



FOOD SECURITY IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE

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Everyday we are reminded of the hard work you put out there, effortlessly working tirelessly in the ground and making it seem easy, you are Unsung Heroine and heroes making kir shopping stores look wholesome colourful and fun. These orange carrots, Green peppers those head shaped cabbages, arghh the list is endless. When we eat a hamburger or drink that mango juice, you are constantly reminded that the food we eat and the drinks we enjoy started in the soil somewhere. It was put there and protected from drought, disease and pests by the hands of your highly skilled agriculturists. You continue to make agriculture fashionable and continue creating opportunities in this department and it is beautiful to see. I walk in the streets and I see beautiful women with radiant skin,(giggles) and I quickly remind myself it is because of those products, the ones from the soil, they were refined and took to the stores shelves, they come from the soil, they are highly protected and insured, they were constantly watered and irrigated through and through.

Again when we share a pizza or gather for shisa nyama, raise a glass to the long chain of hands who delivered it to you. We are reminded that you our dearest farmers buried your money in the ground, saw to the health and productivity of what was growing there and found markets and supply chains to get the products to our tables. Good memories are shared, friends and colleagues are made and met through a simple meal and yet nutritional supplements produced by you, (Our Dearest Farmer's) you are remarkably consistent and reliable, our health and wellness advocates, we learn from you and the work you put out there. In our unreliable, unstable economy we still praise you, because we legit know and believe one can never go wrong with Agriculture.

As we put food in our supermarket trolley, we continue to spare a thought for the industry of land investors, farm and factory workers, scientists and marketers who enable South Africa to be the most food secure country in Africa. Dear South African Farmers, We Honour you, We appreciate your hard work, We Celebrate you. You inspire us to do good and never limit ourselves, Dear South African Farmers, We follow in your footsteps, You are HEROES in our



Economy, Our food supply, The Betterment of our country is in your hands. Passing generation to generation to come skills and knowledge, we are working towards UP'ing our country with the possible work you put out there. Through Rainy days' Hot days' Cold days' Draught days. You remain in our thoughts! We have absolutely no idea how you keep up, but you are forever showing up. You are forever doing the most. {Our food Security is safe in your hands}!

Although South Africa is food secure as a nation, many households remain food insecure. The government has recognized several key food security challenges in the Integrated Food Security Strategy (IFSS). However, South Africa still lacks specific and accepted methods to measure food security and currently has no regulated way of monitoring the food security status of its population.

In Limpopo Province, the food security situation of rural households is still shaky. Qualitative and quantitative data has been gathered across five districts in the province. The study sample involved 599 households in the rural areas of Limpopo. A thorough description of household characteristics and livelihoods allowed an assessment of the food security and poverty levels in the area. The findings showed that 53 % of the sampled rural households declared themselves to be severely food insecure. Multivariate analyses were used to identify the main household characteristics that determined the household's food security status. These determinants were mainly human capital (education, household size and dependency ratio), household income and the district in which the households were situated.

The findings indicated that policy priorities should be focused on the promotion of rural education and creating an enabling environment for the rural labour market. The issue of climate change has also been a barrier in terms of rural communities having the ability to practice farming. Climate change is still a foreign language in many rural areas to the old, young and middle aged.

The government is passionately trying by all means to assist the province where possible. The study focused on food security projects that are located within the districts of Limpopo Province, namely; VHEMBE, MOPANI, CAPRICORN, SEKHUKHUNE and WATERBERG. The reason for initiating the establishment of food security projects by the government was to alleviate poverty by creating employment. The projects used methods which are a systematic application of social



research procedures for assessing the economic, political, health and education, environmental and social components in the communities.

I had a chat with our Ward Councillor - Mr Baloyi and he added that "The sustainability of the project depends on its capacity to generate an income for its beneficiaries, the direct access to the food which it also provides was also important to beneficiaries, they conclude that growing the agricultural sector is the primary channel for achieving household food security. Food security projects generated income for its members because they get salaries from the profit made after the sale of stock. Food security projects have a great impact in the local communities in terms of job creation."

The economic empowerment programs such as food security projects serve as a means to help communities to financially support themselves. World Health Organization (WHO) and the Global Food crisis (2008) contends that poverty and hunger situations which people face on a daily basis are the reasons why projects were established. The food security projects transfer resources and skills to members of the local communities. The food security projects have been in the fore front in terms of providing health care education to members of the communities in Limpopo Province, they do that despite the presence of health care services in the communities. Some challenges that food security project members experienced during their daily operations are financial constraints, lack of reliable markets and lack of financial management skills. In order to help people change their lives through improved income-generating, it may be essential to develop their money management skills.

