the receiver and giver are poor. Given the landscape of available literature on philanthropy and social networks, the work of Wilkinson-Maposa (et al, 2005) was found to be particularly pertinent and comprehensive in relation to the research context and findings. Her work is presented here in greater depth, with her model and findings on horizontal philanthropy used as the primary source of knowledge and explanation for the social networks found in the research site.

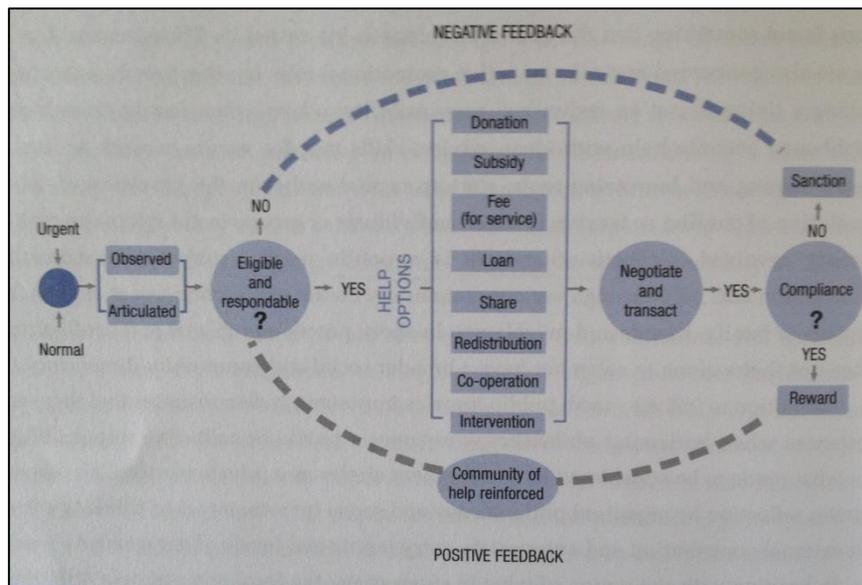
³ Appendix A1

⁴ Appendix A2

2.8.1. Social Networks and Horizontal Philanthropy: Wilkinson-Maposa (et al, 2005)

Wilkinson-Maposa (et al, 2005: 106) defines horizontal philanthropy as a ‘need-impelled, reputation-mediated, network-based system of mutual assistance affording self-respect, mutual survival and joint progress’. The act of horizontal philanthropy comes with five steps - Initiate, Filter, Act, Establish an Agreement and Sanction or Reward.

Diagram 1: Rules of Engagement, Process and Content of a Horizontal Philanthropic Act



(Source: Wilkinson-Maposa et al, 2005: 82)

Help is first requested or offered; asking for help⁵ among those of a shared condition is encouraged and not perceived as begging. The potential recipient of help and their request is then filtered by the giver, who looks for proof of need (as help is not about accumulating) among other criteria. If approved, the giver acts, providing the recipient with assistance. Expectation and accountability between the actors are established through a verbal agreement, terms and conditions are also set. The implementation and outcomes of the help are monitored, with adherence to social rules being rewarded and deviance being sanctioned. Sanctioning is not taken lightly, with the actor opting to either correct, isolate or continue to help the recipient depending on a variety of factors – particularly, the extent of recipient need and reason for noncompliance (Wilkinson-Maposa et al, 2005: 81-84).

⁵ Appendix A3

Within a social network, individuals and households help and are helped. The act of helping is complex, while appearing altruistic, helping can actually come from a sense of duty or obligation (Wilkinson-Maposa et al, 2005: 51). The poor give as a form of savings, knowing that if they help someone now – by virtue of the social rules of the system – they should be helped when it is needed. The idea of helping to be helped is self-orientated but at its core, it is also survivalist. Faced with a relentless onslaught of deprivation, every household does what it must to avoid collapse.

However, within this lack of choice, people can and do act with kindness. Often viewed through a lens of Ubuntu or faith, people will help those that they might otherwise have sanctioned. Through Ubuntu, it is argued that by helping others they are in fact helping themselves – the helping of another builds the community and as the community is raised, so is the individual. Helping as an expression of faith is perceived as being either purely selfless (nothing is expected in return) or as a means through which to earn Gods favour. In establishing horizontal networks, people choose those most similar to them. Ethnicity and gender are favoured with for example, Xhosa women more likely to help other Xhosa women. Social networks are also stretched as wide as possible, incorporating as many points of assistance as that which can be sustained (Wilkinson-Maposa et al, 2005).

While helping others as a key part of the foundation of a community has its benefits, it can also leave those unable to help feeling despondent and excluded. It is thus emphasized that, given the context of impoverishment, when someone with a shared condition gives it is not the amount given but rather the act that is most appreciated. According to the study conducted by Wilkinson-Maposa (et al, 2005), accessing food is of greater priority than health or education. Using networks, people often seek out money in order to purchase resources, using those in closest proximity to them like neighbours. Giving and asking for help requires careful navigation and balance so that one does not become someone that others are unwilling to help. In order to stay within the system, the poor carefully craft their reputation through being seen and experienced as someone capable of giving and worthwhile knowing. Positive public opinion is of high value but, its maintenance can be costly to individual development with people curtailing their individual needs in favour of that of the households. For example, women will prioritize

the successful running of their household over the more individual pursuit of education (Wilkinson-Maposa et al, 2005).

Within social networks, decisions are made about who not to help. While assessing the real need of a potential recipient is a key factor (the poor do not tend to give to the rich), another more important factor is that of trust. Social connections that one cannot trust, in terms of character or ability to repay, are rarely provided with help. A further element informing the provision of help is that of time (Wilkinson-Maposa et al, 2005). People see themselves as incredibly busy, with women in particular expressing a feeling of stress over how much time is needed to run a household and pursue different avenues of resource gain (Mosoetsa, 2011). Beatty, Nanney and Tuttle (2013) also explores the role of time in food security, she argues that low-income households do not have the time available that many poverty reduction programmes require to participate. If the time required does not look likely to lead to an outcome of equal or greater value then the time may not be invested in the first place.

According to Feurt (2000), the act of community philanthropy contributes to social cohesion, builds trust in divided communities and can help to address 'development needs at a local level'. The Global Fund Community Foundation (2013) argues for the support and encouragement of community philanthropy. They argue that when people participate in their own development and are treated as equal partners (including the contribution of personal assets like the volunteering of time), then they care more about the outcomes of development initiatives. Community philanthropy, when well organized and navigated, can build trust between residents and local institutions. Establishing trust is important because it acts as social capital⁶ and can strengthen civil society, initiate engagement and encourage a sense of 'local ownership of the development process'. The work of the Global Fund Community Foundation (2013) is supported by Gilchrist and Kyprianou (2011: 10) who argue that social networks must

⁶ This literature review acknowledges the concepts of social capital and livelihoods (Moser, 1998; Devereux, 1999; Rakodi and Lloyd-Jones, 2002). Social capital refers to 'the norms and social relations embedded in the social structures of society that enable people to co-ordinate action and to achieve desired goals' (Narayan, 1999: 6). It is one form of capital (the others being human, financial, natural and physical) supporting livelihoods in underdeveloped contexts that is similar to the social systems described by Wilkinson-Maposa et al (2005). Social capital is not addressed in this literature review firstly because its mechanisms mirror those described by Wilkinson-Maposa et al (2005) and secondly because a fuller engagement of the dynamics between different forms in capital supporting livelihoods falls outside the theoretical framework and scope of this study.

be used in order to 'combat and cope with the rising levels of poverty'. Social networks should also be incorporated in to the design of policy interventions as a means to 'tackle inequalities, widen opportunities and maintain cohesion' (Gilchrist and Kyprianou, 2011: 10). This is supported by Narayan (1999), who promotes the inclusion of social networks in formal poverty interventions arguing that poverty reduction initiatives work best when a 'rich network of cross-cutting ties within society and between society's formal [state and civil society] and informal institutions [social networks]' is fostered.

2.9. Food Security: Capabilities and Aspirations

Who is helped, how and why all lead into where the poor hope that their systems of social networks (horizontal philanthropy) and their engagement with the informal sector will take them. Appadurai (in Held and Moore, 2007) speaks on these aspirations of the poor, arguing that it is through culture that they envision their futures. Accessing these futures is dependent on the functioning and capabilities of the poor, that which they can do (realized, functioning) and that which they could do through freedom, opportunity and choice (possible, capabilities). Ibrahim (2011) combines the work of Appadurai (in Held and Moore, 2007) and Sen (1993), extending the functioning and capabilities framework to include aspirations. Ibrahim (2011) argues that it is important to investigate what the poor aspire to and where, in contrast, their capabilities fall short. The gap between capability and aspiration, he argues, should be closed through development and the efforts of actors such as the government and civil society. Furthermore, that which individuals and communities aspire to can be expanded through education. However, it is important that aspirations remain grounded and are perceived as achievable. The poor have both internal and external aspirations. For example, they hope to be educated and employed (internal) and living in their own homes (material, external). Going forward, government and civil society actors and initiatives should seek to meet the poor where they are and allow them to define for themselves what their needs and aspirations are. Leading Help-Actors⁷ should take in to account the current capabilities and aspirations of the poor and how best to grow them, they should also consider how the poor make use of the informal sector and what they hope to achieve in their use of it.

⁷ (Wilkinson-Maposa et al, 2005:40), Appendix A1

2.10. Summary

Household food insecurity levels in South Africa are ‘unacceptable’ (Hendriks and Olivier, 2015: 555); a plateau has been reached despite continued efforts from the state and civil society. This chapter has reviewed food security literature by arguing for the relevance of a grassroots up understanding of the coping strategies that food insecure households use including their engagement with social networks and reduction programmes. Literature proposes that government and civil society work together with other actors, namely the informal sector (grassroots, local community), to provide the poor with greater opportunities to expand their capabilities and reach their aspirations. Literature suggests that the poor should not be left to empower themselves out of poverty but rather they should be better equipped through education and employment to pursue the needs and aspirations which they have defined for themselves. Efforts need to be better informed from the grassroots up, the experiences of impoverished food insecure (female headed) households should be used to better establish and implement policies and programmes – hopefully raising the plateau in the process. In the next chapter, the methodology used in the study to find how food insecure female headed households experience the contributions of poverty reduction programmes in meeting their food security needs is explained.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1. Introduction

This chapter provides background on the research context, methods used and participants. The chapter also discusses data collection and analysis, researcher identity and positionality, and research ethics.

3.2. Research Site and Context

Surrounded by wealthier areas, the relatively small community of North Town⁸ has an estimated population of almost 6500 and an unemployment rate of 22.29% (City of Cape Town, 2013). It is situated on the outskirts of the city of Cape Town and has a mix of formal and informal housing. With high levels of unemployment, crime and a sizeable disease burden, the community stands in stark contrast to its neighbours. North Town was chosen as the research site because a discrepancy between the poverty reduction efforts and outcomes of its various programmes had been identified by the general manager of Etham Trust, a local NPO.

3.2.1 Access to Research Site

Access to the North Town was gained through Etham Trust which also recommended a research assistant who was familiar with the various programmes and services available to North Town residents. The assistant was a young Xhosa speaking gentleman who worked part time for Etham Trust and lived in the area but not the research site. The research assistant was tasked with basic administration, community brokering and translation for the Xhosa speaking participants.

3.2.2 Poverty Reduction Programmes Operating in North Town

Poverty reduction programmes in North Town were identified by participants. A poverty reduction programme was understood by the researcher to be any state or non-state (formal and community-led) initiative that had identified a need in the community and attempted to address and reduce it through a series of structured events or services. The following section

⁸ To protect anonymity, the names of places, programmes and participants have all been changed to pseudonyms.

briefly describes each of the identified programmes in North Town based on information gathered through a (local only) programme questionnaire and researcher attendance.

- **State Programming initiatives**

Social Grants – The South African government, through the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA), offers seven different social grants as a means of alleviating poverty and redistributing wealth in the country. Each grant has its own financial value and comes with certain applicant criteria. Participants made use of the following social grants: Child Grant (R350, for ages 18 and under), Foster Child Grant (R890), Disability Grant (R1500) and Pension Grant (R1500, for age 60 to 75) (Gordhan, 2016). Each grant recipient is provided with a SASSA approved bank account, card and pin number. On a set date every month SASSA deposits the grant amount into the recipient's bank account and makes it available for collection. After verifying their identity or providing proof of permission to collect on the behalf of a grant recipient, the amount can be retrieved from either a SASSA 'pay-point', participating merchant store (for example, Checkers) or, for a withdrawal fee, from an ATM (Net1, 2012).

School Feeding Programme – The objectives of the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP) are to provide school feeding, education on nutrition and the establishment and maintenance of food gardens in schools. Each day, every child is to be provided with one cooked meal consisting of: an item of protein (e.g. pilchards, beans), a starch (e.g. pap or rice) and a fresh vegetable or fruit item (Rendall-Mkosi, Wenhold and Sibanda, 2013).

- **Non-State (Formal) Programming**

Etham Trust – is a faith based non-profit organisation that was founded in 2002. It provides services for over 1000 people living in North Town through multiple projects such as home based health care, a children's day care facility, support groups for vulnerable children and a community advice office. Many of the programmes operating within North Town held direct or indirect ties to the Trust through using it as a community entry point and programme meeting space. The Trust also offered support to community led services such as Benji's (see below). Through the community advice office, anyone living in North Town could request assistance for a range of matters including difficulties with government institutions and the search for employment.

Arise, Elderly and Health Club - Founded in 2006 by community health workers, the Arise Club has a membership of approximately 45 pensioners and persons with physical and

developmental impairments. The club is run by a nurse who is employed by the public health community clinic located in the Etham Trust building. The club offers health and support services for those suffering from chronic diseases such as diabetes and hypertension. The club meets every week, and their schedule usually consists of exercise or an activity, a health talk, food donation distribution and a time of prayer and/or gospel singing.

Woven Ministries, Bible education and craft skills training group - Woven Ministries, started in 2013, is a bible study and craft initiative. While the focus is on ministry through bible education, the women who run the club also encourage co-operative craft teaching where everyone who attends the club shares their crafting skills with the group. The group meets once a month with between 5 and 20 women attending. They meet in the Etham Trust sewing room, and are supported by a local church.

Tackling Real Emerging Diseases (TRED) - TRED was a visiting NGO active in North Town during the early 2000s. The NGO trained and equipped select members of the community to run their own community based kitchen. The focus of TRED was to improve health and decrease the negative impact of hunger and disease (namely Tuberculosis and HIV) through the sale of affordable nutritious meals. In 2005, TRED handed over their initiative to the community. Donna, a research participant, was one of TREDs 'operators' and had been supplied with a kitchen in the form of a modified shipping container. Shortly after TRED left, following several cases of theft, Donna was forced to close her kitchen. She relocated her kitchen to Khula Seed Garden where it now acts as the electricity point for the gardens water pump. Donna is currently working towards reopening her kitchen.

- *Non-State (Community-led) Programming*

Benji's, child feeding scheme - Started by a local family, Benji's is the longest running programme in North Town. It is currently supported by Etham Trust. Benji's is open three days a week and provides each visiting child (all are welcome) with one to two sandwiches of their choice and fruit when available.

Khula Seed, community garden - Started in 2004, the community garden moved to its current plot located on the edge of the community in 2011. With little and unreliable assistance from state and private donors, members find it challenging to keep the food production programme running. While anyone is able to join the garden, membership numbers are low with only nine women using the land. Those that make use of the garden find it to be a valuable resource

because they are able to grow their own fresh produce and make a small income from produce sales.

- **Other Formal and Informal Poverty Reduction Initiatives**

Funeral Policies - Meeting a prevalent need, funeral policies are offered by private companies, major retailers and local churches. They act as insurance policies in the case of a family death, and can provide important financial support to a household during a time of need. Payments made to community or church schemes can be accessed during other times of crisis such as following a household fire.

