

Budget Allocation and Funding of Community Food Security Projects in Gauteng Province

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Abstract: This study aimed to assess funding of community food security projects in the Gauteng Province. The study was prompted by high levels of poverty and unemployment. Despite the two challenges being at the fore front for policy makers in the country, civil society members are partaking in alternative and sustainable solutions to poverty reduction which has led to establishment of community food security projects. Proper and adequate funding to these poverty reduction strategies ensures that the projects succeed and meet their intended objectives and goals. It is important for government to budget for developmental and sustainable initiatives. To realise the research problem, a semi-structured questionnaire is used to solicit and examine how community food security projects are funded in the six peri-urban townships of Emfuleni Local Municipality. This was to assess the contribution of communities in their own food security and the impact of the projects on the whole community. The study established that food gardens have a role to play in the extensive fight against hunger and in improving household food security and ultimately, in creating income generation or providing employment opportunities. The study recommends for increased participatory budgeting process to enhance involvement of community members.

Keywords: Budget allocation, Community food security projects, Food security, Poverty alleviation, Pro-poor budgeting

1. Introduction

The study seeks to assess budget allocation and funding of community food security projects. Budget allocation forms part of the components of the public financial management system. This study is prompted by the high levels of poverty and the establishment of community food security projects as an alternative measure by communities to promote food security, create employment and generate income. The funding of such programmes remains a huge contributor in the fight against poverty amongst the residents of Emfuleni Local Municipality. The processes, mechanisms, pool of donors and criteria for funding these food security programmes need to be assessed in order to ensure their success. The South African government strives to address the problems of high levels of poverty and food insecurity which is caused by structural poverty and inequality (Gauteng Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (GDARD), 2011). The financial sector contributes to reducing poverty and improving opportunities for the poor directly, indirectly and by making economic growth more pro-poor (OECD, 2007). The target of the Gauteng Province is to reduce the number of people experiencing food insecurity by 2030 (GDARD, 2011).

Several projects have already been implemented in Gauteng under national, provincial and municipal programmes including the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRPD) programme that focus on the poorest communities (GDARD, 2017). In 2011 the GDARD developed the Gauteng 20 Year Food Security Plan to organise and direct food security efforts in the province as well as to lead food security interventions beyond the Gauteng Integrated Food Security Strategy and Food for All Roll-Out Plan (GDARD, 2011).

To ensure that there is adequate and proper funding of community food security projects, the processes, mechanisms and criteria for funding such projects need to be established. Along with these, the challenges faced by the participants of such projects in acquiring assistance also need to be placed under a microscope. The fact that community members are being active in their efforts to alleviate poverty and enhance food security means that all other role players need to come to the table to make these efforts a success. The sections below provide a background and motivation for this paper. It also gives a brief theoretical introduction into the subject of food security, pro-poor funding and budget allocation, in so doing, draws attention to status of

food security projects and the funding thereof in the Gauteng Province of South Africa.

2. Methodological Approach

The study was carried out utilising a qualitative research approach with the use of semi-structured questionnaire containing open-ended questions. The use of the semi-structured questionnaire was to obtain insight and understanding of the phenomena from the viewpoint of the community food security projects coordinators. The research instrument allowed for data to be obtained directly from the participants. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005) qualitative research uses an in-depth inquest to study a phenomenon in terms of meanings and understanding made by people. This research method allows the researcher to comprehend phenomenon around them. Qualitative research allows the study to gain in depth knowledge or understanding of the phenomenon from its context or setting. The preference to qualitative research method is because this study is concerned with understanding pro-poor budget allocation for community food security projects rather than to explain the phenomenon.

The study was conducted within a social constructivist paradigm, and it sought to explore, assess and understand the funding of community food security projects. The social constructivists are of the view that people seek understanding of the world in which they live and work and thus develop subjective meanings of their experiences, meanings directed towards certain objects or things (Cresswell, 2009). This paradigm is about people constructing and making sense of events, processes and repositions them into viewpoints or perceptions. The assumption of the study being that adequate and proper funding would yield suitable results for community food security projects. This was important for to collect data that would allow participants to express their experience with applying and receiving funding for their community food security projects.

