

CHALLENGING HUNGER

A workbook for bulk-buying groups



This publication forms part of the Community Education Programme of the Centre for Integrated Post-School Education and Training (CIPSET), Nelson Mandela University. This publication is funded by the Foundation for Human Rights.

Published in 2018 by CIPSET.

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Funding for this booklet is facilitated by the Foundation for Human Rights supported by the European Union through Sector Budget Support.

The ideas, opinions or policy recommendations expressed in this publication are strictly those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent, and should not be reported as those of the Department of Justice & Constitutional Development, the European Union or the Foundation for Human Rights.

All photographs (unless otherwise acknowledged) were taken by the Community Education Programme Team

ISBN 978-0-6399337-6-4

Acknowledge us as follows:

Community Education Programme, 2018. *Challenging Hunger. A workbook for bulk-buying groups*. Port Elizabeth: Centre for Integrated Post-School Education and Training, Nelson Mandela University





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1. USING THIS WORKBOOK

1.1 The purpose of this book

This workbook was written for use by community educators and self-organised community groups interested in understanding and claiming the right to food. It brings together information about the South African food system and unpacks critically how this system works. It positions bulk-buying as a democratic collective activity which has the potential to challenge the existing food system by reorganising food distribution to poor people in urban and rural areas.

The book gives ideas and activities for community educators and self-organising community groups. These ideas and activities will help group members to learn about the right to food, and how, together, they can challenge the problem of hunger.

The book sets out ways to understand and analyse the problem of hunger. By looking at the right to food and the problem of hunger from different angles, groups can decide for themselves how they want to mobilise and organise against the issue of hunger and claim the right to food. Bulk-buying is one of a range of responses which we will discuss in this book.

1.2 The Community Education Programme

The Community Education Programme (CEP) is based at the Centre for Post-School Education and Training (CIPSET) at Nelson Mandela University. It is a collaborative programme with community members and organisations around the Missionvale Campus of Nelson Mandela University. CEP uses community-based participatory action research to develop non-formal education programmes and support for community participants to undertake collective work that build self-reliance and a solidarity economy. The workbook is based on the work of members of the Community Education Programme.



Community members discuss household spending. Soweto-on-Sea, Nelson Mandela Bay.



BULK BUYING GROUPS

1. USING THIS WORKBOOK

In 2014 and in 2015, CEP staff and local community members, completed a number of transect walks through local areas near the university campus. The walks aimed to look and listen closely to identify key issues or problems in a local area. We spoke with many people who said they did not have enough food for everyone at home every day. We saw young children with swollen stomachs. We met a man who shared food with the cattle that he cares for. We also saw some evidence of groups gardening in local schools. We saw vegetables gardens at several homes and met people who kept livestock.

Critically looking at what we saw and heard and based on our own experiences, we agreed that the issues of food availability, nutrition, and hunger form a knot of many linked problems. It also brought us to the following key questions: How is it possible that many people go hungry in a country that produces enough healthy food for everybody? What can be done?

We organised a workshop which was open to everyone in the communities we walked through. We spent three days together and discussed the possibilities of learning together and using our own resource and abilities to bring about change. The theme *Food and Hunger* came from these investigations and the sharing of our findings with community members. Under this programme, we offered workshops, organised bulk-buying and savings groups, and started community food gardens at local schools.

1.3 Our approach

We aimed to work with people who are excluded from the labour market and wanted our work to talk to their lived experience. We wanted to understand from the perspective of people who are marginalised and excluded, what knowledge and skills they consider worthwhile learning in building a more equal, just and sustainable society. Then we wanted to act in support of emerging alternatives and increase the space for these alternatives to take hold and become self-sustainable.

We also wanted to explore how a critical pedagogy could develop to support such work. Through our work, we intended to make explicit the global arrangements of power that shape the relationship between education, work and society. We also meant to see if it was possible, as educators and learners, to create a system of democratic education by building a collective learning group. In this space, we conceived of educators and learners working together to build knowledge about how non-formal community education programmes can emerge through continuous spirals of investigating, organising, reflecting, learning and acting together. The focus of these programmes should surface from the issues and challenges that were considered important by people living in a specific locality, and to connect a shared analysis and understanding of these local issues to a wider critique of our society – a world of enormous inequality and exploitation of people and nature.

We wanted to create a more radical space where the social context and power relations that shape our lives can be understood and challenged - “reading the world” (Freire & Macedo, 1987). And where people act collectively to increase the possibilities for alternative thinking and practice to emerge and take root.

We pictured the development of education programmes as starting from the concrete lived experience of community participants. We attempted to work together in a way that disrupted and challenged hierarchies of power and created and recreated autonomy and co-operation as alternatives to oppressive and top-down systems of educational administration. Through a community-based, participatory action research process, educators and learners investigated this

“every day and night experience” (Carpenter & Mojab, 2011: 4), and described it in rich detail using a range of visual, oral and text-based methods. We compared and contrasted stories of individual experience. We asked critical questions and sometimes added information from academic, media and web-based sources. We explored contradictions in what we saw and read about. We spoke about and explored possible alternatives. We consulted with a wider community, and organised and initiated collective actions.

Through this work we wanted to explore the role of education in the development of civic agency; solidaristic forms of organisation and work that lie outside of the domination of people and nature; and in socially and ecologically useful community knowledge.

1.4 Developing a workshop programme using this material

Our work has drawn from the tradition of critical pedagogy and in particular that of Paulo Freire. In this tradition, the purpose of education is to support transformative learning processes that view learners and educators as agents for social change. A curriculum that is centred on issues that are important to participants, require that educators and learners are able to surface such issues and frame them as problems or questions that help to uncover the world as we know it.

Such a curriculum should also question assumptions and views about this world (including our own), and enable the imagination of a socially just alternative. In this process, critical reflective dialogue becomes an important element for framing and organising educational activities.

Critical reflective dialogue is more than asking questions. For us it is a process of shared learning and working that involves respect, listening, questions that uncover experiences, feelings and assumptions, and which searches for the structures that shape our world. Critical reflective dialogue brings learners and educators together to name and explore issues they agree are important. As they add and interrogate new information, they develop and test their ideas, and find ways to challenge oppressive situations.

Through repeated cycles of investigation, critical reflective dialogue and action, shared learning happens; new knowledge is constructed and a deeper understanding and collective engagement with our world emerges. The power relations between educators and learners shift.



Discussion amongst community participants in food and hunger workshop. Veeplaas, Nelson Mandela Bay



BULK BUYING GROUPS

1. USING THIS WORKBOOK

The workbook uses three sets of linked questions as a way to spark dialogue and structure the learning process:

- What is the world like?
- Why is the world as it is?
- What could be done about it?¹

Answering the first question requires descriptions of our shared experiences and brings out our shared understanding, so that we are naming our world. This ‘naming’ can come from the group’s own research, but also through the use of photos, stories, short video clips, cartoons and pictures to open up discussion and reflection. Depending on the energy and interest of the group, a single activity or a set of activities that surface the participants’ lived experience can launch an investigation into ways of making sense of the world from different standpoints - ways of ‘reading’ the world.

At this point, new information could be added that also relates to the experience of the participants. Such information is explored not only as new content. Through the question, “Why is the world as it is?”, we develop our understanding of different explanations of the world as it is and we compare these explanations or theories to our experience and to ideas of what the world could be. In this way, we deepen our understanding and add to our knowledge from other perspectives.

A further aspect of making meaning is to examine how knowing is valued in society and the ways in which knowledge is used to strengthen social, political and economic power. What do we learn from the different positions people hold about the interests these positions represent? Sometimes this process includes challenging our own ideas and beliefs, or exploring ways to claim and reinforce the validity of marginalised forms of knowing. The process of making sense - upending thinking, rethinking, restating and reclaiming – leads us to thinking about what knowledge is useful and helpful in opening up spaces for transformative learning. This connects us with the third question: “What is to be done?”

Thinking about ‘action’ suggests a participatory investigation to identify and evaluate alternatives that might exist within a geographical or cultural community, but could also exist elsewhere. From our new understanding, we assess what the possibilities for change are. We ask ourselves, what power we have in our own hands? We look at what resources and strengths, abilities and qualities we have as a community or group. We look at the possible risks and difficulties our initiative might face. We organise ourselves and identify roles and responsibilities. We allocate tasks and say by when these tasks should be completed. We follow up to see what has been done and hold each other responsible. We reflect on our progress and consider what activities we need to adapt or change or stop all together.

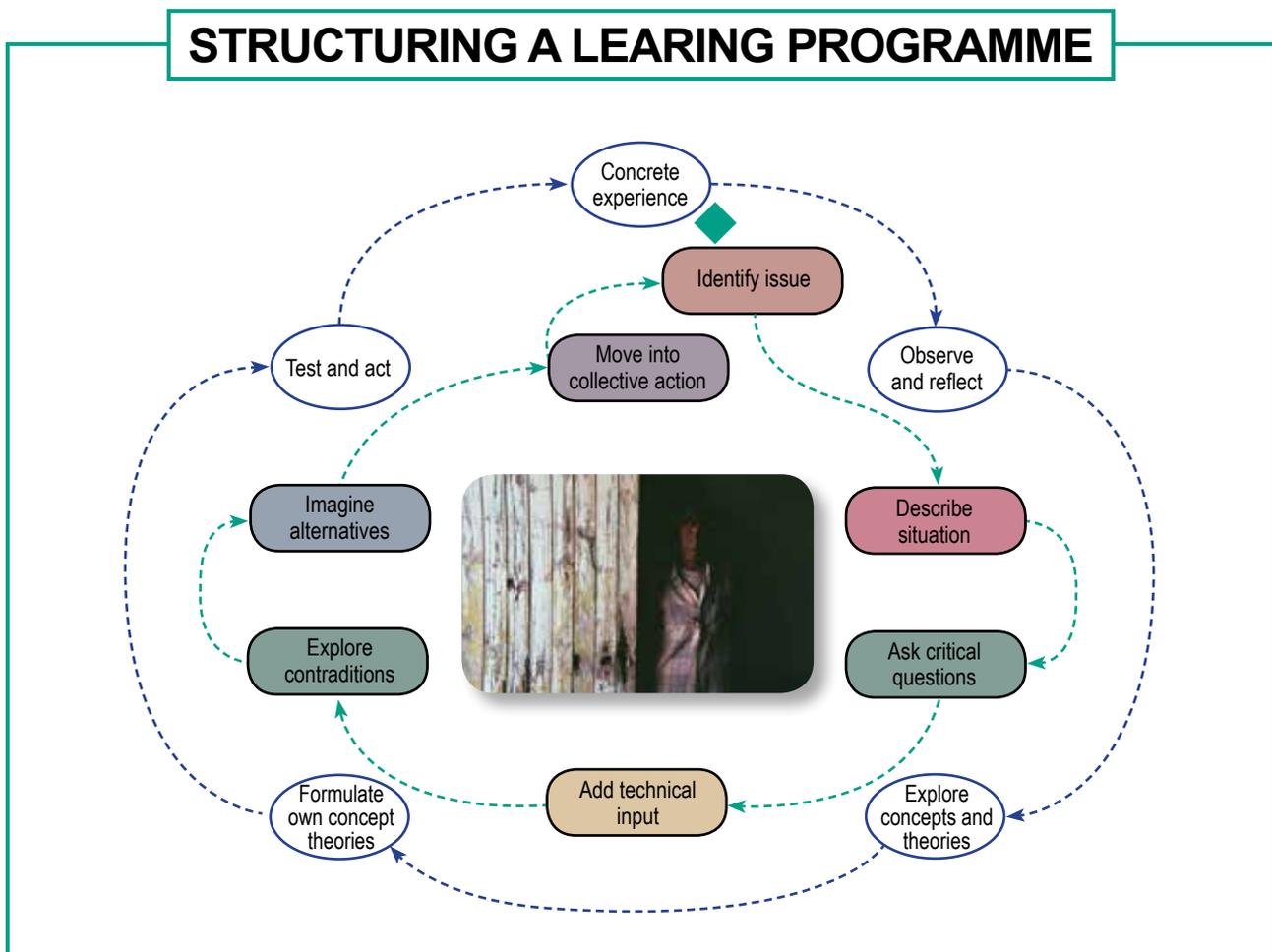
Exploring possibilities and spaces for action can shift the focus from local issues to finding global connections and examples of resistance. However, ‘action’ does not necessarily mean only activities that connect back into the community through mobilising, organising and collective work and the learning this can bring. It can also be thought of as the shared processes of designing and implementing new learning activities that deepen our understanding or our capacity for action. These interlinked questions spark learning that is both focused within the learning group and embedded in broader transformative processes with others in a community.

The questions give momentum to a spiral of repeated activities that drive us to ever deeper understanding and transformation of ourselves and our world. They are not prescriptive, sequential

¹Farrell Hunter provided a timely reminder of Anne Hope’s questions.

steps that are each completed before moving on to the next element, in the way of a conventional content-based curriculum. A starting point and further connecting activities come from educators and learners co-designing the learning programme through these problem-posing questions. How activities are selected and sequenced, with what learning objective in mind, should emerge from ongoing thoughtful dialogue between learners and educators. They are offered as possibilities or a starting point, for shared learning and activity.

The diagram below sets out the process we follow in our work.



1.5 A note about language

Our learning circles bring together people with different home languages and schooling, and experiences of how language was used in education. Opening up dialogue amongst learners and between learners and educators in a way that encourages participation requires that we recognise that language is not a neutral issue and that language preference and the dominance of English in our society, reflect power relations.

This book is written in English so it can reach a wider group of users, but it should be used in ways that cross language boundaries. In our groups, we talk and write across the languages that we share.

For example, we start with a discussion that surfaces lived experience in isiXhosa (sometimes based on instructions for the activity in English).

We write down our discussion in a mixture of isiXhosa and English.

We put up a newsprint sheet where any participant (learner or educator) can write down key ideas from a discussion that is in isiXhosa or in English.

At the end of a session, we review this list and translate these terms. Or we start a discussion with a word code from the popular language of a community and unpack the deep knowledge and understanding that is crowded into this concept. An example is the term, “poppie water diet” (see page 14).

We try to use language as a resource for defending, privileging and extending all the knowledge that is stored in the languages of participants, rather than only what is written in English. This means that we must problematise our own language use and preferences and that educators must become co-learners rather than expert knowers.

1.6 Investigating our experience

In surfacing and extending our understanding of the right to food, this workbook provides activities that encourage learners and educators to become co-investigators. Our investigation might include collecting information in a local neighbourhood. At the same time, we also surface and explore our own experiences and ideas. Plus, we read and compare different texts on the issue, adding further viewpoints.

Such investigation takes us as a group of co-learners in more than one direction, as we draw on learners’ deep knowledge of their communities and educators’ academic knowledge of research processes. Bringing these knowledges into dialogue, rather than into a hierarchy of knowledge, enables co-learning and the exchange of capacities. The power relations that shape what knowledge is and whose knowledge counts, enter the learning space, and can be examined and challenged. In the process, a critical community of investigators emerges that uses its capacity and shared knowledge, to challenge oppressive conditions and take action to improve lives.



Participants code pictures from their investigations in a workshop. Missionvale Campus of Nelson Mandela University, Nelson Mandela Bay.

2. WHAT IS OUR WORLD LIKE

“Freedom is meaningless if people cannot put food in their stomachs.”

-Nelson Mandela-

All human beings eat to stay alive. What we eat can be shaped by our culture, where power relations place us in society, and our capacity to produce or find food. While food can connect people, food is also a way in which communities and people are divided and many are marginalised.

The activities that follow aim to surface collective experiences and understanding among workshop participants around household spending and the link to food in income-poor households.

Each of the activities follow a pattern: the purpose of the activity is set out, there is a materials list, followed by guidelines for the group.

There is no set time for how long the activity will take the group. This depends on many things: how the activity has been adapted for a specific group, the size of the group or groups learning together, the number of languages in the group and other contextual factors that we do not know as writers of this book.

Groups using the activities are encouraged to think about the following:

- Who the educator/s are.
- Who the learners are.
- Where the learning is taking place.
- What time learners and educators have available to them.
- When in the day the workshop is taking place.
- What resources they have available.
- What the requirements of funders are (if there is a funder).

All these issues might influence the selection of learning activities and the programme design.

Household income is a sensitive subject and discussing it could bring up painful personal experiences. Prepare for this possibility by considering co-facilitation (more than one educator), and space for people to debrief in the group and as individuals. In preparing, carefully take into account how race, gender, education and class might intersect and how the positionality of the educators could open up or close the discussion amongst group members.

This booklet works with other booklets written by CEP. It connects in particular with the following booklets:

- *Workbook for community gardening groups*
- *Resource book for savings groups*



A man walks home after shopping at a supermarket. Zwide, Nelson Mandela Bay.

2.1 Activity - Spending in households

Purpose of the activity

- Discuss spending decisions in households.
- Connect with the discussion on food prices.

Materials

- Flip-chart paper and felt-tip pens.
- Sticky labels: 'adults' and 'children /young adults'.
- R2000 money bundles.
- Photocopy notes to make money bundles or simply write the value of a note on pieces of paper cut to the same size.

In your group

- Ask the group to divide up into three household types:
- Male as head; Women as head; Grandmother as head:
- Give each participant a label showing the role they play:
1 woman, 1 man, 1 granny, a mix of children and adults of different genders.
- Ask the group to form households with the household head and a maximum of 4 dependents.
- Give each household one R2000² money bundle which must last for a month.
- Ask each household to develop big categories for spending for example: schooling, electricity, food, transport, etc.
- Ask the household to discuss on what categories they are going spend this money.
- Ask them to discuss how much they will budget for each category.
- Ask each household to write their budget on a flip-chart and put it up on the wall.

Activity with all groups together

Educators discuss group feedback on flip-charts with whole group.

- Try to identify who makes spending decisions and why this is the case.
- Are there differences in how money is spent in the different households?
- What are the major spending categories.
- Discuss if some spending is not listed and why this is the case.
- Discuss if there are invisible spending³ categories.
- What are we learning about spending in different households?

How do age and gender influence household spending?

- Discuss family strategies to enable meeting all household needs.
- Do women and men make different spending decisions? Motivate.
- Do older people make different spending decisions from younger people?
- What family strategies do we use to help us meet all our household needs?

NOTE

Increase the household income to R3500 (This is the minimum wage that will become effective in 2018.)

Divide the group into male and female households. Ask the group to repeat the exercise. What has changed?

What are the differences in spending across households? Decrease the household income to R1600. (This is the value of a government old age grant in 2017 for people over 60 and younger than 75.) What has changed?

What are the differences in spending across households?

²In 2017 the South African Statistical Services calculated that a food basket covering the minimum healthy food for an adult was R1138 per person per month. Household sizes differ. On average income-poor households have four or five members.

³Spending by household members that are hidden from other household members

2.2 Activity - Food prices and food options

Purpose of the activity

- Discuss food options in income-poor households facing a rapid change in food prices.

Materials

- Flip-chart paper and felt-tip pens.
- Copies of the stories below for each participant.

In your group

- Read the stories together in the group. The group can choose a reader or give a section of the story to different readers, or divide into pairs that read together.
- Using the stories and drawing on your own experience, discuss strategies that income-poor households facing a rapid change in food prices could use to:
 - Protect where and how the household finds food.
 - Change the pattern of food use in the household.
- Looking at the strategies the group listed, who holds power to influence decisions about food access and use in households?
 - What power do women have? What power do men have?
 - What power do younger women have? What power do older women have?
 - What happens to children?



