



ASSESSING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS 1 AND 2 IN SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

Vyas-Doorgapersad S.

School of Public Management, Governance and
Public Policy; College of Business;
University of Johannesburg, South Africa
Corresponding Email: svyas-doorgapersad@uj.ac.za

Abstract

The article summarizes the reasons and objections raised during the scientific debate about SDGs 1 (no poverty) and 2 (zero hunger). The study's primary goal is to investigate the barriers to SDG implementation in the South African setting. Systematisation of the literary sources and approaches for solving the problem indicates that there are several variables that have a detrimental influence on the fight against hunger and poverty. The relevance of this scientific problem decision is important because it highlights the need for the necessary methods to be made available to realize the objectives of the sustainable development agenda. Investigation of the topic SDGs 1 and 2 in the paper is carried out in the following logical sequence: The study methodologies included qualitative methodology, and a literature review was thought to gather pertinent data, which was then analyzed using conceptual analysis. The desktop study, which examined information in a country-specific context, took three months to complete. The research object is the chosen country, South Africa due to its historical reasons for apartheid, which prevented its black people from receiving better education, development, and training possibilities, as well as high-level work positions. Because of the segregation of the majority population's socioeconomic progress, there was a significant racial component to poverty and hunger. The paper presents the results of an empirical analysis that shows that to minimize poverty and food insecurity, several institutional and legal frameworks have been put in place. The research empirically confirms and theoretically proves that; However, nothing has changed; the majority of South Africans are still facing hunger and living below the poverty line. The research results can be useful for policymakers who may utilize the research findings to implement SDGs 1 and 2 for socioeconomic development.

Keywords: *Food insecurity, hunger, poverty, South Africa, sustainable development goals 1 and 2.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The term 'sustainable development' began to gain popularity in the late 1980s after it first appeared in Our Common Future, often known as The Brundtland Report (International Institute for Sustainable Development [IISD], 2023). The Brundtland report, which was the output of an UN-convened committee established to propose a worldwide agenda for change in the idea and practices of development, highlighted the need to reevaluate our modes of living and governing. Responsible achievement of humanity's objectives and ambitions will need both innovative approaches to solving long-standing issues and coordinated worldwide action, as suggested by Carter (2001:13). As a worldwide call to action to end poverty, protect the environment, and ensure that everyone lives in peace and prosperity by the year 2030, the United Nations Member States accepted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015. The SDGs acknowledge that development must balance economic, social, and environmental sustainability and that decisions made in one area will influence results in other areas. Under the 'Leave No One Behind' commitment, nations have committed to accelerating development to assist those who are initially most behind. Because of this, the SDGs aim to achieve multiple life-altering zeros, such as zero hunger and zero poverty, as emphasized by Adamec, Holzinger and Franz (2015:8). The SDGs are a compelling appeal for the world to change to a more sustainable course. They represent a courageous commitment to complete the work that humans have begun and address some of the most critical issues the world is now experiencing (Prasetyo, 2020:304, in Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2022a:626).

ENHANCING LEARNING THROUGH DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES: A RESEARCH PERSPECTIVE*Abdul Rehman Kha*