Nonprobability sampling technique was applied in the selection of the research participants to ensure validity and reliability of results. Purposive sampling as a type of non-probability sampling was applied for the purpose of obtaining the sample for data collection. Purposive sampling is used as a technique where subjective judgements are utilised to resolutely select groups that the researcher believes

will represent the population (Greenfield, 2002). The benchmark for selection such was that the project had to be a community food security project, not located at a church nor a school ground but within the community and to serve and accommodate the whole community and not just specific people. The selection was designed to capture pro-poor budget allocation and the impact of community food gardens across Gauteng. The anticipation was that the responses from the selected sampled size would provide an understanding into the impact of community food security projects, budget allocation and pro-poor funding. The participants were selected from the Gauteng Province in the GDARD. A questionnaire was developed to elicit responses from the participants of community food security projects. The representative of the GDARD is the Extension Officers who co-ordinate the established projects.

3. Literature Review

For governments to alleviate poverty and stimulate growth and development, a key mechanism is to allocate funds for government expenditure. Carter (2015) indicates that "pro-poor" expenditure has been deemed as a pre-requisite for benefactors to support severely indebted countries debt relief and the implementation of national poverty reduction strategies since the 1990s. According to Simon (2012), the 1990's spending was dedicated towards progressive expenditure that touched the lives of the poor in order to compensate for the Apartheid's exclusive focus on economic growth along with its related increase in marginalizing the poor. Public expenditure composition is the core of politics. It has been contended by political economists that spending decisions, the values that ought to regulate resource allocation comes second to the actual process of allocating funds (Fozzard, 2001, as cited in Simon, 2012).

Local government in South Africa has transformed to more than just providing basic services, to transforming the lives of the people. This transformation includes administrative, political, economic and governance system. It requires effort from constituencies, political, administrative and bureaucrats alike to make the country a well-functioning democratic state where all people are taken care of. These efforts mean utilising more financial resources; hence public financial management has become central to the development and transformation of communities. Local and provincial government

remain central at asserting governments programs to address poverty and food security locally. The aim of the Gauteng Province is to cut up in half the sum of people experiencing food insecurity by 2030 (GDARD, 2011). Several projects have already been implemented in Gauteng under national, provincial and municipal programmes including the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRPD) that focus on the poorest communities (GDARD, 2017). In 2011 the GDARD developed the Gauteng 20 Year Food Security Plan to organise and direct food security efforts in the province as well as to lead food security interventions beyond the Gauteng Integrated Food Security Strategy and Food for All Roll-Out Plan (GDARD, 2011).

Despite implementation of several projects in Gauteng, the on-going projects implemented by the province are not harmonised into an effective, directed and all-inclusive programme (GDARD, 2011). A critical shortcoming in the existing policy framework on food security is the lack of understanding of how different government interventions targeting food-insecure households have affected food security levels in South Africa. To reduce poverty effectively and efficiently, the poor need to be properly identified. Although various definitions and measurements besought in the assessment of poverty, applying the right policies may ensure agricultural revolution, growth and development to attain both food security and poverty reduction goals (Mbilinyi, 2011). However, for the full benefits of the agriculture sector to be realized, it is important for funds and investments to be provided at both the national and local spheres of government (Mbilinyi, 2011). Do public resources established for food security programmes reach the intended beneficiaries? This question is posed particularly for the Gauteng province because as it is the tiniest of all the provinces in South Africa, with the highest population (GDARD, 2011).

Addressing food security involves broader understanding of the issue itself and incorporating elements such as availability, access, utilisation and stability; this can be achieved through the adoption of an agriculture-based agenda (Drimie & Ruysenaar, 2010). Some literature refers to food gardens as 'kitchen garden' or 'household gardens', however Earl (2011) explained that these food gardens are regarded as gardens that yield vegetables and fruits for consumption. Despite what they are called, food gardens play a pivotal role in resolving the food

security crisis so much so that the Department of Agriculture established a special programme which aims to "establish short-term food programmes such as food gardens to augment food shortages in rural households and to sustain long-term food security for all" (Koch, 2011). The capacity of these food gardens to achieve their objective rests upon proper support from the department and commitment from the participants.

