

CHAPTER 5: QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 5 describes the data-collecting phase for the qualitative approach to the research study and outlines the research setting, developing the measuring instrument, the pilot study, and the focus group and extended household interviews, involvement of field workers, and the emerging themes and sub-themes formulated from the focus group and extended household interviews. The assistance of a community worker from a local NGO was invaluable in contacting the beneficiaries of the IFNP, moving amongst the people in the various areas in Kungwini, and assisting with the interpretation at the focus groups and extended household interviews. The researcher was pleasantly surprised at how much information was forthcoming from the community members in Kungwini. As a close-knit community, they knew exactly who received the IFNP food packages and who did not and were able to distinguish between the IFNP and related poverty programmes prior to and following the IFNP.

The questions for the focus group and extended household interviews were based on the IFNP policy framework. The IFNP sought to develop home, community and school food gardens to meet the daily nutritional needs of impoverished households. The process would then broaden into marketing the surplus garden produce. Key objectives of the IFNP included reducing the number of households that did not have adequate food, and developing employment opportunities through income-generating initiatives.

5.1.1 Research setting

Kungwini is a rural area situated on the border between the Gauteng and Mpumalanga provinces. The area is presently experiencing economic growth, with large-scale development in the business centre of Bronkhorstspuit. However, many impoverished households did not benefit from local economic growth and remain in poverty. The stark contrast between poverty and economic development in Kungwini is measured against South Africa's commitment to the MDG to alleviate poverty through sustainable development and improving income generation.

Poverty in Kungwini can be broadly defined as the decline in household assets and income that are inadequate to meet a family's physical and material needs (World Bank Development Report, 2003:26; Ljubotina and Ljubotina, 2007:1; Olderwage-Theron & Slabbert, 2008:3). The IFNP sought to alleviate poverty in Kungwini by aligning the programme with related poverty programmes. This has however not taken place, as indicated in the focus group and extended household interviews.

5.1.2 Beneficiary profile

The participants for the research study were chosen purposively from the beneficiary list. They were all from impoverished households comprising extended family members living in small crowded houses. Most of the roads in the townships are dirt tracks, apart from the main tarred road leading to the townships of Zithobeni, Rethabiseng, Thembisile, and Kanana, the informal settlement. Electricity, water supply and sewage removal are provided to the formal households, but not to the informal settlement where households share a communal street tap. Many streets do not have communal taps and purchase water from householders in the formal settlement across the street.

The overall impression of poverty in Kungwini is one of neglect and people disempowered to improve their lives. Yet in spite of this, they are able to laugh spontaneously, as was observed during the focus group and extended household interviews and the random visits to various homes in the community. Even among the many people who came out of curiosity and who were not part of the focus group discussions, laughter was spontaneous. Their patience was indescribable, as they waited for hours to provide their contributions to the research. This was one of the touching aspects of the research investigation.

Another important feature was the responses to the questions. There was no anger or emotional outbursts, but clearly thought out responses to the questions posed. It appeared as if participants were resigned to their lot in life. During the focus group and extended household interviews, the researcher observed that a need existed to mobilise the community for socio-economic change, as they were willing to participate in programmes that brought change in their circumstances.

5.1.3 Informal settlement

The Kanana informal settlement is close to Zithobeni, in the municipality of Kungwini. Dirt roads meander between the corrugated iron, wood and mud homes. Water gathers in stagnant puddles in the streets. A visit to one of the homes revealed a thriving vegetable garden. Water was brought by bucket from the street tap to water the garden. The toilet is a drop pit. A further household that the researcher visited in Kanana was the wattle-and-daub home of an informal chicken and goat farmer.

5.2 PHASES OF QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTING

The phases of the qualitative data collecting included the following:

Phase 1: Pre-test the semi-structured interview schedule with a purposively chosen focus group that is not part of the main research investigation.

Phase 2: Pre-test the semi-structured interview schedule with a purposively chosen extended household that is not part of the main research investigation.

Phase 3: Conduct the focus group interviews.