Nations that have made deliberate attempts to comprehend sustainable development and are willing to make changes, both domestically and globally, confront the problem of putting sustainable development-oriented policies into effect. Contrary to Agenda 21, which offered a framework for countries to pursue sustainable development, there is no ‘enforcer’ of the accord. To put it another way, although nations may declare that they comprehend sustainable development and that they will modify their policies, nobody really makes these adjustments (Johnson, 1992:9). The article aims to assess how well SDGs 1 and 2 (no poverty and zero hunger) are being implemented. According to the justification, these two objectives may be connected since hunger might emerge from poverty.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is qualitative research and offers desktop analysis of information compiled through secondary sources that are in public domain. Qualitative research, which focuses on understanding a specific aspect of social life, is differentiated by its procedures, which (most of the time) supply words instead of statistical information for assessment, as emphasised by Bricki (2007:1, in Nhlapo, 2020:22). Through an assessment of the literature, information was gathered. A literature review is an overview of the research that has been published on a certain topic (Dudovskiy, 2021:1; Mudavanhu, 2017:190; Soga, 2022:50). While SDGs 1 and 2 as a subject matter have both been thoroughly studied, not many studies have convincingly investigated how their relationship might improve socio-economic development of the country. This is where the literature review conducted in this study helped to justify the need for research undertaken here. The literature research also aided in defining and contextualizing poverty and hunger as issues with numerous meanings and points of view. The data was analyzed using a methodology known as conceptual analysis, which is thought of as a method that views ideas of “relationships, objects, properties, or events” (Furner, 2004:133, in Mutandwa, 2023:36). It entails explicitly defining the definition of a particular term by outlining the circumstances in which a phenomenon or an object is (or may be) classified under the concept in the investigation, as suggested by Furner (2004:133, in Mutandwa, 2023: 36). The research sought to define the terms ‘poverty’ and ‘hunger’ as they relate to SDGs 1 and 2.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study explores the following aspects requiring discussions.

3.1 STATUS QUO OF SDG 1 IN SOUTH AFRICA

The multifaceted concept of poverty essentially refers to a condition of deprivation that hinders someone from achieving a minimal, ‘socially acceptable’ quality of life (Khumalo, 2003; Bhorat, Poswell & Naidoo, 2004, in Madikizela & Ntshaka, 2010:3). According to Townsend (1979:31, in Makhubu, 2020:13), only when the idea of relative deprivation is taken into consideration can poverty be objectively defined and applied consistently. However, Ramnath (2015:7) stated that the ability of a person to satisfy their basic requirements is used as a proxy for wellbeing in the ‘basic needs perspective’ of poverty. As a result, it describes poverty as the absence of resources needed to satisfy fundamental human needs. Townsend (1979:31, in Makhubu, 2020:13) further clarifies that a person, family, or group of people can be considered to be poor if they lack the means to eat according to their dietary needs, engage in activities, or enjoy amenities that are accepted as norms in the society to which they belong.

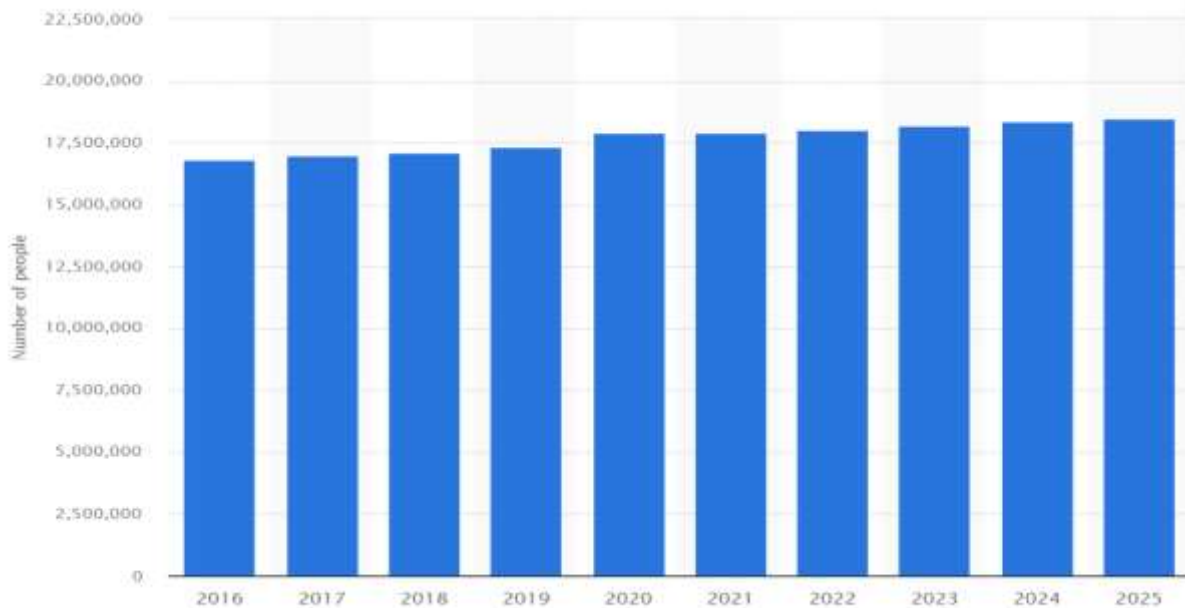
Their finances fall so far short of what the typical person or family can command that they are essentially cut off from common lifestyles, traditions, and pursuits. SDG 1 is linked to ‘no poverty’ goal. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development includes eliminating extreme poverty for all people worldwide by 2030 as one of its key objectives, according to publications from the United Nations (UN, 2023). In the context of South Africa, many black people lived in poverty before 1994 because of apartheid's restrictions on their access to jobs and educational opportunities. White people occupied most well-paying occupations. Despite several regulations and initiatives that were implemented to address the situation in the post-apartheid era, nothing changed. Koma (2013, in Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2022b: 271) cites statistics indicating that in 1995, it was estimated that 32% of people made it on less than \$2 a day; this number rose to 34% in 2000 before dropping to 24% by 2005. 53% of the population was living in poverty in 2000, compared to 52% in 1995,



