

# Food security interventions to achieve Sustainable Development Goal Two in South Africa

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**Abstract:** The purpose of the study is to investigate how SDG Two is being implemented in South Africa. SDG Two states to “end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture” (SDG Compass 2015:1). SDG 2 is aimed at ensuring that people have access to food that is nutritious and safe all year round, with emphasis on poor communities and children (Fourie 2019:1). The study examines the status of SDG Two in South African context. The guiding question for the study is: “what are the challenges related to SDG Two implementation in South Africa”? To find answers, a qualitative desktop analysis with a descriptive research design was used to acquire enough data for the study. The study used literature and document reviews as secondary sources for data collection. The journal articles, internet-based information, research reports, dissertations, theses, government documents, Acts, media reports, and annual reports, were reviewed as secondary sources of information. Data analysis for this study was done using document analysis and conceptual analysis. The literature review has revealed problems with food security initiatives' policy implementation. It is necessary to investigate the causes and henceforth find solutions to apply these initiatives successfully. There is also a need for transparency amongst state departments to collaborate while executing the implementation plans effectively.

**Keywords:** Ecology theory, food security, sustainable development goal (SDG), SDG Two, South Africa.

## Introduction

In 2015, the United Nations (UN) adopted a set of goals to eradicate poverty, ensure that the planet is protected, and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by the year 2030. These goals are known as the sustainable development goals (SDGs) (United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) 2012:1). There are 17 goals in total. All interconnected and interrelated. This means that action in one area significantly affects the outcome in other areas. In addition, it is important to note that development must be balanced at the social, economic, and environmental levels to be considered sustainable (UNDP 2012:1). As observed by the UNDP (2020, in Vyas-Doorgapersad 2022a:266), “these 17 SDGs are intertwined as their common focus is complemented by one another towards realizing the objectives that include environmental sustainability and socio-economic development”. Countries around the world have committed to prioritising the progress of countries that are furthest behind. The SDGs are aimed at ending poverty, hunger, discrimination against girls and women, and AIDS (UNDP 2012:1). This study aims to discuss SDG Two, which is zero hunger, and South Africa’s progress and interventions in achieving this goal.

Even though the globe generates more than enough food to feed everyone on the earth, 811 million people worldwide go to bed hungry every night, as emphasised by Manning (2021:12). In addition, farmers, herders, and fishermen produce over 70% of the global food supply however they are more vulnerable to food insecurity because poverty and hunger are more common among rural populations (Manning 2021:12). There are various reasons the world faces hunger today. According to Wills, Patel, Van der Berg & Mpeti (2020:20), “99.1 million people in 23 countries [and] estimated 14 million children under the age of five worldwide suffer from some form of malnutrition, and only 25% of children suffering from acute more nutrition has access to treatment that is lifesaving”.

Hunger and poverty are strongly interconnected. People living in poor communities and poverty are more likely to face household food insecurity because they use inappropriate care practices, live in unsafe environments, and have poor access to potable water, healthcare, education, sanitation, and hygiene. All these factors contribute to hunger (Van der Berg, Zuze & Bridgeman 2020:19). Another cause of hunger is conflict, which leads to severe food crises, including famine. When conflicts are prolonged, and institutions are weak, hunger and undernutrition worsen. There has been an increase in the number of conflicts. As a result, world leaders and organisations working towards

combating hunger must take conflict-sensitive approaches (Van der Berg et al. 2020:19). Climate change has also significantly contributed to reduced food availability in many countries, increasing the levels of food insecurity. Countries that depend on oil and alternative primary commodity export revenues experienced economic downturns, negatively affecting people's access to food and food availability (Nahman & Lange 2013:2496). These aspects are discussed below.

