Food Security in South Africa: A Review of Data and Trends

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Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and health life (FAO, 1996 World Summit)
1. **Who and Where are the food insecure in South Africa?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who?</th>
<th>Where?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population group</td>
<td>Provinces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational status</td>
<td>Districts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age group</td>
<td>Rural/Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>Ex-homelands</td>
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<tr>
<td>Socio-economic status</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household composition</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Family type</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Employment Status</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Own production/not</td>
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</table>

2. **What are current food security trends in South Africa?**
Food Security Indicators

Indicators to measure food security include:

- All people at all times (universality, frequency)
- Access (Physical and economic)
- Sufficiency (adequacy/quantity)
- Safe and nutritious (Quality)
- Meets dietary needs (quality)
- Preference
Food Security Indicators

DHS Indicators- Measure Evaluation (SADHS, 2003; 2008)

• Use nutritional status as proxy indicators for food security
• Assess the anthropometric status of sub-groups of the population

Children: *(Usually more valid for children under five years)*

• Stunting (height-for-age)
• Wasting (Weight-for-height)
• Underweight (Weight-for-age)

(data usually disaggregated by: age (in months); sex; birth order; birth interval; size at birth; residence; race; mother’s age; mother’s education, wealth quintiles)

Women:

• Body Mass Index (BMI)

Also usually disaggregated by background characteristics
Food Security Indicators-3

NATIONAL FOOD CONSUMPTION SURVEY (1999)-Dept. of Health, Stellenbosch University

Indicator: The amount of money spent on food weekly in children aged 1-9 years nationally/by province

Indicator: Mean energy intake (kJ) of children by age and area of residence

Indicator: Hunger risk classification in children aged 1-9 years nationally and by province (Children are classified as: Food secure; at risk of hunger; and Experienced hunger)

Indicator: Hunger Scale Questionnaire: % of affirmative responses in children aged 1-9 years nationally/by province (Do your children ever say they are hungry because there is not enough food in the house?)
Question: Did any child in your HH go hungry during the last 12 months?

Module: Food access and supply and income and expenditure

• Did your household run out of money to buy food during the past year?
• Has it happened five or more days in the past 30 days?
• Did you cut the size of means during the past year because there was not enough food in the house?
• Did you skip any means during the past year because there was not enough food in the house?
• Did you eat a smaller variety of foods during the past year than you would have liked to, because there was not enough food in the house?
• Please specify how many times the household ate the following foods during the past seven days?
### Changes in GHS HH food Security questions/indicator (GHS 2007 & 2010)

Source: Jacobs, P (2012). Household food access in Rural South Africa: Lessons for emerging food security policy: HSRC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>GHS 2007</th>
<th>GHS 2010</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Food Security Status</strong></td>
<td>Hunger scale (adults/children)</td>
<td>Hunger scale (adults/children)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Food access; Variety foods consumed; Coping strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Household livelihood &amp; demography</strong></td>
<td>Farm workers; small-farm HHs; Household size</td>
<td>Farm workers Small-farm HHs Household size</td>
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<td><strong>Living standards expenditure</strong></td>
<td>Total spending (quartiles) Food spending; Social grants</td>
<td>Total spending (quartiles); Social grants</td>
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<td><strong>Agricultural production</strong></td>
<td>Land access; Agricultural outputs</td>
<td>Farm activities; Agricultural outputs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spatial information</strong></td>
<td>Provinces; District council</td>
<td>Provinces; rural categories (formal/ex-homeland)</td>
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</table>
NATIONAL INCOME DYNAMICS SURVEY (NIDS)- SALDRU

Module: Food spending and consumption

Examples of questions:

• What was the total food expenditure of this household in the last 30 days?

• Was [food item..] eaten by this household in the last 30 days?

• What was the value of [..] eaten from own production and/or from own shop stock in the last 30 days?

• Anthropometric measurements (Adults/Children)
  
  BMI; Stunting; Underweight; Wasting; Height; Overweight; Obesity
Recent Trends of HHs experiencing food adequacy by province 2009/2010/2011

Source: Stats SA General Household Surveys

Western Cape
Eastern Cape
Northern Cape
Free State
Kwa Zulu Natal
North West
Gauteng
Mpumalanga
Limpopo
South Africa

Food Adequacy by Province

Percentage of Households

Province

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

2009 2010 2011

Western Cape
Eastern Cape
Northern Cape
Free State
Kwa Zulu Natal
North West
Gauteng
Mpumalanga
Limpopo
South Africa

Source: Stats SA General Household Surveys
More HHs in the Northern Cape Reporting SEVERE food Inadequacy

Source: Stats SA General Household Survey 2011

Percentage of households experiencing food adequacy/inadequacy by province

- **Western Cape**
- **Eastern Cape**
- **Northern Cape**
- **Free State**
- **Kw a Zulu-Natal**
- **North West**
- **Gauteng**
- **Mpumalanga**
- **Limpopo**
- **South Africa**

- **Food Access Severely Inadequate**
- **Food Access Inadequate**
- **Food Access Adequate**

Percentage:
- 0%
- 10%
- 20%
- 30%
- 40%
- 50%
- 60%
- 70%
- 80%
- 90%
- 100%
Adequacy of food consumption by sex

Source: Living Conditions of South Africans 2008/2009 published by Stats SA

Percentage distribution of households by standard of adequacy of their food consumption during the month prior to the month they were surveyed by sex of household head.
Annual Food Expenditure in Proportion to Total Expenditure

Source: Living Conditions of South Africans 2008/2009 published by Stats SA

![Graph showing annual average household consumption expenditure on food and proportion of food expenditure to total expenditure for different population groups: Black African, Coloured, Indian/Asian, White. The graph indicates that Black African households spend a higher percentage of their total expenditure on food compared to other groups.]
Trends in HHS with Children experiencing Hunger (GHS 2002-2010)

Source. M. Aliber
Anthropometric Data

Malnutrition among Children aged 6 months to 5 yrs. (NIDS 2008)
Malnutrition among Children aged 6 months to 5 yrs. (PSLSD 1993)

• % of stunted children under 5 yrs. decreased from 30% to 24% b/w 1993 & 2008

• Similarly, the % of underweight and wasted children from 15% to 9% and 9% to 5% respectively

• Over the same period, Female children are less likely to be classified as malnourished

• No significant change over time in the risk of being overweight and obese in this age group

• The average weight of African children increased by 2.4kg

Source: Ardington et al 2009) health: Analysis o the NIDS Wave 1 Dataset. Discussion paper no. 2. UCT: SALDRU
Conclusions

- There is a plethora of existing data on the dynamics of food consumption/security in SA but of varying quality and relevance.
- There seems to be a lack of consensus on standard indicators to effectively monitor and evaluate the food security situation nationally.
- Little or no data on the intra-household dynamics of food security.
- Dearth in data on the relationships among cultural norms, gender stereotypes and inequality, and food insecurity.
- Limited information/data to answer the question: “Who are the food insecure in SA”? 
Thank you