when the poverty threshold was set at R322 (South African Rand value [R]) per person per month, pricing based on the price of a basic need basket of goods and services (Koma 2013, in Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2022b: 271).

Nearly 30.4 million South Africans lived below the country's official poverty threshold in 2015, according to Statistics South Africa's 2017 report, which confirms that nothing has changed (Brown, 2019) in Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2022b: 271). 2019's fourth quarter poverty data for South Africa were made public at the end of March. With the use of these figures, South Africa's poverty was to be described in general terms. According to the data, 64,2 percent of Black South Africans, 41,3 percent of Colored South Africans, 5,9 percent of Indian/Asian South Africans, and 1% of White South Africans are living in poverty (SABC News, 2019, in Makhubo 2020:30). These statistics demonstrate how the majority of South Africans, who are Black, are disproportionately affected by poverty. These statistics show that 30,4 million of South Africa's 56 million citizens are officially poor. Additionally, Black African women make up 49,2% of this impoverished population, and poverty in the nation is often concentrated in traditionally underprivileged areas (i.e., the old homelands). Finally, and most significantly, it appears that poverty in the nation is continuously increasing (SABC News, 2019, in Makhubo, 2020:30-31). As of 2022, the poverty line in the country was \$1.90 USD per day, with 18.2 million people living in extreme poverty. This meant that around 123,000 more people were classified as poor in 2021 as compared to before. The headcount was also expected to increase in the future years. By 2025, about 18.5 million South Africans will need \$1.90 per day to survive (Statista Research Department, 2023). Table 1 provides data from 2016 to 2025 on the number of South Africans living in extreme poverty.

Table 1: Number of people living in extreme poverty in South Africa from 2016 to 2025



Source: Statista Research Department, 2023

Several matrices are used to quantify poverty. The national poverty line, which is based on the consumer price index (CPI) of a basket of goods that includes both food and non-food items, is occasionally used by local governments. The national poverty line in South Africa was established at 945 South African rands per month in 2022, or around 54.59 USD per month (Statista Research Department, 2023). There is a link between poverty and food insecurity causing hunger. The amount needed to buy the bare minimum number of daily calories required for optimum health is known as the food poverty line (FPL, sometimes known as the 'extreme' poverty level). The FPL serves as the foundation for the lower-bound poverty line (LBPL) and upper-bound poverty

ENHANCING LEARNING THROUGH DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES: A RESEARCH PERSPECTIVE

Abdul Rehman Kha

line (UBPL), which also include a non-food component. People living in the LBPL lack the resources to buy or eat an acceptable amount of food and non-food products, therefore they must forgo food to acquire necessary non-food items. The UBPL, on the other hand, offers a sufficient selection of both food and non-food things for people to buy. According to the Consumer Price Index (CPI), the poverty limits are adjusted yearly. The FPL in South Africa was set at R561 per person, per month in 2019, while the LBPL and UBPL were set at R810 and R1 227, respectively (*South African Institute of Chartered Accountants [SAICA], 2021:1*). Statistics and facts are useful because they assist in defining terms related to poverty. The table below summarizes a few pertinent facts. The data were taken from Statistics South Africa 2019, and the baseline values for the National Development Plan (NDP) targets between 2030 and 2050 were extrapolated from that (in SAICA, 2021:2).