The fact that most customers are community members has prompted project members to plough back to the communities. Youths who are studying agriculture are given the opportunity to practice farming skills with the programmes for free. Phillip Chuene (An Agricultural Graduate from Waterberg Tvet College!) says "The projects provide children with a tool for survival at times of food shortages, they also familiarize children with methods of sustainable production of food that are applicable to their homestead of farms and important for household food security. In the Province the contributions of food security projects towards alleviating poverty looks moderate. Although the projects are creating employment for their members, they cannot handle employment problems of other community members because their profit is low. Moreover, women run projects better than men and women can starve themselves of salary for a number of



months without getting anything. It is therefore critical for Extension Officers and other funding departments that are responsible for food security projects to develop a monitoring tool to ensure sustainability of projects. As it was mentioned during the interviews with respondents and informants, it is necessary for project beneficiaries to be trained on financial management skills as well as a broad management of food security projects. Lastly, communication skills with market agents need to be improved.

Drought has emerged one of the main challenges to the province farmers. It could become a major threat to food security, as it has a strong impact on food production, access and distribution. Furthermore, given that an estimated three million farmers in South Africa produce food primarily to meet their family needs, rural poverty in Limpopo could be worsening with drought (Stats SA, 2007). Indeed, due to their low income, lower technological and capital stocks, households are predicted to have limited options to adapt to changing weather patterns like drought.

Drought is a serious problem in the province considering that it is in a semi-arid area with low, unreliable rainfall (LDA, 2010). As a result of the severe drought, the province experienced reduced grazing land and water for livestock and irrigation. The province was worst affected by drought in the past eight years when dams were only 50% full, compared with 84% in late nineties. Agriculture is an important source of livelihood for the province especially for those in rural areas, but with extreme weather like drought, it is going to be very difficult for people to cope. It is quite disturbing that in some parts of the province, farmers are already forced to sell their livestock because of drought. This will in turn place a serious challenge for agriculture and result in insufficient or shortage amount of food (food scarcity) not only in the province but South Africa as a whole.

A sharp decline in agricultural production would not only have implications for a province or country but also for the region as a whole. These pointers may probably assist: (1) To describe the current rainfall and drought status in some districts in Limpopo province and (2) To describe factors that may influence food scarcity in the province. Limpopo province is situated in the Northern part of South Africa. It is the gateway to the rest of Africa, with its shared borders making it favourably situated for economic cooperation with other part of South Africa.



While Climate change affects all of us and food supply, intersexuality is a framework that can help us understand the complex system of the world while addressing the CLIMATE CRISIS more effectively and equitably.

The world works in a way where those most affected by inequality, and classism, and other systems of oppression, also suffer more due to climate change, environmental breakdown and natural disasters. Applying the intersectionality framework means we are able to centre the people most affected. This then allows us to better develop and apply solutions that benefit all.

In all this, it is also important to also understand that the idea of intersectionality cannot fix all the problems that exist in our world. However, it is a necessary framework that can help us usefully engage with issues around privilege and power – and find proper ways forward.

In Limpopo Province we should consider applying measures that are able to address social, economic and environmental issues at the same time is important.

To name a few:

1. Land reform and restoration
2. Environmentally conscious affordable housing
3. Implementing basic income grants
4. Providing accessible (environmental) education
5. Creating green jobs which focus on transitioning away from fossil fuels while restoring degraded landscapes, and building food sovereignty.

Why RURAL areas and communities should engage in Climate Change mitigations and adaptations, also why climate justice matters:

Climate justice calls farming communities and the citizens to understand the challenges faced by the people and communities most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Those on the front lines of climate change have often contributed least to the crisis.



Furthermore, these communities are unlikely to have the resources needed to adapt to the changing climate. This makes them particularly vulnerable to climate change impacts. For example, someone living in a township will be less able to cope with drought, flash floods and heat waves than someone who lives in a wealthy area. Likewise, rising sea levels could force millions of people to move to areas where they do not have jobs or networks. A community's ability to "mitigate and adapt" to the negative consequences of climate change is shaped factors such as income, race, class, gender, economic and political representation. Climate justice also helps us determine how we should fight climate change. It can help governments to allocate resources effectively and assist the most vulnerable. When we improve society with the most vulnerable people in mind, everyone wins!

The end