- **The extent of hunger globally:** More than 811 million people experience hunger. Over the past decade, there has been a steady decline in world hunger. However, it is now on the rise again, affecting over 9.9% of the world population (Ki-Moon 2007:13). Due to issues such as climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic from 2019 to 2020 the number of people who are undernourished grew by 161 million (Berg & Patel 2021:1).
- **The extent of hunger in Africa:** "Hunger is increasing at an alarming rate in Africa. Issues such as the COVID-19 pandemic economic woes, conflict, drought, and extreme weather conditions have reversed years of progress" (World Vision 2021:1). In "2019, it was reported that 234 million sub-Saharan Africans were chronically undernourished. In Africa, 150 million people were experiencing hunger, that is 20% of the population. In East Africa, conditions are deteriorating 7 million people are at risk for starvation. In addition, 33.8 million face acute food insecurity moreover, 12.8 million children are acutely malnutrition in East Africa" (William 2009:1).
- **The extent of hunger in the SADC region:** Africa remains the region with the highest prevalence of undernourishment. Statistically one in four people are estimated to be undernourished. The food insecurity in the southern African countries is not the same because different countries experience different shortfalls in terms of agricultural production because of climate change failed policies (Mlaba 2020:1). A 2019 report conducted by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) revealed that in 13 countries there were 41.2 million people who were food insecure between the years 2019 and 2020. This was compared to the statistics in 2018 that revealed that security increased by 28%. The countries that experienced a drastic food insecurity increase were Mozambique (85%), Eswatini (90%), the Republic of Congo (80%), Zambia (144%) and Zimbabwe (128%). Food insecurity is caused by civil unrest, diseases, pests, droughts, floods, human conflicts, and policies that adversely affect agriculture (SADC 2019:1).

As a result, "international and regional organisations have come together to assess the impacts of failed policies to better understand the nature of the problems they are dealing with so that they can put together actions and policies that are aimed at ensuring a society that is hunger free" (Gibbs 2015:1). Bennett (1987:47) identifies "five countries in the Southern African region that are mostly affected by food insecurity challenges, these countries include Angola, Madagascar, Malawi, Namibia, and Zimbabwe. Achieving food security is challenging with developing countries". However, South Africa also faces challenges that cannot be ignored, explored in this article.

## **Materials and Methods**

The study considered employing a qualitative approach to compile relevant information. Qualitative research is a content creator, which means that one can find new methods to present historical information. It allows for genuine ideas to be gathered from socioeconomic demographics (Gaille 2018:1). Research approaches aim to clarify and define the nature of the research problem. It is research used to gather information to help paraphrase specific problems or opportunities. It collects data which are both unstructured and informal and seeks to progressively narrow the research topic scope (Cant, Gerber Nel, Nel & Kotze 2003:28). Descriptive research describes specific problems and opportunities. It answers questions such as who, what, where, when, and how? This is to provide accurate descriptions of aspects of society or the environment (Cant et al. 2003:29–30). The study used literature and document reviews as secondary sources for data collection. According to Auriacombe (2007:458), "a literature review can be defined as an informed assessment of research that already exists pertaining to a certain topic. It is a critical synthesis of research that exists. It promotes fairness and is goal-oriented". A document review is a formalised data collection technique that involves examining existing records and documents. The type of documents it reviews are public records, personal documents, and physical evidence (O'Leary 2014:14). Data analysis for this study was done using document analysis and conceptual analysis. Document analysis "is a formalised data collection technique that involves examining existing records and documents. The type of documents it analyses are public records, personal documents as well as physical evidence" (Bowen 2009:27). Conceptual analysis refers to being able to distinguish terms and analysing them and what they represent. Concepts are made up of important phenomena related to a field or discipline. Concepts are theoretical terms that refer to a construct that is often complex also which phenomena and what they represent in theory or when relating to other concepts (Myburgh & Tammara 2013:1), and hence "can be seen as a system of concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs and theories that inform research" (Maxwell, 2005; Nyikadzino and Vyas-Doorgapersad 2020; Vyas-Doorgapersad 2022). The information compiled is secondary and hence used for

qualitative desktop analysis, and includes journal articles, Acts, official documents, books, Acts related to food security.

To this study, the theoretical framework was based on the ecology theory, as it focuses on the earth's ability to meet the demands of an increasing population. South Africa is an unequal society where both rich and poor people reside. The ecology theory highlights the need for a country to educate its people on the importance of protecting the environment to produce good food for consumption. It emphasises the need to promote agriculture, ensure sustainable land, and encourage sustainable living for future generations. In line with food security, the ecology theory also emphasises the need for businesses and big corporates to be more environmentally friendly. It must be noted that the environment is threatened by land, air, and sea pollution, which affects the environment and the soil quality to produce fruits and vegetables for consumption (cf. Gray & Moseley 2005, in Hlongwane 2023).