Phase 4: Conduct the extended household interviews.

Phase 5: Analyse and interpret the research data.

5.3 QUALITATIVE DATA

5.3.1 Focus group interviews

The focus group interviews were conducted at the local municipal offices in Kungwini, a safe venue with tight security control. The participants walked to the venue, as they lived in the surrounding areas. The research purpose and process was clearly outlined at each focus group meeting, including their willingness to participate in the research process and their prerogative to withdraw.

The focus group questions included the following:

- How were you assisted to improve your household food needs?
- How were you assisted to establish food gardens?
- How were you assisted with skills development?

- How were you assisted to access child or pension grants?
- How were you assisted to form community organisations?

A total of six focus group meetings were held. It was clear at the last two meetings that a saturation point was reached and no new information would be forthcoming. The responses were recorded on tape and by taking notes. The qualitative data was analysed in terms of the literature review (De Vos, 2002d:343).

5.3.2 Extended household interviews

The criteria for the four extended household focus group interviews included unemployed parents and grandparents living with the family and school-going children. The interview schedule for the four extended household interviews was the same as that used in the focus group interviews.

At the first extended household interview, the grandchildren had arrived from school. There were nine children ranging from three babies to learners in different grades. Even the youngest learners, aged seven and eight, understood the purpose of the data-collecting process and solemnly provided their consent to partake in the research investigation.

The second extended household interview included a family consisting of the grandparents, four unmarried adolescents and four grandchildren.

The third extended household interview included a widow and her three children living with extended family members.

The fourth extended household interview included a large family living in the informal settlement of Kanana, which consisted of the father, mother, five young adolescents and three grandchildren.

5.3.3 Data-collecting method

The focus group and extended household interviews enabled the researcher to gather rigorous data through exploration to gain a deeper understanding of the impact of the IFNP (Greef, 2002:319). The qualitative data-collecting procedures were informal, free flowing, but remained focused on the questions and collecting the appropriate data

(Graziano and Raulin (2000:49-52; 123-125). Observations, open-ended narratives and field notes were key data-collecting methods. The observations of the processes were viewed against the activities that took place in a specific time and setting that focused on the impact of the IFNP in Kungwini. The qualitative data enabled the researcher to draw specific conclusions. The six focus group interviews as well as the four extended household interviews examined specific groups in two different settings, compared with each other, and validated with theories from the literature study.

The participants for both the focus group interviews as well as the extended household interviews have similarly experienced a particular phenomenon, namely, the IFNP's efforts to alleviate poverty in Kungwini. This was extensively explored in the interviews. The meanings, themes and general descriptions of the participants' experiences were analysed within the above context (Graziano & Raulin, 2000:131; Fouché, 2002c:273).

Throughout the qualitative data collecting in Kungwini, the researcher was aware of her responsibilities towards the participants and endeavoured to create a tolerant environment that encouraged the sharing of perceptions, points of view, experiences and concerns without bringing pressure upon the participants to reach consensus (Greef, 2002:313). The experiences of the participants regarding the IFNP guided the data-collecting process and focused on the objectives of this research, namely to evaluate the impact of the IFNP and to provide recommendations to policy makers.

The focus groups provided multiple viewpoints regarding the impact of the IFNP to alleviate poverty in Kungwini. The researcher was attentive to observe and to record what the participants did and what they stated. This allowed for the collecting of material that was rich in content and revealed consistent themes. Each participant in the focus group and the extended household interviews signed a consent form, indicating their willingness to participate in the research. The consent form outlined the purpose of the research as well as the confidentiality of information. The tape recorder was used with the participants' permission.

5.4 QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

The researcher gathered the qualitative data with a semi-structured interview schedule. Various themes and sub-themes were identified from the focus group and

extended household interviews. The questions and the appropriate responses were taken directly from the transcripts. The data was interpreted according to De Vos (2002d:340), using Creswell’s data-analysis spiral, whereby the researcher moves in analytical circles, rather than using a fixed linear approach. This includes frequent revisions in data collection to incorporate emerging data, integrating the data into a linear form, undertaking a preliminary data analysis, writing the memos, identifying the emerging themes and searching for alternative explanations.