Food purchases of the Khulisani Bulk-buying Club await delivery. KwaZakhele, Nelson Mandela Bay.



BULK BUYING GROUPS

2. WHAT IS OUR WORLD LIKE

Many income-poor households in urban areas spend a large share of their household income on food. This is also true in rural communities. When prices increase rapidly, households can experience a food shock - a sudden change in the food that members of the household eat. Food shocks are also the result of changes in weather patterns (like drought) that affect prices, or any situation that affects the production of food; or causes a loss of income when a household member can no longer exchange her/his labour or services for an income.

PACSA, a church-based organisation in Msunduzi, KwaZuluNatal, monitor the price of food through participatory research with low-income families. They say, “The crises in our economy is reflected on our plates.”

Women participating in the research with PACSA explained that the biggest food price increases came from “the big foods.” This core group of foods include: maize-meal, rice, cake flour, white sugar and cooking oil. These are the foods which households prioritise and have to have regardless of price, because they provide energy and the basis for all meals.

“Maize meal, rice, flour, sugar, cooking oil: whether you like it or not; you cannot leave it out of your groceries *kuwumgogodla wekhaya*” (Focus Group: Crossing, 15 August 2016).
“You have to have the big things; what are you going to do? How will you get through the month without the big things?” (Focus Group: Mpumuza, 4 August 2016).

In September 2015, the ‘big foods’ cost R481.91; a year later they had increased by R120.54, taking their total cost to R602.45. Together the big foods increased by 25% between 2015 and 2016. This is a very big increase and is much higher than the average consumer price index – a measure of the change in the buying power of money year-on-year.

Source: http://www.pacsa.org.za/images/food_barometer/2016/2016_PACSA_Food_Price_Barometer_REDUCED.pdf

This is what Thando, a 69-year old pensioner from Thembisa in Gauteng, told Ishtar Lakhani, a food rights researcher:

“In the past food was cheaper. Eating healthier was cheaper. We could buy everything that we want. Now you either have mealies or rice. Now we eat pap because you can eat it all day. Income was a little, but food was cheaper. Now income has increased a little, but food prices have increased a lot. But as long as you have maize meal, you will be fine. You can make soft porridge for breakfast and eat pap the rest of the day.”

Source: <http://wiredspace.wits.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10539/14947/Ishtar%20Lakhani%20MA%20Research%20Report%20Anthropology%20FINAL.pdf?sequence=2>

*In the past food was cheaper. Eating healthier was cheaper.
We could buy everything that we want. Now you either have mealies
or rice. Now we eat pap because you can eat it all day.*



2.3 Activity - Unemployment and food decisions

Purpose of the activity

- Discuss unemployment and food decisions in households.
- Connect the discussion with the right to food.

Materials

- Flip-chart paper and felt-tip pens.
- Copies of the story below for each participant.

In a small group

- Read the story which follows together in a group.
The group can choose a reader or give a section of the story to different readers, or divide into pairs that read together.
- Discuss the story in the small group.
 - What about the story is familiar to us?
 - What about the story surprises us?

In the big group

- What are we learning from this story about Elzetta and her family?
Organise the responses using the following headings and other headings that will help the group explore the relationship between unemployment and food options.
 - Strategies to deal with unemployment.
 - Strategies to deal with the price of food.
 - Strategies to deal with the immediate problem of extreme hunger.
 - Other strategies to strengthen the family in the face of extreme hunger.
- Unemployment and loss of income make access to food extremely difficult.
Discuss the role of other groups in society:
 - Neighbours.
 - Community groups.
 - Government.
 - Companies.

NOTE

Connect this discussion to extracts in the next section from page 33 onwards.

A story of two young women

'We have to buy the cheapest of the cheapest, and we are rated as the cheapest of the cheapest,' says Elzetta, who is an unemployed 23-year-old and who lives in Bloemendal, in Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality in Eastern Cape. She has one child and lives with her twin sister, who has her own child. They depend on donations from neighbours and friends in order to survive. However, they find it difficult to ask for help from neighbours, due to stigma, discrimination and their own sense of pride and dignity. The two sisters work as a team; one looks after the household while the other does odd jobs such as cleaning, washing clothes or doing people's hair in order to earn some money. They get paid very little for doing these jobs, and sometimes do not get paid at all.

Elzetta told the international aid organisation, Oxfam: 'Our lives are very difficult. People say that we have chosen this life, but I do not know how we could have chosen this. I did not choose to have a baby at 23 years old. My mother is lost. My father is very sick. I lost my job as I could not leave my sister and father alone at home. We have no money. The last time my sister and I ate was on Sunday (Oxfam conducted a Focus Group Discussion on Tuesday), but we made sure our children ate. We rely on a budget of R6 a day for four people. We buy four potatoes for R3 and a cup of rice for R3, and this makes a meal for four. Bread and cheap juice is our daily staple food; we live off others. Tea, coffee, sugar and milk are luxury items. We buy cheap bread that goes hard because of the heat. R100 normally stretches for two weeks because we don't know where the next R100 will come from.'

'Due to the poor quality of food the children wake up hungry in the middle of the night and this bothers us. At times, we feel it would be better if someone adopted them so as to give them a chance in life.'

There is no support from the Department of Social Development to help them run their household. They would like to have a food garden, but there is no fencing around their house, which makes this difficult. However, the girls still have dreams in life: one of them wants to be a pathologist and the other dreams of being a nurse one day.

Source: https://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/file_attachments/hidden_hunger_in_south_africa_0.pdf



Notice with prices for doing hair. Rolihlahla, Nelson Mandela Bay.

2.4 Activity - Nutrition and food groups

Purpose of the activity

- Consider factors that affect the quality of food available to different households.

Materials

- Circles cut from flip-chart to the size of a dinner plate. Fold the circles into quarters. (The participants can use the fold lines to help them estimate the size of the foods on the plate).
- Cut rectangles from flip-chart to more or less the size of a water glass. Fold the rectangles into quarters.
- Flip-chart paper and crayons.
- Copies of the diagram below for each participant.

In your group

PART 1

- Divide the participants into pairs.
- Ask each pair to draw a plate of food that is most often eaten by people from households headed by:
 - A pensioner.
 - Someone with a grant.
 - A factory worker.
 - A young adult.
 - Self-employed informal business owner.
 - A teacher/ nurse/ police officer.
 - Any other segment of the community suggested as important by the group.
- The drawing should show the actual size of the different elements of the food on the plate. A 'drawing' could also simply be a portion of the plate coloured in and labelled.
- Stick the plates (labelled with a description of the household head) onto a wall and give the group time to look at the different drawings and informally chat with each other about what they see.
- Bring the pairs together into a single group and ask them to discuss:
 - What is similar across the pictures?
 - What is different across the pictures?

PART 2

- Ask the group to study the diagram of foods considered important for healthy living by the South African Department of Health.
 - What foods do they see in the diagram?
 - Why are foods organised in circles?
 - Why are the circles in different sizes?
 - What foods are missing from the diagram?
 - Why are there no foods or fluids that are high in sugar on the diagram?
- Ask the group to label the circles using the following labels: Fluids; Pulses and Cereals; Starches; Vegetables and Fruit; Fats; Dairy; Animal Protein.

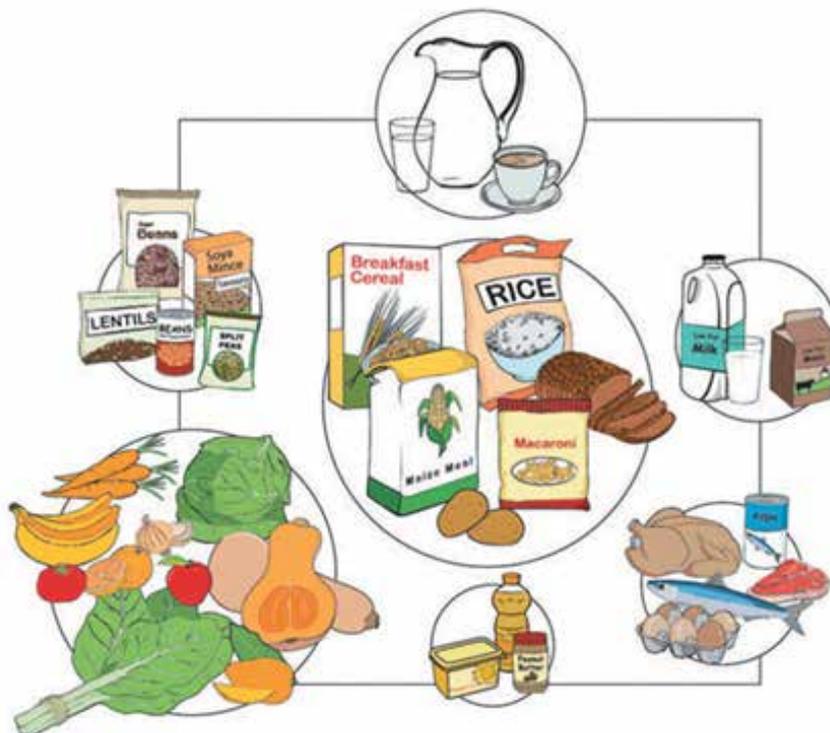
PART 3

- Ask the group to compare their plates with the diagram's food groups.
- What is similar between the plates and the diagram?
- How is the plate different from the diagram?
Consider explanations that account for:
 - type of food on the plate;
 - the amount of food;
 - what is missing from the plate;
 - what might be different depending on the week or month, or time of year.
- Ask the group to explain reasons for the differences further.
You can prompt the group to use the question "Why is that?" each time they have an answer.

NOTE

- Consider introducing some technical terms that might help the groups in their explanations: 'energy-dense foods'; 'high in calories'; 'high/low in nutritional value', etc.
- One way of doing this, is to put up newsprint with some of the terms at the beginning of the session. Ask the group to add to the terms as the session progresses. Anyone can add a term at any time during the session. If this is slow to happen, use the discussion to request a participant to write down a term.
- Allow for time at the end of the session to discuss and translate the terms.
- Connect the discussion of terms to popular terms. For example, in parts of Nelson Mandela Bay, a meal that consists of slices of white bread and a sugary drink, is called the "poppie water diet".
- Open up a discussion around the knowledge that is embedded in this term. Compare the knowledge in a term like "energy-dense foods" with "poppie water diet". How is this knowledge similar or different? Why might one term have more 'scientific' value than another term?

Food Guide



Source:
[http://cdn.24.co.za/files/
Cms/General/d/2345/
dc7034cde5664bc-
59c4975117f936da9.jpg](http://cdn.24.co.za/files/Cms/General/d/2345/dc7034cde5664bc-59c4975117f936da9.jpg)

2.5 Activity - Food branding

Purpose of this activity

- Critically explore the health claims, packaging and messages of food brands.
- Understand how food branding drives spending.

Materials

- Flip-chart paper and felt-tip pens.
- Pictures of food advertising.

In your group

- Look at the packaging of this cereal.
 - How does the packaging draw children to the product?
 - What is the message to persuade parents or caregivers to buy the product?
- There are two other products based on the breakfast cereal linked to this add: Kellogg's Mini Pack and Kellogg's Cereal and Milk Bar. Kellogg's call their products, 'a family of cereals'.
 - Why do you think they are using the term 'family'?
 - How do marketers use children to encourage parents to buy a product?
- How do big businesses create loyalty to their products from childhood into adulthood?
- What can we do to test the value of a product, without influence from branding?
- What prompts us to spend money on more expensive products, rather than cheaper alternatives?



Kellogg's® Coco Pops®

Flavoured with real cocoa, low in saturated fat and a source of 6 vitamins and iron, it's not surprising that kids love the chocolaty taste of breakfast with Coco and his Crew.

NOTE

Prompt the group to think about:

- How advertisers use colour, characters, and ideas to suggest that a product has value, or to suggest that its use brings fun and happiness, or to suggest that its use is linked to a preferred identity.
- How similar products, like breakfast cereals made by the same company are aimed at different age and user groups.
- How concerns about food safety can also push people towards branded products that may be of dubious or no nutritional value.

2.6 Activity - Food labels

Purpose of this activity

- Critically explore the health claims, packaging and messages of food labels.
- Understand how food labelling can influence spending.

Materials

- Flip-chart paper and felt-tip pens.
- Food labels.

In your group

- Today, food manufacturers are required by law to include nutritional information on their products to help consumers make informed choices. Look at the information from the two food labels for a 330ml can of sparkling fruit juice.
 - For consumers with diabetes or high blood pressure, what information in the first label might persuade them to use the product?
 - For consumers with diabetes or high blood pressure, what information in the second label might persuade them not to use the product?
 - If consumers knew that 4g of sugar or (6g of salt) is equivalent to a teaspoon, will they still use the product?
- In the first label nutritional information is presented for 100ml (less than half a cup). This is the way information is presented on many food labels. What are the ways in which the information in the first label for a 330ml can, could be misleading?
- How can we use the law to provide nutritional information that helps consumers?

This deliciously good sparkling grape juice bursts with that unmistakable grape scent and flavour. It is a natural addition to the sparkling fruit juice family and, just like other sparkling fruit juices in this family, it has no added sugar, preservatives or colourants.

Typical Nutritional information	per 100 ml serve
Energy (kJ)	227
Protein (g)	0
Glycaemic Carbohydrates (g)	13
- of which total sugar (g)	12.5
Total Fat (g)	0
- of which saturated fat (g)	0
Dietary Fibre	0
Total sodium	4

This deliciously good sparkling grape juice bursts with that unmistakable grape scent and flavour. It is a natural addition to the sparkling fruit juice family and, just like other sparkling fruit juices in this family, it has no added sugar, preservatives or colourants.

Typical Nutritional information	per 330 ml serve
Energy (kJ)	749
Protein (g)	0
Glycaemic Carbohydrates (g)	43
- of which total sugar (g)	41
Total Fat (g)	0
- of which saturated fat (g)	0
Dietary Fibre	0
Total sodium	13

2.7 Activity - Food sources

Purpose of the activity

- Consider where households find the food that they eat and how this affects the quality of food available to them.
- Consider the relationship between food availability and income sources.

Materials

- Copy the page overleaf and cut out the pictures of food (You may need to double the food pictures to allow groups to show that some foods like oil might be bought from both the spaza and the supermarket).
- Cut out the labels representing food sources too.

In groups

- Divide the participants into smaller groups of roughly four people.
- Match the foods with the places from which the households in your group buy most often.
- Discuss the picture that emerges
 - What food groups are bought from which places most often?
 - How does the way money come into the household affect where households buy food?
 - What are the consequences for families of their buying patterns?
Think about costs, the availability of foods and nutrition.



Buying bread from a fruit and vegetable stall. Zwide, Nelson Mandela Bay



BULK BUYING GROUPS
2. WHAT IS OUR WORLD LIKE



Foods for good health	Places where we can get food
	Spaza shop
	Butchery
	Community Dairy
	Street vendor
	Take away and tshisa nyama
	Fish sellers
	Household garden
	Supermarket
	Community market

2.8 Activity - Food production and distribution in the community

Purpose of the activity

- Build a shared understanding of food sources in the community.

Materials

- Print a set of all the pictures per group.
- Cut the pages into half so that the pictures can be assembled in a pile that the group can arrange to develop their explanations to the prompts below.
- Cards and felt-tip pens.
- Copies of the diagram below for each participant.

In your group

- Ask participants to work in pairs and give one or two pictures to a pair.
- Ask the participants to use the pictures to answer the following questions:
 - What foods are connected with the picture?
(Consider what can be seen in the picture and/or what foods might be associated with the picture).
 - Who is producing this food?
 - Has this type of food production always existed? How has it changed over time?
 - Who is using this food source?
 - What is the importance of this food source to the community?
- Bring the pairs together to give feedback to the whole group on their discussion.
- Ask the group to listen across the stories to discuss the following questions:
 - Who are the local producers of food?
(Think about age, gender, and social position in the community).
 - How does local food production help producers and buyers with the problem of having food?
 - What is the value of local food production?
(Think about individuals, households, neighbourhoods).
- Consider ways in which the group's feedback can be organised to deepen their understanding. Using cards with one issue on it helps with organizing information. See the picture below as an example:



NOTE

The group might want to take their own photographs using cellphones. The task can be given as preparation, with everyone bringing their pictures to the session; or organised as part of the session. The educator will need to organise a way of retrieving and printing pictures to enable the discussion.

BULK BUYING GROUPS
2. WHAT IS OUR WORLD LIKE



Chickens feeding in the grass. Rolihlahla informal settlement, Nelson Mandela Bay.



Cows grazing in cemetery. Veeplaas, Nelson Mandela Bay.

BULK BUYING GROUPS
2. WHAT IS OUR WORLD LIKE



Vegetable garden with kids (baby goats). Zwide, Nelson Mandela Bay.



Informal traders preparing and selling 'amacala' and 'inyama yentloko'. Zwide, Nelson Mandela Bay.

BULK BUYING GROUPS
2. WHAT IS OUR WORLD LIKE



Home garden with spinach. Soweto-on-Sea. Nelson Mandela Bay.



Women planting seedlings in newly-prepared garden beds at Soweto-on-Sea Primary School. Nelson Mandela Bay.

BULK BUYING GROUPS
2. WHAT IS OUR WORLD LIKE



Vegetables for sale at a street stall. Zwide, Nelson Mandela Bay.



Oranges for sale from a home. Zwide, Nelson Mandela Bay.

2.9 Activity - Collect prices from different providers

Item	Size	Price at local spaza shop/ supermarket/ wholesaler
Dry Goods		
rice		
bread flour		
dry yeast		
mealie-meal		
sugar		
salt		
samp		
beans		
soup packet		
stock cubes		
coffee		
teabags		
Bread		
white bread		
brown bread		
Oils & Fats		
cooking oil		
margarine		
Vegetables		
cabbage		
carrots		
potatoes		
onions		
tomatoes		
Eggs & Dairy		
eggs		
long life milk		
Meat products		
chicken pieces		
meat mixed portions		
polony		
Cleaning materials		
washing soap		
bath soap		



2.10 Activity - Spending and household income

Purpose of this activity

- Understand price differences at different food suppliers.
- Understand how income influence what spending options are available to households.

Materials

- Flip-chart paper and felt-tip pens.
- Sticky labels.
- R 1500 money bundles.
- R 600 money bundles.
- R 300 money bundles.
- The spaza shop price sheet.
- The supermarket price sheet.
- The wholesaler price sheet.

In small groups

- Give participants the 'SPAZA SHOP' price sheet and ask them to fill in the prices they got for homework.
- Everyone can share information so they get as many prices as possible.
- Then give them the 'SUPERMARKET' price sheet and WHOLESALER price sheet. What do they notice when they compare all three sheets?
- They can break into small groups to discuss and report back.

In a big group

- Bring all the groups together and discuss in the plenary session:
 - Which prices are cheaper?
 - What informs decisions about spending?
 - What are hidden costs in spending on food?

NOTE

- Participants may initially feel that prices that are smaller in money value are 'cheaper', because they are comparing prices and not prices per unit. It may help participants if you show them the column with the 'cost for 1 kg' or 'cost for 1 litre'.
- Participants may feel that how money becomes available in a household affects where money can be spent. Households that get small amounts of money on a daily or weekly basis might be more likely to buy where they can get prices that 'match' their money. To be able to get value for money as an individual household, a lump sum needs to be available. Households with a monthly income from a social grant might spend a portion of that income at a supermarket and rely at other times on a spaza shop.
- Also, households cannot simply look at the price in the shop, because the location of the facility is another factor. Transport becomes an important additional cost, when buying food at supermarkets and especially at wholesalers.