## **Results and Discussion**

From the review of literature compiled under this section, the following aspects are discussed: the section highlights the status of millennium development goal (MDG) One in South Africa and why it failed. Thereafter, it discusses challenges relating to sustainable development goal (SDG) Two in South Africa, including food insecurity, chronic food insecurity, hunger, vulnerability, and stress. Recommendations are offered to improve the situation.

### **Millennium Development Goal (MDG) One (Hunger and Poverty) in South Africa**

In 1990, about half of the world's population made less than US\$1.25 per day (Max 2017:1). Extreme poverty peaked in 1990 at 1.9 billion people (Max 2017:1). The situation did not improve and faced varied consequences in developing and under-developed countries. Therefore the “South African government, together with other UN members, agreed to a national and international action plan to decrease poverty and secure the advancement of its people in the year 2000. This concluding MDG report gives a summary of South Africa's progress toward meeting the eight MDGs” (Gibbs 2015:1). It considers not only the achievements and problems but also the lessons gained and how they should be incorporated into the post-2015 development agenda and the sustainable development goals (SDGs) that go with it (Gibbs 2015:1).

It “began in 1994 with its post-apartheid rebuilding and development plan, which foreshadowed the millennium development goals by focusing on poverty eradication through equitable, inclusive, and sustainable development. The first democratically elected government was faced with the task of addressing structural developmental and rights shortfalls and inequalities across the country” (Dubbleman 2010:1). The above demanded “a complete redesign of a government structure that was originally intended to accomplish the complete opposite of the MDG aims and objectives. South Africa has faced the major difficulties of poverty, unemployment, and inequality over the past two decades. The most serious threat to attaining universal poverty reduction in South Africa is the country's unemployment problem” (Dubbleman 2010:1). Between 1990 and 2015, the situation did not improve sufficiently to satisfy the MDGs' targets and lay the groundwork for unified national economic and social development. Three of the nine MDGs were met by South Africa, showing progress toward poverty and hunger reduction. The findings suggest that progress had been made toward reducing extreme poverty and hunger, as determined by the worldwide MDGs' poverty lines (Dubbleman 2010:1). Dubbleman (2010:1) states that in February 2015, the number of people receiving social assistance had risen from slightly above 2.5 million during 1997 to almost 16.6 million. The poorest income brackets' share of national consumption, which is regarded as the earnings versus expenditure that accumulates to the weakest fifth of the population, fell from 2.9% in 2000 to 2.7% in 2011, which still fell short of the MDG target of 5.8% (Dubbleman 2010:1). In 2014, the employment-to-population ratio – which assesses the economy's ability to create enough jobs for individuals eager to work – was 42.8%, considerably below the objective of 50 to 70%. In 2013, the unemployment rate remained high, at 24.7%, according to official figures (Dubbleman 2010:1). Some of the reasons for the failure of MDG 1 in South Africa are discussed below.

The unemployment crisis is an important reason to consider. Unemployment “is a state of affairs where a person actively seeks employment but is unsuccessful in doing so. Unemployment is viewed as a crucial indicator of the state of the economy” (Hayes 2022:1). According to Gibbs (2015:1), “the most serious threat to attaining universal poverty reduction in South Africa is the country's unemployment problem. Between 1990 and 2015, the situation did not improve sufficiently to satisfy the MDG targets and build a solid foundation for national social and economic development”. Unemployment rates have been high over the past 15 years, and their proportion to poverty has climbed from 33% in 2001 to 40% in 2011 (Gibbs 2015:1). South Africa has not met any of its millennium development goals (MDGs) or adopted employment benchmarks and has occasionally dropped below its original standards.

South Africa was falling behind in achieving many of the targets set out in the UN's MDGs. Children suffered the most due to South Africa's failure to achieve the MDGs. These goals included healthcare, education, and poverty reduction that required urgent attention (Ki-Moon 2007:15). Africa and South Africa, in particular, were falling behind in reaching these goals despite positive trends in the rest of the world. Issues such as the 2008/9 global financial crisis negatively impacted the food security crises, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa (Ki-Moon 2007:15). The rapid increase in climate change also influenced access to food, which significantly decreased. The global financial crisis caused a ripple effect as richer countries faced financial constraints, which meant that the development of poorer countries slowed down. Moreover, richer countries reduced their development support because many African countries did not uphold their commitment to good governance (Gibbs 2015:1).