Stokvel, rotating credit circle – Stokvels (or gooi-gooi's), are community run saving schemes in which members pay in an established monthly fee to a cash pot. Each month, one or more members (depending on the size of the group) receive the cash collected. Alternatively, the money collected is used to bulk purchase food (meat, vegetables, and staples) which is then distributed among members at a set time of year.

Microlenders - Money can easily be borrowed in North Town however; the borrowed amount must be paid back at a rate of 150%. While microlenders provide an important service in times of crisis, research participants did their best to avoid using them.

Responsive Retailers; stamp books, local butchers, and Mr I - *Stamp books* are a savings scheme in which major and minor retailers sell shop stamps in small denominations (for example, R5 or R10). The stamps are placed in booklets which can then be redeemed at a later stage on a (large item) purchase.

Responding to a need for affordable and accessible food within North Town, two *local butcheries* opened small shops on their premises in order to sell R5 packs of soup bones directly to customers. A valued addition to any meal, the bones were regularly purchased by all but one of the participants.

Furthermore, *Mr I*, a fresh produce hawker, visits North Town most weekends. Community members are able to take goods and pay him back at a later date for no additional cost.

3.3. Research Methodology

The research made use of a qualitative descriptive methodology to investigate and directly describe the perspectives of the five research participants (Sandelowski, 2000).

3.4. Study Population and Sampling

There are close to 6500 people living in North Town, of which 51.1% (3321) are women (City of Cape Town, 2013). The study population were all of the women living in North Town who identified themselves as household heads, whose households were food insecure and who met the remaining inclusion criteria.

A small sample group of five participants was considered appropriate as qualitative research does not seek to generalise its findings (i.e. to North Town) but rather to identify information-rich cases through which the research question can be answered in depth. In addition, the use of multiple data gathering methods and number of hours of contact with each informant strengthened the trustworthiness and plausibility of the findings and affirmed the quality of the small sample size (Babbie and Mouton, 2008).

Typical case purposeful sampling (Patton, 1990) was used to identify participants using inclusion and exclusion criteria based on literature describing the vulnerability of female-headed households for food insecurity. The sampling criteria were as follows:

Inclusion criteria

- Female head of a food insecure household. At the first meeting, participants were asked to complete a Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (Coates, Swindale and Bilinsky, 2007), Appendix H or Table 1.
- Unemployed. Unemployment was included as an inclusion criterion so that participants had the time and incentive to attend programmes.
- Conversant in English with basic English reading and writing skills. Language literacy was included as a criterion so that the researcher could communicate directly with participants without the need for translation.
- Household should make use of two or more state / non-profit food focussed poverty reduction initiatives. This criterion was considered important because it is through these initiatives that food insecurity is being addressed.

Exclusion criteria

- Child headed households (below 18 years of age)

- Male and co-headed households;
- Food secure households;
- Non-users of poverty reduction programmes.

The research assistant was asked to identify potential candidates living in the research site based on the sampling criteria. Of the seven identified potential participants, one was unable to commit to the length of the project, and a second opted to leave the research following the first meeting⁹. The remaining five participants stayed on the research project until termination. While the number of research participants was relatively small, the selected women represented ‘typical cases’ of poverty reduction programme users. Their experiences cannot be generalised to the public, but can be taken as typical and thus loosely applicable to other similar settings. *Table 1* depicts the demographics of the sample and is followed by a résumé of each participant’s individual life circumstances. See Appendix H for participant household organograms.

Table 1: Demographics of Sample

Demographic	Donna	Doris	Ethel	Elizabeth	Abira
Age	68	72	73	58	49
Household size	3	2+	2+	8-9	4
Personal Income	1 Pension Grant Food Sales	1 Pension Grant	1 Pension Grant	1 Foster Child Grant	Odd Jobs
Race	African	Coloured	African	Coloured	Coloured
Home Language	Xhosa	Afrikaans	Xhosa	Afrikaans	Afrikaans
Faith	Christianity	Christianity	Christianity / ZCC	Christianity	Christianity / Islam
Literacy Level	Grade 9	Grade 8	/	Grade 7	Grade 8
HFIAS, HFIAP¹⁰	22/27, Severely Food Insecure	18/27, Severely Food Insecure	14/27, Severely Food Insecure	18/27, Severely Food Insecure	21/27, Severely Food Insecure

3.5. Research Methods

Data to answer the research objectives was obtained through the methods of *Photovoice* with photo-elicitation interviews, semi-structured interviews, collage, observation field notes and a self-constructed questionnaire. At the end of data collection, thirty hours of audio from

⁹ The participant, in her 20s, chose to leave to focus on the care of her new born baby. Her contributions during the first research meeting are included in the data analysis. The loss of a younger woman from the sample reduced its representation portfolio but not its trustworthiness.

¹⁰ HFIAS, HFIAP (Coates, Swindale and Bilinsky, 2007) was calculated at the first meeting.

multiple interviews had been recorded with each participant having met with the researcher eight or more times.

3.5.1 Photovoice with Photo-Elicitation Interviews

The method of *Photovoice* (Wang and Burris, 1997; Wang, 1999) was selected as it afforded participants with a direct and expressive means of conveying their personal experiences. As a research method, *Photovoice* enables marginalized, disempowered and illiterate people to communicate through visual imagery. The data gathered from this method are physical snapshots of participant lives, inviting the researcher into spaces that they otherwise could not have gone (Wang, 1999). The images captured by participants are an extension of their voice, facilitating shared communication about topics connected to the research objectives. While participants were provided with a broad frame in which to take photographs, space was left for interpretation and the opportunity to set new research agendas (for example, a request for food sources revealed the far reaching social networks at play within the community). Steps in the Photovoice process involved:

- Issuing each participant with a disposable Polaroid camera with 27 exposures.
- Training the participant in the use of the camera
- Clarifying the research objectives, focus of the photos and time frames
- Negotiating a suitable time to collect and develop the photographs and a time to meet for a photo-elicitation interview
- Providing each participant with a notebook containing basic research information, self-prompting questions regarding the taking of photos, and instructions on camera use (Appendix C).
- Encouraging participants to write in their notebooks about the photographs that they had taken, for the purposes of memory and better facilitation of different avenues of communication.
- Teaching each participant about how to consider their own ethical dilemmas in taking photographs under the Photovoice research method (Wang and Burris, 1997).

Photo-elicitation interviews (Clark-Ibáñez, 2004) involved gathering tape recorded raw data on the opinions, perspectives and experiences of the women as they narrated their stories, based

on their photographs, of engaging with local programmes and living as food insecure households. In turn, the researcher was able to look through the images with the participant and, using probing questions, facilitate deeper discussion on issues pertinent to the research objectives. Written informed consent was obtained at the start of the study (see below) to audio tape record each data gathering event and verbal informed consent was re-affirmed throughout the study whenever the recording device was used.

3.5.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured Interviews (Savin-Baden and Major, 2013: 359) involved the use of a guideline¹¹ individually developed for each interview using the study literature. Each guideline, which covered topics like food sources, nutritional diversity and programme experiences, served as a source of prompts during interviews. Semi-structured interviews, ranging in length from twenty to ninety minutes, allowed conversational and open-ended probing in which the participants were free to voice personal opinions, perspectives and feelings which they considered relevant to their particular challenges.

3.5.3 Collage

Collage is a data gathering method that involved participants creating a poster with cut out pictures and words from magazines to tell a story or depict a situation in their lives¹². Collage provides an opportunity to 'include marginalized voices and encourage a range of linguistic and non-linguistic representations to articulate authentic lived experiences' (Gerstenblatt, 2013: 294). The method served as a pre-cursor and extension of Photovoice in that participants were asked during the first meeting to create a visual image (like composing a photograph) which represented their perception of food (in)security and what it means to them. It was found that visual cues were helpful in stimulating and directing conversation, leading to several individual and group activities during interviews that involved verbal and visual engagement¹³. The collage and other visual activities facilitated communication across language and literacy barriers. While the intention with all of the methods was the same, the collage and visual activities encouraged active participation and opened up new areas of research objective exploration (Appendix E, F).

¹¹ Appendix D

¹² Appendix E

¹³ Appendix F

3.5.4 Observation Field Notes

Observation was informed by the literature and semi-structured interview guidelines and involved taking mental note (and then later writing up) of surroundings and pertinent interactions between programmes and participants. Field notes are an important research strategy to reduce bias through reflexivity (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw, 1995). Reflexivity encourages the researcher to be aware of their position and influence throughout the research period, and how they may have created or imposed meanings on the study process (Savin-Baden and Major, 2013: 76). In this study, the field notes enhanced reflexivity by creating the backdrop for triangulating data as well as acting as a reminder of key moments of insight which occurred during fieldwork. The field notes written by the researcher were invaluable as an addition to the words and actions of the participants, they created a more holistic context from which the research objectives could be answered (Appendix G).

3.5.5 Programme Questionnaire

During the research process, the participants identified several poverty reduction programmes which they make use of, all of which have been described above. Following termination with the participants, all of the identified local programmes were approached and asked to complete a short questionnaire (Appendix B). The questionnaire was used to gain background information on the programmes as well as to provide greater context for participant's experiences through providing insight in to how the programmes perceive themselves in comparison to how they were perceived by participants.

3.6. Research Participants: Resume of Life Circumstances

Donna

Donna is a 68 year old pensioner who has lived in North Town since 1999. Arriving in North Town, she moved directly into a government built house (RDP) where she currently lives with her granddaughter and great-granddaughter. Living two doors down, is Donna's daughter and young grandson with whom she shares household resources and responsibilities (for example, all cooking happens at Donna's home). Donna last worked full time in 2001; she is now dependent on her pension grant. She supplements her grant with her work in the community garden where she grows her own fresh produce and on occasion sells it. Donna is an active user

of programmes, having completed multiple training opportunities from business management to HIV awareness. Donna currently makes most use of the Khula Seed Community Garden, Arise Club, Woven Ministries and Etham Trust. Her grandson also attends Benji's. Through her work in the garden, Donna has also had access to City of Cape Town programme related training opportunities and aid assistance. In addition to formal programmes, Donna invests in multiple stokvels when possible. Of all of the programmes that Donna has used and currently uses, she most appreciated the work of TRED - which left the community in 2005.

Doris

Doris is a 72 year old widowed pensioner who has lived in North Town since 1994. She lives in a brick house (not RDP) a few minutes' walk from Etham Trust. One of her sons, an unemployed recovering substance abuse user, lives with her in the house and another son lives with his wife and two children in an extension on the house. Also on the property is a backyard 'bungalow' where one of her grandsons occasionally stays with his wife and two children. While none of the family members who live on Doris's property pay a formal rent, they help out where they can. Doris last worked full time in 2007; she now relies on her state pension grant as her main source of income. She identified her son, who lives in the main house with her, as her only dependent. Of the poverty reduction programmes active in the community, Doris makes most use of the Arise Club, which is facilitated by the Etham Trust. Doris struggles every month to pay off her debt with local department stores, after which she prioritises the payment of her funeral policy, rates and church donations. Doris is helped most by two of her daughters, her church community and a local children's home where she volunteers.

Ethel

Ethel is a 73 year old pensioner who has lived in North Town since 1999. Arriving in North Town, She moved directly in to an RDP house where she currently lives with her young granddaughter. Ethel is encouraging of visitors, and often has her son (father of the granddaughter) and a teenage grandson staying with her for short periods of time. Ethel is on a pension grant, and her granddaughter is on a foster grant but she does not always get the money. Ethel is dependent on her pension grant and the kindness of her social networks, which provide for her on principle (age and health). Of the poverty reduction programmes, Ethel most makes use of the Arise club, Etham Trust, her own church and the community garden where vegetables are planted and harvested for her by Donna, her best friend. Ethel is also on a funeral policy through her church,

on occasion she joins stokvels with Donna, and she makes use of microlenders when necessary. While she visits her extended family in the Eastern Cape at least once a year, they do not help her while she is staying in Cape Town.

Elizabeth

Elizabeth is 58 year old widow who has lived in North Town since 1990. When the researcher met Elizabeth she had been living in an RDP house (since 2000) with between 8 and 9 family members, she also rented out two of her three backyard bungalows. Towards the end of the research period, a fire consumed both rented backyard dwellings and engulfed most spaces in Elizabeth's RDP home. Elizabeth moved quickly to recover from and capitalise on the disaster, networking different aid from a variety of sources. The fire was also used as an opportune moment to evict, with little interpersonal strife, those who had been living in the bungalows. In the place of the two rented bungalows, one large bungalow is being built by and for her son and his wife and their two children who had been living in the RDP house with Elizabeth. During the research process, one of Elizabeth's daughters was released from prison and moved into a bungalow behind the house with two sons who had previously been living in the RDP with Elizabeth. Throughout the research period, Elizabeth also fostered a grandson from another daughter who does not live with her. While Elizabeth is not on a social grant, her spatially extended household receives and shares the following: 1 disability grant (son, unemployed), 4 child grants and 1 foster child grant. Although Elizabeth used to receive rent from her bungalows, the money was sent to her daughter in prison. Elizabeth last worked full time in 2003 and would like to find new employment but her family says that she is too old and must stay home and take care of the grandchildren. Of the poverty reduction programmes active in the community, Elizabeth's household makes most use of Benji's and Etham Trust, both of which were relied upon to help recover from the fire. Elizabeth does not partake in informal saving mechanisms such as stokvels, stamp books and bulk buying of food but like all of the research participants, she pays a monthly fee to a funeral policy.

Abira

Abira is 49 year old married woman who has lived in North Town since 1998. While she is married, when asked, she described herself as the head of her household and so was included in the sample. She has lived in a brick house on the same block as Benji's since 2000, and

currently lives with her husband, daughter (from a previous marriage) and young grandson. Her husband is on a pension grant, their main source of income, and her grandson receives a child grant that is used only for the purchasing of diapers and milk. In addition to the pension grant, Abira and her husband sourced a small income from the collection and sale of golf balls. Despite struggling with health concerns, Abira looked for work throughout the research process for both herself and her daughter. She took on odd jobs where possible and at termination, she had returned to full time work at a local butchery. Abira does not see herself as using any poverty reduction programmes (although she has on occasion used the office services at Etham Trust). Her reasons for not attending programmes were relevant to the research objectives, and thus she was still included in the sample. Other than formal programmes, Abira makes use of stamp books and is interested in getting involved with a food orientated stokvel if her husband will provide her with the capital.

3.7. Data Collection

The research methods were applied over two field work blocks: Block 1 (3 December 2015 – 4 February 2016) and Block 2 (9 February – 7 March 2016). In order to gain insight into how participants experience their food insecurity and the use of programmes throughout the year, it was decided that the first block would occur during school holidays when many programmes were closed and the second block would occur when school was in session and programmes were running. Most of the participants did not know each other and, at the start of the first block, were invited to a research start up meeting to obtain informed consent and establish a shared conceptual baseline regarding the study objectives and terminology (core constructs). The session took place in a meeting room at Etham Trust and lasted 4 hours with a break for lunch. The women were offered refreshments and no financial incentive for their time (see ethics below).

Story telling was used to get the conversation about food (in)security going. One story about a food secure woman and another about a food insecure woman were read after which the women were invited to develop a colloquial definition reflecting their definitions of food security and food insecurity. The conversation was facilitated by simplifying (through word

association) definitions sourced from the literature¹⁴. Afterwards, participants were asked to create a collage depicting what life would look like if the 'programmes helped them perfectly', and they had achieved a level of food security¹⁵. Every effort was made to ensure that participants were clear about the focus of the study, and that they themselves had identified how they wished to define food in/security and related programmes. The start-up meeting ended with logistical arrangements for follow up individual semi-structured interviews to gather demographic information, explain their collage image selections and to orientate them to the use of the camera for Photovoice.