Table 1: Statistics and targets related to poverty

NDP target	2006	Baseline (2011)	2015		2020	2025	2030
			Target	Actual	Target	Target	Target
Percentage of the population living below the food poverty line (FPL)	28,4%	21,4%	16,9%	25,2%	9,1%	3,5%	0%
Percentage of people living below the lower-bound poverty line (LBPL)	51,0%	36,4%	28,7%	40,0%	19,2%	9,6%	0%
Percentage of people living below the upper-bound poverty line (UBPL)	66,6%	53,2%	N/A	55,5%	No target specified		
Percentage of people classed as poor using the South African Multi-Dimensional Poverty Index (SAMPI) headcount	17,9 % (2001)	8,0%	N/A	7,0% (2016)	No target specified		

Source: SAICA, 2021:2.

Business activity is adversely affected by regulatory supervision gaps, violent crime, labor unrest, and unproductive state-owned companies. Extremely high unemployment rates are a result of the labor market's rigidity (The Heritage Foundation, 2020, in Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2021:5). Furthermore, Ngonyama (2013:5, in Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2021:5) also stated his concern that the triple issues of unemployment, poverty, and inequality continue to be South Africa's key development challenges, notwithstanding significant economic growth, which is essential to finance development activities. Therefore, it is not unexpected that [26] years after apartheid was abolished, poverty's regional, racial, and gender distribution still reflects historical inequality.

It is important to note that the worldwide poverty rate significantly increased because of the COVID-19 pandemic, going from 8.3% in 2019 to 9.2% in 2020. The level of extreme poverty increased significantly over this period, the greatest since 1990 and the first increase since 1998. It also caused a three-year delay in the progress toward ending poverty (UN, 2023). The consequences of the COVID-19 epidemic stopped the 25-year pattern of gradually declining poverty. This historic turnaround is being made even more dramatic by the consequences of the Ukraine conflict and skyrocketing inflation. The combined consequences of these crises are anticipated to result in an additional 75 million to 95 million people living in extreme poverty in 2022 compared to pre-pandemic projections (UN, 2023). This is witnessed globally and in South Africa as well. The impact of covid-19 on increased poverty, hunger and unemployment in South Africa will form part of future Both worldwide and in South Africa, this is evident. Future research will include an analysis of the effect of COVID-19 on rising unemployment, hunger, and poverty in South Africa.