The total budget for this plan is R50 million per annum with inflation variations from years 4 for 21 years (GDARD, 2011). The allocated budget is expected to reflect the priorities for the reduction of poverty. The general principle is to allocate resources to communities with the biggest potential to benefit from the allocation. However, budget allocation for the agriculture sector seems to be very low. Public funds remain to be a scarce resource. It is for this study to identify how funds are allocated to fund the community food projects in the Emfuleni Local Municipality by GDARD. The optimal management of the allocation of limited public funds across the growing levels of poverty is a challenge faced by both high- and middle-income countries (Al Hussein, Al Akeel & Attridge, 2009). With the need for fiscal consolidation, the government is also required to make potential budgetary trade-offs and to compromise funding to overcome the poverty challenges (Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, 2013).

Dollar and Kraay (2001) contend that even if the aim is to reduce poverty as opposed to promote growth, the precise course to undertake would be to place attention on aspects that are beneficial for growth. Few existing studies on the direct relationship between aid flow and poverty have embraced a typical across-country growth regressive approach, and substituted growth with an indicator of poverty as the dependent variable. However, as support directly funds government spending, focusing on public expenses aimed towards the poor suggests a more overt transmission mechanism for the effect of support (Gomanee, Morrissey, Mosley & Verschoor, 2003). Large sums of support for government expenditure are aimed at reducing poverty or at least improving the lives of the poor. Although, literature has shown that globally community food gardens contribute to food security, there is still a vacuum as to whether community food security projects contribute towards income generation and poverty alleviation in Emfuleni local municipality,

Gauteng Province South Africa. This study sought to achieve the following objectives:

- To establish how projects are funded and the source of funding.
- To identify and comprehend the criteria applied for allocating funds to food security projects.

Attaining food security is arguably an indispensable step towards a more general development objective of improved human well-being, along with the alleviation of poverty and achieving sustainable growth. Considering the afore-mentioned objectives of this study, the following central theoretical statement has been formulated for the study:

- Community food security projects, specifically community food gardens have a significant role to play in alleviating poverty and generating income for the participants, therefore proper and adequate funding is incremental in making this a reality.

4. Understanding Community Food Security Projects and Budget Allocation

To comprehend pro-poor funding, one needs to have a broad understanding of community food security projects and budget allocation. The section below intends to provide a descriptive account of community food security projects and budget allocation.

4.1 Community Food Security Projects

Food security is diverse in nature and often depends upon the attainment of other socio-economic privileges. The converse is also true. Research by the Financial and Fiscal Commission found interactive responses exist among the MDGs (Financial and Fiscal Commission, 2012). Addressing hunger and under-nutrition can help achieve other MDGs such as (MDG 2) universal basic education, (MDG 4) reducing child mortality and (MDG 5) improving maternal health. Improving household food security and nutrition can improve long-term economic growth by enhancing human capital and reducing poverty (World Bank, 2004).

In 2000 a national strategy was formulated, which highlights some of the key challenges of achieving

food security in the country. These challenges include ensuring enough food is available now and, in the future, matching income to prices in order to ensure access to sufficient food for all, empowering citizens to make optimal choices for nutritious and safe food and ensuring adequate social safety nets and food emergency systems (Earl, 2011). Community food gardens are increasingly getting recognition from policy makers and civil society alike as an important contributor on several fronts' economic development, food security, income generation and as poverty reduction strategies. These community food gardens require the commitment and leadership from civil society and government.

The community food security programme is designed to:

- Meet the needs of low-income households by increasing their access to fresher, more nutritious food supplies;
- Increase the self-reliance of communities in providing for their own food needs;
- Promote comprehensive responses to local food, farm, and nutrition issues;
- Meet specific state, local, or neighbourhood food and agricultural needs for infrastructure improvement and development;
- Plan for long-term solutions; and
- Create innovative marketing activities that mutually benefit agricultural producers and low-income consumers (Loveless, 2017).