Each participant was subsequently interviewed and trained on how to use their camera. Each participant was provided with two 27-shot disposable cameras (one for each of the research blocks) and asked to visually express their experience of food insecurity and poverty reduction programmes. They were also provided with a notebook within which were reminders of how to best use the camera as well as basic research details and information. As a means of facilitating communication, the two participants who wanted to write notes pertaining to the research in their notebooks were encouraged¹⁶.

Following some challenges during the first block of data gathering, it was decided by the researcher that more on site guidance for participants was called for - particularly during the time that they engaged Photovoice. In order to draw out more images, and those relevant to the research, the researcher spent a day in the community with each participant and their camera. During each outing, participants were questioned in depth on their lives and a list of potential sites for images was made with and for each participant. After the outings, participants were regularly checked in on. Cameras were only collected once the participant felt ready to hand them over to the researcher for processing.

After each research block of taking photographs, the images were printed out and participants were individually interviewed using a photo-elicitation interview approach (Clark-Ibáñez, 2004). During their individual interviews for Block 1 and 2, participants selected one image or category

¹⁴ Appendix I

¹⁵ Appendix E

¹⁶ With their limited use, the notebooks were not seen as sufficiently pertinent to justify them as another research method. The two notebooks used, were included in data analysis.

to share in an informal group setting scheduled at the end of each Block. After sharing the story of their photographs with the group at the end of Block 2, participants were invited to add or modify any further insights gained during the study period. In addition, concluding Block 2, the researcher met with each participant individually and member checked using a series of statements gleaned from the preliminary findings. Member checking increases the credibility and accountability of the research through providing space for participants to give feedback and verify the researcher's interpretation of findings (Savin-Baden and Major, 2013: 477).

At every step of data gathering, talking points taken from the literature and interviews were used to create deeper discussion on matters pertaining to the four research objectives. It is important to note that while the research was continually directed towards answering the research objectives, the researcher did not impose but rather facilitated opportunities for participants to express their experiences of food insecurity and poverty reduction programmes as thoroughly and genuinely as possible. After each session with the participants, field notes were compiled to capture the researcher's observations, questions and emerging understanding of any related dynamics at play.

3.8. Data Analysis and Trustworthiness

Recordings from the start up meeting as well as individual interviews were transcribed semi-verbatim, meaning that phrasing and sentence structure was captured but false starts and stutters were omitted. The semi-verbatim transcriptions were then printed out and collected in to four booklets to be deductively analysed (Saldaña, 2013). The opinions and social actions undertaken by the participants were emically understood within the specific context of the research community (Babbie and Mouton, 2008). Searching for meaning units, each printed booklet was carefully read through and coded using colour highlighters to highlight phrases which corresponded to the four different research objectives (Appendix J). Meaning units were established through relating one or more of the research objectives to what had been said by the participant, with a unit potentially having more than one meaning depending on which research objective or perspective was considered. All of the meaning units were written into notebooks, one for each of the research objectives. Using the research question as a lens, the notebooks were then read through. It was found that the meaning units could be considered either an Internal Driver or an External Driver (participants experienced the contribution of

programmes from an internal perspective influenced by external factors) (Chapter 4). Using the research question again as a lens, both the Internal and External Drivers were found to have eight categories each. Each of the eight categories was then organized into four pairs, which became the research findings ‘themes’. A central research theme was also found once the source of and dynamic between the Internal and External Drivers was considered. Given the layout of the findings, the most direct and expressive way to represent them was in diagrammatic form which allowed the dynamics of the findings to come through (Chapter 4).

In qualitative research, trustworthiness is the equivalent of reliability and validity of the methods used in quantitative research. Saldaña (2013: 255) defines trustworthiness as the ‘knowledge of acceptable procedures within the field’. In this study, trustworthiness was promoted by data triangulation, prolonged engagement, and the detailed maintenance and recording of raw data (Babbie and Mouton, 2008: 276-278). In conjunction with member checking, participant data was triangulated (Babbie and Mouton, 2008) with researcher field notes and entries recorded in the participant’s notebooks. Interpretation of the findings was guided by literature triangulation (Saldaña, 2013). For data analysis, see Appendix J.

3.9. Researcher Identity, Positionality and Assumptions

I am a young white well educated female South African. I grew up in a middle class English speaking single parent household in the suburbs of Cape Town. My positionality as researcher and an outsider posed a number of challenges. It took a few meetings for the participants to relax in to the research process and to talk as openly with me as could be expected in light of the age, race, language and privilege differences that existed in a post –Apartheid context. I assumed at the start of the study that I would find that women are the backbone of their households (Floro and Swain, 2013), and that the government has largely failed to provide them with the tools needed to flourish (Hendriks and Olivier, 2015; Shisana et al, 2013). I also assumed that those in need would use poverty reduction programmes without hesitation and that the plateau could exist as a result of a lack of programme resources (Chapter 5).

3.10. Limitations

Over-Exposure: The researchers initial impression of the participants was that they were over exposed to aid distribution, and knew how to work the system (in which the research was

perceived to fall) to secure resources to their benefit. It became a challenge to navigate expectations, and to encourage participants to talk freely without concern for getting the answer 'right'. Furthermore, my assumption that participants readily used poverty reduction programmes was tested by their lack of self-driven attendance with much effort and time wasted tracking participants down and reminding (they had often forgot the appointment and/or the time) them that we had a meeting. Participants had learnt set patterns of programme engagement (to their benefit) which I disrupted through regular reminders of meetings and learning where I could find them.

Potential Bias and Coercion: The use of Etham Trust as an entry point, and one of their part time employees as a research assistant, was initially perceived as a possible limitation to honest communication between participant and researcher. However, the association with the non-profit also provided the researcher with legitimacy which the participants accepted. While it was noted that participants would on occasion watch how they spoke about the non-profit, their willingness to openly discuss the non-profits shortfalls suggest that they felt comfortable to speak truthfully regardless of the researchers association.

Technical Skills: Participants struggled to take information, associate it to their lives and then visually represent it through Photovoice. They also found it difficult to use a camera - even after multiple instruction sessions and time spent using their first camera, participants still expressed a lack of uncertainty regarding camera use during Block 2 of data gathering. Confusion and a lack of technical know-how limited the quality of photographs taken. One of the biggest setbacks to the research process was when the researcher returned after the school holidays (data gathering Block 1) to find that of the five camera's left with participants – one had been stolen/destroyed by relatives, another had been used up by a relative taking pictures unrelated to the research and a third had gone unused. In order to better use Photovoice as a research method, the researcher began to more actively engage the participants and check in on their progress regarding comprehension of research objectives and the method of Photovoice.

Literacy Levels: Bi-directional information was lost in translation and transcended the language barrier. Each participant was capable of a conversation in English but found it difficult to comprehend requests and questions pertaining to the research objectives, even when translated (where possible). Furthermore, each participant had engrained belief systems regarding health and healthy eating which offset efforts by the researcher to communicate ideas relating to food security and food insecurity. In keeping with the ethics of sound cross

cultural social research (Posel and Ross, 2015), every effort was made to meet participants where they were, visual exercises were used to further break down communication barriers and participants were encouraged to speak with few interruptions from the researcher. The research assistant acted as cultural and language broker throughout, guiding the researcher towards increased sensitivity about the issues at stake. While the shift in approach to data gathering proved effective, it was also more relationally intensive and time consuming. Deconstructing the research process for the participants also created a degree of instability to data gathering and at times created a sense of confusion for both participant and the researcher.

3.11. Ethical Considerations

The research was implemented with human subjects hence the need for compliance with the latest version of the Declaration of Helsinki (World Medical Association, 2013). As the participants were asked to express their experience of the use of poverty reduction programmes, which they rely on, they were treated as a vulnerable group. Every effort was made to respect their privacy and autonomy. All relevant information regarding the research and research process was disclosed to potential participants. Each participant was asked for their individual informed consent (Appendix K). All potential participants were requested to demonstrate their comprehension of their role and involvement in the research and research process. If they voluntarily consented to participate, they were asked to sign a standard consent form – which was explained through the research assistant who acted as a translator where necessary. Participants were informed that their involvement in the research, as well as their personal information, would be kept confidential, their anonymity would be guaranteed through use of pseudonyms and used only for the purposes of the research project. As an extension of the Belmont Report Principles (DHEW, 1978) of beneficence and justice, the research sought to maximise the benefits and minimise the risks of the research for the participants. Furthermore, the research was conducted in a reasonable and non-exploitative manner with any risks and benefits fairly and equitably distributed amongst the participants. As an extension of the Belmont Report Principle of respect; all potential participants were selected equitably, their autonomy respected and their adequate comprehension of research objectives and process assessed. All participation in the research was voluntary, and participants were able to terminate their involvement at any time without consequence. It should also be noted

that participants were taught how to consider their own ethical dilemmas in taking photographs under the Photovoice research method (Wang and Burris, 1997). At termination, participants were provided with a bulk food package as fair reimbursement for their time and other research related inconvenience.

3.12. Summary

This chapter has captured the implementation process of the study. It has illustrated the methodology and methods that enabled robust data to be collected and described the ethics involved the research process.

Chapter 4: Findings

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the qualitative findings that answer the research question: *how do food insecure female headed households experience the contributions of poverty reduction programmes in meeting their food security needs?* The chapter commences with a diagram depicting the drivers influencing the participants' experience of food insecurity. Internal and External Drivers¹⁷ consist of personal and environmental factors, reported in the data, which shaped or swayed participant perspectives and behaviours in relation to food security and poverty reduction programmes. Diagram 2 illustrates how the experience of food insecurity, depicted as a fluid line, fluctuated over time through variations of the central research theme of *'I have nothing'*.

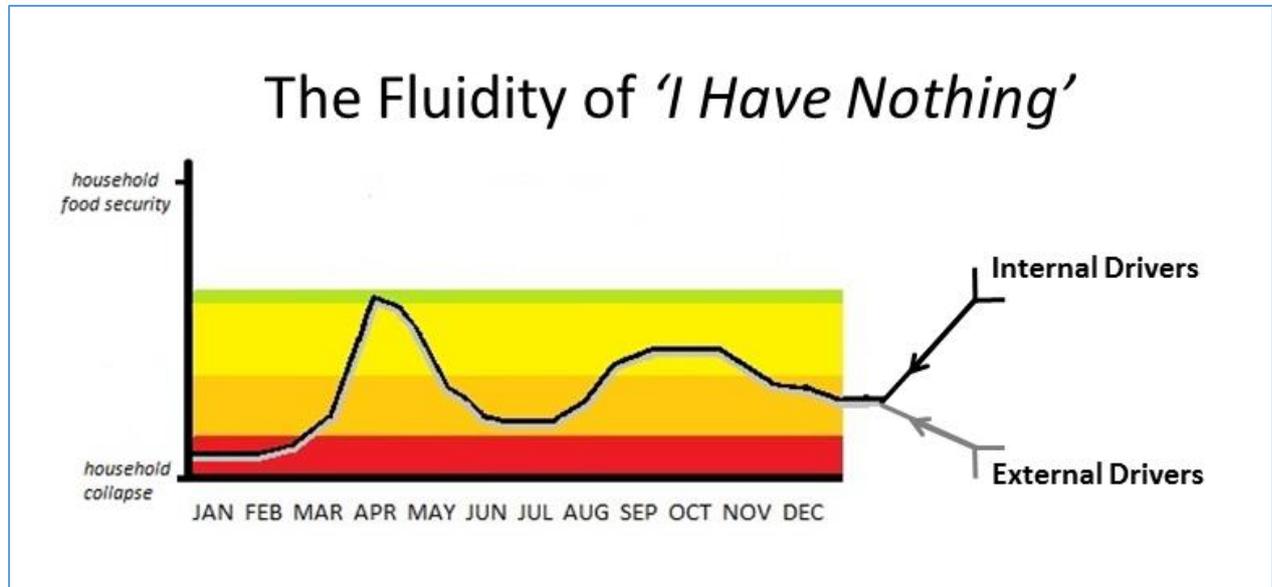
The fluid line, representing variable levels of *'I have nothing'*, was influenced by Internal and External Drivers. Internal Drivers were associated with environmental (social networks and programmes) and personal (capabilities and aspirations) factors that determined participant actions to obtain resources when needing food. Within the research, Internal Drivers consist of four themes, each capturing a facet of the women's subjective, dynamic and adaptive stance towards meeting their food related needs: *'soldiering on'*, *'making a plan'*, *'watching and waiting'* and *'eating - one eye open'*. Participants reported and were observed to continually move (along the diagram x and y axis) from one theme quadrant to another, occasionally operating in more than one quadrant at a time depending on whether they were pursuing single or multiple resources simultaneously. Resources refer primarily to food however – as observed by the researcher - other material and non-material resources, such as money, clothing, social connections and information, were also pursued given that they were used to leverage access to food.

Also consisting of four themes, External Drivers represent the women's perspectives on effective and ineffective poverty reduction programmes (an environmental factor) and how these perceptions influenced their choices and ways of engagement: *'start ups'*; *'window dressers'*; *'mixed messages'* and *'nurturing nutrition'*. The diagram depicts only how participants

¹⁷ Detailed in Chapter 3, both Internal and External Drivers were found through data analysis.

perceived programmes during the study period and not what the actual functioning of the programmes was. The chapter proceeds with a resume of the findings pertaining to each of the diagrams.

Diagram 2: The Drivers Influencing the Experience of Food Insecurity



4.2. The Fluidity of 'I Have Nothing', Diagram Description

Participants described themselves and their households throughout the study as having 'nothing' in terms of food resources. The meaning of the word 'nothing' was fluid as it was observed to change with context with, participants describing themselves as having 'nothing' in different ways in varied scenarios. For example, 'nothing' was used to describe a cupboard without food, and with food but that was inaccessible (not theirs to eat), insufficient (may last one meal) or inadequate (not healthy and/or their choice).

Donna – *'they wanted to come for Christmas but I said sorry...I don't have nothing'.*

Ethel – *'I had that but I have nothing now until the end of the month'*

Abira – *'I cooked some potato chips that day when we didn't have nothing'*

Picture 1 captures Ethel's food cupboard. Her son purchased most of the items pictured for his daughter, who stays with Ethel. Ethel does not eat her granddaughter's food, and so she describes herself as having 'nothing' to eat.



Picture 1: Ethel's Food Cupboard

Picture Quote: Ethel – *'It's for the child...I have got nothing'*

With multiple meanings, the fluid operating space of *'nothing'* is thick. In **Diagram 2** the line depicting *'nothing'* illustrates observed and communicated moments in which participants moved from one meaning of *'nothing'* to another. The green bar¹⁸ refers to fleeting moments of having *'something'*, the yellow bar refers to having access to more and diverse resources (like information, which provides opportunities to enter the green zone), the orange bar is the last space of manageable survival before the red – the danger zone of household collapse. Participants moved towards or away from food security and household collapse based on helpful or harmful Internal and External Drivers, which varied seasonally (fairly predictable) and daily (fairly unpredictable). For example, some programmes close over school holidays making fewer sources of help available to participants over June / July and mid-November to mid-February (Christmas break).

In response to the expected Christmas break seasonal shift in food resource availability, Ethel, Abira, Doris and Elizabeth left North Town and travelled to find food with relatives. In contrast, Donna used her pension grant to plan ahead with a year-long investment in a food stokvel and so she hosted six additional family members for Christmas (**Picture 2**).

¹⁸ Each colour bar, along with the entirety of Diagram 2, was developed from the findings. A graph-like depiction was found by the researcher to best represent the dynamic movement of participants as they navigated their space of *'nothing'*, perpetually moving towards and away from food security / household collapse.



Picture 2: Items from Donna's Food Stokvel

Picture Quote: Donna - 'Yoh, we used to go to loan sharks¹⁹ by this time Jan-Feb, we eating loan sharks money for grocery but now till March I still have a lot of food'.