In addition, the global trading system was not fair towards developing countries. It was biased towards developed countries and hindered the development of poorer nations, resulting in them failing to achieve the MDGs (Gibbs 2015:1). In South Africa, a child's development is primarily shaped by the environment. South Africa's laws are also aimed at protecting children. However, it is not always the case in practice. South Africa performed poorly in the MDGs that were directly aimed at children. Issues such as mental health, poverty, hunger, water, sanitation, and HIV/AIDS were not adequately addressed (Dubbleman 2010:1). Although there were signs of a decrease in children living in poverty, there are currently 11,9 million children living under the poverty line. There has been a decline in child mortality since 2000, but it is still high, as nine children die every hour. Moreover, 80% of child deaths happen under the age of five, and these deaths occur because of HIV/AIDS and poverty (William 2009:1). In addition, there was a drastic increase in maternal mortality rates from 1990. There was also a link between HIV/AIDS and mortality rates. At the time, 17% of South African people lived with HIV. As a result, this MDG was particularly challenging for South Africa (William 2009:1). It was determined, when few years remained to achieve these goals (the 2015 MDG target), that these targets were indeed out of reach for South Africa and the African continent (William 2009:1). The failure of MDG One resulted into the establishment of SDG Two.

There is also a lack of food entitlement adding to the challenge of food insecurity. Sen (1981:7) defined poverty as a lack of food entitlement (in regard to a lack of access to land, credit, income, and family support networks), which was [also] discovered to be the leading cause of famine, hunger, and disease. Sen (1981:7) questioned the generally held belief at the time that a lack of food production primarily drove famines, subsequently developing his entitlement thesis in his widely read book *Poverty and Famine*. Sen (1981:7) realised that people go hungry because of a lack of food entitlement rather than a lack of food availability. Starvation "is a condition in which there are insufficient calories of any kind to meet the body's energy requirements for an extended length of time. The body's reserves are exhausted. The end effect is significant weight loss, tissue deterioration, and ultimately death" (Brink 2016:1). According to Sen (1981:8), "in a private ownership market economy, entitlement relations often involve trade-based entitlement, in which one is entitled to own what one obtains by buying and selling something that one possesses with an interested party (or, multilaterally, with a willing set of parties); manufacturing entitlement, in which one is entitled to own what one obtains by arranging production using one's own resources, or by hiring resources from willing parties who meet the agreed-upon trade conditions; own-labour entitlement, in which one is entitled to own what one obtains by employing one's own; and succession and transferring rights, which entitles one to own what is knowingly handed to one by the rightful owner thereof, but which can remain in effect after the latter's death if indicated by him or her" (Sen 1981:8).

In the context of South Africa, an underdeveloped agricultural sector also plays a significant role in determining food insecurity. Over-reliance on primary crop production, low fertility soils, minimal use of external agricultural inputs, environmental destruction, significant food crop loss pre- and post-harvest, relatively limited value addition and product diversification, and inadequate food storage and preservation are all factors that contribute to significant commodity price fluctuations in Africa (UN 2022:28). Women who own small farms suffer additional disadvantages. Although the output of food production units headed by men and women is comparable in half of the nations with data available, the average yearly income of units headed by women is between 50 and 70% of the males (UN 2022:28). According to Hart (2009:375), market deregulation and economic agreements that raise organic manures prices similar to commodity prices, restricted access to global markets and infrastructural facilities, limited development of yield, input and credit markets, and poverty and money barriers that hinder farmers' capacity to afford manure and other inputs are all factors that limit fertiliser use. The foundations continue to erode, resulting in a decrease in farm productivity (Hart 2009:375). The restricted adoption of organic manures replenishment approaches and sustainable water management initiatives in Africa; the downturn in the use and duration of drought seasons; growth of crop production into marginal and fragile areas; and the clearing of vegetation through overexploitation, logging, improvement, and domestic use are among some of the factors associated with soil fertility depletion (Hart 2009:375).