According to Earl (2011) most of the food gardens have been established by NGOs and civil society. Most of them encounter several difficulties such as: funding sources which can hamper the long-term success of such projects. These difficulties make it impossible for the projects to operate effectively and efficiently and this can be remedied through collaborative effort of NGOs, government and civil society. In recent years, food gardens have been receiving recognition from policy makers and civil society alike as a contributor to economic development, food security and a poverty reduction strategy. The successes of such projects require active participation from all stakeholders and availability of resources (land, tools, finances).

4.2 Budget Allocation

According to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Section 152 and 153) of 1996, the local government has the responsibility with regards to the process of development in municipalities along with municipal planning. The statutory obligation of municipalities, relating their budgeting and planning functions to their goals provides a clear indication of the intended purpose of municipal integrated development planning. Local government plays a momentous role in the development of South Africa. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 1996) and the White Paper on Local Government (1998), envision a comprehensive restoration of the local government. Local government is a sphere of government and no longer a function in the national or provincial government.

The allocation of government expenditure has been considered a key mechanism for governments to reduce poverty and promote growth. Since the 1990s, donors have consistently encouraged increased Pro-poor spending as a condition for their support to heavily indebted countries debt relief and the implementation of national poverty reduction strategies (Carter, 2015). Pro-poor growth has proven to be the most effective poverty reduction strategy across various settings. Significantly, one looks at the long-term relationship between economic growth and the poverty reduction rate in most developing countries including South Africa.

The scope of budgeting changed from a more limited and separate process during the incremental era to a more comprehensive governing process (Khan & Hildreth, 2002). Tanase (2013:1) suggests that budgeting with any institution is important because budgetary allocations are essential mechanisms to an annual financial plan, or budget, for all organizations. They show the level of resources an organization is committing to a department or program. With no restrictions towards allocation, expenses can surpass revenues resulting in financial deficits. Any persons dealing with budget ought to have thorough understanding of how budgets are utilized and restrictions they offer. For governments to alleviate poverty and stimulate growth and development, a key mechanism is to allocate funds for government expenditure. Carter (2015) indicates that "pro-poor" expenditure has been deemed as a pre-requisite for benefactors to support severely indebted countries debt relief and

the implementation of national poverty reduction strategies since the 1990s.

According to Simon (2012), the 1990's spending was dedicated towards progressive expenditure that touched the lives of the poor in order to compensate for the Apartheid's exclusive focus on economic growth along with its related increase in marginalizing the poor. It has been contended by political economists that spending decisions, the values that ought to regulate resource allocation comes second to the actual process of allocating funds (Fozzard, 2001, as cited in Simon, 2012). Budgeting systems are crucial instruments for translating the priorities and strategic plans of a municipality into public services and goods. Effective planning, budgeting and financial management promotes effective and efficient service delivery. It is important to link budgeting to strategic management objectives as strategic planning is an integral component in the budgeting system in the public sector.

5. Results

The results presented in this section have been gathered from the participants of community food gardens in the ELM region. The discussion below focused on the following themes, establishment of projects, funding of projects, and prioritisation. The themes are discussed in the subsequent sections.

5.1 Establishment of Food Security Projects

This section comprised two questions posed to the Department. The first question inquired about the number of food security projects established. The Department informed that there are three regions developed for the realisation of the developmental mandate of the province, namely:

- Germiston Region (Ekurhuleni Metropolitan and Sedibeng District Municipality);
- Randfontein Region (Johannesburg Metropolitan and West Rand District Municipality); and
- Pretoria Region.

The Department was asked to provide information on the number of projects established and funded by the Department in the ELM. The department reported that food security projects are categorised in three forms, namely: community food gardens,

household food gardens and school food gardens. In terms of the projects established, the Department informed that the extension officers maintained almost 146 existing community projects established in the ELM. The projects established in the ELM, are found in Sebokeng, Evaton, Sharpeville, Tshepiso, Bophelong and Boipatong. In 2019 there were 146 existing food production units maintained and supported by the department. The projects established are meant to respond directly to a modernised and transformed agricultural sector increasing food security, economic inclusion and equality.