All participants described January as the toughest month, the period of time when any personal savings and food hampers distributed by programmes and churches (**Picture 3**) had run out and school / programmes were yet to start up again.

Elizabeth – 'like now in January, it is mos²⁰ a long month. But February is short, then the food is coming every day in'.



Picture 3A and B: End of Year Food Hampers

Picture 3B Quote: Elizabeth – 'And then they [a church] give me the bucket. It was full, full of clothes and food. Was 2kg sugar, 2kg rice, fish oil bottle and masalas and two tins baked beans and tins of corn beef and viennas...[how long did it last?]...2-3 weeks'

¹⁹ Local term for microlenders

²⁰ Colloquial, 'it is'

Participant's experience of having '*nothing*' also fluctuated daily. **Picture 4** captures two of Ethel's fluid food sources. Ethel often has something to eat on Tuesdays, when she accesses donated foods through attending a local programme called Arise²¹. At Arise, she is either provided with a packet of food or she gets to choose for herself what she wants such as packs of salad greens which she takes home to boil with pap (pictured). Although helpful, the food she gets from Arise rarely lasts until Thursday and so she continues to describe herself throughout the week as having '*nothing*'. Also in **Picture 4**, on occasion, people in Ethel's social network stop by and bring her items which she can eat – like a pack of plums (pictured) – and for that day she has something but she does not know when these people are coming and if they will bring her something that she will be able to eat – and so she continues to operate in a fluid space of '*I have nothing*'.



Picture 4A and B: Ethel's Fluid Food Sources

Picture 4A Quote: Ethel – '*if people say that it's Tuesday [Arise] today then I am glad*'

Throughout the research period, participants struggled to comprehend the meaning of food security and insecurity, and to differentiate between the two terms.

Donna – '*You see these things, this 'food security' we don't really understand. We hear this on the TV, this food security / food insecurity but we don't really understand. We do not clearly understand*'

²¹ Although participants and programmes have been given pseudonyms, those pseudonyms are at times still omitted to ensure the greatest amount confidentiality against local community readers who will be supplied with a copy of the research.

Through media exposure, participants were most familiar with the term 'food security' which they associated with healthy eating.

Doris - *'Food security is that you have to eat the right food, at the right time' // 'fruit, vegetables...it's very healthy; that is the real food that the body wants'*

While participants noted similarities between their life and descriptions of food insecurity, they repeatedly described themselves as food secure. Participants saw themselves as food secure because they found ways, using their belief and knowledge systems, to eat healthily (**Picture 5**).



Picture 5: A 'Healthy' Meal

Picture Quote: Donna – *'this is a homemade bread. We were going to have the supper with the tea' // Doris – 'with your bread and peanut butter, it's very healthy'*

Donna – *"Yes, like this one, it saves my money, the fish fingers you don't have to make big pot, you just have one, but you know that you have healthy food, just take one, one, one per person and you know that you got your nutrition"*

Abira – *'it's a little piece of bread with water...but, you got it very healthy'*

Each participant determined for themselves which food items were healthy or unhealthy based on personal experience, and information from authoritative figures like doctors and radio hosts. For example, one participant argued that sugar cannot be unhealthy because she was told by nurses to use it in rehydrate mix, another believed that sugar is healthy because it is a useful item supported by recognisable brands – *'what about sugar makes it healthy? The name'*.

In navigating their space of *'nothing'*, using their personal belief and knowledge systems, participants pursued their own ideals of healthy eating and food security. They appeared largely unaware of the contradictory nature and health implications of their food choices. However, it should be noted that given their space of *'nothing'*, their food choices were limited to begin

with. For example, one participant with high blood pressure – on the advice of her doctor – eats two plain slices of toast every morning with black tea. To make the meal palatable, she adds three sugars to her tea. It was unclear at what point her meal was informed by her lack of options (if she had more purchasing power, would she eat a different breakfast?), knowledge or lack of knowledge (toast is good for high blood pressure, sugar is not), and personal choice. The participants' confusion as to what food was healthy or unhealthy, or where they were (food insecure) and what in essence they aspire to (food security) was observed to further complicate how they navigated their space of '*nothing*'²².

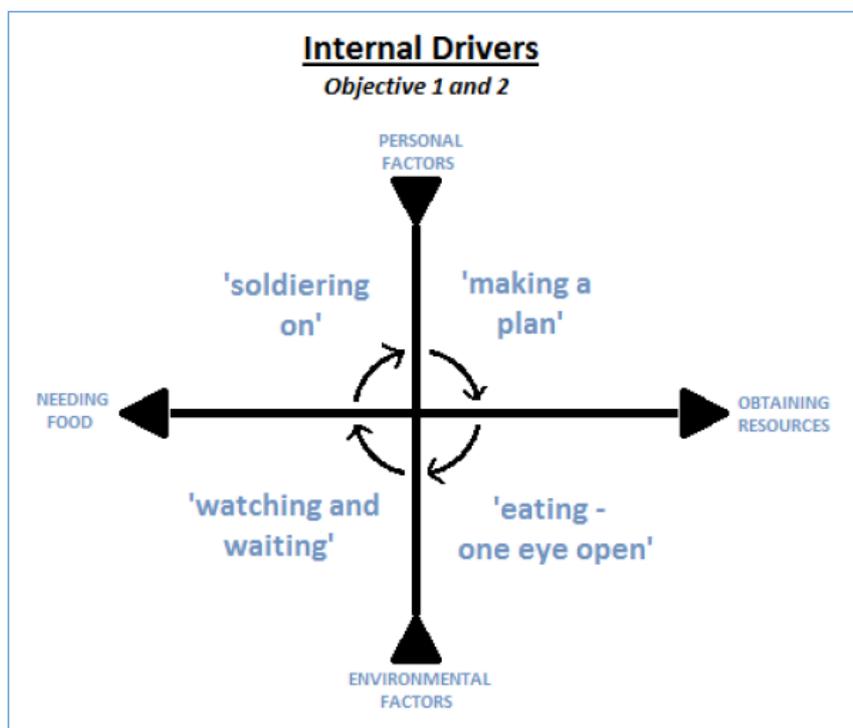
Although challenged by their limited choice and opportunities and confused knowledge constructs to successfully navigate their space of 'nothing', one major aspect helping participants to manoeuvre through their poverty and sustain a degree of household survival was the role of personal and environmental factors, as described in the Internal Driver **Diagram 3** depicted below.

²² For example, they were observed to pursue resources that were not beneficial to their wellbeing, such as rolls over vegetables.

4.3. Internal Drivers: Managing 'Nothing' from the Inside Out

Diagram 3 depicts the findings pertaining to the first two research objectives: what food insecure households believe food in/security is and how food insecure households experience food insecurity. Four themes emerged from the data analysis, each describing an Internal Driver; a position from which participants engaged with the fluidity of their space of 'nothing' in the context of poverty: *'soldiering on'*; *'watching and waiting'*; *'eating - one eye open'* and *'making a plan'*.

Diagram 3: Internal Drivers, Subjective Stances in Managing 'Nothing'



The diagram shows how participants respond to their food insecurity based on what they believe (aspire to) and what they are capable of achieving. Environmental and personal factors influenced the capacity of a participant to move from needing food to obtaining resources, and back again. Environmental factors included social networks, poverty reduction programmes and the food insecure / impoverished context in which participants live. Personal factors refer to participant capabilities and aspirations which inform what, if and how participants pursue food security through resource gain.

While participants did rotate through the diagram quadrants, if they were pursuing more than one resource, they could also operate in multiple quadrants simultaneously. Findings revealed

that the women were confused about what food in/security was. Not having (enough) food was a part of life, a facet of living in poverty from day to day with 'nothing'.

4.3.1. Internal Driver: Theme, 'Soldiering On'

The theme of 'soldiering on' had two categories – 'living in poverty' and 'enduring adversity'. Participants were constrained by their circumstances from obtaining resources which would bring about the quality of life and food security that they pursued.

Donna – *'And you know this grandchild? She says 'I am tired of these rolls [aid hand out] - you must cook food, please mama'...she doesn't know I got nothing, every day we eating rolls. She says, 'I am tired, I want food now' – she doesn't know that there is no food'.*

Abira – *'I am hungry, my stomach is grounding here then I drink a glass of water then that grumpies go away then I feel alright'*

Nevertheless, they soldiered on every day trusting and strategizing that provision would be made through the goodwill of God, others or by taking action themselves. While living in poverty, participants endured adversity – looking inwards to personal factors which served to sustain them as they existed in a space of needing food. Finding themselves without, participants often took solace in their faith.

Abira – *'A bit of a wobble but, life goes on. What can you do, my sweetheart, life goes on – you just live, live every day and pray to God every day and say thank you and I mean – you haven't got, what you going to do? To sit at home, you get nothing – so I walk every day, if I can have a chance to go, I do it'*

Faith also informed participant action; it led them to help others in need. In sharing what little they had, participants placed trust in the provision of God and their social networks. When participants received goods in kind, it was thus taken as an affirmation of God's provision and the benefit of sharing from a position of faith. When participants gave out of a sense of faith, it differed from their use of social networks. Social networks functioned on fair exchanges; one gave to get in accordance with a community established framework of resource sharing. In contrast, in faith-giving participants 'blessed' others with gifts; they did not give to get. However, it should be noted that in sharing with their faith networks, participants strengthened their connections and increased the likelihood that in a time of need, they would be helped by indirect reciprocity.

Doris – *‘The one hand must help the other, this is what the Lord wants, we must help each other’*

Abira – *‘I think for giving to people, God also provide for you’ // God bless me with a 10 kg chicken’*

While faith acted as a source of sustenance for participants enduring adversity, participants were also proactive in using their personal factors to pull themselves away from needing food and towards obtaining resources through ‘making a plan’.

4.3.2. Internal Driver: Theme, ‘Making a Plan’

The theme of ‘making a plan’ had two categories – being ‘street smart’ and ‘pursuing ideals’. In the midst of having ‘nothing’, participants used their knowledge and skills to create means through which they could access and obtain resources. The creation of a means was attitudinal, rather than accept their situation they proactively sought to change it through action.

Abira - *‘I make a plan, there is always a plan – I tell him [visitor] also, there is always a plan, just go take a walk. You will see that that walk you take, you will come back with something and then sometimes they do – they go and take a walk. And then they come back and say (!) you were right. You see that? Always use your mind – don’t sit and mope. All of us got stress, a lot of stress but we gone sit like that how things gone come right? Do something to make that plan’.*

Donna – *‘This week, we are going to plant’ // ‘I am going to sell [homemade linen] on Saturday’*

Elizabeth – *‘If I phone my sister...and then Sunday she come...they bring bread...they help for me’.*

Each plan required street smartness, a keen sense on how to navigate social networks and how to use programmes to their benefit. While similarities in plan making existed, each participant used a unique skill set (built through life experiences) and available resources to make plans best suited to her needs and the needs of her household. For example, Doris relied on her faith networks to create a community of mutual help, Elizabeth expanded her social networks in to a local wealthier neighbourhood where her grandchildren went to school, and Donna used her programme connections to gain access to resources.

Living dependent on her husband’s grant and any odd jobs that she was able to find, Abira was the most forthcoming in describing the plans she made to fill the gaps in her access to

resources. Rather than actively engaging local programmes for help or making use of her North Town social networks, Abira crafted her own plans. Making a plan for Abira often meant going for a walk, leaving home in search of any opportunity for resource gain. Abira and her husband would walk almost every day, collecting golf balls and selling them for resale to their bridge friends²³.

Abira – ‘Sometimes you sit at your home and you got nothing, and then you must put your knowledge together to think – “Eish, what you gonna do today, where you gonna have money?” because you can’t lend by people [in North Town] because people don’t have so I don’t go lend me R20 because where tomorrow am I gonna have that R20? So I don’t bother with that people, I go for a walk. And then maybe I find balls and then I can go give it to him [bridge friend] and get R20, R30 and then at least I can put something on the table’ (Picture 6A)

Abira’s bridge friends also helped them to save money by sharing the dog²⁴ food they were given by drivers and pedestrians (Picture 6B). In return, Abira helped her friends with ‘small minor stuff’ like cotton wool.



Picture 6A and B: Abira’s Plan Making and Use of Social Networks

Picture 6B Quote: Abira – ‘they will always share with us’

Participants were observed to make plans based on their capabilities and aspirations. They used the tools available to them, their capabilities, to pursue an end goal which was defined by what they aspired to. Participants had large aspirations, for example improving their living standards through moving to a better neighbourhood (Elizabeth) or starting a sewing collective (Donna). They also had smaller aspirations, like being able to put food on their table for their family

²³ A small homeless community who begged daily at the traffic stops of a nearby bridge

²⁴ Dogs are kept for security: Abira – ‘Ja, people is breaking in in our yard...that’s why I have the dogs’

every day. The kinds of food which participants sought out was determined by their individual belief and knowledge systems (which at times acted in contradiction to their health needs), and realised through participant capability and resource availability (which was limited by their spaces of 'nothing').

In pursuit of their ideals, participants used their street smarts to formulate plans. While some plans made by participants saw results in a day, others could be stalled by environmental factors like a dependency on a slow social network connection or a sudden loss of assets (see *Elizabeth*).

4.3.3. Internal Driver: Theme, 'Watching and Waiting'

The theme of 'watching and waiting' had two categories – 'using social networks' and 'assessing programmes'.

When not forced by circumstance to immediately engage in potentially risky behaviour, for example the use of micro-lenders, participants waited and watched for opportunities that would be most advantageous to resource gain. Operating from a position of needing food, they pursued opportunities they perceived to be of value. Both the availability of opportunities and the perception of those opportunities were influenced by environmental factors. For example, social networks were used to gain knowledge on the viability of resource gain pursuits:

Abira – 'Donna, tell me a story – you join this gooi gooi²⁵ now and then?..I was thinking I would talk to my husband about this story, I would like to join and see how it works out'

Participants also used their social networks and personal experiences and observations to assess programmes. Participants constantly scrutinised programmes in North Town, observing and judging how programmes managed their projects, staff and the community, and from there, they decided the value of connecting or not connecting with a programme.

Donna – 'They [programmes] say they understand but, they don't'.

Maintaining a good public image was very important in North Town, to be someone that others could trust, someone that people wanted to include in their social network.

Ethel – [People can trust her on her word] 'because I never change my face or lie like this'

²⁵ Or Stokvel, a rotating credit circle.

While being included in a social network can have its benefits, it can also limit personal development. Participants were observed sharing their resources when they had very little, and turning away from opportunities because they were frowned upon by their household or community.

Donna – *'but they don't want, it's about many years now, no one wants the garden... They think that to be in the garden you are very poor and you got T.B.'*

Another reason participants used for not attending programmes was their personal lack of availability.

Doris – *'I don't want to be a part of that community [programme], I am too busy'*.

Time is a very valued commodity in North Town, it is used to manage households and maintain social networks. Despite being head of the household, participants were observed to not be entirely autonomous as they were expected - given their gender and age, to fulfil a set of responsibilities within their homes including food sourcing, meal preparation, housework and child care. As most of the participants were pensioners, they were often left to care for their grandchildren while their children looked for work, worked or socialized. Participants also socialized however, their outings were often communicated to come with added benefits. For example, on her way to church Doris stops in twice a week with a friend who always shares a meal with her. Socializing, or the building and maintenance of social networks, is time consuming but has both a short term (like weekly meals) and longer term benefit which was recognized by the household members. In contrast to household responsibilities and the gains of socializing, the benefit of programmes was not always apparent to participants and thus they found it difficult to justify (for themselves and to their households) why they should spend their time attending one. For a participant to join a programme their household would have to create space for them to do so and thus programmes were assessed, namely in terms of direct and indirect resource gain. In effect, for a participant to join a programme, the resource gain needed to outweigh the time loss and household/social costs.