There are barriers to market access. Farm owners must overcome market access. The issue is multi-faceted and includes weak infrastructure and impediments to market penetration caused by their low resource foundation, a lack of information, a lack of or insufficient institutions, and ineffective regulations (Osei, Banful, Osie & Oluoch 2010:34). Through raising the cost of transportation, poor infrastructure restricts the areas to which producers can effectively convey their produce, and thus functions as a hindrance to market saturation. In addition, market standards, inadequate information, substantial initial capital investment requirements, insufficient product differentiation, and discriminatory rules are among the roadblocks (Osei et al. 2010:34). Although practically any agricultural food sells at the local level market, customers are fast to discriminate against inferior produce, so farmers have adapted to selling just that which will sell over time. It is indeed a highly subjective method that has typically worked. However, subjective standards no longer operate since the same farmer wants to sell his produce to high-end markets (Osei et al. 2010:34).

All these factors discussed in this section are responsible to causing challenges to realise SDG Two in South Africa, discussed below.

### **Challenges Related to Sustainable Development Goal Two in South Africa**

Several challenges hinder South Africa from achieving the desired targets. Poor governance is the first challenge. The government is responsible for ensuring that frameworks are implemented to tackle the issues of food insecurity and climate change (Atukunda, Eide, Iversen & Westerberg 2021:1). However, due to poor governance and coordination of policies, executing these goals is challenging. The absence of ethical behaviour in government departments results in the food initiatives not working. The mismanagement of natural resources is another challenge (Atukunda et al. 2021:1). Years of economic advancement in numerous rural communities across Southern Africa are being undone by weather extremes – sometimes over years, in the form of deteriorating water shortages and occasionally in the short term, in the form of powerful storms. Today, millions of families are stuck in a cycle of poverty that they cannot escape (World Food Programme (WFP) 2021:1). In addition, the increased deforestation has had a significant impact on climate change. National food policies also conflict with global policies, negatively affecting South Africa's chances of achieving food security targets (Atukunda et al. 2021:1). Moreover, there are also conflicting agricultural practices. Population growth has significantly increased, resulting in more food needed to feed people in South Africa. Lastly, the 2019 coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic further worsened the abovementioned challenges (Atukunda et al. 2021:1) and slowed South Africa's progress in achieving food security. It also negatively impacted economic development (Atukunda et al. 2021:1). As part of the study, the challenges in implementing SDG Two that may have caused food insecurity in South Africa are discussed below.

There is a food insecurity in South Africa. Food insecurity is defined by the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) (2008:2) as “a condition in which there is a scarcity of safe and nutritious food essential to live an active and healthy life”. Due to a lack of resources, people considered to be food insecure are unable to consume or grow enough food. Other victims of food insecurity include war casualties, the urban poor, and low-income households, particularly in developing countries (Turner 2022:1). Furthermore, women who live in poor homes are more likely to be food insecure. This is because mothers typically devote a significant portion of their earnings to their children's needs. They must also produce or prepare the food they buy (Turner 2022:1). Braun, Teklu and Webb (1992:2) distinguish between chronic and temporary food insecurity.

There is also an existence of chronic food insecurity in the country. When people cannot satisfy their basic minimum food needs, it is known as chronic food insecurity. This frequently happens as a result of long periods of deprivation, restricted access to financial resources and a lack of private property (Turner 2022:2). Chronic food insecurity arises when there is a long-term food shortage, usually caused by a lack of productivity and monetary income as a result of poverty (FAO 2008:9). Individuals who are unable to achieve the necessary needs to buy or improve yield are constantly affected. Chronic food insecurity fosters vulnerability, defined as a state of constant susceptibility to food shortages (Devereux 2006:3). Chronic is generally defined as a state of food insecurity when a country regularly experiences market or structural failures. Every year, about one billion people are affected by chronic food insecurity (Staatz, Boughton & Donovan 2009:159). Holden (2006:231) suggests that “a daily minimum dietary intake and health and nutrition policy measures are critical policy recommendations for addressing chronic food insecurity issues”. Transitory food insecurity occurs when there is a temporary shortage of food. It is caused by several circumstances, including short-term shocks and a lack of food owing to price variations (FAO 2008:9). Transitory food insecurity occurs when one cannot purchase or produce enough food to sustain a healthy lifestyle due to unexpected changes. Even though it happens in the short term, transitory food insecurity is considered the most severe expression of food insecurity since it creates hunger and famine (Staatz et al. 2009:159). Due to the destabilisation of food consumption trends, ineffective government policies may result in temporary food insecurity (Holden 2006:235).