2.11 Activity - The food system

Purpose

- Identify the food system from the land to the plate.
- Connect the food value chain to prices (gap between the farm gate and shop price).
- Explore the 'hidden' costs in our food system.

Materials

- Potatoes (enough so that each group has one or two potatoes).
- Crayons/ felt-tip pens, magazines and flip-chart paper.
- Cards with the names of all the 'stops' of the potato along its journey.
- As many picture as possible of the production of potatoes from farm to processing plants and supermarkets. Put these pictures up around the room.

In a group

PART 1

- Ask the group to pass the potatoes around and talk about:
 - What they see: Is it clean or does it still have earth on it? What does it smell like? What size is it? Is it fresh or old?
 - What they know about growing it. Some might be home gardeners and have grown potatoes and can share taking potatoes out of the ground and cleaning them before bringing them into the house for cooking.
 - What they know about buying it: Where they buy potatoes? How potatoes are packaged? Where do people, who sell potatoes from a stall on the street, buy their potatoes? Where do supermarkets get their potatoes?
- Ask the group to draw the journey of a potato from the farm to the plate, using the material provided.
- Provide the group with the cards with the names of the following "stops" along the journey: Growing, Harvesting, Processing, Distributing, Marketing, Selling, Buying, Preparing, Eating.
- The group should think through all the possible things that happen to the potato at each stop and name those things in detail.

PART 2

- Create a story wall of the different journeys and ask the group to walk along with a partner, looking at the journeys and noting what is similar or different in the journeys.
- Next, ask the group as a whole to create a single story that tells the journey of the potato. A scribe will write down next to each stop what the group agrees is likely to have happened to the potato.
- Point out that the group has now described key elements of the food system from the farm to the eater.

PART 3

- Divide the group in two:
 - Get the one group to discuss who are the workers at each step that will need be paid from the production of the potatoes.
 - Get the second group to discuss who are the owners & managers who will carry costs and get income from the production of the potatoes.
- Bring the group together in plenary and hear the report from each group.



BULK BUYING GROUPS

2. WHAT IS OUR WORLD LIKE

- Ask the group to share their insights about the costs involved in food production between the farm and the plate:
 - What share goes to farmworkers?
 - What share goes to farmers?
 - What share goes to the distributors and owners of supermarkets?
 - What costs are passed to the consumer?

PART 4

- Ask the group to consider if there are 'hidden' costs to the price of a potato. A hidden cost is a cost that is passed on to a third party without the producer or the consumer carrying the cost.
- Ask one group to think through what are the hidden costs that workers might carry (Costs that are passed on to them... for example, clothing, illness from exposure to fertilisers and pesticides, from working in cold storage, the costs of survival for season work and so on).
- Ask the second group what costs to nature might be hidden. These are costs that producers pass on to the environment (and to future generations). So, the costs of losing top soil in commercial agriculture, the costs of pesticides and fertiliser to the soil, the costs of water, the costs of fossil fuels to the environment, the costs of plastic packaging to landfills and ocean environments etc.)
- Ask both groups to consider the issue of waste: where in the food system might there be waste and what are the hidden costs when there is waste?

PART 5

Ideas to build on:

- Investigate with groups how supermarkets are working to control the food system
 - What research are supermarkets sponsoring?
 - How are supermarkets changing the traditional food production system?
 - How are supermarkets selling their "food journey" to consumers?
- Investigate with the groups different ways to disrupt the existing food system?
 - What happens to the food value chain when people produce their own food?
 - What happens to the food value chain when small producers produce food for local markets where consumers buy directly from them?
 - What are the ways that food production and consumption can avoid hidden costs or at minimum make the hidden costs visible?

NOTE

- There are different journeys for getting a potato from the farm to the plate. Explain clearly from the start, that the exercise is looking at describing the journey of potatoes that we would buy in a shop, because we are trying to understand the main food system that exists in South Africa.
- Consider asking the group to 'pass the potato' using story telling instead of drawing to describe the journey. Put cards with the 'stops' up along the way, up on a wall as a prompt to the group. This will work if the group is small. The group stands in a circle and one person starts and passes (or throws) the potato to another in the circle. The person with the potato tells what happens at a 'stop' along the journey, before passing it to the next person. Someone could simply pass the potato along to the next person, if s/he is not ready to contribute information.
- You could also ask the group to discuss, how this value chain of ownership and labour, will change if the potato is changed in the production process to frozen quick fry chips? Or the production of powdered mash potatoes? This could open up a discussion around how long value chains affect prices and what is added to food when it is altered through industrial food processing.
- Advise the group to look at the ingredients list at the back of a packet of processed potatoes to get a glimpse of what happens in the factory.



BULK BUYING GROUPS
2. WHAT IS OUR WORLD LIKE



Source: <https://www.farmersweekly.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/potato-production.jpg>

Words for Part 1 (write each word in bold on a separate card)

Growing

Harvesting

Processing, washing, grading, packaging

Distributing, transporting, storing, warehousing, fossil fuels, refrigerated trucks

Marketing, potato boards, advertisers

Selling, buying, wholesalers/ city markets, supermarkets, spaza shops, street sellers

Preparing

Eating

Words for Part 3 (Write each word in bold on a separate card)

capital, land, water, seed, fertilizers, pesticides, machinery, money, labour



2.12 Activity – Explanations for the problem of hunger

Purpose

- Compare explanations for hunger.

Materials

- Print in bold (or write in big letters) the key statement at the top of the box on a large sheet of paper.
- Print (or write) each statement out in big letters.
- Cut these statements out so that you have a selection of individual statements.
- Randomly stick these up on a wall.

In a group

PART 1

- Gather around the wall to read the statements as explanations for the problem of hunger in South Africa.
- Clarify words or ideas.

PART 2

- Ask the group to rank the statements from most important to least important.
- Members of the group should motivate why they want to move a particular statement up to a more important position or down to a less important position.
- The group then makes a shared decision about where to place.
- Write these motivations down.

PART 3

- Ask the group to review their motivations and develop their own explanation of why we don't have freedom from hunger.



BULK BUYING GROUPS

2. WHAT IS OUR WORLD LIKE



Here are some statements about food and hunger in South Africa. The statements come from research about the problem of hunger in South Africa by Oxfam, the South African Statistical Services and activist researchers.

Why do two out of every four people suffer hunger or are at risk of hunger?

South Africa produces 600g starch, 300g fruit and vegetables and 150g meat and fish per person daily. Why do two in four people suffer hunger or are at risk of hunger when we produce enough food?

One third of all food goes to waste in South Africa

The majority of working South Africans are unemployed, self-employed in survivalist work, or have low-paying, casual or part-time jobs.

Rising food prices have made hunger worse. Low-income families spend nearly half of their income on food. When prices go up, there is not enough money to adjust to higher costs.

Women are the main producers of food in the home. They are increasingly involved in other activities to help their families live better, or to care for family members who are ill.

Poor health affects income. Sick people do not have strength to collect water and fuel for cooking.

Poor households have limited access to land, water, tools and seeds for food production.

Prices in low income areas are higher than in the suburbs where there are large supermarkets.

Access to transport affects the ability of low income households to shop in neighbourhoods where there are supermarkets or food wholesalers

Low income families spend money on cheap energy rich foods. Not all energy rich foods are nutritious and healthy.

Spaza shops stock low-quality produce and limited fruit and vegetables.

Our food system is geared for export rather than domestic use

The food industry is controlled by large global food monopolies that control food products, prices and markets.

Five large food retailers control 60% of the food market in South Africa.

Some food producers have been found guilty of fixing the price of basic foods such as bread and milk.

2.13 Activity - Hunger, resources and population

Purpose

- Explore some of the key arguments to explain hunger in the world.
- The arguments represent two competing views of the world and its problems.

Material

- Print copies of the cartoon and the questions for each group.
- Consider how you want to divide the group. (Along gender lines? Along age lines? What value would different perspectives have to the discussion?)
- Supply groups with Felt-tip pens and paper to record their discussion.

In a group

The cartoon below is an example of a political cartoon. A political cartoonist uses pictures and words in a way that makes us think again about a situation or event. In this cartoon, there is a conversation between two men about the problem of hunger.

- Start by looking at how the cartoonist represented each of the men.
- What are they wearing? What are they doing? Where are they in the picture?
- What is happening in the background of the picture?
- Who do these two men represent?
- How is power presented in the pictures?
- How are the two men using facts to make an argument?
- What message/s do you see in the cartoon?
- Using the cartoon as a source of information, give two different arguments for the existence of hunger in the world.
- What is your view?





BULK BUYING GROUPS
2. WHAT IS OUR WORLD LIKE



2.14 Activity - Exploring alternatives to hunger

Purpose

- Critically assess alternatives to hunger

Materials

- Print (or write) each alternative out in large print.
- Print in bold (or write in big letters) the key statement at the top of the box on a large sheet of paper.
- Cut these statements out so that you have a selection of individual alternatives.
- Randomly stick these up on a wall.

In a group

- In developing a challenge to oppressive and unfair situations, our strategies are informed by how we understand the problem.
- Discuss the value of each of the strategies below in your group.
 - What understanding of the cause of hunger informs each strategy?
 - Group strategies based on a similar understanding together. Label each group.
- Which strategies are dominant in our society? Why is this?
- How can strategies that appear to be based on charity or reforming capitalism, be changed to build a challenge to the capitalist food system?

Soup kitchens	Farmers' markets
Food banks	Seed saving
Bulk-buyers' clubs	Sustainable foraging
A sustainable food system and solidarity economy	Healthy and safe food
Community gardens	Household gardens
Agro-ecology; permaculture; organic agriculture	Collective kitchens
Campaigning for progressive national food policies	Campaign to end GMO seeds and foods
Fair trade	Food policy that shifts food production & distribution away from corporations
Support for small-scale farmers and food producers	Food co-operatives

NOTE

Depending on the needs of the group, discuss the meanings of the terms in the table first. Then move on to assessing the strategies.

3. WHY DON'T WE HAVE FREEDOM FROM HUNGER

This section brings together short pieces of writing from different sources. They extend our understanding of the right to food. Each piece is presented in a text-box. Each text-box also provides the link to its original source of the information.

Why don't we have freedom from hunger? Here are some explanations:

- The problem is poverty or not enough income
- The problem is inequality
- The problem is the food system
- The problem is capitalism.

Some of these reasons do not stand on their own. Some of them work together.

When a group reads these explanations, they read critically by problematising the explanations.

Stuart Hall explained that when we read critically, we “all speak from a particular place, out of a particular history, out of a particular experience, a particular culture, without being contained by that position.”

When we problematise explanations, we don't just accept any useful explanation. We examine where the explanation comes from – its history and who has presented this idea.

We look at how it helps (or doesn't help) to get to the root causes of a problem. We look at what other ideas might be 'hidden' in an explanation.

What would the solutions be, if we accepted this explanation?

Which explanation helps our understanding of hunger? What can we do to solve the problem?

How we understand a problem lays the path to challenging or overcoming the problem.



Source: <http://www.cittadellaltraeconomia.org/sites/default/files/styles/1000x500/public/eventi/120509-food-sovereignty.png?itok=APQRnmKJ>

3.1 The right to food

The right to food could be seen simply as a right given to us by the laws of our country. The right to food can also be used as a political tool – we can use it to organise so that we can transform environments where people are marginalised and excluded.

We cannot talk about the right to food without exploring the many ways social, economic, political, historical and environmental factors shape the food systems that we rely on.

The right to adequate food is realized when every man, woman and child, alone or in community with others, has the physical and economic access at all times to adequate food or means for its procurement.

Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations – General comment 12 (CESCR).
Source: <http://www.fao.org/right-to-food/en/>

The reason that hunger and malnutrition persist, is not because there is not enough food for everyone. Hunger persists because of poverty, social and economic inequality and inaccessibility to vital resources, as well as adverse impact of trade rules in developing countries and the predatory character of economic globalization. Many of the root causes of world hunger cannot and will not be overcome without the existence and implementation of normative principles of human rights.

Hilal Elver, Special Rapporteur on Right to Food, 24 January 2017, Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR).

3.1.1 What does the South African Constitution say?

Section 27(1)(b) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa states: “Everyone has the right to have access to sufficient food and water.”

In section 27(2), where the Constitution explains that: “The state must take reasonable legislative and other measures, within its available resources, to achieve the progressive realisation of each of these rights.”

The Constitution also identifies people who have to rely on others for access to food. These people have authority over their lives. According to the Section 35(2)(e) of the Constitution, prisoners and detainees also have a right to sufficient food.

Section 28(1)(c) states that “Every child has the right to basic nutrition, shelter, basic health care services and social services.”

Source: <https://www.gov.za/documents/constitution/chapter-2-bill-rights#27>

3.1.2 What does this right to food mean in practice?

The South African Human Rights Commission explains that:

“The right to food is a human right recognised under national and international law, which protects the right of human beings to access food and feed themselves, either by producing their own food or by buying it. The right to food is linked to one’s right to life and dignity. The right to food requires that food be **available, accessible and adequate** for everyone **without discrimination at all times...**”

The right to food **does not** mean that individuals and groups have a right to be provided food. It means that one has the right to feed oneself in dignity, through economic and other activities. In other words, individuals and groups are responsible for undertaking activities that enable them to have access to food. But the state still has an important role to play in supporting these efforts.

Parents must to provide food for their children. When they can’t, the state is obliged to step in and provide food for them.”

Source: http://www.sahrc.org.za/home/21/files/brochure_A3_English.pdf



Food production without highly hazardous pesticides, says the Pesticides Action Network

Source: http://www.panna.org/sites/default/files/styles/blog_lead_image/public/blog/food-justice-farm.jpg?itok=xKR6xUUw

BULK BUYING GROUPS

3. WHY DON'T WE HAVE FREEDOM FROM HUNGER

La Via Campesina is an international movement of the organisations of peasants: small farmers, farm workers, workers in food factories, rural women and indigenous communities across Asia, Africa, America, and Europe. They offer the concept, “food sovereignty” as another way to look at the right to food.

Food sovereignty is both an idea and a practice. It shifts thinking and action away from competitiveness to solidarity, from the removal of natural resources for profit to respect and care for nature, and from exploitation of people to dignity.

This is what La Via Campesina says in the Nyéléni Declaration:

Most of us are food producers and are ready, able and willing to feed all the world's peoples. Our heritage as food producers is critical to the future of humanity. This is specially so in the case of women and indigenous peoples who are historical creators of knowledge about food and agriculture and are devalued. But this heritage and our capacities to produce healthy, good and abundant food are being threatened and undermined by neo-liberalism and global capitalism.

Food sovereignty gives us the hope and power to preserve, recover and build on our food producing knowledge and capacity. Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. It puts those who produce, distribute and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations. It defends the interests and inclusion of the next generation. It offers a strategy to resist and dismantle the current corporate trade and food regime, and directions for food, farming, pastoral and fisheries systems determined by local producers.

Food sovereignty prioritises local and national economies and markets and empowers peasant and family farmer-driven agriculture, artisanal-fishing, pastoralist-led grazing, and food production, distribution and consumption based on environmental, social and economic sustainability.

Food sovereignty promotes transparent trade that guarantees just income to all peoples and the rights of consumers to control their food and nutrition. It ensures that the rights to use and manage our lands, territories, waters, seeds, livestock and biodiversity are in the hands of those of us who produce food. Food sovereignty implies new social relations free of oppression and inequality between men and women, peoples, racial groups, social classes and generations

Source: <https://nyeleni.org/spip.php?article290>



2017 World Conference of Via Campesina

Source: <http://www.spi.or.id/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Konferensi-La-Via-Campesina-ke-7.jpg>

3.2 Views of poverty and hunger

Our right to food as South Africans is deeply compromised. We can explore the link between poverty and hunger by asking: What is poverty? Who should define it? Why do some people live in poverty?

3.2.1 What is poverty?

In 2006, Xin Wei Ngiam, a student and migrant hotel worker organiser in Boston, spent a month in Durban. Members of Abahlali baseMjondolo spoke to her about their views of what poverty is:

“If I phone the ambulance now, the ambulance can take... ten hours, even twenty-four hours to come. If the people staying in Umhlanga phone an ambulance, it won't even take five minutes. If I phone the police now, if there are people fighting here, they won't come. In Umhlanga, you can hear the vans rushing there. We were phoning the ambulance from 8 o'clock till 12 o'clock. The people died, waiting. So, the government is for rich people. Abahlali is for poor people.”

- Nonhlanhla “Princess” Mzobe

“(We) tell the government that we need this, we need what you told us, because they said in the Constitution that the people shall share, the people shall have equal rights. But the only thing we notice now, (is that) we are not having equal rights. Some of the people are too poor, some of the people are too rich. We don't really need that division.”

- Lindela Figlan.

“Our struggle is for the moral questions, as compared to the political questions as such. It is more about justice, it is more about moral questions... is it good for the shack dwellers to live in the mud like pigs, as they are living? Why do I have to live in a cardboard house, if there are people who are able to live in a decent house? So, it's a moral question.”

- Sbu Zikode

Source: <http://abahlali.org/node/27/>

“Society means a shared life. If some and not others are poor, then the principles on which life is shared, are at issue: society itself is in question.”

AH Halsey 1985. “Foreword” in *Poor Britain*. Joanna Mack and Stewart Lansley. London: Allen & Unwin

*We tell the government that we need this, we need what you told us,
because they said in the Constitution that the people shall share,
the people shall have equal rights*



BULK BUYING GROUPS

3. WHY DON'T WE HAVE FREEDOM FROM HUNGER

Researchers from the International Poverty Centre at the United Nations Development Programme say: “What poverty is taken to mean depends on who asks the question, how it is understood, and who responds. Our common meanings have all been constructed by us, non-poor people. They reflect our power to make definitions according to our perceptions. Whose reality counts? Ours, as we construct it with our mind-sets and for our purposes? Or theirs as we enable them to analyse and express it? “

Source: <http://www.ipc-undp.org/pub/IPCPovertyInFocus9.pdf>

“There are as many poor and as many perceptions of poverty as there are human beings... For long, and in many cultures of the world, poor was not always the opposite of rich. Other considerations such as falling from one’s station in life, being deprived of the instruments of labour, the loss of one’s status or the marks of one’s profession... lack of protection, exclusion from one’s community, abandonment, infirmity, or public humiliation defined the poor... It was only after the expansion of the mercantile economy, the processes of urbanization leading to massive pauperization and, indeed the monetization of society that the poor were defined as lacking what the rich could have in terms of money and possessions.”

Majid Rahneman, 1993. “Poverty” in The Development Dictionary: A guide to Knowledge as Power. Wolfgang Sachs (ed). Johannesburg: Witwaterand University Press & Zed Books

“Social scientists’ understanding of poverty, on the other hand, is critical of the economical idea of free choice models where individuals control their own destiny and are thus the cause of their own poverty... One cannot consider only the economic part of poverty. Poverty is also social, political and cultural. Moreover, it is considered to undermine human rights - economic (the right to work and have an adequate income), social (access to health care and education), political (freedom of thought, expression and association) and cultural (the right to maintain one’s cultural identity and be involved in a community’s cultural life).”