The data analysis included structuring the accumulated data into categories and searching for general relationships, based on the specific questions (De Vos, 2002d:344). The data was transcribed into short memos that identified key phrases to describe the participants’ experiences regarding the impact of the IFNP. The data analysis assisted the researcher to achieve the objectives of this research, namely to evaluate the impact of the IFNP and provide recommendations to policy makers. The participants’ responses from the six focus group interviews and four extended household interviews are outlined as follows:

5.5 RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS

5.5.1 Question 1: “How were you assisted to improve your household food needs?”

5.5.1.1 Focus group responses

Focus group 1	
Participant 1:	<i>“The food parcels were okay. But we need a better place for growing vegetables. There are not enough vegetables for selling”.</i>
Participant 2:	<i>“The food parcels were good. But I need help for my brother to complete his studies. There is no bursary for him.</i>
Participant 3:	<i>“The food parcels were good. I rear chickens and I need assistance and training.”</i>
Participant 4:	<i>“The food parcels were good. Since my mother passed away, the grant has been cut.”</i>
Participant 5:	<i>“The food parcels helped. We need more.”</i>
Focus group 2	
Participant 1:	<i>“The food parcels were good. I like gardening, planting spinach, carrots, beetroot and morogo (a type of spinach). It all grows well.”</i>
Participant 2:	<i>“I did not know that the food parcels would stop. I thought that I</i>

	<i>would receive it more often.”</i>
Participant 3:	<i>“I received the seed packets only, not the food parcel.”</i>
Participant 4:	<i>“The food parcels were good. I love gardening, but I did not receive any help.”</i>
Participant 5	<i>“The food parcel helped me to budget to make it last.”</i>
Focus group 3	
Participant 1	<i>“The food parcels were good. I have a chicken business. I need a bigger place.”</i>
Participant 2	<i>“The food parcels were not enough. There are 7 people in my family. It was not much help.”</i>
Participant 3	<i>“The food parcels helped. We are 3 adults and 6 children. We need more help.”</i>
Participant 4:	<i>“The food parcels helped. We do not receive any grant or anything. Our children are grown and out of school. Our 2 grandchildren live with us with their mother.”</i>
Participant 5	<i>“The food parcel with the grant was okay.”</i>
Focus group 4	
Participant 1	<i>“I have work recycling paper and scrap iron. I do not earn much. I am the only one working. The food parcels helped my children and grandchildren.”</i>
Participant 2	<i>“I have no work, so the food parcels helped me.”</i> <i>“The food parcels helped at the time. Now I am dependent upon my disability pension.”</i>
Participant 3	<i>“I received the food parcel. It was good for my children.”</i>
Participant 4:	<i>“The food parcels helped. We are 7 adults and 4 grandchildren.”</i>
Participant 5	<i>“The food parcels helped. We are 8 adults and 6 grandchildren.”</i>
Participant 6	<i>“I live with my family. I have 2 children and my 2 sisters each have a child. My mother is the only one working as a domestic. We depend on her pension, as well as the child support grant. The food parcels were very helpful.”</i>
Focus group 5	
Participant 1	<i>“The food parcels were too small for a family of 8.”</i>
Participant 2	<i>“The food parcels helped. But then it stopped.”</i>
Participant 3	<i>“I am a single parent with 5 children. The food parcels helped.”</i>
Participant 4:	<i>“Before the food parcels, I had no income. Once the food parcels stopped, I decided to rear chickens for a living. I am doing well.”</i>
Participant 5	<i>“The food parcels helped. I have a very big family. I receive the old</i>