3.2 STATUS QUO OF SDG 2 IN SOUTH AFRICA

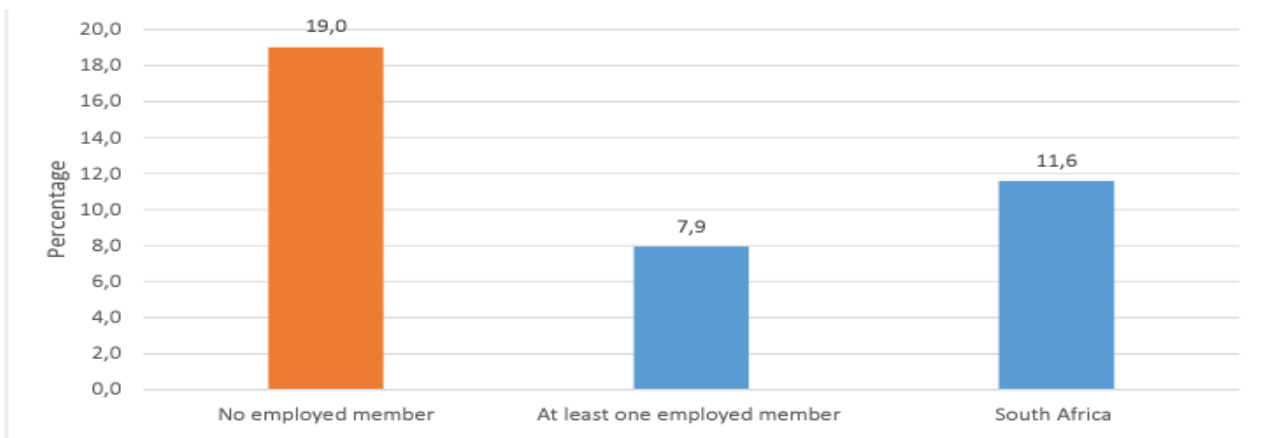
SDG 2 is linked to zero hunger. One of the core basic human requirements is to have enough to eat. Undernourishment, sometimes known as hunger, is the condition of consuming less calories than are needed to maintain a healthy and active lifestyle (Ritchie, Rosado & Roser, 2023:1). There is a direct link between hunger and poverty. Living in dangerous conditions, using unsuitable care methods, and having limited access to drinkable water, healthcare, education, sanitation, and hygiene make people in impoverished neighborhoods and poverty more likely to experience household food insecurity. Hunger is caused by all of these things (Van der Berg, Zuze & Bridgeman, 2020:19, in Hlongwane, 2023:2). Earl (2011:31, in Ndobo, 2013:24) notes that inequalities in access to arable land and the present urbanization trends are responsible for the continued prevalence of hunger in South Africa. Numerous studies have revealed that a significant portion of households in South Africa, both in rural and urban areas, are vulnerable to incidents of food insecurity (Hendricks, 2005; Altman, Hart & Jacobs, 2010; De Cock, 2012; in Ndobo 2013:24).

In 1974, in response to the famines in the Sahel and Darfur, the phrase ‘food security’ came into use (Bjornlund, Bjornlund & van Rooyen, 2022). However, the World Food Summit selected the term that is currently most widely used, and this has evolved into a shared understanding of what constitutes food security (FAO, 1996, in Ndobo, 2013: 13). The definition states that food security is attained at the individual, home, national, regional, and global levels when all people, at all times, have both financial and physical accessibility to adequate, wholesome, and nutritious food to suit their food preferences and dietary requirements for an active and healthy life (FAO, 1996, in Ndobo, 2013:13). For a very long time, many governments, especially underdeveloped countries, in the opinion of Peng and Berry (2019), have struggled with the problem of ensuring food security while preventing food insecurity. To clarify what is meant by food security or what is meant when a country is stated to be food secure, many definitions have been put forth. A country is said to have food security if there is consistently enough food available in acceptable quantities and at reasonable rates (Peng & Berry, 2019). On the other hand, the World Bank (WB, 2022), believes that a nation can still attain food security even if it is unable to produce enough food on its own soil because it has the resources to import food to make up for the production shortage. This might be used to defend nations who spend a lot of money importing food from outside.

Recently, however, the significance of achieving food security has been overemphasized because of the disturbing figures about the 828 million people who report going to bed hungry every night (World Food Programme (WFP), 2022). According to The Borgen Project (2021:1, in Hlongwane, 2023:3), 6.5 million people call South Africa home, and 11% of them are food insecure, and hence are hungry. In terms of households, around 2,1 million (11,6%) families in South Africa reported going hungry in 2021 (Statistics SA, 2023:1).

Emphasizing again that a lack of access to food leads to hunger is essential. Having a working member of the family can help since they can give the funds needed for the home to be able to buy enough food. Insufficient to extremely poor food access was indicated by many homes with no employed members, and hunger levels were greater in these households (Statistics South Africa, 2023:15). Figure 2 demonstrates that, compared to families with an employed person, those without an employed member experienced hunger at a rate that was more than twice (19%). A key factor in maintaining family food security is employment. (Statistics South Africa, 2023:15).