Source: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/international-migration/glossary/poverty/>

“The United Nations ... divides poverty into two general classifications: income poverty and human poverty... The UN’s Economic and Social Council has described human poverty as: “... a denial of choices and opportunities, a violation of human dignity. It means lack of basic capacity to participate effectively in society. It means not having enough to feed and clothe a family, not having a school or clinic to go to, not having the land on which to grow one’s food or a job to earn one’s living, not having access to credit. It means insecurity, powerlessness and exclusion of individuals, households and communities. It means susceptibility to violence, and it often implies living on marginal or fragile environments, without access to clean water or sanitation.”

Source: <http://www.thp.org/files/Hunger%20and%20Poverty.pdf>

3.2.2 What is the poverty line?

“The poverty line sets the income boundary between poverty and non-poverty as determined by governments. It is based on the cost of subsistence needs in a given country; so, while US\$1 a day is the international poverty line, for countries where the cost of living is higher, the poverty line is higher. “

Source: <http://www.thp.org/files/Hunger%20and%20Poverty.pdf>

“International poverty lines are calculated by the World Bank: \$1.25 per day per person is said to represent the ‘absolute poverty line’, below which a person can hardly survive. This is calculated from the mean of the national poverty lines for the poorest 15 countries. A slightly higher line, set at \$2 per day per person, is the average of the national poverty lines for all developing countries.”

To date, these lines have been accepted as the universal poverty metric, underpinning global goals such as the MDGs – at least MDG 1a – and discussions on how the world is doing in reducing poverty. But that is increasingly coming into question.”

Source: <https://oxfamblogs.org/fp2p/should-poverty-be-defined-by-a-single-international-poverty-line-or-country-by-country-and-what-difference-does-it-make/>

In South Africa, Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) calculates the poverty line used by government. Stats SA works out the cost of food and non-food items that are essential for daily survival. The poverty line is a measure used to separate South Africans into the poor and those who are not poor.

- In 2015, about 25 percent of the population lived below the food poverty line of R441 per month. This means that one out every four people could not afford food that meets the minimum energy intake for healthy development.
- Statistics South Africa showed us that since 2011, there are not only more people living in poverty, but that poverty has become worse.
- The patterns of poverty reflect the inequalities brought about by apartheid and capitalism. Black Africans, women, people from rural areas, and especially people living in the Eastern Cape and Limpopo and those with little or no education are the main sufferers in the ongoing struggle against poverty.
- The healthy development of children is deeply affected by poverty. Not only are children more likely to be poor than most South Africans, but they are also living in the poorest households. In 2015, 66,8% of children were living in poverty, compared to 55,5% of all South Africans. This is the group that is younger than 17 years old.
- Stats SA says that in 2016, two in every ten households in South Africa were classified as indigent (very poor). 3,56 million households were identified by municipalities as unable to pay for certain basic services, such as water, electricity, sanitation and refuse removal.
- Because of the economic recession and job losses in 2017, it is likely that the poverty has worsened. The poverty lines used in 2017 were:
Lower Bound Poverty Line: R758;
Upper Bound Poverty Line: R1138.

Source: <http://www.statssa.gov.za/?p=10341>

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Some critics say that counting the number of people living in poverty by looking at income is not the right way to understand poverty. They argue these points:

- There are many sides to poverty and different ways of understanding it, and poverty cannot be reduced simply to income.
- Counting the number of people below a cut-off line based on income, does not show us where most people are situated within a poverty grouping.
- People living just above a poverty line are often also struggling, but they get less government help. This is because the poverty line excludes them from government support targeted at the people below the poverty line.
- Income poverty is really only spending poverty. It does not say anything about the causes of poverty, other than lack of income.
- Explanations of poverty are not neutral. They say something about our views of the problems in our society and what can and should be done to change these problems.
- Income poverty has nothing to say about how people are challenging poverty.

Identifying the number of people who fall below the three different poverty lines, helps us see and talk about how big the problem of poverty and hunger really is. Such information could help working-class people mobilise to challenge the problem of hunger.



School feeding programme. Zwide, Nelson Mandela Bay

3.2.3 Food poverty

Governments, aid organisations and some academics use the term 'food poverty' for a situation when families or individuals do not have enough resources or income to avoid hunger.

In South Africa, food poverty is measured by the amount that a family's income falls below what is needed as the bare minimum to survive. Without this amount of money, families experience ongoing hunger. In 2017, the Food-based Poverty Line was R531 per person per month or R17,46 per person per day. Yet many families that do not experience this extreme level of food poverty, are not food-secure. A food-insecure family is not able to find enough food for all its members every day. The food that is available to such a family might give energy, but not all the nutrition that makes us healthy and strong.

Food poverty statistics also show up some of the power differences between different social groups.

The Stats SA report on Poverty Trends in South Africa 2006 – 2015, tells us that there are more male-headed households than female-headed households that had skipped a meal in the past twelve months. In almost all the provinces, male headed households are the ones that had highest number of households who skipped a meal compared to female headed households.

At the same time, the report shows that between 2006 and 2011, women experienced deeper levels of poverty than men – poor women were generally poorer than poor men. By 2015, the gap between women and men became a bit smaller, yet individually, poor women were still worse off than poor men. More than 5 out of every 10 poor people, are women - 52,7% of poor people are women.

Source: <http://www.statssa.gov.za/?p=10341>

Also of grave concern is that trends in household expenditure demonstrate starkly how little transformation has taken place in South Africa. The average annual spending in a household headed by a white person in 2015 was R350 937, almost five times more than that of a black-headed household at R67 828. Female-headed households on average spent over a third less than male-headed households. To compound inequalities, poorer households tend to be double the size (4,6 people) on average than non-poor households (2,4 people).

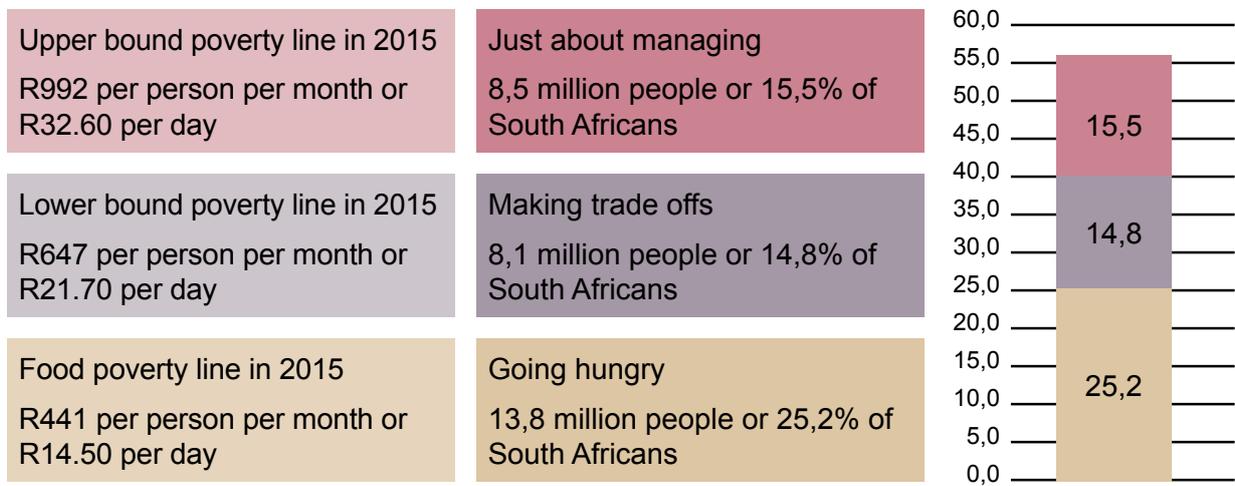
Source: <http://www.spii.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/SPIITalk-Q3-Newsletter-2017-.pdf>

*A food insecure family is not able to find
enough food for all its members every day.*

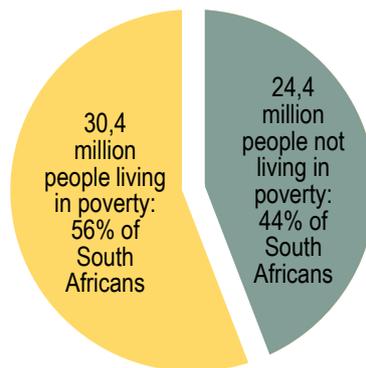
POVERTY IN SOUTH AFRICA

In 2015, more than half of all South Africans lived below the poverty line¹. That is 30,4 million people lived on R992 per person per month or less.

There are currently three poverty groupings or poverty lines in South Africa:



SOUTH AFRICANS LIVING IN POVERTY IN 2015



¹Infographic adapted from: <https://mg.co.za/data/2015-02-05-infographic-poverty-in-south-africa> Data from StatsSA: <http://www.statssa.gov.za/?p=10341>

Some South Africans who are living above the poverty line, are so close to the poverty line that their status can easily change.

Economic shocks like price increases and retrenchments, and social shocks like a death in the family or substance abuse amongst family members, can push households below the poverty line. Such shocks can also worsen the experience of poverty for those who are already living below the poverty line

3.3 Views of inequality

There is growing inequality in most countries in the world today.

The world's richest people have seen their share of the globe's total wealth increase from 42.5% at the height of the 2008 financial crisis to 50.1% in 2017, or \$140 trillion (£106 trillion), according to Credit Suisse's global wealth report.

At the other end of the spectrum, the world's 3.5 billion poorest adults each have assets of less than \$10,000 (£7,600). Collectively these people, who account for 70% of the world's working age population, account for just 2.7% of global wealth.

Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/inequality/2017/nov/14/worlds-richest-wealth-credit-suisse>

Yet what has changed in recent years is the explosion in economic inequality – the gap between the rich and poor – in countries around the world. The distribution of income (rather than even income levels themselves) is driving social inequalities in education, health and nutrition. Yet there is still a persistent view that focusing on the incomes of the poor is enough.

Inequality can be divided into three key types: economic inequality, social inequality and political inequality. Social, economic and political inequalities reinforce each other. No one type of inequality 'comes first' – it is a circular process. For example, a child with poor nutrition and health will be less able to learn at school, resulting in lower educational attainments and lower lifelong earnings, which in turn, affect economic inequalities.

Similarly, women - who are excluded and who society treats as second-class citizens, may not believe that they should have more say in decision-making. They may be less likely to vote, which reinforces their limited political influence. Interrelated inequalities are self-perpetuating.

Economic inequality refers to inequality of income and inequality of wealth. Social inequality refers to the difference in social outcomes between groups, such as health and education outcomes, but also nutrition, housing, water and sanitation, energy access and other aspects of life.

Discriminatory norms and beliefs lead to additional negative, social outcomes. For example, when people from lower classes or castes are socially excluded and marginalised, groups are routinely denied dignity, legitimacy and voice. Political inequality is commonly thought of as the concentration of political power in the hands of a few, but should be broadened to include participation inequality, to take into account the inclusiveness of political systems and opportunities for active citizenship

Economic, social and political inequalities can be described as vertical inequalities, which refers to differences based on 'vertical concepts' of income and wealth. The word vertical is used because it means inequalities that are based on the division between those at the top and those at the bottom. By its very nature, the concept of a vertical inequality does not differentiate between the identity of groups of people, but simply measures difference based on income levels.

Horizontal inequalities exist between different groups and are based on aspects of identity. Gender inequality is at the forefront, while other horizontal inequalities include those based on ethnicity, race, caste, religion, sexual orientation and disability. Spatial inequality is a form of horizontal inequality that focuses on geographic location, the most common being the inequalities that exist between urban and rural areas.

Oxfam in <https://oxfamilibrary.openrepository.com/oxfam/bitstream/10546/620253/1/gt-oxfam-inequality-guide-120417-en.pdf>



BULK BUYING GROUPS

3. WHY DON'T WE HAVE FREEDOM FROM HUNGER

One explanation for the problem of hunger in South Africa is that a small part of the population owns most of the wealth, leaving the majority living in poverty.

60%-65% of South Africa's wealth is concentrated in the hands of just 10% of the population. The total net wealth of just three billionaires in SA is equivalent to that of the bottom 50% of country's population.

Oxfam in <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2015/jan/19/global-wealth-oxfam-inequality-davos-economic-summit-switzerland>

“Of course, this group historically has been predominantly, almost exclusively, white. Even today if you look at the data, especially within the top 1%-5%, it will be up to 80% white, so things have changed a little bit, but we are still are very much with this same structure of racial inequality that we used to have. So now how can we make progress?... Inequality is not only still very high in South Africa, but has been rising and, in some ways, income inequality is even higher today than 20 years ago.”

Thomas Piketty at University of Johannesburg's Soweto campus in 2015

Piketty argues that capitalism as we practise it today is fundamentally flawed because wealth will always grow faster than economic output. In other words, the bank accounts of the wealthy will always grow faster than everyone else's salaries. In even simpler terms: the rich get richer, and the poor get poorer.

To change this, Piketty supports calls for vastly increased income taxes and annual wealth taxes and a national minimum wage. He argues for worker participation at board level in companies, and says South Africa desperately needs proper land reform.

Source: <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2015-10-04-thomas-piketys-south-african-conundrum/#.WhvgrraB06V>

Economic inequality is largely driven by the unequal ownership of capital, which can be either privately or public owned. We show that since 1980, very large transfers of public to private wealth occurred in nearly all countries, whether rich or emerging. While national wealth has substantially increased, public wealth is now negative or close to zero in rich countries. Arguably this limits the ability of governments to tackle inequality; certainly, it has important implications for wealth inequality among individuals.

Over the past decades, countries have become richer but governments have become poor.

Source: <http://wir2018.wid.world>

This way of understanding poverty sees poverty as exclusion and calls for the redistribution of wealth to excluded groups.

Others argue that to understand poverty only as exclusion from the economy, ignores how the economic system, capitalism, lies at the root of inequality and poverty. In this view, capitalism is not only a system of exclusion, but also one of exploitation, based on profit-making through the private ownership of the means of production, the exploitation of workers, a dominant ideology and a system of institutions for governance. According to this view, inequality is essential to capitalism, and enables the accumulation of wealth by a few at the expense of the majority.



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“The worker is alienated from the object he produces because it is owned and disposed of by another, the capitalist. In all societies, people use their creative abilities to produce objects which they use, exchange or sell. Under capitalism, however, this becomes an alienated activity because ‘the worker cannot use the things he produces to keep alive or to engage in further productive activity... The worker’s needs, no matter how desperate, do not give him a licence to lay hands on what these same hands have produced, for all his products are the property of another’. Thus workers produce cash crops for the market when they are malnourished, build houses in which they will never live, make cars they can never buy, produce shoes they cannot afford to wear, and so on.”

Judy Cox, 1998. An Introduction to Marx’s Theory of Alienation. Issue 79 of INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM, quarterly journal of the Socialist Workers Party. Available from: <http://pubs.socialistreviewindex.org.uk/isj79/cox.htm>

“For Marx, wages were the money you got for making your ability to work available for use by the capitalists. For a certain chunk of the day, the laborer works to earn enough money that might be exchanged to feed, house and clothe her family. But the laborer will work a whole day, because that is what her employer has paid for. Labor is the magic ingredient, one that can add use value to raw materials unlike anything else that capitalists can buy. Any value beyond that which it takes to replenish the laborer’s ability to work goes to the person who hired her. Marx calls this ‘surplus value’, and this is the ultimate source of profit.

From this little dance – in exchange of work for money, and money for commodities – Marx pulls a description of capitalism. Capital isn’t just money – a chest of banknotes isn’t capital. Capital is the process of transforming money into commodities that can be sold for more than the wages paid to workers and the costs of machines and materials, to make a profit...

[This explanation] points to the constant process of growth and expansion that capitalism needs to sustain itself. It points to the central inequality in power, between those who control capital and those who have nothing to sell but their labor...

It is not by labor alone that value is created. Another route through which profits might be expanded is by having to pay less to workers. The cheaper it is for workers to survive and reproduce, the better for profits... The daily work of rearing children, maintaining a household and engaging in civic work – the unpaid slabs of work that feminists have called ‘women’s triple burden’ – remains unpriced worldwide. Were all unpaid work to be remunerated, the sum was estimated in 1995 to be \$16 trillion... Of that, \$11 trillion represented women’s unpaid work. Back in 1995, this was more than half of the world’s total output. What is worse, this miscalculation is not innocent. It is because this reproductive work has been naturalized as women’s work, and because women’s work is unpaid, that there can be such a large paid economy...

There is a final route through which profit might be created, one that doesn’t involve labor: enclosure... When a national forest is sold for timber, biodiversity is put under patent, or mineral rights are auctioned off, there’s an enclosing, a privatizing of that resource that allows someone to profit from it at the public’s expense.”

Raj Patel, 2009. The value of nothing. London: Portobello Books pp 66-68

3.4 The food system

“Despite growing output, and a net surplus of food in the world, the current global food system is failing to secure people’s right to food. This arises from the extension of corporate control over production as well as input markets (seed, fertiliser, pesticide) and food processing and distribution. Overproduction of food coexists with poverty and immiseration of farmers in the global South. What is needed is not more of the existing agricultural development programmes, but a new direction and a structural change.”

Ruth Hall (2014). “Food sovereignty: a growing activist and intellectual movement”. Available from: <http://www.plaas.org.za/blog/food-sovereignty-growing-activist-and-intellectual-movement>

The industrialisation of food production processes since the 1950s have resulted in an increasing disconnection between cities and the places where food is produced. Especially the availability of cheap oil (for transport and machinery) has contributed to the transition from a city connected to and dependent on the availability of local resources to a much bigger and sprawled city completely isolated and detached from its rural environment.

This shift, combined with steady migration to urban centres (every day about 190 000 people move to cities from the countryside), has generated new food distribution models and new types of intermediaries, such as hypermarkets and other large-scale food retailers. It has also led to a concentration of power over food production and distribution in the hands of transnational corporations (TNCs) which aim to control all the phases of the modern “food chain”, from the farm gate to the shopping trolley.

By consolidating their position of power, they aim to further separate producers from consumers and to develop a food culture that traps consumers. Even if small-scale food producers still provide 70% of the food available in the world and peasants food webs are still widespread, TNCs are pushing to gain more space and power.

Source: www.nyeleni.org

But when we look at the emergence of the capitalist food system, we see that regulation in the form of the enclosures that privatized the production and flow of goods, and the violent dispossession of land and resources by state-financed armies, and the exploitation of labor by coercive means such as poverty and slavery allowed the system to emerge. This pattern of regulation, dispossession, exploitation, technological development, and market expansion was to repeat itself many times throughout the development of capitalism...

...Capitalism is a system in which most goods and services are produced to be bought and sold as commodities in a market. Labor is supplied by people who have no way to make a living on their own and must sell what they do have — their ability to work, that is, labor power. In capitalism, value is created by bringing labor, resources, technology, and markets together to create commodities that are sold for more than it cost to produce them.

Capital, in turn, is profit in search of more profit. Value is extracted and wealth is accumulated in this process and turned again into capital. Capitalism as a system must either grow or die. Because capital is always in motion as owners compete for more profits and a greater share of the market, capitalism expands constantly. This is why land, labor, and other resources are often forcibly and violently colonized by capital through dispossession (such as the enclosures) or war. Expanding markets and access to resources are very high priorities of the system as



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a whole, as well as for individual business owners and managers. These priorities are then posited as social necessities and this gives rise to the view that our economic well-being is best measured by our economic growth rate, irrespective of how such growth destroys the environment, lives, or entire cultures and societies.

