

Research Findings & Potential Policy Implications

Local food systems for rural sustainable development - A case study of the Vaalharts Area

PSPPD II Research Conference for CfP1 Grantees

14 – 15 March

Sheraton Hotel, Pretoria



Research team

Africa Unit for Transdisciplinary Health Research (AUTHeR)
North-West University



planning, monitoring
& evaluation

Department:
Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



PSPPD
PROGRAMME TO
SUPPORT PRO-POOR
POLICY DEVELOPMENT



Overview of the research

Relevance for SA

- Food systems in South Africa: highly commercialized, mechanised and centralized
- Mainly large-scale commercial farmers – produce 95 % of market outputs → national food security
- Small-scale farmers face multiple challenges
- More than half of South Africans experienced hunger or are at risk of being hungry
- Increased obesity levels (39% among female population) and increased related prevalence of non-communicable diseases

Overview of the research cont.

Policy context

- Comprehensive Rural Development Programme, National Development Plan, National Policy on Food and Nutrition Security, Strategic Plan for Preventing and Controlling Non-Communicable Diseases, National Road Map for Nutrition, and Strategy to Prevent and Control Obesity
- Local food systems → more equitable, empowered, and resilient local communities, particularly in rural areas
- Experts call for a localization of food systems to promote the government's envisaged priority to promote rural development and food security in South Africa (De Schutter, 2011; Ortmann & King, 2010; Shisanya & Hendriks, 2011)

Overview of the research cont.

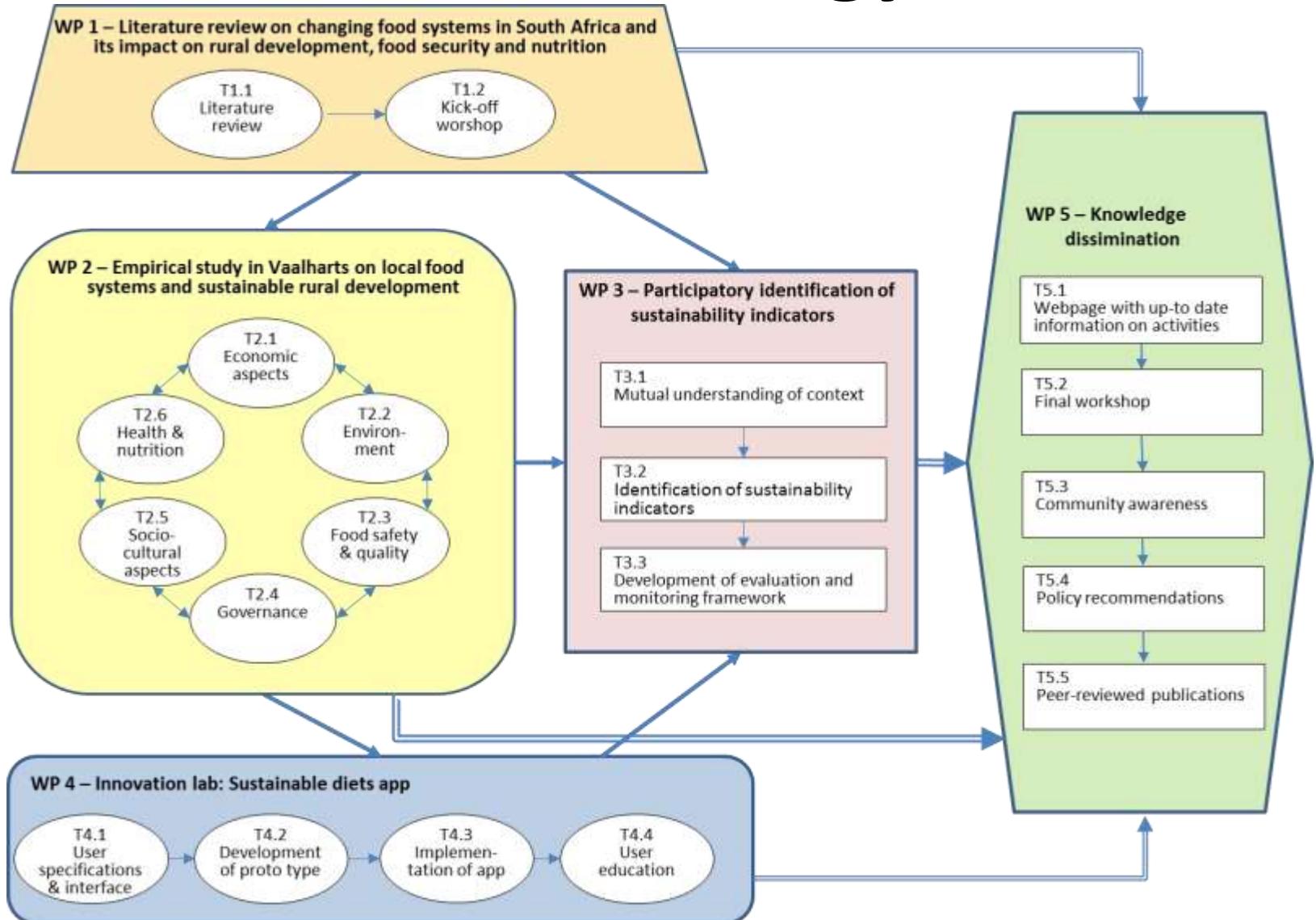
To provide empirical evidence on the potential of local food systems to contribute to sustainable development among rural resource-poor communities.