Figure 2: Proportion of households by employment status and experience of hunger



Source: Statistics South Africa, 2023 :15.

According to Landman (2004:906, in Hlongwane, 2023:4-5), despite several years of democracy, South Africa continues to face a dire issue regarding food security. In a report by Statistics South Africa (2009, in Hlongwane, 2023:4-5), With a population of 49 million, South Africa saw annual population increase of 1,7%. Indicators of national food security also show that throughout the preceding eight years, the nation was able to meet the food requirements of this expanding population. However, there are no reliable statistics to show if food insecurity affects every household equally, particularly in rural portions of the nation. The condition of South Africa's food insecurity is confirmed by Demetre, Yul and Zandile (2009:1, in Hlongwane, 2023:5), who also contend that 35% of the population, or 14 million people, are at vulnerability to food insecurity.

Food insecurity is a situation when someone lacks access to the nutritious and safe food, they need to live an active and healthy life (Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO), 2002, in Ndobu, 2013 :18). Additionally, this condition causes worry about running out of food or not having enough money to buy food (Burns, 2004:6, in Ndobu, 2013:18). Victims of conflicts, political instability, and war; households with low incomes, especially those from developing countries; are other groups who face food insecurity. In addition, women are more likely to face food insecurity in low-income households. This is because women frequently allocate a sizable percentage of their money to the needs of their children. They are also in charge of producing or preparing the food they purchase. (FAO, 2011; European Commission, 2009:9, in Ndobu, 2013 :18).

Despite all the reasons mentioned in the article, the phenomenon, and effects of Covid-19, which resulted in job losses, unemployment, and subsequent poverty and hunger, cannot be disregarded. When Covid-19 sparked a range of global food insecurity issues, several African nations—including South Africa—were the victims of this dreadful pandemic that imperiled world economy, as highlighted by the World Bank (2022). Thus, the issues of rising levels of hunger and poverty were also felt in South Africa. The country was forced to enact severe restrictions as the epidemic spread, “including total lockdown, stay-at-home orders, and partial lockdown” (Arndt, Davies, Gabriel, Harris, Makrelov, Robinson, Levy & Simbanegavi, 2020). Despite being deliberate reactions, these actions led to more difficulties in people movement, food security initiatives, the fall in agricultural and farming operations, a loss of markets, revenue, and significant employment reductions (Ragasa & Lambrecht, 2020). The Covid-19 epidemic impacts South Africa's ability to provide food security, and still there is a struggle to meet with the demands of hunger that according to Sukwani, Deshkar & Shaw (2020), threatens both rural and urban livelihoods.

Before the issues of climate change and Covid-19 there was significant progress made in the reduction of hunger. World leaders took the initiative to join the United Nations and civil society in making a commitment to meet the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015 and the first goal was that of ensuring that world hunger and extreme poverty are eradicated (Masemola, Aardt & Coetzee, 2012). These interventions can be considered as lessons that South African can learn and adopt. In America, there has been a food intervention put in place to improve the lives of patients suffering from chronic diseases. The intervention



is known as Feeding America, and it is a national food bank network with 200 members that provides food to more than 60,000 food pantries and meal programs. The network of Feeding America feeds approximately 46 million Americans yearly and reaches all the districts (National Academy of Sciences (NAS), 2021:1). Given that 58 percent of the homes her organization serves have a person with high blood pressure and 33 percent have a member with diabetes, health is a top issue for the organization's customers.

Clients of Feeding America report being in fair or poor health 47% of the time, having no health insurance 29% of the time, and having some debt from medical expenses 55% of the time (NAS, 2021:1). In the context of Africa, the food crisis led the establishment of an initiative called World Vision that put in place an emergency response for countries such as Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Sudan, and South Sudan in efforts to assist in providing food for 3.2 million people, including 1.2 million children. With the help of this project, families will get nutritional support and children and expectant moms will be evaluated for acute malnutrition (Van der Berg et al., 2020). In Africa, there is also a programme that is aimed at helping African countries eradicate hunger and poverty. The name of the programme is the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP), it seeks to reduce hunger and poverty by promoting economic development through development that is agriculture-led. Since its inception, the African governments have made a commitment to allocate 10% of national budgets to developing rural areas and agriculture. They have also committed to achieving agriculture growth rates by 6% per annum. Targets for minimising poverty and hunger, ensuring that there is an increase in productivity and farm income as well as improving the use of natural resources and the sustainability of agriculture production, have been included (Banthum, 2021:1).