Disasters such as hurricanes add to the gross domestic product (GDP) because of the economic activity of rebuilding. So do private prisons, the illegal drug trade, and the war on drugs. On the other hand, the work traditionally done at home by women, such as cooking and cleaning, child-rearing and care of the family — all essential to capitalism — are not part of the GDP. Neither is food grown for self-consumption, nor food that is bartered or given away.

...Although modern agriculture needed seasonal peasant labor (available at low cost because the peasantry still fed itself), it also had to move the vast masses of peasants out of the countryside to make way for industrial agriculture. This was accomplished by the forces of the market, politics, violence, or a combination of all three. Nonetheless, nations had tremendous difficulty accomplishing this task. People stubbornly hung on to their farms and their way of life. Despite the peasantry's reputation for being conservative, violent peasant rebellions for land and against injustice have been common throughout modern history. Major wars of liberation— most against capitalism— were fought by peasants in Mexico, China, Algeria, Vietnam, and Cuba...

... Capitalist agriculture's large-scale industrial operations have been very effective at producing cheap food. The mass production of cheap food brings down the cost of labor by making the worker's "food basket" less expensive. This stimulates industrial growth. Cheap food also means that workers can afford to buy more new products coming from industry. Of course, large farms and factories produce much more than workers eat or buy. This drives market expansion, nationally and globally, as capital seeks out more and more consumers. (Though capitalist agriculture has been adept at producing cheap food, it is not energy or water efficient, is not good at providing living wage jobs, and is rife with negative social and environmental consequences that mainstream economists call "market failures" and "externalities.")

...The construction of the corporate food regime has been rife with painful contradictions. The Global South went from a billion dollars in yearly food exports in the 1970s to importing 11 billion dollars a year in food by 2001. The environmental costs of the neoliberalization of the global food system have been devastating. Industrial agriculture has destroyed up to 75 percent of the world's agrobiodiversity, uses up to 80 percent of the planet's fresh water, and produces up to 20 percent of the world's greenhouse gas emissions. Millions of peasants have lost their livelihoods and been forced to migrate across hostile borders and dangerous seas in search of work. In 2008 and again in 2011, when food price inflation sent a billion people into the ranks of the hungry, the world was producing record harvests. At the same time, giant agribusiness and agrifoods corporations were making record profits, as were major financial houses speculating with food commodities.

...The tendency of capitalism is to constantly grow and expand; to concentrate more and more monopoly power in the hands of a few firms; to pass off capital's social and environmental costs to society (or turn them into a market) and to experience cyclical crises of overproduction and economic boom-busts. That is also the nature of the capitalist food system. This is why calls to "fix a broken food system" are misplaced. To call the system broken is to believe it once worked well for people, the economy, and the environment. This would mean ignoring the three centuries of violence and destruction characterizing global food systems since the first food regime. The food system is not broken; rather, it is working precisely as a capitalist food system is supposed to work. That is the first thing we need to realize if we want to change it.

Holt-Giménez, Eric. A Foodie's Guide to Capitalism: Understanding the Political Economy of What We Eat (Kindle Locations 805-808). Monthly Review Press. Kindle Edition.

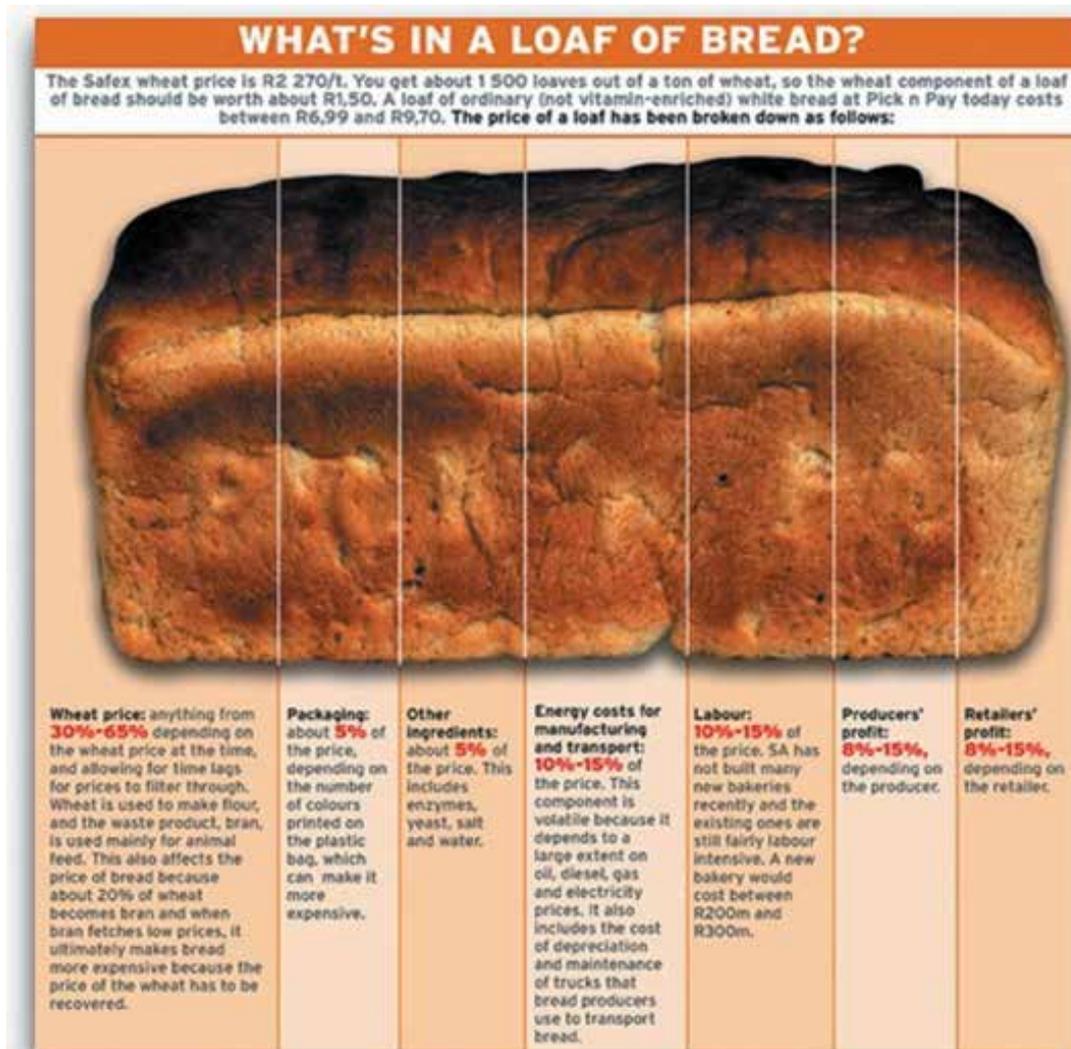
BULK BUYING GROUPS

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3.4.1 Food production for profit

Because it satisfies the basic human need to eat, food is at the core of any society. Without food, capitalism or any other economic system would grind to a halt. We incorporate it into our bodies and can't live very long without it. Food is clearly a special commodity, with essential properties that make it unlike all others. Food's difference is important, though in capitalism, it is just another product that is bought and sold. As a commodity, food — like shirts, automobiles, or smartphones — is produced to be sold in a market. The production and sale of food commodities responds to market demand, which is different from need. If you have enough money you can buy as much food as you like. Those who need food but can't afford it must produce it themselves, barter for it, steal it, or rely on charity. Or they can go hungry, as do over one billion people around the world.

Holt-Giménez, Eric. A Foodie's Guide to Capitalism: Understanding the Political Economy of What We Eat (Kindle Locations 926-931). Monthly Review Press. Kindle Edition. Trade agreements



The picture shows some of the costs in a loaf of bread in 2009. (It is scaled to the text not the costs)

Source: <http://www.digivu.co.za/blog/wp-content/uploads/2009/09/window-11.jpg>

“Greed and corruption in some sectors of South African business and industry seem limitless. And this shameful behaviour becomes even more distasteful when it seems to hammer the final nail into the coffin of a group already suffering in the depths of poverty, a group that has nowhere else to turn to, but stick with the available staple food - bread.”

The cost of bread

Increases in prices impact negatively on poor households, who spend 34% of their household income a year on food, and 35% of this on bread and mealie-meal alone. There has been significant price inflation for these products over the last three years. Between January 2013 and January 2014, the price for a 700g loaf of white bread increased by R3,96 and brown bread increased by R5,11.

The price of bread depends on the profits made along the wheat-milling-baking-retail value chain by the cartels that control it.

Wheat farmers

The volatility of wheat prices on the global market is often blamed for the increase in bread prices; however, wheat producers are steadily getting less for their wheat, while bread prices keep increasing. There are an estimated 4 000 wheat producers in the country and they primarily produce bread wheat for human consumption.

About half of the wheat needed to service South Africa's bread and flour needs is imported from Argentina, Australia, France, the United States and the United Kingdom. The country's dependence on imported wheat has increased over the years, as have bread prices.

For example, in 2009, while producer prices decreased from R1.27 (588 grams of wheat) in 2008 to R1.01 in 2009 (20%), the price of a 700g white bread loaf increased from R7.20 to R7.88 (9%). In 2011, producer prices decreased by a further 3% and the bread price increased by 10%.²⁶ Simply put, the wheat producer – the farmer – gets roughly 3.5 slices of income from a 21-slice loaf.

The millers

Pioneer Foods, Tiger Brands, Premier Foods and Foodcorp are the four largest millers in the country for maize and wheat, accounting for 98% of milled wheat sales. The industry is thus characterised as vertically integrated, as these companies not only control the milling of the flour, but they also make and sell the bread.

A decade ago, Pioneer was already milling 27% of all flour and Tiger Brands was milling 20%, with the balance taken up by smaller operations. Despite claims by Pioneer Foods that bread is a low-profit business, with returns of between 2 - 4%, financial statements from both Tiger Consumer Brands and Pioneer Foods indicate higher profit margins in their milling and baking divisions than in their other divisions. For example, Tiger Consumer Brand's milling and baking division achieved a profit margin of 22% in 2012 compared to a 15% overall operating profit margin and Pioneer's milling and baking division achieved a 9.5% profit margin compared to an overall margin of 6.2%.

The bakers

The bread industry, as with most agricultural industries, was heavily regulated in South Africa until 1991. It operated under a quota system and there were specifications about weight, height and width of the loaf. Prices were fixed, as were volumes and distribution areas for each producer. There were about 370 bakeries operating in the country in 1991. This number has steadily decreased.

Bread producers belonged to the Chamber of Baking and various issues were discussed under its auspices. Following deregulation of the industry in the early 1990s, the Chamber of Baking continued as a forum for discussion, but it no longer had powers to set standards or settle disputes between producers.

By 2010, four bakeries held a market share of between 50 - 60% of the domestic bread market in South Africa: Premier Foods (Blue Ribbon); Tiger Consumer Brands (Albany); Pioneer Foods (Sasko and Duens); and Foodcorp (Sunbake). Plant bakeries, such as Tiger, Premier, Pioneer and Foodcorp, dominate the baking industry with the remainder taken up by in-store bakeries (20% in 2004), such as Pick n Pay, Spar, Shoprite and Woolworths, industrial users and small bakeries. The three big plant bakeries (Tiger, Premier, Pioneer) controlled 66% of the bread market in 2013.

The retailers

Besides the big plant bakeries, Shoprite/ Checkers, Woolworths, Pick n Pay and Spar also play a significant role in the industry with their in-house bakeries. The bulk of food sales in South Africa (70%) occur in these stores and this market is controlled primarily by Shoprite Holdings, Pick n Pay Retail Group, Spar Group, Massmart and Woolworths Holdings. In addition, some of these companies (such as Shoprite Holdings and Spar Group) are owned by or have direct relationships with bread-producing companies, such as Premier Foods and Tiger Brands.

This illustrates the stranglehold that corporations have over the wheat-to-bread value chain in South Africa, which was highlighted as a major concern in the 2009 National Agricultural Marketing council investigation into the value chain

Consolidation

The same companies (Tiger Brands, Premier Foods and Pioneer Foods) that control the milling and baking stages of the wheat-to bread value chain also control 60% of the milling and processing stages of the maize value chain.⁴⁷ Just as with wheat, the maize value chain feeds into a highly concentrated food retail sector, dominated by Shoprite/ Checkers, Pick n Pay, Woolworths and Spar.

Cartels

The flagrant, blatant and unashamed disregard for consumer rights and South African law are nothing new to the country's bread cartel. Tiger Consumer Brands, Premier Foods, Foodcorp and Pioneer have all been found guilty in the past for colluding to capture profits at the expense of consumers.

Maize and bread price-fixing scandals have resulted in several appearances by these companies before the Competition Commission Tribunal of South Africa. In 2007, Tiger Brands was fined R98.8 million after admitting that it had colluded with rivals (Premier Foods,



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Pioneer Foods and Foodcorp) to raise the price of bread by 30 - 35 cents a week before Christmas in 2006. In 2010, Pioneer Foods was fined R195 million for its role in a bread price-fixing cartel, involving these other players as well. Their actions affected the “poorest of the poor, for whom these products are a staple.”

African Centre for BioSafety (no date) GM Contamination, Cartels and Collusion in South Africa's Bread Industry. Available from: acbio.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/GM-Bread-201405.pdf

3.4.2 Trade agreements

The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) Uruguay Round represented a negotiated settlement between the two principal ('dumping') competitors for world markets in food, the US and the EU – with corporations exerting substantial influence in shaping the 1995 outcome: the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and its trade, investment and intellectual property regime. At that time, 'food security' was redefined as the right to purchase food, and market rule was consolidated.

While the food sovereignty movement initially challenged the destabilizing effects of EU and US agro-exporting, under the WTO/IMF-sponsored trade regime, agro-exporting is now generalized across all states in a corporate-structured economics of 'competitive advantage'.

Raj Patel noted:

“The new political economy of food rested not on control through the United States' food surplus, but through the Global South's fiscal debt...the Global North found itself able to access cheap food from the Global South under the aspect of magnanimity – every bite of cheap food eaten in the North was helping the South pay back its debt.”

I would add that each bite helped the South pay for its imported food bill, given the substitution of high-value export foods for staple domestic foods under this regime of austerity, with the proliferation of 'New Agricultural Countries'.

A private regime requires 'governance', and food regimes and agrarian questions outlines how GATT multilateralism enabled the elaboration of global regulatory mechanisms that compromised national sovereignties in developing a specific structure of global accumulation (eliminating farm program protections and supply management and depressing food prices). GATT's procedural standardization and general tariff reduction embodied a distinctive constitutional dimension attractive to the growing nation-state membership of what became the WTO.

Thus, the new regime obtained certain legitimacy, imparted by WTO Director-General Renato Ruggiero, who remarked at the first ministerial meeting of the WTO: 'We are no longer writing the rules of interaction among separate national economies. We are writing the constitution of a single global economy, (see UNCTAD 1996) – in the absence of a hegemonic state fashioning its own rules of the game. The agricultural subsidy system that formerly regulated national economies was now transformed into a competitive world market instrument, to the advantage of grain traders and food retailers, institutionally embedded in the WTO.

The rules were premised on standardizing market conditions as if all states were equal (with some exceptions for Less Developed Countries (LDC's)), subject to a binding integrated dispute settlement mechanism to ensure freedom of trade and investment.

Phillip McMichael (2016). Commentary: Food regime for thought. The Journal of Peasant Studies, Vol. 43, No. 3, 648–670,

Chicken wars

The renewal of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) between the United States and South Africa, allowed the import of 65 000 tonnes of chicken without anti-dumping duty. The South African government supported this import to protect the continued trade relations between both countries. But chicken producers and trade unions warned that AGOA would have a detrimental impact on the poultry industry and on keeping workers' jobs safe.

In 2015, Reuters reported from Washington:

South Africa will end punitive duties on US chicken and renew imports, initially 65,000 tonnes a year, under an agreement reached by the two countries, Trade and Industry Minister, Rob Davies said on Saturday.

South Africa imposes "anti-dumping" duties of above 100 percent on certain chicken products and industry groups said removing those import barriers opened a market which had been closed for the last 15 years.

The deal was "within the tolerance of the (South African poultry) industry and is something we can all live with," Davies told Reuters in a telephone conversation from Paris, where the deal was concluded.

The agreement, which would see the US emerge as one of the top poultry exporters to Africa's most advanced economy, should help smooth the passage of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) currently before American lawmakers.

"We believe we have placed ourselves in a much stronger position," Davies said.

AGOA is a non-reciprocal trade preference initiative providing duty-free treatment to US imports of certain products from eligible sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries.

Source: <http://en.rfi.fr/africa/20150607-south-africa-loses-game-chicken-renewal-us-trade-agreement-agoa-poultry>

SA must defend its chicken farmers from an influx of imported dark meat from Europe or face the collapse of the local industry, according to Trade and Industry Minister Rob Davies.

While domestic producers must become more competitive to ensure the industry's sustainability, their efforts will be useless unless cheap imports are stemmed, Davies said on Tuesday. Since tariffs were removed five years ago under a trade agreement between Europe and SA, imports of bone-in portions, such as legs and thighs, have tripled to more than 188-million kilograms in 2016, according to the South African Poultry Association.

"The competitiveness issues are there, we have to work around those with the industry," Davies said. "But they're not going to be solved if we just allow an influx of spare parts from around the world to come in to take over the market."

South African producers say they're being unfairly undercut by imported bone-in portions after tariffs on chicken from Europe were removed at the start of 2012. European consumers' preference for chicken breasts means producers have an abundance of legs, thighs and wings that they can sell cheaply in Africa.

Kevin Cowley, (2017). Imports put SA's chicken sector in distress, but Europe disagrees. Business Day. Available from: <https://www.businesslive.co.za/bd/business-and-economy/2017-01-25-imports-put-sas-chicken-sector-in-distress-but-europe-disagrees/>

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Employers organisation, the South African Poultry Association and the Food and Allied Workers Union wrote to the Business Day in 2017:

The South African chicken industry, a significant portion of the country's maize industry and tens of thousands of jobs are under threat because large quantities of surplus chicken are being dumped in this market by other countries at prices way below their cost of production.

Thousands of jobs have already been lost and chicken dumping is spreading misery in a country with one of the highest unemployment rates in the world and where each wage earner supports up to 10 people.

Almost four years ago, the South African Poultry Association (SAPA) cautioned that 20,000 jobs could be lost if imports of cheap chicken continued. It said then that 5,000 jobs had already been shed at large and small producers.

Since 2012, eight small to medium-sized poultry farms have closed. That trend has continued as the volume of imports has climbed. Producers are being forced into production cuts, jobs are being lost and more are at risk. The latest Sapa estimate is that 1,000 jobs will be lost for every 10,000 tonnes of dumped chicken imports. Now the entire industry is under threat.

Agmat Brinkhuis, Scott Pitman and Katishi Masemola (2017). SA must shut down dumped chicken imports to prevent industry collapse. Available from: <https://www.businesslive.co.za/bd/opinion/2017-01-26-sa-must-shut-down-dumped-chicken-imports-to-prevent-industry-collapse/>



FAWU members protest against cheap chicken imports.

Source: <https://www.businesslive.co.za/bd/business-and-economy/2016-11-25-fawu-workers-and-their-employers-protest-against-chicken-dumping/>



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3.4.3 Low wages

No one seems to ask why we need cheap food in the first place. The simple answer is that cheap food helps to keep wages down. This is especially important when a country is industrializing and needs low-paid but amply-fed workers. Later, cheap food helps free up expendable income to buy the consumer goods produced by all that industrialization. These were supposed to be stages of economic development, to be surpassed as workers accumulate wealth and climb up the economic ladder. Somehow, in our current food system both poor people and cheap food became permanent fixtures — despite the US food industry's impressive economic growth.