1. Literature review
2. Empirical research
3. Formulation of sustainability indicators
4. Mobile application
5. Knowledge dissemination



Figure 1: Components of LFS for sustainable rural development

Methodology



Key research findings

- Environment
 - Mainly cash-crops by both commercial and small-scale farmers
 - Farmers' perceptions: river and channel water polluted, borehole water safe
- Quality of water for food production
 - Water quality along the irrigation scheme consistent except drainage
 - Farmer's perceptions: sensory observations, access to water, governance, maintenance, and water quality's influence on food security.

Key research findings cont.

- Health and Nutrition
 - More than half of women overweight or obese
 - Land and water are available for home food production: 8% keep livestock and 22% have a fruit/vegetable garden
- Socio-cultural aspects
 - Reasons to purchase locally produced foods: lower price, freshness, support of local people and businesses (mostly informal), and social interactions between producers and consumers.
 - Locally produced foods: healthier, more tasteful, and more aesthetic
 - Food's origin as important as food safety
 - Reasons to buy non-LPFs: convenience with regard to purchasing and preparation, food safety, freshness and expanded shelf life

Key research findings cont.

- Economic aspects
 - Stagnant economic activity
 - High unemployment; local agricultural sector largest employer
 - Lower income households spent more on food, mostly on non-locally produced foods
- Governance
 - Supportive towards local food systems
 - Challenges implementation of government-supported programmes → lack of transparency and accountability of projects, and limited participation and empowerment of beneficiaries.
 - Access of training, infrastructure, tools and production inputs
 - Focus on food production

Conclusions & Policy implications

Local food systems contribute to sustainable development among rural resource-poor communities:

- All involved actors included in the short food supply chains were supportive towards local food systems.
- Regional and national food systems
- Strengthening of local food systems
 - local economic growth
 - employment opportunities within food supply chains
 - improved access to and awareness of healthy food and more food diversity
- Supportive of the Government's priority to promote rural development and food and nutrition security

Conclusions & Policy implications

- Strengthening local food systems
 - Support different dimensions of sustainable development
 - local assets
 - knowledge sharing
 - relationship building between relevant actors
 - synergizing existing support programs
- Natural environment and resources

Recommendations

- Localizing policies
 - LFS and local structures
 - Synergies between agriculture, trade, health, and nutrition policies
 - Monitoring and evaluation system
- Accessibility of locally produced foods
 - Market place
 - Local processing and distribution
 - Awareness campaigns
- Environment and sustainable agriculture
 - Nutrition-sensitive food and agricultural policies
 - More resources for in-depth, holistic research

Acknowledgements

- PSPPD and its supportive team
- Research participants and key informants
- Community leaders and members of Vaalharts
- South African Medical Research Council
- Our project team at North-West University



planning, monitoring
& evaluation

Department:
Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



PSPPD
PROGRAMME TO
SUPPORT PRO-POOR
POLICY DEVELOPMENT