As chronic food insecurity is founded in one or more instances of transient shocks, chronic and transitory food insecurity are interrelated. The coping mechanisms households use clearly indicate the relationship between these two notions. In order to cope with temporary food insecurity, a family is likely to sell its possessions, sacrificing their ability to obtain food or money, which results in chronic food insecurity. This entire process is referred to as a poverty cycle (Staatz et al. 2009:160).

South Africans are experiencing hunger. Hunger is defined as “the unpleasant or agonising feeling caused by a shortage of food or the involuntary and repetitive absence of food access” (Hoddinott 2012:4). According to the FAO (2010:6), “around 800 million people went to sleep starving every day between 1950 and 2005, and the number of persons at risk of hunger has increased by nearly one billion since 2005”. When food is scarce due to scarcity of resources, it causes discomfort, a sensation created by starvation (Cook & Jeng 2009:9). Hunger significantly impacts the labour market because hungry people are less productive, stifling economic growth. It also causes most ailments and is a health risk for a variety of illnesses all over the globe (Cook & Jeng 2009:9). Hunger, rather than a lack of land, income, or capital, is the most significant threat to human survival (Shephard 2012:199).

There is malnutrition, that refers to problems including general deficiency, which are caused by a lack of nutrients like vitamins and iron [and] people’s calorie and protein intakes are restricted (Folarannia 2013:145). Malnutrition is an illness that is most common in low-income families, especially in developing countries. Children and women are most commonly affected by malnutrition (Cook & Jeng 2009:12). Several studies have found a strong link between food insecurity and malnutrition. This is because it is believed that a sufficient intake of good nutrition does not guarantee a person’s nutritional status, and insufficient daily consumption of proper nutrition often does not indicate a deficiency (Shepard 2012:196). Food insecurity affects food consumption at the household level, which may impact households' dietary variety and dietary patterns (Osei, Banful, Osie & Oluoch 2010:34). Malnutrition negatively impacts human health since it leads to developmental problems and mental health difficulties. Malnutrition is caused by extreme poverty (Bello & Pillay 2019:2). Malnutrition has economic effects, according to a World Development Report (2008:95), because it reduces productivity by around 10% of lifetime wages and reduces GDP by approximately 2 to 3%.

Vulnerability is an issue. Chambers and Conway (1991:5) define vulnerability as “exposure to threats and anxiety and the inability to cope with them. There are two sorts of vulnerability: an outward aspect of threats, disruptions, and pressure whereby a person or family is exposed, and an internal side of defencelessness, which refers to a lack of resources to cope without causing damage”. Identifying the food and nutrition security of homes in South African communities is a primary challenge. Undernutrition and vulnerability all play an important role in a household’s emotional stress and ability to function (Chambers & Conway 1991:5).

People are stressed. The experience of being overburdened or unable to handle psychological or emotional pressure is referred to as stress. There may be both physical and psychological repercussions to stress (Link 2021:1). According to Hamelin, Habicht and Beaudry (1999:2), “one of the social repercussions of food insecurity is stress”. In the long run, a lack of adequate food generates stress, which diminishes the desire for food and nourishment, culminating in a lack of interest in meals (Hart 2009:376).

The above-stated reasons may be the cause to advance food insecurity, however the impact may vary in country-specific contexts. According to data from the World Bank's official report (2020:1, in Makhubu & Vyas-Doorgapersad 2022: 151), about 55.5 per cent of the South African population (30.3 million people) lives in poverty at the national upper poverty line (ZAR 992), with 13.8 million individuals (25 per cent) experiencing food poverty. Similarly, the international poverty standards assessed poverty of \$1.90 and \$3.20 per person per day (2011 PPP) and was predicted to be 18.9% and 37.6% in 2014/15, respectively, up from 16.6% and 35.9% in 2010/11 (World Bank 2020:1, in Makhubu & Vyas-Doorgapersad 2022: 151). Additionally, in 2021 South Africa's unemployment rate rose to a new record high of 35.3% in the fourth quarter of 2021 from 34.9% in the third quarter due to job losses mainly in manufacturing and construction, [and] the number of unemployed totalled 7.921 million people in the October-December period (Reuters 2022:1, in Vyas-Doorgapersad 2022b: 628).