Source: https://www.huffingtonpost.com/eric-holt-gimenez/too-poor-for-organic-rais_b_4220743.html

Tracey Ledger commented on a Bureau of Food and Agriculture Policy report about the unaffordability of a living wage by farmers after the 2012 farm worker strikes for a living wage. She wrote:

The first was the idea (and the general acceptance of this idea) that the 'value' of people in post-apartheid South Africa should be determined solely by their 'value' as inputs into the economy. The only report [by BFAP] commissioned by government to provide a basis for the strike negotiations was one that determined the *affordability* of the farmworkers to their employers. This effectively relegated their appalling living and working conditions to some kind of inevitable economic collateral damage.

Despite large-scale evidence of illegal evictions and the violent treatment at the hand of employers, no regulatory response was considered. The Employment Conditions Commission (ECC) recommended that the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC) should establish an urgent review of the sector, but this has never happened.

The second reason, in addition to considering how a higher wage might affect farmers, was that the BFAP report also assessed how high wages might improve the living standards of farm workers. As a proxy for this they considered the impact of various wage levels on household access to food. A team of nutritionists compiled four possible 'daily food plate options' based on existing research around food choices and portion sizes they calculated the monthly cost of each portion for a Western Cape family of two adults and two children, using official retail food prices. They then compared these costs to a number of household income scenarios based on various minimum wages.

The findings were sobering: they suggested that a fairly modest, but nutritionally balanced, diverse and calorie-sufficient basket of food would cost just over R7 000 (about US \$ 814) per month for a family of two adults and two children. This equated almost R85 000 (which is US \$ 9 767) in a year. *None* of BFAP's household income scenarios included a R150 per day wage would be sufficient to purchase this basket of food. The BFAP termed this finding 'the workers' dilemma'.

A family with two adults earning R105 per day (the implemented minimum wage) and receiving a state child care grant for each of their children, would be able to afford only one of the study's four balanced plate food options. This was a plate with nutritional dietary diversity and containing only about 60% of daily calorie requirements. Given the hard manual labour of most farmworkers, they would feel very sharply the lack of these calories.

Tracy Ledger (2016). "An empty plate. Why we're losing the battle for our food system, why it matters, and how we can win it back." Sunnyside: Jacana Media

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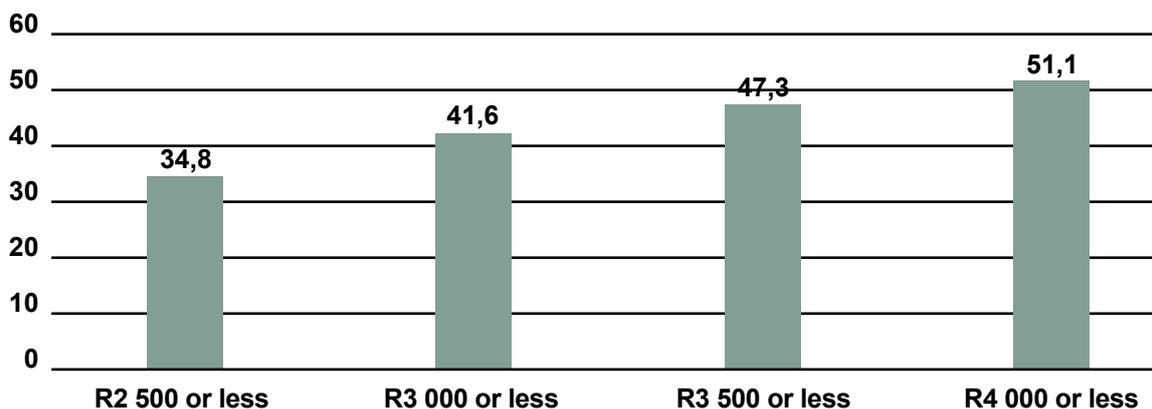
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The South African National Treasury report on a National Minimum Wage for South Africa says that 34.8% of workers (4.6 million workers) earn below R2,500 per month. Considering a wage level of R3,000 per month, 41.6% (5.5 million workers) fall below this level, including 86.6% of domestic workers and 79.8% of agricultural workers. A wage level of R3,500 per month falls above the pay of 6.2 million workers, or 47.3% of the workforce, including 90.7% of domestic workers and 84.5% of agricultural workers.

Finally, 6.7 million workers, or 51.1%, currently earn less than R4,000 per month. This includes 92.3% of all domestic workers and 86.0% of agricultural workers.

Source: http://www.treasury.gov.za/publications/other/NMW_Report_Draft_CoP_FINAL.PDF

Wage levels expressed as the percentage of the working population who earned this wage in 2016



Living wage protest.

Source: <http://aidc.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/living-wage-protest.jpg>

3.5 Privatising rights to the commons

“The commons” refer to any shared resource amongst a community of users that is governed by rules and customs established by that community. The commons are elements of nature such as the ocean, land, water resources, seed and other things; but it also refers to creative work, cultural practices, knowledge and products that enable communities to cooperate, use and care for shared resources.

The commons include goods and resources that two people cannot have at the same time and which might be used up, such as wood harvested in a natural forest, or the wild harvesting of lobster. It also includes goods and resources that are human-made and handed down across generations and cannot be finished up through use. For example, in peasant communities, the knowledge of seed-saving and the links between weather patterns and crops, cannot be exhausted; instead, over time, new knowledge is added through sharing experiences and understanding, and through shared experimenting to solve problems.

So the commons are not only collectively managed resources which are used and protected by a community with shared knowledge. The commons are also the social processes that establish and maintain the shared resources and knowledge creation among users. Participation in the commons enables them to be collectively governed, reproduced, protected and expanded. Within this social participation and its emerging relationships lie the possibility for new forms and processes of production to emerge. The deliberate, conscious creation of the commons, and participation in them, are connected to the creation of a post-capitalist world.

Food production requires access to resources, practices and knowledge that could be regarded as part of the commons. In many countries, though, material resources for food production are held as private property, through land rights, irrigation rights, patents on seeds, or rights to fisheries. Often the state mediates access by granting rights under certain conditions.

3.5.1 Land

The Department of Rural Development and Land Reform says that the state owns 14% of land, including another 4% of recently surveyed state land, while 79% is in private hands. Of this 79%, a significant percentage is owned by private individuals, companies and trusts.

Land redistribution policy and practice have undergone profound changes over the past 20 years. Among these is the shift away from state-assisted land purchase and transfer of title to beneficiaries – the model advanced by the World Bank in the early 1990s and adopted by the ruling African National Congress as policy in 1997.

In the early years this took the form of small grants to poor households to buy modest areas of land for settlement and small-scale farming. From 2000 onwards, under President Thabo Mbeki, a new policy promoted black capitalist farmers, providing larger land purchase subsidies to those with their own means to engage in commercial production. This, it was argued, would prevent patterns of overcrowding and under-utilisation of land evident in the first phase, but produced high levels of indebtedness among the new capitalist farmers.

From 2011, under President Jacob Zuma, the state has adapted the willing buyer, willing seller approach; now the state has itself become the purchaser of land, acquiring land for redistribution to beneficiaries without transfer of title. State leasehold has replaced the original private ownership model.

Ruth Hall and Thembela Kepe (2017). “Elite capture and state neglect: new evidence on South Africa's land reform”. Review of African Political Economy, Vol. 44, No. 151, 122–130

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The leadership of Keiskammahoek Restitution Communities has been attempting to get answers to crucial questions regarding millions of rands worth of their own funds, awarded through a land restitution settlement. To date, requests for information have largely been ignored and the community leadership treated with utter disrespect.

The land claims of the nine communities, Upper and Lower Gxulu, Upper and Lower Mnyameni, Upper Ngqumeya, Gwiligwili, Ndlovini, Ngobozana and Mthwaku were settled on 16 June 2002. The settlement agreement was structured as follows: 50% financial compensation to the families who were dispossessed and 50% set aside for development in the above mentioned communities.

The development funds, totalling approximately R55 million, were to be spent on various projects, identified through a development planning process, and administered by ADM. A local community development plan was drafted to guide the utilisation of the funds and improve local economic development of these communities. A Project Steering Committee was set up for the purpose of co-ordination, accountability and decision-making. Development committees were established in each village to coordinate processes at community-level.

Almost fifteen years later, the planned economic development projects have not been implemented. There has been some expenditure on infrastructure but there has been no meaningful impact on the lives of local people. Not only has roll-out been slow, but information has been withheld regarding the communities' own money. It must be emphasised, the monies held by ADM are not government funds – they belong to the residents of the nine villages.

The ADM has built multi-purpose halls in the villages. None are all complete. Two tractors were purchased, but three years later they have not yet been registered. Efforts by the community leadership, over the last three years, to find out what has happened to the funds have not been successful.

Source: <http://www.brc21.co.za>



Keiskammahoek villagers march on Amathole District Municipality.

Source: https://www.facebook.com/pg/borderrural/photos/?tab=album&album_id=722536317907198



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South Africa is different to other countries in the region. Colonial land dispossession, apartheid, and then post-apartheid deregulation of agriculture in the context of global trade liberalisation have all contributed to the dominance of a highly industrialised and concentrated food and commercial agricultural sector in South Africa. Thirty-five thousand commercial farmers own and use the lion's share of agricultural land as well as 60% of fresh water resources for irrigation.

In contrast, 2.5 million households practise smallholder and subsistence farming on only 14% of available agricultural land. Large-scale commercial farming supplies up to 95% of formally marketed output, and a significant share of the food that South Africans eat is bought from supermarkets owned by just five companies.

A Tshintsha Amakhaya (TA) survey in rural communities served by the TA network found that 50% of the respondents sourced their food from supermarkets, and, even in the case of maize, only 26% of the respondents said that their own production was a primary source of household supplies. Interestingly, 24% of people also relied on home-grown fruit.

There is little reliable or detailed data on the smallholder and subsistence agriculture sector in South Africa, and these farmers remain extremely marginalised. Although the majority of smallholders engage in agriculture to obtain extra food, government policy imperatives have focused on channelling a relatively small layer of smallholder farmers into commercial production rather than supporting the majority of farmers to improve their practices for increased household and community food production.

Hall and Aliber analysed government spending on smallholder agriculture from 2005–2009. Only 13% of agriculturally active households received any support, mostly in the form of extension services, and the majority of funding was allocated as large grants to less than 200 emerging farmers. Often the only support for small-scale farmers is in the form of starter packs, including chemical fertilisers, pesticides, and hybrid or GM seeds channelled through government food security funding.

African Centre for BioSafety (2017) Against the odds: Smallholder farmers and agricultural biodiversity in South Africa. www.acbio.org.za/lists/lt.php?id=fh8GD1dIVINICQkKAQ

3.5.2 Seed

Through increased control over seed, a few big transnational companies have been influencing, agricultural in the South. These companies invest huge amounts in bio-technological research and intellectual property rights to breed new seed from the original varieties peasant farmers have grown and carefully adapted to local conditions. Seed bred in this way gives high crop yields when farmers also use fertiliser and pesticides, but the seed cannot be saved and used to grow crops again.

This way of farming ties peasant farmers, who have grown many varieties of crops (and even many varieties of the same crop) over thousands of years, into growing a single crop, often for export. When the crops fail because of changes in the climate, or the price of the crop collapses in the world market, peasant farmers lose their land and are replaced by large scale farmers with bank loans, and eventually companies own and farm the land. Peasant farmers become farmworkers or move to the cities. Land ownership become concentrated in a few hands.

Seed companies have also been offering governments support to increase their agricultural production, using industrial farming techniques. Their argument is that this is the way to address food

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insecurity. They encourage governments to end seed-trading by passing new laws that enable seed distributors to claim intellectual property rights over seed. Large private philanthropic organisations, like the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, pour enormous amounts of aid into plant-breeding and the promotion of seeds that have been genetically modified to give high yields or be resistant to drought.

Though not yet commercially available, Water Efficient Maize for Africa (WEMA) seed is going to be offered royalty-free. This does not mean the seed is free. It means that Monsanto is not going to charge a premium for the seed's drought-resistant trait. However, WEMA seeds will be "stacked" with the *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) gene for pest control, and a gene for resistance to glyphosate and other Monsanto weed killers.

Though it is unclear whether farmers will have to pay royalties for the other traits, the glyphosate and fertilizer required by these seeds will definitely not be free. The unstated objective behind climate-smart seeds is finding ways for seed, chemical and fertilizer companies to break into the African markets. WEMA seeds with a free, drought-tolerant gene are not only an excellent package for the sale of Monsanto's other products, they usher in the required regulatory frameworks for the commodification of all African seed. Whether or not these seeds actually help small farmers in the long run is irrelevant to capital. Once Africa's seeds are commodified, companies can sell them to the large farmers that will end up displacing the continent's smallholders.

Holt-Giménez, Eric. A Foodie's Guide to Capitalism: Understanding the Political Economy of What We Eat (Kindle Locations 2974-2982). Monthly Review Press. Kindle Edition.

La Via Campesina say:

"Peasants cannot make their vital contribution to preserving and renewing biodiversity if their rights to re-sow, preserve, protect, exchange and sell their seeds are not recognized and respected. They must also have free access to the genetic resources of the plants they grow. The seeds produced on the farm and the informal exchange of those seeds lie at the heart of their contribution. Unfortunately, this time-honoured practice has now been banned in many countries due to increasingly restrictive international rules."

Source: <https://viacampesina.org/en/seeds-and-peasant-autonomy/>



Source: http://3.bp.blogspot.com/-fPYqkGrS354/VhER_HMD4KI/AAAAAAAAABiM/9iNd-KyYzUBg/s1600/Bob.jpg

4. WHAT CAN BE DONE?

In this section we explore what can be done through four focus areas: the role of government, protection against extreme hunger, low incomes, food production and food systems. Each element proposes solutions based on how the problem of hunger is understood. For example, when we consider the problem of hunger to be poor nutrition, our focus will be on how to address the quality of food. If we see the problem of hunger as linked low incomes, we might campaign for different forms of income protection. However, some of the ways of looking at the problem of hunger might miss the big structural issues that shape our food system.

A narrow focus on hunger might bring relief (or some relief for some of the time) to some people affected by hunger, but avoids confronting bigger structural problems and the morality associated with the incredible inequality in our world and its food systems. We should be asking how strategies build community knowledge, organisation and agency amongst the people directly affected by our food system.

4.1 The role of government

The right to food is made possible (or limited) through activities of the government:

- At a very basic level, having food depends on **access to land and water**. Most agricultural land in South Africa is owned by a small community of white farmers. In 2012, 87% of all arable land in South Africa was still owned by white commercial farmers.
- **Small-scale farmers** need policies and access to resources that will support their efforts to produce food. Contract farming integrates small holder farmers into corporate value chains. This does not build food security, but leave the corporate industrial farming and processing in place.
- **Land use planning** in urban and rural communities should make it possible for the development of food markets and shops selling healthy food close to where people live in urban areas.
- **Transport and good roads** are needed to bring food to local markets and for people buying food to get to shops and markets.
- Government gives companies producing bread a **subsidy** to keep the price of bread from rising too fast, because for many poor South Africans, bread is one of their main food sources.
- Government supports food producing companies to **fortify foods**, for example adding Vitamin A to margarine. This increases the possibility that all South Africans will have access to the daily requirement for an important nutrient in their diet.
- Government can also **tax foods (or drinks) that are considered unhealthy**. For example, new legislation that tax sugary drinks is being prepared by Parliament.
- A great many South Africans depend on **social grants** to buy food and other household items. Yet, the portion of total government spending, that is put aside in the budget for social grants has been getting smaller since 2011. And in rural communities, where most people who are income poor live, a smaller proportion of people are registered to get social grants, than in urban areas.

4.2 Focus on extreme hunger and malnutrition

In the face of extreme hunger, strategies that bring immediate relief or some improvement from the worst effects of the food system, might be needed.

4.2.1 Food fortification

Food fortification is one way to provide micronutrients that are essential to a healthy immune system. This strategy does not address hunger. It focuses instead on improving the quality of food available to income poor households.

South Africa is one of few countries that meets all of the World Bank's three priority criteria for urgent nutrition action: (1) stunting/underweight greater than 20 percent; (2) vitamin A deficiency greater than 10 percent or iron-deficiency anaemia greater than 10 percent and (3) an emerging overweight problem.

Large-scale fortification is one strategy for reducing the burden of malnutrition, and in 2003 the South African government passed legislation requiring all bread (wheat) flour and maize-meal to be fortified. From 2004 to 2008, GAIN provided a grant to UNICEF to support the national fortification program. By 2008, 90 percent of wheat flour and 70 percent of maize-meal on the market was fortified. Other key project partners included the Ministry of Health, the National Chamber of Milling, the National Association of Maize Millers and the South African Chamber of Banking National Consumers Union.

Source: <https://www.gainhealth.org/knowledge-centre/project/fortification-wheat-flour-maize-meal-south-africa/>

Bio-technology companies are now researching how to 'add' extra nutrition to plants, either through selective breeding or genetic modification.

Financial sponsorship of the technology has come largely from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the World Bank, the United States Department of Agriculture, the United Kingdom Department of International Development, the International Fertilizer Group and large agribusiness corporations such as Syngenta, DuPont and Monsanto.

When hidden hunger is reduced to a problem of micronutrient deficiencies, addressing hunger serves a political and economic function: First, it gives power and profit to whoever provides the micronutrients. Second, it masks the ways the global food system has destroyed traditional sources of nutrients and impoverished people's diets. The exclusive focus on the 'baffling scarcity' of nutrients enables food industries and biotechnology corporations to sell more products. Third, it also allows governments to depoliticize the causes of world hunger and nutrient deficiency by recasting it as a technical problem to be solved by technical solutions rather structural measures like land reform, market reforms or living wages.

Source: <https://foodfirst.org/2016-world-food-prize-more-genewashing/>

Bread with added nutrients are advertised as 'smart' bread.

Source: <http://www.pinkdrive.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/futurelife-bread.jpg>



4.2.2 Food aid

Food aid is another strategy for addressing extreme hunger. Where people, and especially children, face hunger, the South African government has a constitutional obligation to make food available through food aid or in extreme cases, to provide nutritional support through medical intervention.

The Department of Social Development says food parcels are a lifeline for families or individuals who are experiencing undue hardships. Social relief of distress may be a food parcel or a voucher to buy food. Some provinces give this assistance in the form of cash. Such relief is given for a short time only, usually for up to three months, but it is sometimes given, for another three months.

To qualify, identity documents, sworn affidavits and other forms of proof are needed to show that the person or family is in distress. The first month's food parcel is sometimes issued without the documents, but before the second month's parcel can be issued, all the documents need to be handed in.

Source: <https://www.vukuzenzele.gov.za/food-parcels-lifeline-needy>

The provision of government food parcels has been criticised by communities and the press, who claim that tenders for providing government with food parcels are fraudulently awarded. There have also been claims that food parcels have been left to rot and not distributed to families in need.