For example, Donna was able to negotiate with her family that she could have the time to work in the garden and attend Woven Ministries because the programmes afforded the opportunity of fresh vegetables (**Picture 7**) and money from food and craft sales.



Picture 7: Donna's Morogo / Teku-Teku (African Spinach) for Sale

Picture Quote: Donna – *'I put it in a plastic...then I say R11. And the R1 go for [garden] electricity. The R10 is mine'*

Needing food and being dependent on environmental factors to gain access to resources often left participants in a state of limbo. Living inhibited by their lack of material and non-material capacity to improve their situation, participants could often only wait and watch for an opportunity to obtain resources. When entering into a space of potential resource gain, participants retained their street smartness and cautiously navigated their new found relationships, often 'eating - one eye open'.

4.3.4. Internal Driver: Theme, 'Eating - One Eye Open'

The theme 'eating - one eye open' had two categories – 'living out poverty' and 'dealing with broken promises'.

Participants lived out their poverty when they were forced by circumstance to give up aspects of their autonomy. Living in a space of having '*nothing*', participants were dependent on fluctuating sources of food related resources which they were wary of trusting. For example, a new bakkie (truck) started bringing vegetables in to North Town, creating competition for the trusted source, Mr I:

Abira – 'You must be careful with those people... I don't trust other bakkies...you buy veggies by them but you don't know them...they give to the people on credit but they put more money on that than what they sell to the people....[and] they don't tell the people. But that [Mr I] is an honest person'

Their dependency on environmental factors, which included social networks and programmes, to access resources increased their vulnerability to household collapse. Being dependent on

environmental factors also placed the women in a state of limbo, in which they lacked the autonomous capacity and needed resources to improve their situation. For example, each of the women's households were heavily dependent on the social grant system [main source of household income] and although they were meant to receive the state stipulated sum every month, that was not always the case.

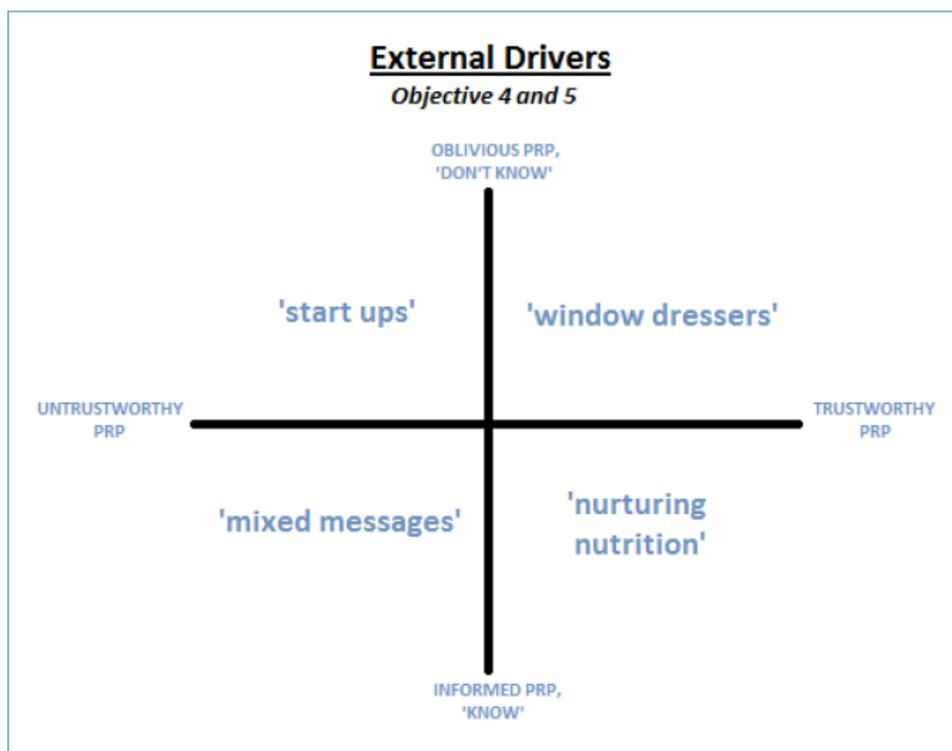
Abira – [Grandson's grant] *'you see these last few months his grant money had not been the same. He has meant to be getting say R330 but then he get R170 or maybe R120 like so... even my husband's money [Pension Grant] was cut. He paid from Dec, Jan, Feb – only R870 from his grant'*.

The unreliability of the sources of household income and unpredictability of resources meant that participants learnt how to deal with broken promises, through making plans and soldiering on and even watching and waiting for better suited opportunities to meet their needs and exercise their capabilities and aspirations. For some, better suited opportunities were encapsulated by the programmes offered in North Town. However, navigating the use of these and other programmes came with its own challenges as depicted by the External Drivers in **Diagram 4**.

4.4. External Drivers: Managing 'Nothing' from the Outside In

Diagram 4 depicts the findings pertaining to the last two research objectives; it describes from the perspective of the participants (female heads of food insecure households) the effective and ineffective characteristics of poverty reduction programmes. The diagram refers to the challenges of engaging programmes and how participant involvement in the more formal help environment of poverty reduction programmes was either encouraged or discouraged based on perceived programme capacity to help or hinder their pursuit of food security. Although programmes could arguably move from one quadrant to another, they were not communicated by participants or observed by the researcher to move during the research period, hence a lack of movement represented within the diagram.

Diagram 4: External Drivers, Perceptions Informing Programme Engagement



4.4.1. External Driver: Theme, 'Start Ups'

The theme of 'start ups' had two categories – 'under review' and 'settling in'.

In contrast to the Internal Driver theme of 'Eating – One Eye Open' in which participants communicated how they engaged with and experienced programmes, 'Start Ups' refers to how programmes encouraged or discouraged participation based on how they entered the community (their design and introductory action). Programmes still settling in to North Town

were placed under review by participants who watched and waited to see the benefits and trustworthiness of the 'start up' programmes. At times, forced by circumstance, participants did engage yet to be vetted programmes – moving them in to a position of 'eating – one eye open'. When the women could take the time to assess new programmes, social networks were valuable in providing information regarding any initiatives that they were unfamiliar with.

Donna – [On Stamp Books] *'Its good you tell me, I am going to do for my grandchild'*.

Ethel – *'Yes, [Donna] was telling me. She is going to come and tell me about a new [programme] and then I go to join'*.

Programmes in North Town had to be vetted and tested via evaluations shared amongst the social network before they could move from being considered 'untrustworthy' to 'trustworthy'. New programmes were viewed as outsiders, those who 'don't know'. They could only be trusted once they were able to prove they understood North Town.

Getting to know and understand North Town, was evaluated on the extent to which programmes settled in to a way of doing things that either encouraged or discouraged community partnership, collaboration and support. Without sufficient understanding of North Town community dynamics, start up programmes could be pushed out of North Town. For example, one participant described how a business woman came to North Town and although what she was doing was helpful, those she helped did not appreciate being told what to do so they voted her out of the community – *'She gave us R1000. She say, we must sell and every time we sell we must [save]. And then by Christmas, we can take that money and leave the other. We were doing that and it was nice but they come, the clever one, they come and say "she can't come and tell us what to do, this is our time now, this is our place". And that lady? Oh, she left. That good lady'*.

The design of programmes also determined their perceived accessibility. For example, several participants excluded themselves from attending programmes because they felt that they had nothing to offer and / or they had health barriers to participating.

Abira – [on being invited to join a craft initiative] *'and that is also working with a needle and my hands is ooh! Very sore, I have arthritis...When I try, my hands get numb'*

While some start up programmes could be pushed out of North Town, other programmes based on their origin status (government, big business) were enabled to come and go within the community – as represented by the next theme ‘Window Dressers’.

4.4.2. External Driver: Theme, ‘Window Dressers’

The theme of ‘Window Dressers’ had two categories – ‘political building blocks’ and ‘half help’.

In discussing all of the stakeholders (from community to government) involved in North Town, one participant was asked whose responsibility they thought it was to help the community. They responded – *‘The City of Cape Town is the one who is supposed to help, they did used to give us but it depends on the budget’*. Participants noted the contributions coming in to their community, particularly those from the City of Cape Town, the Provincial Department of Social Development and the South African Social Security Agency. Contributions from the different levels of government were associated with corresponding political parties – *‘Ooh, the [Democratic Alliance] DA is too much here’* – and thus constituted ‘political building blocks’. Local government was experienced to help sporadically and yet, unlike local programmes, they retained a degree of community trust. This level of community trust enabled government to implement a series of initiatives in North Town. However, it should be noted that in spite of coming from a relatively trusted source, government projects could miss real needs and perpetuate poverty if they did not appropriately engage the community in design and implementation. For example, an electric water pump was installed by the City of Cape Town for Khula Seed Garden and while garden members are grateful for the resource they also struggle to pay for the electricity to run the pump, to keep up its maintenance and to keep it safe from theft. When members cannot afford to buy electricity or the pump breaks down, both of which occurred during the study period, the plants in the garden quickly die and members lose their time and financial investments as well as their access to fresh food and income.

Donna – *‘Now even the box of electricity is not working... They [a sponsor] gave us this tomato, it grows so long... but, now it didn’t grow nicely because there was no water’*.

Well-meaning programmes can also inadvertently hinder self-upliftment through failing to recognize the politics of supply and demand. North Town, surrounded by wealthier areas, is a unique space within which exists several government, NGO and community run initiatives geared towards poverty reduction and social upliftment. One far reaching initiative is the

distribution of donated food, particularly of day old bakery rolls. These rolls form a staple in the community:

Doris – *‘Here in North Town, that people bring food...and there is a lot of people coming to...hall to the kitchen to come ask for the rolls. Every day they getting’ ...[from Arise] ‘The rolls you can use it for two days or so’*

Another participant, Donna, has previously relied upon the source of rolls for the survival of her household – *‘You can’t say you can be dying if you don’t eat. We were surviving about rolls, rolls in the morning, rolls in the evening’*. However, the free distribution of food has also meant that she has been hesitant to invest in re-opening her TRED kitchen:

Donna – *‘And another thing, here it’s not like other areas. We do what the TRED said, we make the vetkoek but here they give you the free rolls. So now you’ve got no customers to come buy your vetkoek’*.

Donna’s hesitancy to re-open her kitchen has been compounded by her lack of means. While she has the equipment and knowledge to run her kitchen, she does not personally have the financial capital to start and sustain a business – especially considering her doubts that there will be many customers able and willing to pay a fair price for a meal. Of all the participants, Donna was the most active programme user. However, in spite of years of programme training and assistance her household has only been able to cope rather than thrive. Donna’s experience thus highlights the ‘half help’ that programmes offer, and the pervasive nature of poverty and food insecurity.

4.4.3. External Driver: Theme, ‘Mixed Messages’

The theme ‘mixed messages’ had two categories – ‘double standards’ and ‘communication breakdown’.

Participants had some appreciation for the challenges which programmes faced in addressing issues in North Town. However, they struggled to trust those programmes which gave off the impression that they knew North Town and then made promises, sending mixed messages using double standards, which the participants perceived to be unfulfilled.

Donna – *‘because they said that they come to help North Town but I don’t understand really the help of them. I can say...if its hundred, they giving fifty’*.

Even with half help and broken promises, participants continued to use programmes. Stretched thin by a lack of resources, they would turn a blind eye to shortfalls as long as the benefits of a programme continued to outweigh its cost. For example, the women often found themselves in a difficult position when offered low quality donated foods²⁶.

Doris – *‘I rather take it then it doesn’t look so bad’*

Donna – *‘I can’t, I stay hungry...[but] I can’t complain, they giving us’*

While some were prepared to try and eat the food, others made an excuse to not take it or did take and then later threw it away or used it for compost in their home gardens. The women felt trapped by circumstance; in order to ensure a flow of resources they had to display a demand for goods which was manufactured when the item was useless (low quality food) and genuine when it was useful.

It should be noted here, that participants did not primarily attend programmes to access food but rather food supplied was an added benefit to the other needs which the programmes met, such as a social and/or educational and/or occupational need. While the gain of resources was still key to encouraging households to facilitate the attendance of participants, participants did not view their own attendance primarily from a resource gain perspective (the meeting of other personal needs was perceived to be of equal significance to resource gain). One reason for participants stating that they did not attend programmes for food was that the design of many local programmes meant that rewards, like end of year food hampers (**Picture 3**), could only be accumulated over time through regular attendance. However, several of the women felt like they could not make an attendance commitment due to the instability and general ‘busyness’ of their lives. Busy maintaining their households and social networks (household responsibilities and assured resource gain), participants felt that they could not prioritize the attendance of programmes (potential resource gain). Therefore, those who attended did so when they were available and for their own reasons such as the opportunity to learn, to socialize with community friends and to break the monotony of their daily lives.

Doris – [Why do you go?] *‘I don’t go for the food...I am going...then I am not so boring at home...I am making friends with other people and so on’*

²⁶ It was unclear at what point these foods became inedible. It may not be a source but rather distribution chain and storage issue (Appendix L).

Donna – [Why do you go?] *'because I want to learn'*

Ethel – [why do you go?] *'Exercise and talk'*

Those that attended programmes were also expected to give back, to financially contribute to the running of the programme and any end of year events. This was a contentious point for participants, who had started attending programmes because they had been told that they would be helped only to find that in turn they were expected to help the helper.

Ethel – *'They help themselves. They say I must give R5, for what!?''*

Donna – *'They help people to help themselves [programmes]'*

The challenges in accessing beneficial help through programmes meant that participants either stayed away from programmes and/or held resentment towards them for saying that they were there to help the community but that help was conditional. Relationships between participants and programmes were further strained over a perceived favouritism of staff²⁷ and lack of transparency from programmes. Participants argued that although the aid that came in to North Town was for the community, they had often observed local programme staff going home with the best aid items. One participant noted after observing a programme with local employees receiving clothing donations - *'They [staff] sell it here on the corner and what do they do with that money? They don't spend it on the community, they keep it for them, their houses is built big'*.

Participants also stated that local programme staff appeared to make subjective decisions on the distribution of resources (food, job openings) and tended to only share with those already in their social networks.

Abira – *'that's why there is stuff happening here in North Town that lots of people don't know and if something happens then it is for who you know! It's by the face they see, that's why most of us don't know nothing'*

Elizabeth – *'They don't share with me but I say its fine, I know that these people don't like me'*

There existed many incidences in which participants, out of a perceived necessity, turned a blind eye to the shortfalls of programmes. The lack of genuine dialogue between programme

²⁷ Local staff choices also fed in to racial tensions which only fuelled feelings of distrust towards programmes – *'they [programme] only help the coloureds', 'we are supposed to be together, they have forgotten us'*.

users and those that design and implement programmes was compounded when participants expressed their concerns and offered solutions only to feel unheard and rebuffed. At this point, participants either expressed an understanding of the challenges faced by programmes or returned to reiterating that programmes should not send mixed messages – i.e. if they come to help, then they should help and do so fairly and with transparency.

Abira – [On accepting the actions of local programme staff] *'In this life, things are so expensive that most of the people, they live for themselves'*

A breakdown in communication was also perceived in the double standards of programme education, message and action. For example, participants were educated by programmes on the guidelines and value of healthy eating and exercise, and were then provided with unhealthy foods like donuts and sugary drinks.

Donna – *'they say that thing is wrong but they give us'*

The double standards of programme health education and action confused participants who went on to create belief and knowledge systems, in conjunction with their personal experiences, which informed their eating habits and aspirations.

Ethel – [Why have you categorized muffins as healthy?] *'I like them very much'*...[and tuna as unhealthy?] *'It doesn't make me feel alright'*

Although participants encountered challenges when engaging with programmes, they remained appreciative of programme contributions to their survival. While participants struggled to trust some programmes, other programmes were held up as exemplars of sound community knowledge, awareness and trustworthiness.