5.2 Role Played by Department in the Establishment of the Projects

The second question inquired about the role played by GDARD in the establishment of the projects. The Department informed that it provides support to new and existing community food gardens. The Department also informed that it creates awareness to mobilise the communities to participate in the programme. GDARD is heavily involved in the establishment of such projects and this involvement extends to providing training to participants, irrigation systems, fencing, equipment and garden tools, storage containers, inputs (seeds and fertilisers) and monitoring of projects. The assistance provided to these projects includes the support for extension services, advisory services and training in vegetable production.

5.3 Funding of Projects

This section inquired about the way the projects are funded. The question sought to establish how projects are funded and whether the funds come from external or internal sources. The results show that the department is not the sole provider of funding to these projects. The Department informed that the funding for food security projects is obtained from the operational and capital funding prepared in the department for the respective projects. The internal source is the Departmental budget for the directorate Food Security. While external funding for these projects come from National Department of Agriculture and Forestry and other external funders including National Development Agency (NDA), Independent Development Trust (IDT). The Department indicated that this fund is provided to all the departments of agriculture in the provinces. Each provincial department gets its allocation as per the size of the province. There are also other forms

of funding towards the realisation of food security, namely: conditional grants and donor funds. Two conditional grants were identified, namely:

- Conditional Grant 1: Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme (CASP);
- Conditional Grant 2: Ilima/Letsema; and
- Conditional Grant 3: Land Care.

5.4 Criteria for Selection of Beneficiaries

This question aimed to inquire if there is a criterion used for selection of beneficiaries to receive funding. The department indicated that the selection criteria is based on the commitment of the beneficiaries, whereby there must be an available land where the garden will be developed. It was emphasised that funds cannot be allocated if the project does not have a place identified for crop production. Therefore, land availability is the most important factor for possible funding. Some groups request funding with an established garden, maybe in church or clinic. In this case, the Department will also assess commitment of the applicants by checking what they have started in terms of establishing a garden on that land.

5.5 Budget Allocation

When asked how much of the annual budget is allocated or reserved for food security projects (community food gardens), the Department mentioned that an amount of R3 000 000 is budgeted for the respective projects. The budget allocation is injected in farming implements as identified during the interviews. The Department indicated that budget allocation for food security projects is conceptualised before the start of the project. The budget allocated is used for:

- **Awareness Campaigns**

Awareness campaigns to educate community members about the available projects. In this awareness, the Department book a hall which is closer to the community identified. Refreshments are also bought to serve the participants at such meetings.

- **Feasibility Study**

The department also conduct a feasibility study on identified projects. This requires money as the extension officer must travel to the identified prospective projects.

- **Business Plan Development**

The budget allocated for food security programmes is also used for business plan development. It was indicated that some prospective projects do not have knowledge of how to draft a business plan. Therefore, the Department assist the identified participants with the business plan development.

- **Farming Implements**

Once a project is approved, the department allocates funding to the project. There is a non-monetary funding model towards these projects. All farming implements are procured by the Department. The department also budget for new projects, whereby a starter pack presented to newly established projects. The budgeted items for the starter pack includes: a starter pack seeds for spinach, beetroot, carrots, green beans, onion and tomato. Further the budgeted items comprise a spade, rake, fork watering can, compost fertilizers, hand hoe and 10 meters hosepipe.

- **Protective Clothing**

The budget allocation for these projects also includes issuing of protective clothing. The Department also informed that protective clothing such as gumboots, eye protector, dust masks and knapsack sprayer are issued to respective beneficiaries to eliminate contact with harmful substances. It can be drawn from the passage above that the establishment of these projects is not an easy process, indeed a lot of effort is invested towards these projects.