Many people, who are in distress, feel the process of demonstrating need robs them of dignity. They also question food-aid provided through charitable organisations:

M'du Hlongwa of AbaHlali baseMjondolo elaborates:

"In those days, Yakoob Baig (the eThekweni Ward 25 councillor) used to come with some pots of breyani, to the side of the road. We said no, we are not dogs, we are not animals, that you have to dish food to and then forget about them, until you remember, oh, we have to go and give food to the shack dwellers again... No, we are not pets, we are human beings. We have to be treated like human beings... He comes with the pot in the morning, and then he disappears for 3 or 4 weeks, then he comes with the pot again. What does that mean?"

Source: <http://abahlali.org/node/27/>

On the other hand, during the protracted strike at Lonmin in 2012, the killings of mineworkers at Marikana and the great trauma that accompanied this violence, the South African International Aid Organisation, Gift of the Givers, provided food aid to community members affected by the strike. The organisation only provides aid when asked by government, or in the case of Marikana, by churches and other pressure groups.

Sooliman said that Saturday's effort was more about assessment and meeting the union leaders, with the feeding beginning in earnest on Sunday. "The kids were afraid to come out and collect juice," he said. "There is a lot of anxiety in the community. And we saw a massive queue of people wanting food. We will have to double our supplies for the rest of the week."

Sooliman estimated that "three or four thousand" people turned out for food on Sunday. He said the organisation did not restrict its provision of food to the striking Lonmin employees. "We never do that. Anyone who is hungry can get food," he said. The organisation will remain

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on site to distribute food until Thursday or Friday, and then aims to provide food parcels which should last for a month. After that, Sooliman hopes that the labour impasse will have been resolved – though he said that, if necessary, they can supply food for longer.

He said the organisation is uninterested in the politics at play. But can the move be read as apolitical when it is obviously sympathetic to the striking miners? Sooliman denies that it constitutes a tacit rebuke to mine management. “It’s not a rebuke. We don’t look at any of those circumstances surrounding an issue like this. We just look at those who are in need.”

Source: <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2012-09-10-marikana-gift-of-the-givers-brings-food-to-striking-miners#.Wnm-eyOB06U>



Food aid to the Marikana community.

Source: <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2012-09-10-marikana-gift-of-the-givers-brings-food-to-striking-miners#.Wnm-eyOB06U>

Critics of massive international food-aid argue that it hides the root cause of the current food crisis (the economic system which produces and distributes food for profit), and the fact that we already have 1.5 times the food necessary to feed everyone in the world, according to the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations (FAO). Food-aid has been the mechanism through which the countries receiving aid have been forced to accept ‘free’ markets, it is argued. Food First says:

By law, 75% of food aid from the US must be purchased, processed, transported and distributed by US companies. In 2002, just two US companies, ADM and Cargill, controlled 75% of the global grain trade, with US government contracts to manage and distribute 30% of food aid grains. Only four companies control 84% of the transport and delivery of food aid worldwide.

Food-aid is perhaps most infamous for the practice of dumping, or disposing of surplus food commodities in vulnerable national markets. In this case, food-aid functions as just another US agricultural subsidy. In 2007, despite growing hunger, food-aid fell globally by 15%, the lowest level since 1961. This reflects the tendency of food-aid to respond to international grain prices and not to the food needs of the poor. When the price of cereals is low, Northern countries and transnational grain companies sell their commodities through food-aid programs. When prices are high, they sell their grains on the global market. So, when people across the world are less able to buy food, less food-aid arrives.

Source: <https://foodfirst.org/the-us-food-aid-industry-food-for-peace-or-food-for-profit/>

4.3 Focus on income

In the previous section we looked at the problem of inequality. In South Africa, income inequality is a contributing factor to the problem of hunger, and the majority of workers earn wages way below basic subsistence levels.

4.3.1 The social wage

To protect income-poor households, the South African government provides a range of services like free primary health care, no-fee paying schools, RDP housing and the provision of free basic services (water, electricity and sanitation) to poor households. It also includes monetary benefits, like unemployment insurance, compensation for injury on duty and social grants.

Together, these services are called the social wage and provide a 'safety net' for unemployed and income-poor households. The National Treasury says that the social wage now is about 60% of government expenditure.

4.3.2 Minimum wage legislation

A further way to protect incomes has grown directly out of the struggles of workers. The struggle for a living wage has led to national bargaining in different industries and minimum wage levels below which employers cannot pay workers without special permission from the Minister of Labour.

However, many unorganised workers in construction, agriculture, domestic work, fishing and the like are not protected by national bargaining. Workers who work on a part-time or seasonal basis are also often excluded, as are workers who are classed as 'independent contractors'. Government attempted to close these gaps through setting down a minimum wage for specific industries, like domestic work and work on farms. This system left many workers still vulnerable to high levels of exploitation.

From May 2018, a national minimum wage will become law in South Africa. This was negotiated between government, workers and big business. Workers and researchers have criticised the proposed legislation as not doing enough, because the minimum wage of R3500 per month is low and still excludes workers seen as independent contractors.

4.3.3 Basic income grant

A basic income grant (BIG), is a guaranteed amount of money paid to every citizen by government. BIG provides all citizens (including children) with a minimum amount that helps with the costs of survival. The benefit of BIG to rich people is claimed back through higher taxes on the incomes of the wealthy.

A basic income grant (BIG) pushes back the effects of long-term unemployment in economies that do not create enough jobs for all people who need work, says supporters of BIG. Long term unemployment is a problem across the world, not only in South Africa. It is primarily the result of the "boom or bust" crises of capitalism; the massive over-production of goods; the new ways in which transnational companies produce goods - shifting different phases of the production of something across many countries so production costs can be cut; and robots and other forms of technology taking on work that people used to do in many industries. These problems are structural and unlikely to change under capitalism.

BIG supporters argue too, that many people vulnerable to poverty - for example, the many young people in South Africa who are not in employment or education - are not covered through other forms

of social protection. Giving all citizens a guaranteed basic income will break the hold of poverty on income-poor families and remove accompanying problems, like hunger.

4.4 Focus on increasing food production

In South Africa, the large-scale commercial sector is made up of about 4 800 farming units. It covers a production area of approximately 82 million hectares, and it produces more than 99 percent of South Africa's agricultural output that is sold through local and international markets.

The emerging or small-scale sector, in contrast, make up 1,3 million farming households. The sector holds an estimated 14 million hectares of agricultural land. These farming households are mainly concentrated in the former homelands.

Smallholders are small-scale farmers who use farm produce for home consumption to some degree, and use family labour within the farming operation to some degree, but for whom farming contributes a highly variable amount of cash income via marketing of farm produce.

Levels of mechanization, capital intensity and access to finance are also variable amongst such farmers

Source: <http://www.plaas.org.za/sites/default/files/publications-pdf/SSCA%20Report%20on%20first%20Innovation%20Lab%20-%202019Sept2013.pdf>

Government argues that these farmers achieve low yields and farm to supplement household food. What government wants is that they should be brought into the 'formal' agricultural economy. MEC Mlibo Qoboshiyane of the Eastern Cape Department of Rural Development and Agrarian Reform said that the plan was to transform subsistence farming into commercial agricultural production, with farmers selling their products to commercial markets. (*Uphuhliso, Plan to Transform Eastern Cape Farming. Monday 5 February 2018.*)

Siyakhula, the Eastern Cape's Massive Food Production Programme (MFPP), was developed to restructure the way in which small-holders produce food and to become a model for agriculture in the Eastern Cape. The Siyakhula Massive Maize Production Programme was designed for those households that had the potential to produce surplus food for sale. These households were provided with a conditional grant to help cover their input and mechanization costs .

MFPP was promoted to farmers as a way to step up and expand production and gain entry into commercial farming. The "Siyakhula" component refers to projects that covered an area of less than 50 hectares, while "Massive" refers to areas that were greater than 50 hectares.

Research by the Masifunde Education and Development Project Trust argues that the agricultural programmes being promoted in the communal areas, such as the MFPP, are being used as substitutes for land and agrarian reform in the province. Based on the poor results of the Programme, the research recommends that agrarian reform and rural development for small-scale farmers in the Eastern Cape should provide:

- Access to land outside the communal areas that will transform the dominant social and property relations;
- Visionary policy support for an approach to small-scale agriculture aimed at food security and food sovereignty;
- Water reform and provision of infrastructure;

- Marketing and financial support from the state for building on people's own initiatives, that include new technologies in organic and agro-ecological farming elsewhere, rather than promote agri-business technologies.

Small holder farmers want government to:

- Promote and support the independent organisation of small-scale farmers in the province in order to increase their power to engage with government and develop alternative models for land and agrarian reform and agricultural production.
- Promote the prioritisation of food production. There are indications that hunger has increased in some households and that the variety of food produced has declined as a result of the current projects. It is therefore vital to continue increasing awareness amongst small-scale farmers that even if they participate in government initiated projects (genetically modified cash crop production) under the promise of future increased incomes, food production must be prioritised so as not to jeopardize their already tenuous food security.
- Prioritising food production does not exclude the additional production of other crops for income generation, preferentially aimed at local markets.
- Support the initiatives of farmers in the area. Part of this is monitoring developments in the Nkqonqweni village in Peulton, where farmers, on their own initiative, are growing maize organically. Plans proposed by the Eastern Cape Department of Agriculture to expand maize production should not undermine this community initiative or promote the use of genetically modified seeds instead.
- Promote the saving of traditional seeds and the establishing of seed-banks, as well as the continued use of traditional organic agricultural practices to avoid dependence on expensive fertilizers and insecticides. This should be done while continuing to promote awareness of the potential impacts of genetically modified crops on health, the environment, food security and the creation of permanent dependence on agri-business inputs.
- Encourage and promote co-operatives amongst farmers for buying and marketing of crops.
- Continue or establish working relationships with other farmers and landless movements and civil society organisations. This includes organisations that are monitoring GMOs and their impacts in South Africa, such as the African Centre or Biosafety and SafeAge, if and when their assistance is needed.

Masifunde Education and Development Project Trust (2010). Threats to the Food Security and Food Sovereignty in the Eastern Cape. Available from: https://www.biosafety-info.net/file_dir/9260820094dda3a605ad33.pdf

In Matatiele 15 emerging farmers received funding from the Masizane Fund sponsored by Old Mutual and investment groups Whiphold and Brimstone.



Farming equipment on small holder farms. Matatiele district, Eastern Cape.

Source: http://dogreatthings.co.za/masisizane/files/2016/01/IMG_0220.jpg

Source: http://dogreatthings.co.za/masisizane/files/2016/01/IMG_0284.jpg

BULK BUYING GROUPS

4. WHAT CAN BE DONE

Is'Baya Development Trust works with the Agriculture Research Council of South Africa to develop an integrated, whole-village approach to smallholder agriculture. It supports villagers in the Port St Johns region of the Eastern Cape to develop dignified, self-reliant communities.

Is'Baya sees agriculture as one element in community development planning. The organisations brings partners, resources and coordination together to build greater self-reliance at community level. Uvuselelo is its integrated village renewal programme



Citrus fruit trees ready for planting.

“The ARC & Is'Baya came to us and opened our eyes. They have shown us how to live – I can sell jams and buy pens and paper for my children for school!” say Jam Making Coop members.

Source: https://www.facebook.com/pg/IsBaya-Development-Trust-209830902416022/photos/?ref=page_internal



The bounty of a small-holder farming at Hluleka supported by Is'Baya.

Source: https://www.facebook.com/rosemary.dupreez?hc_ref=ARSTtwoZC4MM51SM0n-61vMHg1D3Yz2Md0kG1CwH5XGj75sKnrwpllwG5chf8Lb_2M

BULK BUYING GROUPS

4. WHAT CAN BE DONE

Rosemary du Preez from the Agricultural Research Council (ARC), who works with villagers and Is'Baya, believes that small-scale commercial agriculture is a workable option to increase food production.

She says that rural communities have been involved in agricultural production for many years. However, due to limited resources, support mechanisms and access to modern farming technologies, production has focused on subsistence.

Small family farms must have access to modern agricultural technologies in order to prosper. Investment in smallholder production is one of the most urgent and secure means of combating hunger and, at the same time, minimizing the ecological impact of large-scale agricultural practices. Improved methods of cultivation, simple technologies, improved seeds and a large number of agro-ecological strategies all hold huge potential for boosting productivity.

If small-scale farmers have sufficient access to land, water, credit and equipment, the productivity per hectare and per unit of energy use is higher than that of large intensive farming systems. In general, smallholder production requires fewer external inputs and only results in minor damages to the environment. Small farms are more flexible in adapting to climatic requirements and changes.

Source: https://www.facebook.com/rosemary.dupreez?hc_ref=ARSTtwoZC4MM51SM0n-61vMHZg1D3Yz2Md0kG1CwH5X-Gj75sKnwvpllwG5chf8Lb_2M



Village gardens supported by Is'Baya and ARC produce a range of crops and fruit for household consumption and the local market.

Source: <https://www.facebook.com/IsBaya-Development-Trust-209830902416022/>

4.5 Focus on food systems

In developing a challenge to oppressive and unfair situations, our strategies are informed by how we understand the problem. Tracy Ledger argues that the problem is not hunger, or that not enough food being produced – it is a food-system that feeds a few at the expense of the majority of people. Eric Holt-Giménez argues that our food system is a key element of capitalism. To change the food system requires building a challenge to capitalism.

Let me repeat this: the problem is not that people do not have food; or that they do not have enough nutritious food. The food is not the *problem* – it is the *outcome*, the result, the symptom of the problem. The real problem is that we have an agri-food system specifically designed and managed to benefit the few at the expense of the many.

Tracy Ledger (2016). "An empty plate. Why we're losing the battle for our food system, why it matters, and how we can win it back" Sunnyside: Jacana Media

Neoliberal globalization has also crippled our capacity to respond to the problems in the food system by destroying much of our public life. Not only have the health, education and welfare functions of government been gutted, but the social networks within our communities have been weakened, encouraging violence, intensifying racial tensions and deepening cultural divides. People are challenged to confront the problems of hunger, violence, poverty and climate change in an environment in which social and political institutions have been restructured to serve global markets rather than local communities.

Notably, the food justice movement has stepped up - supported largely by the non-profit sector - to provide services and enhance community agency in our food systems. Consciously or not, in many ways the community food movement, with its hands-on, participatory projects for a fair, sustainable, healthy food-system, is rebuilding our public sphere from the ground up. This is simply because it is impossible to do one without reconstructing the other.

But as many organizations have discovered, we can't rebuild the public sphere without addressing the issues that divide us. For many communities, this means addressing racism in the food-system. The food movement itself is not immune from the structural injustices that it seeks to overcome.

Because of the pervasiveness of white privilege and internalized oppression in our society, racism in the food system can and does resurface within the food movement itself, even when the actors have the best of intentions. It does no good to push the issue aside because this undermines the trust we need to be able to work together. Understanding why, where and how racism manifests itself in the food system, recognizing it within our movement and our organizations and within ourselves, is not extra work for transforming our food system: it is **the** work. Understanding how capitalism functions is also the work, because changing the underlying structures of a capitalist food system is inconceivable without knowing how the system functions in the first place. And yet many people trying to change the food system have scant knowledge of its capitalist foundations.

This is because in capitalist countries the foundational political-economic structures are assumed to be immutable and are rarely systematically (or systemically) questioned. Doing so immediately uncovers the structural causes of the profound economic and political disparities between social classes (thus contradicting the notion of a classless society). Tragically, critical knowledge of capitalism — vital to the struggles of social movements throughout the 19th and 20th centuries — has largely disappeared from the lexicon of social change, precisely at a time when neoliberal capitalism is penetrating every aspect of nature and society on the planet and is exacerbating the intersectional oppressions of race, class, ethnicity, and gender.

Luckily, this is changing as activists in the food movement dig deeper to fully understand the system behind the problems they confront. Many people in the global South, especially peasants, fishers, and pastoralists, can't afford not to understand the socio-economic forces destroying their livelihoods. The rise of today's international food sovereignty movement, for instance, is part of a long history of resistance to violent, capitalist dispossession and exploitation of land, water, markets, income, labor and seeds...

Activists across the food movement are beginning to realize that the food system cannot be changed in isolation from the larger economic system. Sure, we can tinker around the edges of the issue and do useful work in the process. However, to fully appreciate the magnitude of the challenges we face and what will be needed to bring about a new food system in harmony with people's needs and the environment, we need to understand and confront the social, economic, and political foundations that created - and maintain - the food system we seek to change.

Eric Holt-Giménez (2015). "Racism and capitalism: Dual challenges for the food movement" Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development, 5(2), 23–25.

4.5.1 Food sovereignty

Food sovereignty is a people-centred rather than profit-centred approach to the right to food. It aims to democratise the food system through increased participation in and control over the system by all citizens.

We recognise that food security initiatives have failed us in the past because they have not provided a holistic approach to hunger. Neither have they recognised the multi-faceted problems related to and causing hunger, including corporate concentration in the food system, globalisation, drought and climate change, to name a few.

In order to ensure every citizen's right to food, we are adopting a people-centred food sovereignty approach. This approach will ensure that the food system is democratised, and that all citizens, particularly small-scale food producers and consumers, have control over the food system.

To ensure a food sovereignty pathway takes root in South Africa, which is necessary to affirm the constitutional right to food, we propose the adoption of a People's Food Sovereignty Law. This entails putting in place legislation and policy to promote active citizenry to ensure:

- access and protection of seed resources as part of our natural commons;
- support for small-scale producers' rights to land;
- water is available as a communal resource;
- food production is eco-centric and consistent with agro-ecology principles;
- consumption patterns that are healthy and nutritious are promoted by the state, including the new tax on sugar, which will be implemented from 01 April 2017. This will be the start of a broader public health campaign by government which is extended to regulating unhealthy fast food in general;
- adequate and appropriate financing to small-scale farmers. Currently, mega agri-hubs engender winners and losers and this does not meet the financing needs of small-scale farmers;
- active support for community and small-scale producer markets.

There are other crucial participatory mechanisms that need to be taken forward by the state to promote a food sovereignty pathway. This includes a National Food Sovereignty Fund, a National Food Sovereignty Council, a National Food System Democratic Planning Commission and support for local communal councils.

These mechanisms are not meant to be top down but driven by active citizen's participation, voice and power. An amount of R3 billion will be allocated to the National Food Sovereignty Fund over the medium term. The Council will be established to comprise of government, civil society and food sovereignty organisations. It will manage the fund to ensure farm buyout processes, capitalisation of small-scale food producer enterprises, and provide working capital to small-scale food producers.

The Council will oversee the transition process to a food sovereign system, including amending legislation which currently upholds an undemocratic food system, including those laws which encourage monopoly power in the food system, seed laws which criminalise seed-saving, and water legislation which currently favours industry (particularly the extractive industry). The National Food System Democratic Planning Commission will develop a 5-year food sovereignty plan to ensure the transition to a democratic food system in which small-scale food producers and enterprises are prioritised, and indigenous foods are revived.

Source: <http://www.spji.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/2017-Human-Rights-Budget-Speech.pdf>

4.5.2 Solidarity economy

A food system that is not built on food for profit suggests a different economy.

The idea and practice of "solidarity economics" emerged in Latin America in the mid-1980s and blossomed in the mid to late 90s, as a convergence of at least three social trends. First, the economic exclusion experienced by growing segments of society, generated by deepening debt and the ensuing structural adjustment programs imposed by the International Monetary Fund, forced many communities to develop and strengthen creative, autonomous and locally-rooted ways of meeting basic needs. These included initiatives such as worker and producer cooperatives, neighbourhood and community associations, savings and credit associations, collective kitchens, and unemployed or landless worker mutual-aid organizations.