To ensure that the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program is advanced, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in partnership with the University of Pretoria Food Security Unit. The objective of this partnership is to provide training for 250 government leaders who occupy senior places, NGOs, research organizations and the private sector in 10 African countries. This partnership has proved to be beneficial because the USAID has assisted in developing the national strategies as well as plans for food security and ensuring that resources for investment in the agriculture sector and allocated accordingly and strategically. South Africa's Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries is also benefiting from this programme because it has helped with building capacity and leadership. The aim of this is so that the department is able to share with other Southern African countries advice on how to improve nutrition, agriculture and livestock practices (USAID, 2021:1).

To effectively develop and implement strategies for reducing poverty and ensuring food security, role players like politicians and bureaucrats must foster an environment that is accessible to the public and stakeholders. To do this, they must encourage the sharing of expert-based information. To ascertain the extent of poverty and hunger in connection to the pertinent statistics, a need analysis is required. It is important to do this statistical analysis based on research to create effective plans for eradicating poverty and guaranteeing food security. Policymakers may receive aid from stakeholders and private investors to implement policies sustainably with enough funding if all political parties agree to support them.

4. CONCLUSION

Food security is essential for guaranteeing sustainability in any nation since it addresses issues like hunger, poverty, and a shortage of food. In this application, sustainability refers to the capacity to sustain throughout time a particular rate or level of required food quality and quantity. However, only people, organizations, and systems through adopted regulations can manage the quality and amount of food. Food and nutrition are inextricably linked in this situation, it should be underlined. This opens the possibility of further research in nutritional governance, which is a function of public policy to attain the essential goal of food security, which is crucial as a public benefit. In this way, obtaining nutrient-dense bodies that can support the South African economy depends on food. There are many ways to guarantee effective food security with good nutritional value, including introducing an inter-sectoral system that handles nutrition, a nationwide nourishment plan or strategy, putting into effect the plan or strategy, inclusion of food in the plan, implementation of a national nutrition policy, budget allocation for the plan, and scheduled nutrition monitoring, are all suggested by Eggersdorfer, Kraemer, Cordaro, Fanzo, Gibney, Kennedy, Labrique, and Steffen (2016).

ENHANCING LEARNING THROUGH DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES: A RESEARCH PERSPECTIVE*Abdul Rehman Kha*

Due to the mechanism's reliance on a political and economic approach, care must be taken to consider the institutional and organizational frameworks in which nutrition stakeholders operate as well as their potential to mobilize resources. This idea—nutrition governance—explains how governance enhances nutrition results in developing nations and how nutritionists, development actors, funders, civic society, and the commercial sector may help public officials uphold their pledges over the long term, suggests the Institute of Development Studies (2022). For South Africa to scale up food sustainability and fulfill Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2, which calls for a zero-hunger agenda in the context of low-income nations, food security must be achieved.

By bringing up the SDGs 1 and 2, which are related to hunger, poverty, and now with added concept of nutritional governance, the study improves the field of public administration and governance. The inquiry will be continued in the future. One limitation of the study is that it used a qualitative desktop analysis. Future research may focus on the status of SDGs 1 and 2 at the local government level. Future studies may include interviews to gather feedback from staff and community members of selected municipalities to better understand the causes and conditions of hunger and poverty and to evaluate the socioeconomic status quo of South African local government.

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ENHANCING LEARNING THROUGH DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES: A RESEARCH PERSPECTIVE

Abdul Rehman Kha

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ENHANCING LEARNING THROUGH DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES: A RESEARCH PERSPECTIVE

Abdul Rehman Kha

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