The literature related to the challenges related to SDG Two in South Africa include chronic food insecurity, poor governance, climate change, the mismanagement of natural resources, population growth, and the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Furthermore, it must be considered that the failure of SDG Two may be the cause of food insecurity which includes hunger, malnutrition, and vulnerability. Based on the information gathered in this study, it can be concluded that South Africa may not be able to reach the goal of zero hunger in 2030. Too many challenges exist, and eight years is not enough to address these challenges and still achieve zero hunger in 2030.

## Conclusion

To improve the standards of food security, various legislative frameworks have been implemented in South Africa. These are the Plant Breeders Rights Act, No. 15 of 1976; Meat Safety Act, No.19 of 1982; Animal Disease Act, No. 35 of 1984; the Agriculture Standards Act, No. 119 of 1990; South Africa Food Security Policy; and the National Integrated Food Security Strategy. Institutional frameworks regulating food security in South Africa include the Department of Trade and Industry, the National Department of Health, the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, the Department of Social Development, and the Department of Education. The South African Government has also implemented various food security interventions that were put in place in South Africa and the benefits and challenges witnessed through them. These interventions include the OPG, CSG, National Student Financial Aid Scheme for food allowance, food distribution programme strategy and the Social Relief of Distress Grant. It was however noted that a lot of the food insecurity issues are a result of the apartheid era. As a result, there is a ripple effect. As much as the new democratic government has created acts and laws meant to assist the previously disadvantaged, much work still needs to be done. A shortage of resources and a culture of corruption stand in the way of South Africa achieving SDG Two by 2030. The COVID-19 pandemic, the Kwa-Zulu Natal flood during 2022, and the Russian-Ukraine war have negatively affected food prices.

The study suggests that holistically, South Africa should adopt the World Food Day Initiative (FAO 2019:1). It needs to focus first on its nine provinces. There should be a focus on poor communities, especially in provinces such as the Eastern Cape, Limpopo, and recently, Kwa-Zulu Natal. The natural disasters in South Africa show how much the country is unprepared for disaster management, leaving areas worst affected by floods and storms in vulnerable positions because of the slow response from the government. South Africa also needs to form stronger partnerships with international food agencies and be willing to be taught how to manage the domestic food crisis (World Food Programme [WFP] 2019:1). Under the World Food Programme (2019), 1.2 million people in Nigeria were provided with food and nutrition aid. This shows that it has been beneficial in addressing the food security crisis. The South African government should also partner with the WFP to assist with the food insecurity crisis faced in poor communities and communities that natural disasters have severely impacted. What South Africa can learn from Nigeria is to accept help from food security initiatives aimed at achieving SDG Two worldwide. South Africa should also adopt a healthy diet campaign in schools, hospitals and the workplace. A month should also be dedicated to observing food-related health issues to curb issues such as being overweight or underweight.

This study sought to determine if food security policies are appropriately implemented. It assessed the current food security interventions and whether they contribute to the success or failure of SDG Two to promote accountability in public service regarding achieving zero hunger in South Africa.

The study found some concerning questions, such as how mismanagement, food wastage, corruption, irresponsibility, and related challenges hamper the implementation of food security interventions and how they can be addressed. The answers to these concerns will form part of future publications.

The study did not include interviews as a data collection method and relied on secondary data to conduct research. In addition, information giving a clear view of the hunger situation in South Africa was not as detailed as would have been ideal. This aspect is considered as a limitation to the study. The interviews with relevant stakeholders, such as Department of Trade and Industry, the National Department of Health, the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, the Department of Social Development and the Department of Education would have added more value to the study. Future studies may incorporate interviews with relevant stakeholders, hence will be an advanced contribution to the fields of public management, and development studies.

## NOTE

This article is based on an unpublished MA minor-dissertation titled Hlongwane, N.H. 2023 - Food security interventions to achieve Sustainable Development Goal Two in South Africa at UJ under the supervision of Prof S Vyas-Doorgapersad. Unpublished Thesis. Johannesburg: University of Johannesburg.

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