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**ANALYSIS OF STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION IN THE COMPREHENSIVE RURAL
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME: THE CASE OF MUYEXE IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE,
SOUTH AFRICA**

By

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ABSTRACT

The Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP) is a South African national collective action designed to fight poverty, hunger, unemployment and lack of development in rural areas. This study analysed the participation of various stakeholders in the CRDP with the goal of creating a national stakeholder relations framework and engaged partnerships of government with local and private sector.

A purposive random sampling was used to select 300 respondents from CRDP projects and 36 respondents for focus group discussion at Muyexe village. Data were collected using structured and semi-structured questionnaires. With the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) ver 21.0, the data were then analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics as well as the participation index and multiple regression techniques. Qualitative data were analysed using ATLAS.ti v. 6.2.15 tools.

The respondents were 35.5 ± 3.19 years old. Mean income was found to be $R1\ 000 \pm 1.27$. The sample has a skewed female (77%) ratio. Forty-two percent of the participants were married and 64% had at least a secondary school education. The level of interaction within projects was found to be high (LI=1.0) but low in other areas. The participation index in council of stakeholders interaction was the least (PI= 0.1) in contrast to the high estimate for benefit sharing (PI= 0.6) which was low in other key areas of the study. The beneficiaries were found to be food secure due to a unit change in production that led to 49.5% increase in food security within CRDP projects. Statistically significant relationships were found between the income levels of the participants and their primary occupation ($X^2 = 11.630$, p value = 0.020), category of farming they belonged to ($X^2 = 20.880$, p value = <0.005), changes in production on the farm ($X^2 = 27.115$, p value = <0.005) and also changes in household food consumption ($X^2 = 27.890$, p value = <0.005).

The study revealed the contributions of stakeholders' participation in successful implementation of the CRDP. Stakeholders would interact both vertically and horizontally if their roles were clearly defined. The changes in socio-economic characteristics and food security among government project beneficiaries observed in the study confirmed the trend in previous studies where sustainability posed serious challenges. It is crucial for stakeholders to be involved in planning and implementation from the outset because it provides an opportunity to harness divergent perspectives when selecting implementation sites, permitting, and also policy-making. A deliberate attempt should be made to increase youth participation in the project.

Key words: *Comprehensive rural development, stakeholder analysis, food security, rural livelihoods, community participation, development projects, sustainability.*