4.4.4. External Driver: Theme, 'Nurturing Nutrition'

The theme 'Nurturing Nutrition' had two categories –'Affirmation of Personhood' and 'Equipped and Enabled'.

Participants responded well to programmes which affirmed their personhood, those that made them feel seen and heard. In describing effective programmes, participants wanted to be proud of their association with initiatives, they wanted to be treated fairly and given choice and opportunities.

Donna – *'I like programmes that I am also going to benefit'*

Participants were most appreciative of programmes which they felt addressed real (community) needs and did so in a successful and tangible manner. One such programme was Benji's, a locally run and community supported feeding scheme for the children of North Town.

Abira – *'That child cannot wait to get out of school. He will see that Benji's is not yet open but he will sit there till she opens because he is hungry'*.

The work of TRED was also appreciated, with participants encouraging Donna to re-open her kitchen:

Ethel – *'I think Donna should go back to the kitchen'*

Abira – *'like what Donna did by that Kitchen. That was very good...If she can start something like that again then it will be good. I will help her'*

Donna felt proud of and empowered by her involvement in TRED, which supplied her with the tools and training she needed to run her own community kitchen. In turn, the community gained from having the kitchen as an affordable resource of fresh and healthy meals. However, although equipped to run her kitchen, Donna's efforts were cut short when TRED moved on to the next community. Loss of TRED support, theft of her gas canisters, as well as an unsustainable business model, all meant that she was forced to close her kitchen. When asked what it would take to re-open it, Donna argued that it was not about money but rather sustained and reliable help in the form of items needed (for example, the food for the meals).

Donna - *'money is not good. You get sick and then the people take you to the doctor with this money. It is not working its job...then the project is dying. But, if you take this food the project is going on'*

North Town also has a role in the success and failure of programmes with participants highlighting their community as both the cause of and solution to problems. In their positioning of community, participants also pointed to a tension between programmes and users:

Abira – *'If [help] comes from outside...what we do is share it...we like to give to people' // 'If I cook tonight then that food goes for tomorrow, there is always someone who comes who is hungry and I give them a plate of food'*

Donna – *‘Why they, the community people, put the rubbish next to the garden!? Now they burn the rubbish instead of moving the rubbish. Oh, funny people of North Town – they are selfish. It is better for them to say to us “come let’s move this rubbish”, its better. I even blame [programme] because...they don’t care...they can never say, “okay, take these 2 young men, move this rubbish and give them maybe R20...R30’ Why can’t they do that?’ // ‘We don’t want. Why!? We independent – we are not under them. These people are under the [programme], we are not.*

Programmes which got the balance of helping while empowering right, were the ones deemed most successful in North Town. These few effective programmes created lasting legacies for other programmes to live up to with Donna, in spite of having closed her kitchen, still referring to TRED as *‘number one in the world’* for equipping, enabling and empowering her.

4. 5. Integration: the Perceived Contribution of Poverty Reduction Programmes

In spite of ongoing government and civil society led poverty reduction initiatives, the proportion of households in South Africa which experience food security, has reached a plateau. The Diagrams (2-4) presented in this chapter address this plateau through answering the research question: *How do food insecure female headed households experience the contributions of poverty reduction programmes in meeting their food security needs?*

An integrated interpretation of the study findings found that although participants made use of several poverty reduction services from the social grant system to local sources of donated food, most of them did not perceive themselves as programme users. While all of the participants made use of programmes to varying degrees, they arguably did not make use of every opportunity available to them. Non-attendance at programmes was found to be both a personal and forced choice. When participants did engage with programmes, they did so cautiously and for their own reasons (personal gain). When they were able to decide if and which programmes to attend, and to what degree they would invest themselves, the following were perceived as important programme factors: a positive degree of usefulness, trustworthiness, community awareness, transparency, efficacy, reliability and respectability. Participants wanted to be treated with dignity and respect, they wanted to be educated and empowered and they sought out and encouraged programmes within their community which they perceived to meet real needs, like child feeding schemes and job creation.

In conclusion, the research found that the participants (female heads of food insecure households) experienced programmes to be a 'half help' in contributing to the food security needs of their household. Participant's engagement with programmes was heavily influenced by the quality of their living standards. Living in a space of '*I have nothing*', participant's food insecurity was just one aspect of their lives in poverty. Moving towards or away from food security and household collapse was found to be dependent on personal (participant capabilities and aspirations) and environmental (programmes and social networks) factors. While participants made use of their personal and environmental factors simultaneously, programmes were perceived to operate in isolation. Functioning separate from an engagement with social networks and the capabilities and aspirations of participants, programmes were found to only momentarily sustain rather than uplift participants and their households. While participants appreciated the assistance which they received from programmes, they continued to live in a space of '*nothing*', a developmental challenge which could be better addressed holistically from the grassroots up with an integrated multi-sectoral (community to government) approach.

4.6. Summary

This chapter has provided evidence for answering the research question: *How do food insecure female headed households experience the contributions of poverty reduction programmes in meeting their food security needs?* Findings indicate that the contribution of programmes to the food security needs of participants constituted a 'half help'. In order to address the current plateau in the proportion of households in South Africa experiencing food security, research findings suggest that poverty reduction programmes should include the personal and environmental factors (Diagrams 3 and 4) of their users in the design and implementation of their initiatives. The chapter concludes with an argument that programmes would be better equipped to help their users if there existed a working integrated multi-sectoral approach which holistically addressed the challenges of poverty and food insecurity from the grassroots up²⁸.

²⁸ It should be noted that the inclusion of grassroots is not viewed by the researcher as an exclusion of formal state programmes (the social grant system was the participants main source of income and thus a major driving force behind the running of social network) but that those who are impacted by interventions are enabled to identify the issues that affect them and to work together with state and non-state institutions to holistically address them.

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1. Introduction

Hendriks and Olivier (2015: 555) describe the household food insecurity levels in South Africa as ‘unacceptable’. Since 2008, in spite of continued efforts from the state and civil society (NGOs), there has existed a plateau in the proportion of South African households experiencing food security (Shisana et al, 2013). This study sought to gain some insights into possible reasons for this plateau by engaging with female heads of food insecure households who use state and NGO (local) poverty reduction programmes to meet their household’s food security needs. This discussion of the findings argues that the perceived plateau in food security is one of many reflections of poverty, the daily lived experience of the participants. While state and local programmes are valued and do help food insecure households, their efforts only constituted ‘*half a help*’ in dealing with multi-dimensional poverty. Local programmes within the study site, in conjunction with state initiatives – primarily the social grant system, were found to only sustain the living conditions of participants rather than raising them up above the food security plateau and out of poverty. Poverty, the root cause of participant identified needs, is multi-dimensional (Barrientos, 2011) and thus requires a more integrated multi-sectoral rather than singular approach i.e. targeting education, employment and nutrition simultaneously rather than only food sufficiency. It is therefore argued that local programmes which operated within North Town (particularly those that provided food) influenced the existence of the plateau because they were limited in their capacity to sufficiently address participant poverty given the large gaps left by state programming. Furthermore, state and local programmes in North Town limited their own efficacy when they failed to connect with the community, and function alongside the current survival mechanisms used by programme participants.

5.2. Food Insecurity: A Dimension of Poverty

The participant’s food insecurity was observed to be both a cause and consequence of their poverty. The women did not differentiate their experience of food insecurity from their living conditions; every day was a challenge to secure resources – of which food was just one unmet survival need in the context of grinding poverty. Floro and Swain’s (2013:10) description of women as the ‘primary caregivers and household managers’ confirms the experience of the

participants. Living in poverty, the women were forced to take risks and make decisions on behalf of their households, which at times worsened their food insecurity.

Although the social grant system along with access to local programme food appeared to be beneficial, the needs of participants and their households exceeded that of the help available. The findings thus suggest that any 'programme successes' were negligible in the face of the daily realities of lived poverty. Furthermore, when participants trusted and relied on the provision of their networks, and those connections failed, the food insecurity of their household could become exacerbated.

Cook and Jeng (2009) describe how poverty and food insecurity overlap, when addressing one – the other must be considered. Food insecurity does not operate in a vacuum, and according to Hendriks (2015: 614) it is 'not a single experience', but was rather observed to be intricately woven in to how participants navigated their poverty and used and pursued resources. The use of coping strategies in the context of poverty and food insecurity is well reflected in the literature (Norhasmah et al, 2010; Kimani-Murage et al, 2014; Battersby et al, 2014; Hendriks, 2015). Forced by circumstance to employ food coping strategies, the women did their best to protect their household through buffering, food stretching and using their limited educational knowledge to make meals 'healthy'. However, the extent of their poverty meant that their efforts fell short and their households could still hover on the edge of collapse with, for example, members forced to leave home to seek food elsewhere.

Barrientos (2011) argues that when programmes address multi-dimensional poverty, solutions should be as integrated and dynamic as possible. Participants thus struggled with food insecurity not only because they lacked access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food but also because, for example, they lacked the financial and educational means needed to improve their life situation in general.

How participants experienced their food insecurity could not be removed from how they experienced and navigated their poverty. In response to community food and nutrition shortages, some local programmes in North Town directly targeted household food insecurity through food packages and education. While their efforts were noted and appreciated by participants, these programmes directly targeting the provision of food as a need did not solve the women's (household) food insecurity. Hendriks (2015: 610) writes how the 'economic,

social, environmental and political systems related to food are inextricably inter-connected', directly addressing food insecurity through the singular provision of food may momentarily help but it does not sufficiently address the diverse causes of food insecurity. Without taking into consideration the gravity of poverty, the efforts of local programmes not only fell short but also, as discussed in the next section, had unintended outcomes.

5.3. Sustained Rather Than Uplifted: A Lack of Integrated Multi-Sectoral Action

The outcome of the help provided by state and local programmes was described by participants to be inadequate and was observed to sustain rather than uplift the women and their households towards food security and out of poverty.

Mosoetsa (2011: 48) describes poverty as fluid, and argues that 'households move in and out of poverty, according to the threats, risks and shocks that they face at any one time'. This is reflected in the research findings through the women's plateauing life space of '*I have nothing*'. The South African urban poor, according to Mosoetsa (2011), live in either declining, coping or improving households. The participants, female heads of food insecure households, arguably fell in the 'coping' category as their households held a few basic assets (shelter, access to electricity; running water; food) but they were unable to use them and their resources to effectively manoeuvre out of poverty. They reached a plateau of coping, using the same strategies over and over to manage their dire circumstances within the pervasive context of '*I have nothing*'.

Although deemed inadequate, the efforts of local programmes to fill the gaps left by state programming did ultimately work to sustain participants and help their households to cope in the short term. For example, each household was dependent on the social grant system as their main source of income. Social grants contribute to household security (van der Berg, Siebrits and Lekezwa, 2009) and according to Altman et al (2009) they have helped to improve food security since 2001. Although these grants helped the study households and provided them with a degree of stability and opportunity, all of the participants felt that the grant amount was too little because the financial demands placed on them to provide for their households were too great and too diverse. Existing in the '*I have nothing*' space, participant's households could have collapsed but rather they were sustained through the efforts of local programmes which included a child feeding scheme and donated food (which filtered through the community via

social networks). The efforts of state and local programmes to sustain households is admirable but insufficient given the testimony of participants, the gravity of poverty, the South African Constitutional right to food and the current state of food insecurity in the nation (Hendriks and Olivier, 2015). It is thus argued here that contemporary food insecurity and poverty approaches have to find ways to move away from only enabling households to cope and towards 'food security and resilience' (Hendriks, 2015: 614) through facilitating integrated poverty reduction programmes and upliftment strategies (Barrientos, 2011).

Hendriks and Olivier (2015) argue that there currently exists no enforceable and comprehensive framework in South Africa to fulfil the constitutional right to food and to address food insecurity. The findings affirm the absence of an enforceable and comprehensive framework on North Town. Although participants received help from their community (Benji's, social networks); NGOs (Etham Trust, Woven Women); and the state (social grants, community garden), they remained food insecure and living in poverty. It is thus argued here that one reason for the plateau in national household food insecurity is the lack of coordination, communication and integration between multi-scale programme efforts. It was not that state and local poverty reduction programmes did not directly and indirectly address participant's household food insecurity but rather, their contribution was insufficient given the uncoordinated design of current approaches and the pervasive and multi-dimensional nature of poverty (Barrientos, 2011).

Furthermore, local programmes were inhibited in their capacity to adequately address the real needs of participants because their scope was limited to the knowledge and resources which they had available to them. Addressing the plateau in household food security requires the involvement of multiple actors from different scales to work together, rather than separately, to holistically and effectively target poverty. State and local programmes could also benefit in their attempts to address poverty and the plateau through better engaging the communities which they serve.

5.4. Sustaining or Disrupting the Food Security Plateau: Local Dynamics

Although participants perceived the contribution of programmes to be inadequate in addressing household food insecurity, the efforts of state and local programmes sustained participants and enabled their households to 'cope'. It is argued here that in order to better

address the plateau in the proportion of food secure households in North Town, state and local programmes need to develop improved means to uplift rather than simply to sustain households (Hendriks, 2015). One area of potential improvement is a more integrated incorporation of the local community and the current survival mechanisms (personal and environmental factors) which participants communicated and were observed to use (Mosoetsa, 2011; Shisana et al, 2013).

Participants are skilled navigators of their spaces of '*nothing*' (a finding supported by Mosoetsa, 2011). They have learnt how to survive on minimal resources and are thus the best sources of knowledge on how to effectively advance their food insecure status to food secure. The inclusion of community voice has been well-represented in the literature, with academics (Hendriks and Olivier, 2015; Crush and Frayne, 2011) and large organisations (Oxfam, 2014; McLaren, Moyo and Jeffrey, 2015) encouraging better on-the-ground voice inclusion in integrated multi-sectoral poverty reduction initiatives. The inclusion of programme users in programme design, of those who are impacted by top down poverty reduction action, can be clearly argued for when one considers the plateau and the testimony and actions of participants in regards to programme use and engagement.

Low attendance was a continuing struggle and inhibitor for programmes. Although personal and environmental factors could facilitate survival, their navigation also informed participant decisions (free and circumstantially forced choice) regarding attending potentially beneficial initiatives. For example, time was found to be a valued commodity that was governed by the survival needs of the household who could enable or disable individual pursuits given their perceived value and the opinion of the community (supported by Wilkinson-Maposa et al, 2005; Beatty et al, 2013). If the community did not approve of a pursuit (a programme), then it was unlikely that the family would create space or time for a member to attend.

Instead of attending programmes, participants were observed to prioritise a community and household sanctioned activity proven to yield results - the maintenance and navigation of social networks (also called '*horizontal philanthropy*' by Wilkinson-Maposa et al, 2005). Accustomed to the functioning of social networks, participants were observed – when they did engage – to treat programmes like another connection in their social network. It is thus argued here, that it would be valuable for programmes to learn how to engage using the same *horizontal philanthropy* rationale, referencing Wilkinson-Maposa's (et al, 2005: 81-84) rules as a guideline.

For example, it is not common practice for a 'poor' person to give to a perceived 'rich' person and so when participants were asked to contribute to the running of programmes they rejected the idea. Small and large missteps on the part of programmes developed a sense of mistrust between participant and programmes, a key factor inhibiting interaction (a finding supported by Wilkinson-Maposa et al, 2005). It should be noted that not every research finding was supported by Wilkinson-Maposa's (et al, 2005) discussion on *horizontal philanthropy*. For example, extra money was sooner accessed through microlenders than social networks; neighbours were not common social network connections; and, other needs could be placed higher than food given the contribution of programmes in to the community.

