

An investigation into the poverty reduction co-benefits of climate change-related projects in eThekweni

Background

Although the impacts of climate change are experienced by all, the poor are the least adapted and are therefore more adversely impacted when climate change disasters occur. In addition, the realities of climate change are eroding the livelihood opportunities of vulnerable communities and pushing them further into poverty. Against this backdrop, the inclusion of poverty reduction co-benefits in climate change related projects has gained prominence in recent years.

Objectives

This research project aimed to evaluate climate change adaptation programmes and their poverty reducing co-benefits in the eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality of KwaZulu-Natal in order to both improve local and national practice, and to influence wider debate at national and global scale. The project also aimed to develop a measurement instrument which could evaluate climate finance initiatives and expenditures most likely to demonstrate poverty co-benefits.

Methodology

This study examined 13 purposively selected climate change-related projects in eThekweni Municipality to determine their poverty reduction potentials, building on the document analysis of the poverty reduction co-benefits of 104 climate change-related projects in the municipality. Using a qualitative research approach, municipal staff and project beneficiaries were interviewed to gain insights into the co-benefits of these projects.



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Conclusion

Findings of the study show that all 13 projects that were qualitatively assessed had poverty reduction co-benefits and are important sources of livelihood and income for project beneficiaries. Some of the projects have improved local communities' access to and appreciation of nature, others have provided accredited training for participants which they have leveraged to access employment beyond the climate change projects, while most have resulted in increased well-being.

In light of the benefits of the climate change projects, there is a need to move beyond a project-based approach to institutionalising climate change activities in order to provide permanent employment. Climate change projects also have great potential to contribute to national development and poverty reduction in its many dimensions if scaled to provincial and national levels.



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