Second, growing dissatisfaction with the culture of the dominant market economy led groups of more economically privileged people to seek new ways of generating livelihoods and providing services. From largely a middle-class "counter-culture" - similar to that in the United States since the 1960s - emerged projects such as consumer cooperatives, cooperative childcare and health care initiatives, housing cooperatives, intentional communities, and ecovillages. There were often significant class and cultural differences between these two groups. Nevertheless, the initiatives they generated all shared a common set of operative values: cooperation, autonomy from centralized authorities, and participatory self-management by their members.

A third trend worked to link the two grassroots upsurges of economic solidarity to each other and to the larger socioeconomic context: emerging local and regional movements were beginning to forge global connections in opposition to the forces of neoliberal and neocolonial globalization. Seeking a democratic alternative to both capitalist globalisation and state socialism, these movements identified community-based economic projects as key elements of alternative social organisation.

Ethan Miller (no date). "Other Economies Are Possible!": Building a Solidarity Economy. Available from: <http://www.geo.coop/node/35>

BULK BUYING GROUPS

4. WHAT CAN BE DONE

COPAC in Johannesburg advances the solidarity economy as an alternative vision for progressive social movements.

Some of the main ethical values of the solidarity economy are caring, sharing, self-reliance, honest, democracy, equality, learning, ecological consciousness, social justice and openness. The process of the solidarity economy is guided by the following principles:

Solidarity: provides the social basis for the solidarity economy. It informs the cooperation between members inside a solidarity economy enterprise, between such enterprises and with the community more broadly.

Collective ownership: ensure the assets and resources of the solidarity economy enterprise brings benefits to all within the enterprise, to the community and future generations. It ensures control and power are shared.

Self-management: gives members (men and women) and worker owners the rights to impact on decision-making. Such a principle ensures one-person-one-vote institutionalises accountability and responsibility. Ongoing education and training is crucial for viable self-management.

Control of capital: is a crucial practice to secure benefits for the individual enterprises, the wider solidarity economy and the community. It requires developing mechanisms to build up capital from below and subordinating it to democratic control so that the vision, values and principles of the solidarity economy informs lending practices. Such criteria will also inform the behaviour of the borrower.

Eco-centric practice: places and emphasis on a non-destructive relationship with nature through inputs, productive processes, services rendered, consumption and household practices.

Community benefit: encourages a broader social awareness as an integral part of how the solidarity economy works. Such community benefit to be accounted for through transparent financial reporting.

Participatory democracy: provides an institutional space for the decentralised power of citizens and solidarity economy actors for and with the solidarity economy process. Such an institutional space to bring together and unite such social forces to ensure effective coordination and development of the solidarity economy.

Source: http://base.socioeco.org/docs/copac_-_building_a_se_movement.pdf



Source: <https://www.ctunet.com/blog/text/GlobalSolidarity.gif>

5. STARTING A BULK-BUYING CLUB

5.1 What is a bulk-buying club?

A club is a bit like a stokvel, but members pay money for their food hamper at the beginning of each month. On that day, the club members bring their money and then they go and buy the bulk food and divide it into hampers.

5.1.1 Who can join?

Any adult can join the club for free; as long as they accept the constitution. (You can find it at the end of this workbook.)

5.1.2 How can the bulk-buying club help me?

Bulk-buying can save money because we buy in large quantities at the wholesaler - so it is cheaper than buying at a spaza.

For example, one packet of Royco chicken soup = R4 at a spaza, but at the wholesaler = R2.89.



Delivering bulk-buying purchases to members. KwaZakhele, Nelson Mandela Bay.

5.2 Recruiting members

A bulk-buying club can start because one person decides to organise other people that she knows to join the group. Or a group of people who are already working together or who belong to the same organisation can decide to form a group who decides together if they want to recruit new members. A group, may also decide to organise new groups and will again have decided together who can join. A group will usually have some link to one another – everyone lives in the same area, or belong to the same church-group, work at the same company, or belong to the same community organisation.

Membership is voluntary. No one should be forced to join a group. Becoming a member means that the new member is willing to accept the rules of the group and its constitution.

5.2.1 Forming a group

When all the members of the group has been recruited, it is important to think about how to keep the connections between the group strong. Building solidarity among group members can take many forms: groups can celebrate birthdays together, cook together on the day food is shared or the orders are placed, offer support when there is a bereavement, and so on.

5.3 Developing a constitution

When the bulk-buying group first meets, it will organise a meeting to look at and amend a draft constitution. (See page 80 for an example of a constitution). When the group is satisfied that their constitution will work for them, they formally adopt it at a meeting.

Once a year, the group should review the constitution to see if it needs to be updated. All the members should be at this meeting, or at least a big majority of the members. This avoids some members feeling that a small group controls everything.

The group should make time to ensure that all new members understand the constitution. The group can organise their own training to help members understand the constitution.



Members make up hampers from their bulk purchases. Missionvale, Nelson Mandela Bay.

5.4 Establishing a committee

At the first meeting that adopts the constitution, the group will also elect its committee. Once a year, the existing committee will step down and the group will elect new members.

Committee members should have the time and experience to take on their roles. It is good for the group to train new committee members in the course of the year, so that the responsibility for helping the bulk-buying group work is shared by everyone.



The treasurer records money received from the bulk-buying group members. Missionvale, Nelson Mandela Bay.

5.5 Managing conflict

Bulk-buying groups handle money and this is sometimes a source of conflict in groups. When the group has clear rules on how to handle its money, and it sticks to these rules, conflict can be avoided. However, the group may want to write into their constitution a procedure for managing conflict before it happens. This way the group can use its shared experience to avoid conflict.

If the group is very big, it is natural that members will have closer bonds with some and not others, and some (like members of the same clan or family), may even have these bonds outside the group too. It helps to think through ways in which the ties among some members could influence the group. For example, it may not be helpful if all the committee members have a close bond that is not shared with other group members.



Money can sometimes cause conflict – all group members must understand decisions. Missionvale, Nelson Mandela Bay.

5.6 Record-keeping

Good records, which are available to all the members of the bulk-buying groups, help to strengthen democratic decision making in the group. For example, getting members to sign for the delivery of their groceries, allowing members to match the groceries they receive to the order list. To note and explain where the order lists don't match the delivery (because an item was no longer available at the time of purchase) means that decision-making in the group is shared and the basis of decisions are understood by all.

5.7 How do we find the best prices?

In the bulk-buying club we decide which are the best shops for buying food and other household items.

We look for the cheapest prices by regularly checking prices at the agreed shops. But it is not always easy to compare prices, because some foods come in different size packets. Look at the example below.

Makro sells Invicta Samp in 5kg packets = R34

Shoprite sells Invicta Samp in 2kg packets = R15.60

How do we know which packet to buy? The problem is the packets are different sizes. The best way to do it is to calculate the cost of 1kg from each packet.

If you cut the 2kg packet along the black line in the picture you will get 1kg + 1kg

So you must also cut the cost in 2 pieces = $R15.60/2 = R7.80$

So the cost of 1kg Invicta Samp at Shoprite = R7.80 for 1kg



Shoprite 2kg = R15.60

If you cut the 5kg packet along the black line in the picture you will get 1kg + 1kg

So you must also cut the cost in 2 pieces = $R15.60/2 = R7.80$

So the cost of 1kg Invicta Samp at Shoprite = R7.80 for 1kg



Macro 5kg = R34,00

We can see that it is better to buy a 5kg bag of Invicta Samp at Makro, because we will only pay R6.80 for each kg. This cost per kilogram is called the Unit Cost.

The cost of 1kg of any food or 1 litre of oil or 1 pack of soup of the same weight or 1 tin of pilchards of the same weight is also called the Unit Cost.

5.8 How do we organise bulk-buying?

In the last week of each month (or at the agreed time gap) the group completes an order-sheet. The order-sheet is a list of all food items the group wants to buy with the prices available from the different shops for that month. The group then works out the unit prices for all the foods together and decides where best to make their purchases.

Sometimes the group will compromise on the unit price, because the travel costs to a different shop is not worth the saving that comes from the lower unit price. The group may also settle for a higher unit price if the quality of the product is better. The main issue is that the group makes the decision together and records the decision.

BULK-BUYING CLUB - ORDER SHEET

MEMBER'S NAME:

TOTAL paid to Treasurer = R

Treasurer's signature:

Member's signature: Date:

	Food	Price	Quantity I want	Cost to me
1	Spekko white rice parboiled 1Kg	R 9.60	Kg	
2	White Star m/meal Super Poly 1Kg	R 6.70	Kg	
3	Econo super m/meal 1Kg	R 3.70	Kg	
4	Sasko flour cake 1Kg	R 7.40	Kg	
5	Champion maize samp 1Kg	R 6.50	Kg	
6	Hewletts white sugar 1Kg	R 10.70	Kg	
7	Imbo sugar beans 1Kg	R 19.50	Kg	
8	Fusion Juice concentrate 1 Lt	R 5.20	Lt	
9	Sunshine sunflower cooking oil 1Lt	R 14	Lt	
10	Lucky Star pilchards 1tin	R 13.99	Tin	
11	Royco cream of chicken soup 1 pack	R 2.89	Pack	
12	Knorrox Stock chicken cubes (2 per pack)	R 1.37	Pack	
13	Knorrox Stock beef cubes (2 per pack)	R 1.39	Pack	
14	Econo dry yeast 10gm pack	R 0.98	Pack	
15	Star salt 100gm pack	R 1.47	Pack	
16	Sunlight hand wash powder 500gm pack	R 8.50	Pack	
17	Frisco coffee 100gm tin	R 11.66	Tin	
18	Glen tea bags 100 bag pack	R 13.66	Pack	

5.9 Linking with other groups

Saving as a group to buy in bulk is a long-standing strategy in working class and rural communities to deal with the effects of income poverty. Among the 800 000 stokvel groups in South Africa, about 160 000 save together to buy groceries in bulk – many only buying at the end of the year. Working together, bulk-buying groups can negotiate cheaper transport and lower prices.

Bulk-buying groups can form food cooperatives with greater power to buy at lower prices directly from food producers and community small holder producers. A food cooperative is collectively owned by its members. Its focus is on providing a service to its members, rather than on making a profit, like supermarkets and other retailers do. Members, rather than outside shareholders, make decisions together based on their needs and local circumstances.

Food cooperatives can also fight exploitative practices from wholesalers and supermarkets that sell bulk-buying groups products that are close to their sell-by-date or that have expired.

Links between bulk-buying groups and trade unions, community food producers, local farmers hold the potential to break or at least challenge some of the long retail value chains.

5.10 Khulisani Women's Club

As part of research for his Masters thesis on buying and savings groups in Nelson Mandela Bay, Anele Dloto interviewed members of the Khulisani Women's Club, a bulk-buying group in KwaZakhele.

Siphokazi says that she started organising members of her church to join in December 2016. The group includes neighbours, school teachers and church members. Many in the group depend on government grants for their main income. Apart from saving on the cost of food, the buying club also saves older people time and effort from going to buy food at the shops, because the group delivers bulk purchases to each members home.

Eighteen members joined, contributing R450 per month. After a review at the end of 2017, the group changed and one new member joined. The group now has a bank account and contributes R550 over a period of three months, because "that manner almost break us." The contribution was too much per month. But, says Siphokazi, "The good thing is that many of us are beneficiaries of government social grants and every month there is a guarantee that we will get our social grant. Therefore it becomes very easy for us to save..."



Khulisani members sharing out bulk purchases. KwaZakhele, Nelson Mandela Bay

BULK BUYING GROUPS

5. STARTING A BULK-BUYING CLUB

In 2017, the Khulisani members used all their contributions to make purchases. Nokhanyo says, “It is not easy to be a member of the bulk-buying club, because one is confronted with the genuine reality of making decision on how to spend the money. All the money is used when it comes and it does not remain.”

MaDlamini explains, “We meet to discuss what we intend to buy in the beginning of the month. We buy in bulk. We learn that, when we do this, the price drops... and we save a lot.”

Sindiswa adds, “I was inspired to start budgeting and to buying food that is necessary for my household here, because of the Khulisani Bulk-buying Club. We learnt to calculate unit prices and [now we] cost prices before we buy food.”

“The bulk-buying clubs is very important and it’s very supportive to me and my household. The club has also been a space where we belong and we share with one another our problems from our families and get advice”, says Ma Dlamini.

Ntombomzi says, “I do not qualify for old age or any social grant. I get a child support grant for my children, as they are still young. My situation was going to be very bad if the bulk-buying club was not there. The bulk-buying clubs help me to put food on the table, at least through the child grant I am assured of income to buy food every month with the bulk-buying club members.”

Eunice believe the buying-club helps its members to fight poverty: “Now I can afford to buy food very cheap, because I no longer buy food as an individual, we buy as a group of women. It helps to make sure we always have staple food in our houses. Unemployment and poverty continue to be part of our world, but it does not mean that we can’t fight poverty. Yes, we can through clubs like Khulisani Women’s Group.”

Busi agrees, “Because I am unemployed, I always found it hard to have enough money to buy food since only my husband is working and he gets little wages, so we were always running short of food. In December, it was even worse because we could not buy enough food and I could not buy my children new clothes for Christmas.”

MamJwara says, “I joined the bulk-buying club because it helps me during the month end, because I am not working and now that I am part of the bulk-buying clubs, I always have food on my table.”



Khulisani member, Mrs Willem, helps to pack bulk hampers. KwaZakhele, Nelson Mandela Bay.



6. BULK BUYING CLUB CONSTITUTION

The name of the Bulk-buying Club is:

.....

1. Aims and Objectives

- To strengthen individual and household buying power.
- To build human solidarity and organization through collective buying and community action.
- To promote personal and club development through community education.
- To increase membership and household buying power in a neighbourhood.

2. Membership

- Membership is open to any interested person who is willing to abide by the Bulk-buying Club constitution.
- Members will give the Bulk-buying Club Secretary their ID number, date of birth and residential address and receive a proof of membership certificate in return.
- Members will attend monthly meetings.
- Members agree to pay their monthly contribution to the treasurer in person at the monthly meeting.
- Members will help the organiser to recruit new members so that the buying club's power grows.

3. Bulk-buying Club Executive Committee

- The executive committee will have five members: Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer and Organiser.
- The **Chairperson's** responsibilities are:
 - Prepare the agenda for meetings with the secretary.
 - Lead meetings.
 - Make sure members follow the Club's constitution.
 - Explore opportunities for strengthen the Club's practices.
- The **Deputy Chairperson's** responsibilities are:
 - To assist the chairperson and committee in any given task.
 - To act on behalf of the chairperson in her/his absence.
 - To act as buyer on behalf of the club
 - To accompany CIPSET to do the bulk-buying of goods.
- The **Secretary's** responsibilities are:
 - Prepare the agenda with the Chairperson.
 - Keep the minutes of all meetings in a Bulk-buying Club Minute book that is open to inspection by any club member.
 - Keep records of the Club e.g. correspondence, membership register and a diary of the club's activities.
 - Communicate with members to inform them of Club activities.
 - Help members place monthly orders.



BULK BUYING GROUPS
6. BULK BUYING CLUB CONSTITUTION



- The **Treasurer’s** responsibilities are:
 - Keep accurate account of the Club’s finances by maintaining a monthly register of contributions in the club’s contribution register.
 - Write receipt slips for contributions.
 - Check that monthly orders are correct.
 - To act as buyer on behalf of the club.
 - To accompany CIPSET to do the bulk-buying of goods.

- The **Organiser’s** responsibilities are:
 - To work with members to organise and educate new membership into the club.
 - To support the Secretary to keep up to date membership records.
 - To visit members who are not present.

Name of Chairperson:

Duration of Office

.....
Name of Deputy Chairperson:

Duration of Office

.....
Name of Secretary:

Duration of Office

.....
Name of Treasurer:

Duration of Office

.....
Name of Organiser:

Duration of Office

4. Change of Leadership

- Elections for office bearers will take place every 12 months.
- Members can change the leadership structure if there is a majority vote before 12 months is over.
- A proposal to change the leadership structure must be announced 60 days prior to the meeting. The proposal must give clear reasons why the leadership should change.

5. Resolutions

- Each member shall have one vote.
- A resolution can be passed by simple majority (one more than half of the members of the Club).
- A resolution can only be passed in a meeting where at least half of the Bulk-buying Club members plus one are present in person.
- A resolution shall be by a show of hands, unless a member requests a secret ballot.
- The votes of two thirds of all the members of the Bulk-buying Club are required to change its constitution.



6. Meetings

- Meetings of the buying club will be held at least once a month.
- For a meeting to be a valid meeting that can make decisions at least half of the members plus one additional person need to be present.
- Special meetings will be called when necessary by the executive committee.

7. Financial contributions

- Each member can choose on a monthly basis what size hamper they want to buy.
- There will be hampers of R.....

8. Organizing bulk-buying

- Shopping lists for hampers will be prepared in the last week of each month and the buying club with help of the treasurer will take and check orders from each member.
- Buying clubs will meet on an agreed in the last week of the month to place their orders.
- A member should place an order every month, but does not have to order to the same value every month.
- Buying of food hampers will take place between the 1st and 5th of each month.
- Members will pay their money to the treasurer on a date between the 1st and 5th of every month as agreed on the day orders were placed.
- The treasurer will hold the money on behalf of the buying club.
- Buyers (treasurer and deputy chairperson) will accompany two members to do the purchases on a Wednesday.
- Measuring, re-packaging and distribution of food will take place at an agreed central venue on the same Wednesday that food was bought.
- Members can change the way the buying club is organised through a majority vote (half of the membership plus one more member).

9. Code of conduct

- Members cannot use the name of the Bulk-buying Club for personal business purposes or personal gain.
- Each member will be expected to conduct him or herself in a socially acceptable manner at the meetings.

10. Meeting attendance

- If a member is unable to attend a meeting for whatever reason, he or she must send an apology in writing.
- Should a member fail to attend two (2) consecutive meetings without a good reason such as illness or being away, he/she will face a disciplinary committee.

11. Disciplinary committee

- The chairperson, secretary and organiser and two ordinary members will act as the disciplinary committee.
- Ordinary members who act as part of the disciplinary committee will be elected at the first meeting of the buying club for that year and will hold office for a year only.
- The chairperson will act as the chair of the committee and the secretary will keep a record of the disciplinary meeting.



BULK BUYING GROUPS
6. BULK BUYING CLUB CONSTITUTION



- Where an executive member who is also a member of the disciplinary committee is called to the disciplinary committee, s/he will be replaced by the deputy chairperson.
- Any member called to the disciplinary committee may bring another member along as her or his observer.
- The members of the disciplinary committee will discuss sanction where a member is found guilty of breaking the constitution.
- There will be three levels of sanction: a verbal warning; a written warning and termination of membership.
- Termination of membership is immediate where a member has been found guilty of stealing from the buying club.

12. Bulk-buying club closure

- In the event that the bulk-buying club closes, any extra funds and assets of the Bulk-buying Club will be shared amongst members according to each member’s contribution as recorded by the treasurer.

13. Change of constitution

- Members can change the constitution if there is a majority vote.
- Changes in the constitution must be announced 60 days prior to the meeting.

14. Declaration

I hereby accept the constitution of Bulk-buying Club (club’s name)

Signed at: _____ (name of community) **on this** _____ **day**
of _____ (month) _____ (year)

New member signature **Full Name and Surname**

Witness
Signatures of existing members **Full Name and Surname**

NELSON MANDELA
UNIVERSITY

Centre for Integrated
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