5.6 Prioritisation of Funding and Monitoring

The question enquired about how priority is given when funding is executed. The response obtained pointed out that priority that priority to receive assistance is given to already existing projects and projects with land availability. The beneficiaries should also show commitment and desire to see the project existing and projects that benefit the poor. In terms of monitoring, the department outlined that it ensures sustainability of funded projects. The response obtained indicated that once assistance has been provided to the projects, there is continuous monitoring and evaluation. Budget allocations are monitored through financial reporting. To ensure that there is no corruption, the department indicated that the projects are not given money rather the money is used to support them and to pay service providers. The department use work plans, visitation forms, weekly plans, monthly

reports, quarterly reports, annual reports, supervisory reports, and performance management systems to monitor the funded programmes.

6. Discussion

The study has established that food gardens have a role to play in the extensive fight against hunger and in improving household food security and ultimately, in creating income generation or providing employment opportunities. Food security projects also play a vital role in the development of communities hence more funds need to be invested in them. Proper implementation of financing mechanisms is crucial in ensuring that funding reaches where it is supposed to reach, that it targets the poor and reaches them. The funding method used by the department is effective and efficient because it ensures that funds are used for what they are meant for.

Establishing a resource allocation formula is an important step in targeting poverty. Proper and adequate funding to these poverty reduction strategies ensures that the projects succeed and meet their intended objectives and goals. A strong allocation is based on integrated processes to allow for more effective planning and financial control.

The following are related challenges that may restrict funding of food security projects:

- Wrong expectations whereby applicants think that the department must transfer the funds to their accounts;
- The appointed service providers provide poor quality services;
- Poor quality often derails the implementation process; and
- Anticipated financial risks.

Agriculture remains very important to the economy as it contributes more than one-third to the gross domestic product (GDP) (Chirwa, Kumwenda, Jumbe, Chilonda & Minde, 2008). Based on the above responses the department must ensure that the funding reaches the deserving projects. A thorough feasibility study is crucial for ensuring that all facts are gathered in terms of the project's plan and its sustenance. Furthermore, proper information to beneficiaries should be communicated to the

community about the pros and cons of the project. In this manner the department will not have clashes with the community. The study also found that monitoring and evaluation forms part of governance in any organisation.

7. Recommendations

This section provides a set of recommendations that are presented below. Public funds need to be effectively, efficiently and economically utilized for the best interest of the poor. Proper and adequate funding to these poverty reduction strategies ensures that the projects succeed and meet their intended objectives and goals. Proper and adequate funding to these poverty reduction strategies ensures that the projects succeed and meet their intended objectives and goals.

7.1 Alignment to the Poverty Reduction Strategy

Agriculture is identified as a game changer and investment in agriculture must be guided under strict conditions to achieve the aspirations of the National Development Plan. Poverty reduction strategies are often stated in country development plans. Therefore, an alignment is required for inclusive growth and for translating into poverty reducing expenditure. Public funds need to be effectively, efficiently and economically utilised for the best interest of the poor. It is important for government to budget for developmental and sustainable initiatives, public expenditure needs to be properly managed.

7.2 Explore More Avenues for Revenue

Government funding plays a vital role in poverty reduction. However alternative funding should be considered to allocate enough revenue for the respective projects and for attaining the Sustainable Development Goals.

- **Inter-Sectorial Partnerships and Easy Access to the Markets**

Community food security projects produce a variety of crops. Easy access to the markets.

8. Conclusion

The central objective of this study was to assess budget allocation and funding of community food security projects in Emfuleni Local Municipality. This

was to examine how funds reach their intended respective projects. Based on the results presented it is evident that community food security projects are important in enhancing pro-poor growth for the poor. They provide the poor with an opportunity to fight poverty, generate income and fight unemployment and ensure that communities are food secure. It is also evident that funding plays a vital role in the success or failure of such projects in meeting their objectives. Funds invested in any poverty reduction strategy have the potential improving the lives of the poor and to generate income. The involvement of the public also enhances sustainability of the projects. The funding method used by the department is effective and efficient because it ensures that funds are used for what they are meant for. With adequate funding most projects do prosper and meet their objectives, this is realised through the monitoring and evaluation of the projects. This allows for continued funding for projects that are meeting their objectives and goals, if funds are important for the completion and success of any project.

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