Given the potential of programmes to help households, it is argued here that a further mission for programmes is to develop the functioning and aspirations (Sen, 1993; Appadurai in Held and Moore, 2007; and Ibrahim, 2011) of their local communities so that they perceive the value of programme initiatives and thus encourage rather than discourage participation. Improved participation can also be encouraged through appropriate engagement with users - meeting them where they are (listening to their voice), learning to engage on their level (their current capacities, aspirations and survival mechanisms) and interpreting their needs into a multi-dimensional and integrated multi-sectoral poverty reduction approach. Adding to the knowledge of participants is also important if their confusion regarding healthy eating and food (in)security is to be addressed. It is argued here, that the confusion which participants experienced is a symptom of their (educational) poverty which had negative consequences for their pursuit of improved living standards and food security. Furthermore, it is argued by Hendriks (2014; 2015) that one of the hindrances to the development of a comprehensive approach to food security has been a lack of common understanding regarding the term and its achievement. It is thus important that programme users / community members are helped to better define their situation and needs so that programmes can be best equipped to assist them develop their capabilities and achieve their aspiration of food security.

5.5. Summary

In summary, this chapter has argued that although participants perceive programmes to only offer '*half a help*', that help served to sustain participants and their households. In order to address the food security plateau (Shisana et al, 2013), state and local programmes need to not only sustain but uplift households through acknowledging and working with the multi-

dimensional nature of poverty (Hendriks, 2015). Multi-level programmes need to work better together, in the form of co-ordinated and integrated multi-sectoral poverty reduction strategies, to address poverty and by proxy food insecurity. In addition, it has been argued that programmes should seek to better reflect the communities that they serve in the initiatives which they design and implement. The next chapter will conclude the research, highlighting limitations and making recommendations.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1. Introduction

This chapter starts with a research method experience summary, namely regarding the use of Photovoice. It then provides recommendations from the research for state and non-state (local) programme actors on how to improve the efficacy of their interventions through greater awareness of and relationship with their users. The chapter then closes with the conclusion of the study which advocates for a more comprehensive approach to food security through multi-sectoral poverty reduction programme integration and better engagement with and enabling of local programme users.

6.2. Research Method Experience Summary: Photovoice

The use of Photovoice as a research method proved both valuable and challenging. Intended to empower those marginalised and illiterate, Photovoice was found to not be as simple and easily understood as it initially appeared to be.

The author of this work first used Photovoice in their postgraduate final year research project – Duncan (2013). The experience was a positive one, with research participants actively engaging the method and generating rich and diverse images. Upon reflection, it is thought that the difference in experiences between the project and this thesis could be attributed to the lens through which the different group of participants viewed their lives. In Duncan (2013), participants had lost everything in a fire and could thus more readily identify outliers in their environments and lives. Those participants held a reference of change, they had lived both before and after a life-changing fire and could thus more easily communicate lifestyle nuances. In contrast, participants in North Town were immersed in their day to day activities. When asked to capture their (food) lives on film, they were unaware of what made how and what they consume interesting because they had comparatively little to compare it to. Although the imagery captured by participants was at times a rich source for exploration, the quality of visual themes was often lacking. While every effort was made to meet participants where they were, translating a written or spoken idea in to a visual representation was not a competency that this particular group of individuals expressed great confidence in. The result was many weak images that did not directly correlate to research objectives. Faced with weak imagery, photo-elicitation interviews became increasingly difficult and time consuming. Rather than the images

providing rich visual narratives to draw questions from, the interviewer was tasked with facilitating an intensive process of self-discovery through repetitive questions and extended periods of listening. Although the interviewer learnt how to successfully engage participants using weak images, the participants facilitated process of self-discovery was not found to improve their understanding of food security, how it plays out in their daily lives and how best to capture the concept visually.

Furthermore, in spite of numerous tutorials, participants continued to lack confidence in the technical use of their cameras. They also felt constrained by what they perceived as socially imposed limits and did not want to take pictures in certain settings due to a fear of interpersonal conflicts and social repercussions. For example, they did not want to be labelled entitled by their community for having a camera and nosy for using it, they also did not want to become targets for theft. While every effort was made to put participants at ease regarding the use of their cameras, their hesitancy slowed the data gathering process and limited the quality of images.

While the challenges to using Photovoice created stumbling blocks to the successful completion of data gathering, it remains a valuable research method with tremendous potential. Going forward, it is recommended that it is only implemented as a method in settings where it has been successfully trialled.

6.3. Study Recommendations

In poverty reduction programme design and implementation, primary actors need to take into account the multi-dimensional nature of poverty. It is thus recommended that offered solutions need to be comprehensive in their address of the issues presented. It is argued here that this can be achieved through a multi-sectoral approach in which multi-level actors from the community to civil society (NGO) to government work together to establish integrated poverty reduction programmes. It must be understood by programmes that in order to effectively address the food security plateau in South Africa, household food insecurity should be placed within the broader context of poverty – simply providing food through donation and feeding schemes may sustain but not uplift communities who also live in need of employment, education and improved physical access to quality goods. It is thus important that local programmes expand their scope of influence through effectively and consciously collaborating

with multi-scale actors to offer more holistic and dynamic solutions to the poverty and food insecurity which their communities experience.

It is also recommended that state and local programmes meet their users where they are, targeting, designing and implementing programmes which address the real issues as defined by context (the community) and practice (state and NGO experience and academic literature). Programmes can better engage with their users through learning how their users see them, as a connection within their social network. Using the work of Wilkinson-Maposa (et al, 2005), local programmes in particular have the opportunity to learn how to relate in a way that makes sense to and is respected by their users. Understanding the functioning of horizontal philanthropy, programmes can open new pathways to communication and build stronger and more dynamic relationships with their users (for example, inspiring greater attendance through mutual understanding of expectations). State and local programmes can also empower their users through expanding on their capabilities and aspirations through supporting or directly educating and upskilling them and their households. Communities and programme users that are better equipped with a vision of what they want for their lives (aspiration) and how to get there (functioning and capabilities) are more enabled to engage programmes as equal partners in their pursuit of household and community food security. The realisation of the constitutional right to food is a 'progressive process' (Hendriks, 2015); with the recommended inclusion of greater grassroots voice inclusion, it is hoped that it is a process with a solid foundation.

6.4. Study Conclusion

Focussing on the experiences of female headed food insecure households in Cape Town, the study found that the research participants perceived the contributions of poverty reduction programmes to their food security to be inadequate. Described by participants as '*half a help*', the assistance provided by poverty reduction programmes active in North Town served to sustain rather than uplift participant households out of poverty and towards food security. The findings of North Town reflect the plateau identified by SANHANES-1 (Shisana et al, 2013); South African households are being helped by local, NGO and state programmes but that help has thus far proven insufficient in its address of food insecurity.

The study found that the participant's food insecurity could not be separated from their lived experience of poverty. In navigating their poverty and food insecurity, participants pursued their aspirations (food security) through the use of their functioning and capabilities.

Participants relied most heavily on their social networks to access material and non-material resources. The use of their social networks was found to be governed by a set of community understood rules, well-represented by the work of Wilkinson-Maposa (et al, 2005). In order to improve local programme attendance, communication and the relationship between programme and user it has thus been argued that programmes learn how to relate to their users making use of Wilkinson-Maposa's (et al, 2005) horizontal philanthropy framework. Given the multi-dimensional nature of poverty, and the need to address food insecurity as a matter of national development, the study has also argued that multi-scale actors need to work together to form integrated poverty reduction programmes. These new integrated programmes should be context specific and reflect the needs of the communities they serve while also offering comprehensive, collaborative and dynamic solutions to poverty and food insecurity.

Realising South African citizen's constitutional right to food is a progressive process with many starting points, one of which is the plateau in the proportion of food secure households. This study has thus argued for a re-focus of policy on food access in the urban landscape, the greater inclusion of grassroots voices in the design and implementation of programmes and the establishment of a more comprehensive and multi-sectoral approach (in policy and practice) to food security. It is hoped that through well-planned and conscious effort, household food security levels can be improved, contributing to the development of the country and positively impacting the lives of many South Africans.

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Appendix

A – Social Network: Horizontal Philanthropy

1.

Help-Actor Classification

Category	Coverage
Immediate family	Spouse/partner, wife/husband, parents (mother/father), children (son/daughter) and siblings (brother/sister)
Extended family	Grandparents, grandchildren, cousins, nieces, nephews and other relatives
Non-family	Neighbours, friends, strangers and others
Mutual assistance groups	Self-help associations, volunteer organisations, street committees, women's clubs, work colleagues, grocery societies and any other such collective
Informal associations	Groups such as <i>stokvels</i> , burial societies, sports clubs and other such associations
Formal organisations	Formal organisations refer to external organisations such as NGOs, religious institutions, welfare organisations and other volunteer organisations

(Source: Wilkinson-Maposa et al, 2005: 40)

2.

Material and Non-Material Help

Content	Description
Material	<p><i>Money:</i> cash, school fees, medical bills, business capital</p> <p><i>Goods:</i> food, blankets, medicine, clothes, firewood, soap</p> <p><i>Productive assets:</i> farming and trading assets, utensils, materials, tools, seeds, livestock</p>
Non-material	<p><i>Knowledge:</i> advice, ideas, information, skills transfer</p> <p><i>Physical/manual support:</i> labour, accommodation, shelter, transport, protection</p> <p><i>Moral/emotional support:</i> prayer, comfort, encouragement, standing together</p> <p><i>Intervention:</i> active problem-solving, decision-making and conflict resolution</p>

(Source: Wilkinson-Maposa et al, 2005: 47)

3.

Help Principles and Options (Behaviours)

Help principles	Characteristics	Transaction examples
Donation	No expected return or payment	Time Care Child-rearing of orphans Assets
Subsidy	Forgo or reduce 'normal' expected return or repayment	Discount Fee waiver
Fee for service	Nominal 'payment' as token of appreciation	Odd jobs for pay Food for work
Loan	'Repayment' required later on, based on exclusive use for a period	Extending credit Animals for draught power Land
Share	Reallocate (use of) private asset or goods, based on joint use	Ideas, knowledge, wisdom Skills Clothing Food
Redistribution	Reallocate group or public asset	Chief's granary Welfare
Co-operation	Collaborate for mutual gain	Labour on land Building and repair work Revolving funds Annual pooling
Intervention	Intercede on someone's behalf	Prayer Conflict mediation

(Source: Wilkinson-Maposa et al, 2005: 48)

B – Poverty Reduction Programme Questionnaire

PROGRAMME QUESTIONNAIRE

The terms of the research have been explained to me; I understand and am willing to participate. I also understand that any information shared is confidential, and that the details of my programme will be changed to maintain confidentiality.

Position and Signature: _____ Date: _____

Programme Name:

Year Founded:

Target Group:

Estimated Number Reached:

Brief Description of the Programme:

How well do you service your target group?



A) Please rate your performance -

B) What would your target group rate you? –

C) Please describe five characteristics of your programme:

1. _____ 4. _____

2. _____ 5. _____

3. _____

D) Please select one of your above characteristics, as the thing that your programme does best:

E) What is one characteristic (listed or not) that your programme could work on to improve how well it serves its target group:

C – Example of Provided Notebook Content

How to use the Camera:

- Find what you want to take a picture of
(be 1m or more away from what you want to take a picture of)
- Stand with the sun and/or light on your back
- If there is little light and where you are is dark, turn on your flash (front on/off button – red light will appear).
- Turn the ‘wheel’ until it locks or stops turning.
- Hold your camera so you can see out of the ‘View Finder’ and so that your fingers are only on the ‘Finger Area’ stickers.
- Hold steady (do not shake the camera), and press the pink button with three dots on it.
- Well done! You have now taken a picture.
- Please turn off your flash (on/off switch – red light will go away) and store your camera until you would like to take another photograph.

What kinds of photos am I taking?

- Where do I get food from? (take a picture)
- If I am using a programme, what does this programme do well? (take a picture)
- If I am using a programme, what does this programme not do well? (take a picture)
- What do I like and what do I not like about using programmes? (take a picture)
- Is there anything else about the role of food (good or bad) in my life and the programmes that I use (good or bad) that I can tell Sarah? (take a picture)

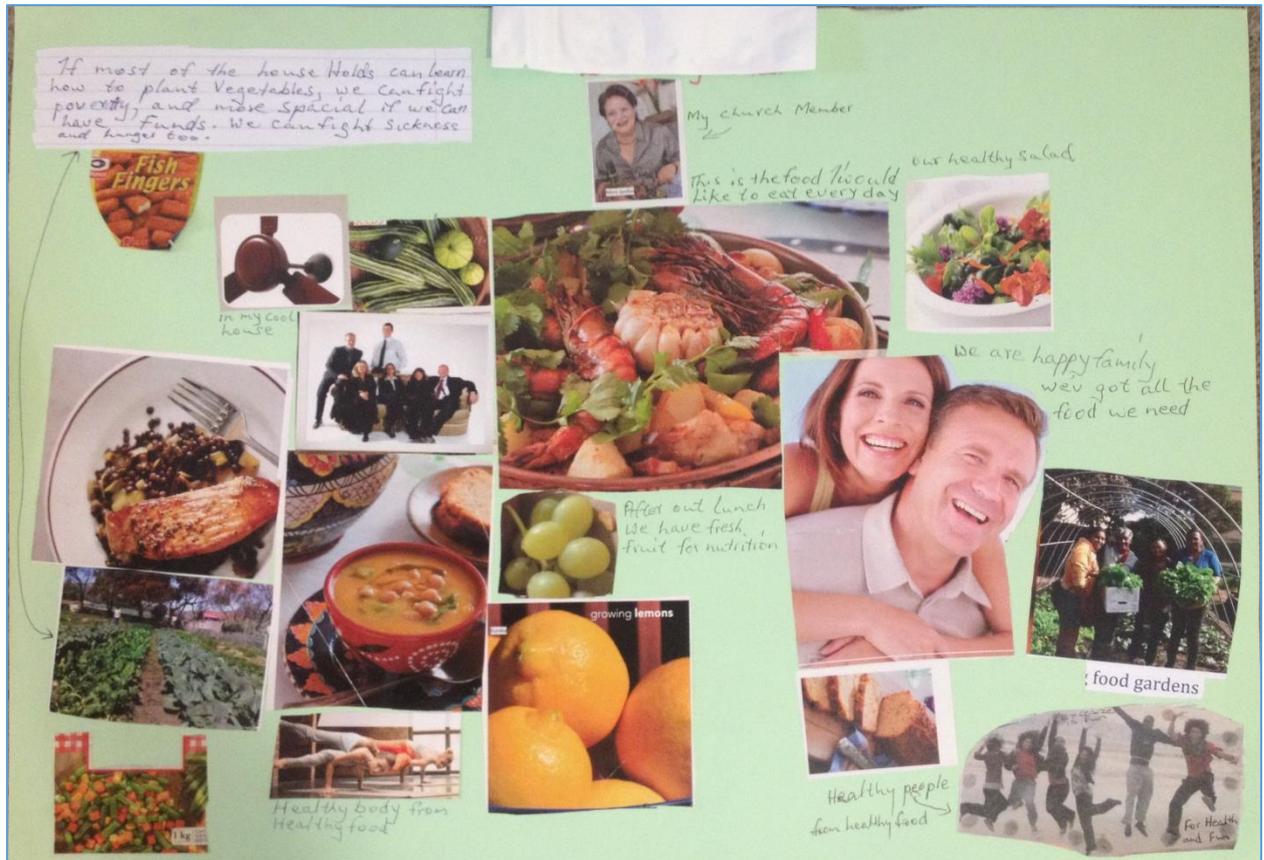
D – Example of an Interview Guideline / Question Prompt

Household Organogram Guideline

- Explain Organogram:
 = Female  = Male **X** = Separated
- Who lives in your household?
Family Relation? / Age? / Grant? / Programme User? Which? Frequency?
- Who contributes to the household?
- Who are dependents in the household? Who helps them?
- Who else helps the household?

E – Example of a Collage Constructed by a Participant

‘If the programmes worked perfectly, and you were food secure, what would life look like?’



