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**LOCAL GOVERNANCE OF AGRICULTURE AND NUTRITION  
PROGRAMMES FOR ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DIETS IN  
VAALHARTS, SOUTH AFRICA**

Master Thesis  
submitted by

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## 7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study was set out to explore the role that local governance plays for implementing agriculture and nutrition programmes and the effective achievement of sustainable diets. It has identified policies and programmes that are linked to food security, agriculture and nutrition, how they are implemented at local level as perceived by actors and beneficiaries within and of these programmes, and identified challenges and achievements within this process. Sustainable diets are an integrative multidisciplinary concept that incorporates a multitude of aspects on three levels on depth. The concept responds to contemporary problems, such as environmental degradation, unhealthy diets, growing global food demands, agricultural challenges and other cultural lifestyle issues that have a negative impact on the society. As one of the six dimensions policies and programmes are the only one that allow a link to the macro-level and are connected to all three levels. The study at hand reaffirms that the dimension of policies and programmes plays a crucial role in the achievement of sustainable diets. Literature on the topic of sustainable diets so far lacks the practical concept application and measurement possibilities that allow for determining the aspects of a sustainable diet (Johnston et al., 2014).

The particular chosen programmes were the Fetsa Tlala Food Production Initiative, the educational part of the Integrated Nutrition Programme, as well as Soup Kitchens that are governed through the local community. Evidence from other studies such as Koch (2011), UNSCN (2013) or Gildenhuis (2014) indicated a lacking integrated approach as reason for inadequate realisation of policy targets. This could be confirmed by applying the sustainable diets framework by Claasen et al. (2015) and examining the interplay between the policy and local governance dimension with the other dimensions. Furthermore, as stated by Edwards (1999), it could be supported that non-governmental local organisation are more embedded within communities and highly responsive to the immediate needs of the residents when it comes to food security, however, they require the necessary mentorship and funding possibilities for initiation. In this way the government can make use of NGOs to effectively convey its targets and support democratic local governance participation.

Future studies on this topic could concentrate on how cooperation on policy targets between departments can be realised and identify the exact obstacles to date. Also the system of how knowledge from field level is being gathered and incorporated into

national policies needs further suggestive research. The main challenges for emerging and established soup kitchens were to care for funding and attract donors. Very successful examples in this regard could be examined and the findings made available to young soup kitchens in form of a guideline. Students from the North-West University could write a thesis or establish a research project which aims at writing a business plan for a soup kitchen with additional projects that integrate as many facets of the sustainable diets concept as possible. Furthermore, the soup kitchen administrator expressed that help from a professional nutritionist would be gladly welcomed. One research project for nutrition scientists might be to draft a food schedule for soup kitchens that takes into account variety and alternation of dishes, nutritional diversity, financial feasibility and stability, local food structures as well as seasonal changes.

In spite of the current underdevelopment of practical application of the sustainable diets concept, I am certain that there is no better way of representing all aspects of a food and nutrition strategy and allowing a comprehensive analysis in this regard. The research project by Dr. Nicole Claasen will contribute to closing the current gap in literature and this research hopefully plays its respective part. Policies and programmes from local to national and even global level are forming the world as we hope to expect it in the near future, thus they play a key part in integrating sustainable diets within a systems approach with other targets that aim at a sustainable and fairer world.