(Example, Donna's Collage)

F – Example of a Visual Exercise Completed by a Participant

‘Organise, are these items healthy or unhealthy?’



(Example, Participant Visual Exercise)

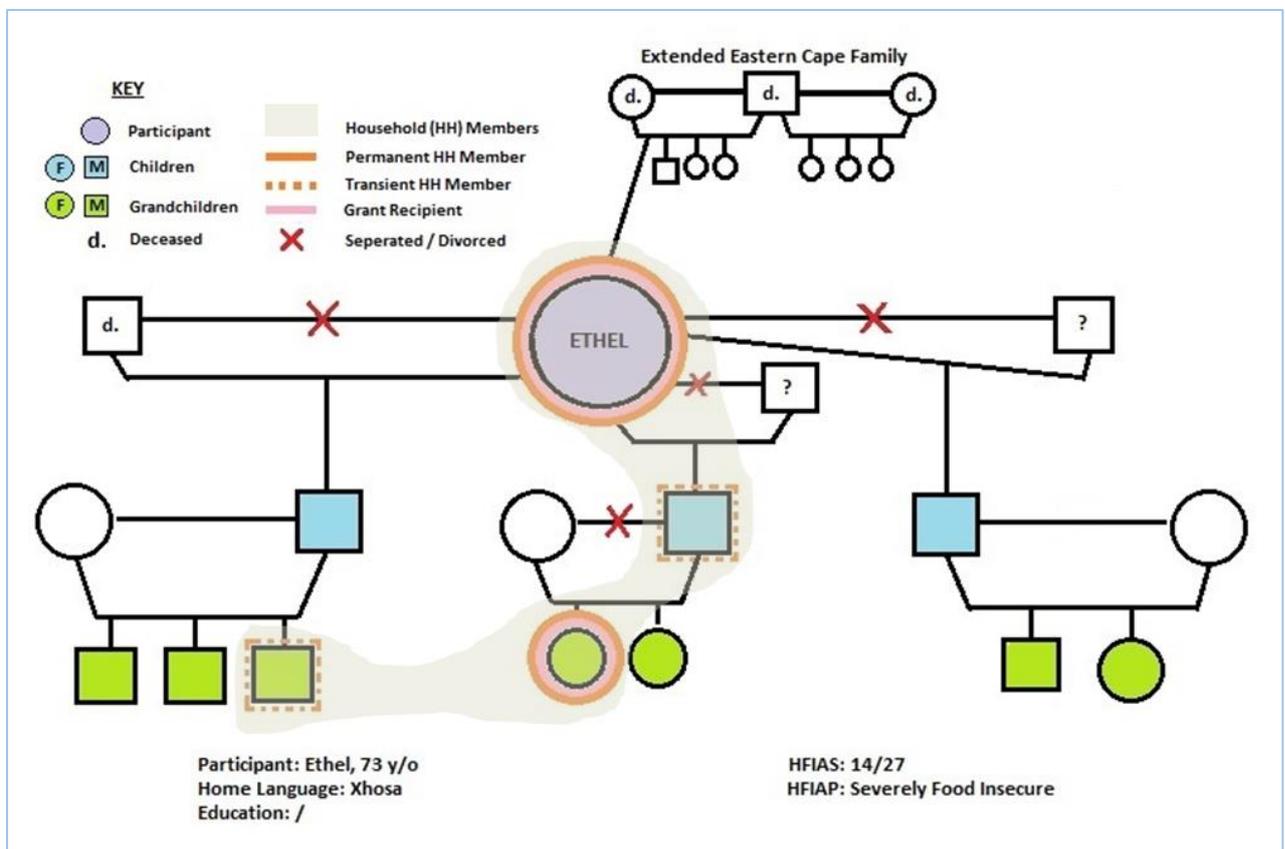
G – Excerpt from a Field Note

First Meeting – Group, 3 December

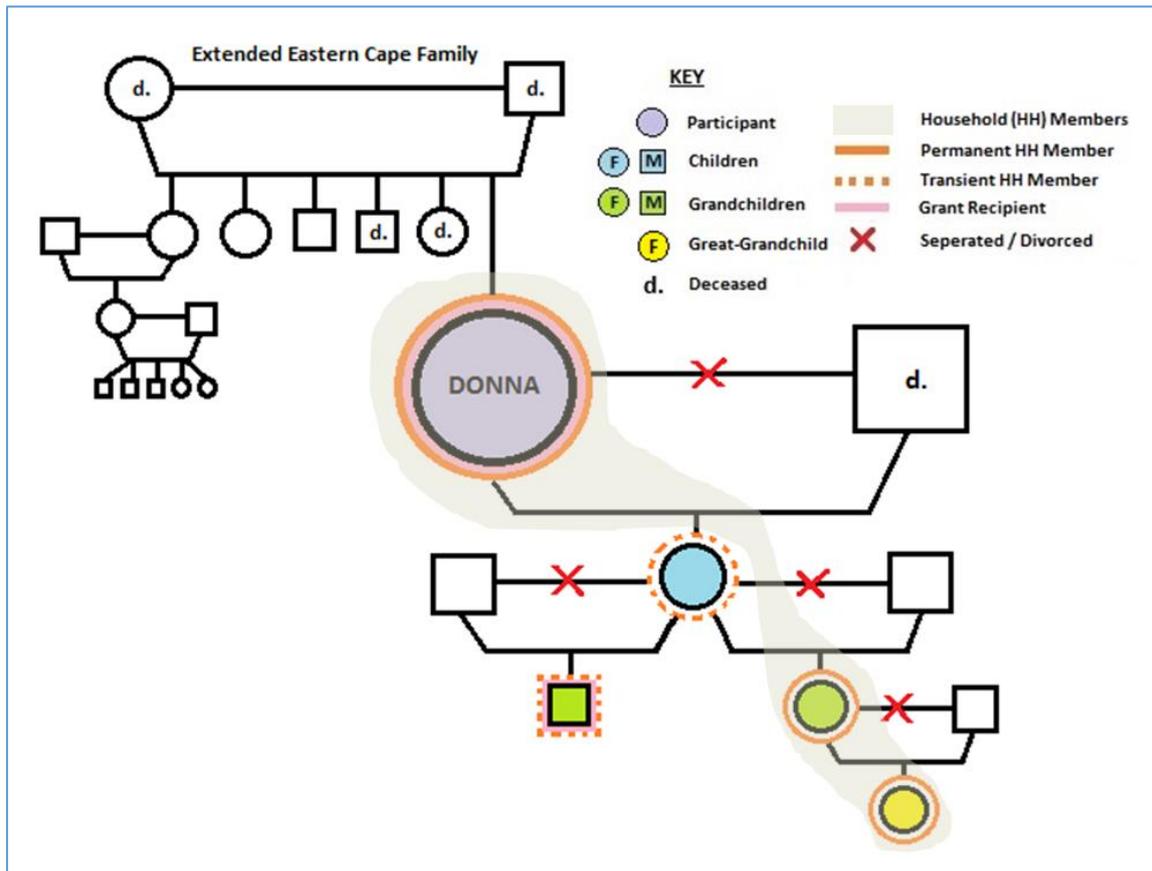
...“When asked about food security, some had heard the term before like on TV but they don’t appear to know / really understand what it is. When asked what they thought words like ‘hygiene’ and ‘healthy’ and ‘saving’ came out. They seemed to struggle to connect what was being said with a definition of food security/food insecurity and then to differentiate between food security and food insecurity. There was also a disconnect – as though they thought they were talking of others and not themselves ‘THEY are food insecure’ vs I AM”...

H – Participant Household Organograms

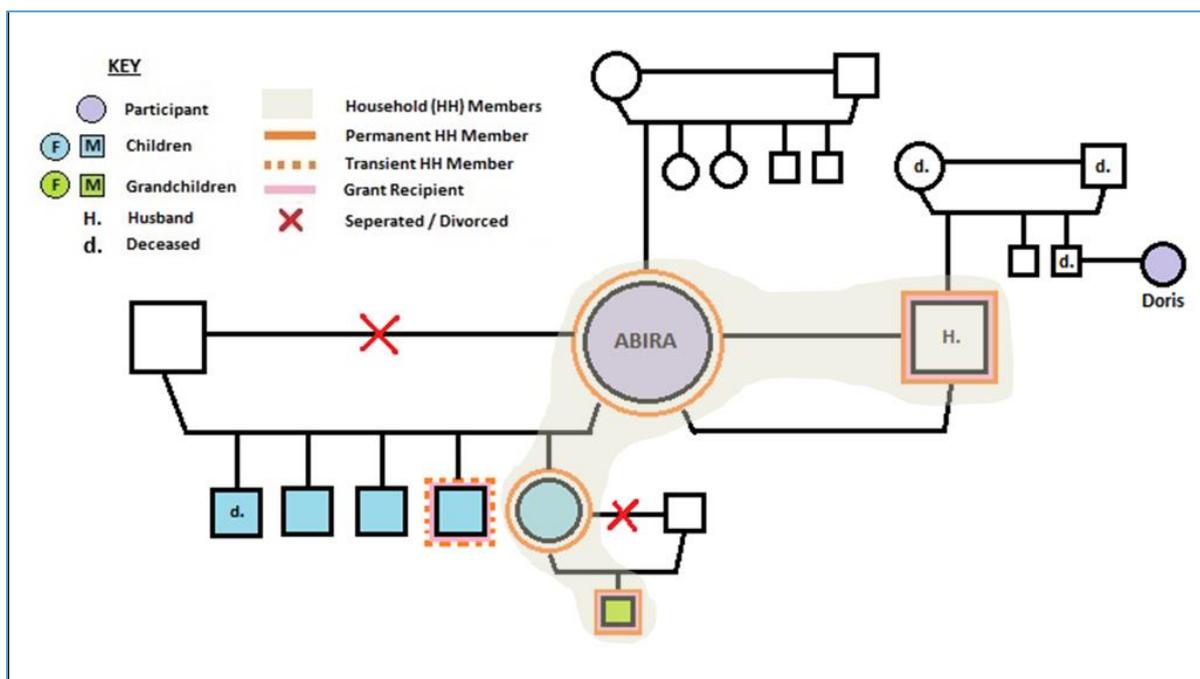
1. Ethel



1. Donna



1. Abira



I – Food Security and Food Insecurity Definition Interpretation Exercise

FOOD SECURITY

"EXISTS WHEN ALL PEOPLE, AT ALL TIMES,
 IS EVERYONE ALWAYS
 HAVE PHYSICAL AND ECONOMIC ACCESS TO
 WALKING DISTANCE MONEY
 SUFFICIENT, SAFE AND NUTRITIOUS FOOD
 ENOUGH CLEAN HEALTHY
 THAT MEETS THEIR DIETARY NEEDS AND
 CULTURE, ALLERGIES, HEALTH
 FOOD PREFERENCES FOR AN ACTIVE AND HEALTHY
 WANTS ENERGY HAPPY LIFE"
 (FAO 1996)

Researcher

FOOD SECURITY

"EXISTS WHEN ALL PEOPLE, AT ALL TIMES,
 HEALTH EVERYONE WALKING DISTANCE
 HAVE IS PHYSICAL AND ECONOMIC ACCESS TO
 ALWAYS ENOUGH MONEY
 SUFFICIENT, SAFE AND NUTRITIOUS FOOD
 CLEAN WANTS
 THAT MEETS THEIR DIETARY NEEDS AND
 CULTURE, ALLERGIES
 FOOD PREFERENCES FOR AN ACTIVE AND HEALTHY
 HEALTHY ENERGY HAPPY LIFE"
 (FAO 1996)

Participants

FOOD INSECURITY

"EXISTS WHEN PEOPLE LACK SECURE ACCESS
 IS UNCERTAIN
 TO SUFFICIENT AMOUNTS OF SAFE AND
 ENOUGH CLEAN
 NUTRITIOUS FOOD FOR NORMAL GROWTH AND
 HEALTHY NOT STUNTED
 DEVELOPMENT AND AN ACTIVE AND
 SMART ENERGY
 HEALTHY LIFE"
 HAPPY

Researcher

FOOD INSECURITY

"EXISTS WHEN PEOPLE LACK SECURE ACCESS
 UNCERTAIN
 TO SUFFICIENT AMOUNTS OF SAFE AND
 ENOUGH NOT STUNTED
 NUTRITIOUS FOOD FOR NORMAL GROWTH AND
 CLEAN HEALTHY SMART
 DEVELOPMENT AND AN ACTIVE AND IS
 HAPPY ENERGY
 HEALTHY LIFE"

Participants

J – An Excerpt from Data Analysis (Coding)

Background Interview – Abira, 9 December

A: For me it is very heart break to see small small children and how they must go – and luckily here is almost, I can say, a feeding scheme for the children. When they go out of school at least they can go to that house then they get like a fruit – an apple and two / four slices of bread and that will full their tummy...but tonight come, what is happening tonight? You see that is during the day, maybe that is the first time that they eat a piece of bread since this morning because they have to wait till school goes out to go to that peoples house to go fetch that bread. But the whole morning that child is hungry –

: Objective 1
 : Objective 2
 : Objective 3
 : Objective 4

K – Participant Information Letter and Informed Consent

Participant Information Letter

My name is Sarah Duncan; I am a student at the University of Cape Town. This research forms part of a Masters qualification for the Department of Environmental Geographical Studies at the University of Cape Town. The research looks at the role of poverty reduction programmes in lowering household food insecurity levels in a Cape Town community. It is focussed on female headed households. Data will be gathered through the use of Photovoice, collage and photo-elicitation interviews (which were all explained to you during the first meeting on 3rd December, 2015).

Information that you provide me will be protected through the use of a pseudonym (false name) so that you will not be identified. I will meet with you approximately four to five times for each of the two research blocks. You may withdraw from the study at any point with no consequence to you. If you are unhappy with any aspect of this study, you may contact my Department at UCT on XXX.

Researcher:

Sarah – XXX XXX XXXX
Research Assistant (XXX) – XXX XXX XXXX

Informed Consent

Date: _____

You do not have to participate in this research. You will be able to stop participating at any point during the research process without consequence. Your information will be kept confidential, and only used for the purposes of this research project. There will be no direct compensation for your contribution to this project.

Your signature on this consent form confirms that you understand the conditions of the research and are willing to participate.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

HH Code: _____

Contact Number/Network: _____

Second Camera Interview – Group, 7 March

P1: Sometimes you get the veg that is not so good

P2: Ja, it comes rotten

P3: I saw this [pointing to photograph] and thought it ok, I took it home and my daughter just take it and put it in the bin – she says, put this in your compost. Because I was sick, I took pumpkin – that yellow squash, it look very nice - but yoo, after that I was very sick. And again, you see I took another and it was also rotten. My daughter says, never ever bring this.

P2: Yesterday, packet butternut broccoli and carrots and baby potatoes and you can see it is starting to go off but I washed it off nicely and then I boil it up and we all ate from it – I am so healthy from that today. As you throw it away, I can still use it.

P3: It was butternut?

P2: yeah, it wasn't pap – I just wash it and boil it up...if its rotten then I won't eat it up

P3: Sometimes it is good, you see it says 28 but today is 27 so it is still good.

P2: Yeah, the dates – Milk don't last long. But veg – it say (this day) but if you put it in the fridge then it won't expire on that day. You can still use it. Even if the people give you that tin – and it says 2016, its still 2016! It is good. I make it open and I eat it, if I must die then I die!

Everyone: No! No!

P2: That's not to say its rotten...

P3: The only thing that is good is rolls – the rolls is right (takes from Arise)

P2: I had a friend who gave me a loaf of bread and that bread was in my fridge, and I forgot about it! But that bread doesn't have to waste, take it out and let it cool off that coldness – we ate that bread! Sometimes it get miff on the side – I eat it!

P3: Ja, you just take that black thing out.

P4: Ja, I don't waste I eat it and thank God, I am healthy today