	<i>age pension and 3 of my grandchildren receive the child support grant. I have 5 other family children, some receive the foster care grant.”</i>
Focus group 6	
Participant 1	<i>“The food package helped my family.”</i>
Participant 2	<i>“The food parcels helped a lot. I sell vegetables from home, which I buy. There are 14 family members in the house. Four children receive the child support grant. This is our only income.”</i>
Participant 3	<i>“The food parcels helped. I have 5 children and 2 receive the child support grant. My husband has no work.”</i>
Participant 4:	<i>“We are 8 people in the family. The food parcels were too small.”</i>
Participant 5	<i>“The food parcels helped. Other items should have been included, like soap and washing powder.”</i>

5.5.1.2 Extended household responses

Extended household 1	
Participant 1	<i>“The food parcels helped my family. I work sometimes, helping as a volunteer to cook food for the poor at the dumping site. My husband works repairing cars, but does not get paid regularly, as the people do not always have money. There are 6 adults and 12 children, including 7 grandchildren and 2 foster children, who are not getting the grant.”</i>
Participant 2	<i>“I was not working at the time. The food parcels helped the family a lot. I did not receive the child support grant at the time, as I did not have an ID.”</i>
Participant 3	<i>“The food parcels helped, as two family children are living with us, as their mother has passed away. They are not receiving the grant, as we need to get their birth certificates.”</i>
Child participant 1	<i>“I remember the food parcels. It helped my family.”</i>
Child participant 2	<i>“The food parcel was not enough. We do not have enough food.”</i>
Extended household 2	
Participant 1	<i>“The food parcels was okay. I work as a domestic, when I can get work. We need more assistance.”</i>
Participant 2	<i>“Although the food parcels were okay, I need a job, even to open my own business.”</i>
Participant 3	<i>“I agree that the food parcels were okay, but I need to work to help my family.”</i>
Child	<i>“I am at school. Sometimes we do not have enough food. Especially</i>

participant 1	<i>school uniforms.”</i>
Child participant 2	<i>“I want the government to help my family with the grants.”</i>
Extended household 3	
Participant 1	<i>“The food parcels were good. My husband and I owned a small supermarket. Since he died, his family took away the business. I am not working.”</i>
Child participant 1	<i>“It was a difficult time for us when my father died. The food parcels helped us.”</i>
Child participant 2	<i>“The food parcels were good. We need more food. And also school uniforms.”</i>
Child participant 3	<i>“I also want a school uniform to go to school. We also need food. When I grow up I want to be a pilot.”</i>
Extended household 4	
Participant 1	<i>“The food parcels were very good, my husband and I do not work.”</i>
Participant 2	<i>“The food parcels were very helpful, especially for the children.”</i>
Child participant 1	<i>“The food parcels were a great help.”</i>
Child participant 2	<i>“I remember the food parcels. I am 8 years old. I want more food to eat.”</i>
Child participant 3	<i>“The food parcels were good. I am 12 years old. I want a school uniform.”</i>
Child participant 4	<i>“The food parcels helped my family. I am 16 years old. I want to work in the mines as an administration manager.”</i>
Child participant 5	<i>“I remember the food parcels. They helped the family. We still need more food to help us.”</i>
Child participant 6	<i>“I remember the food parcels. They helped our family.”</i>
Child participant 7	<i>“Yes, the food parcels were good. They helped.”</i>

5.5.1.3 Main theme from Question 1

The main theme from question 1 is the **appreciation of the food packages** that were distributed and that the **food parcels contributed** to the needs experienced at that specific time.

5.5.1.4 Sub-themes from Question 1

The sub-themes from question 1 is **inadequacy of the food packages** to meet the participants' daily food needs, which is aligned to **unemployment** and the inability to take care of their families. Overall, the participants indicated that the family's daily food needs was inadequate. Financially, they were not able to make ends meet. They could barely support their immediate family members, as well as several extended family members and a number of grandchildren.

Poverty reduction is based on opportunities to enable the poor to attain their full human potential. As it is difficult for the poor to deal with their poverty situation, they should be assisted to overcome their adverse circumstances (Galbraith, 2000:65; Chaskin, 2001:1; Mutandiva & Gadzirayi, 2007:3-6). Kungwini is similar to many poor communities in South Africa, where social justice for the poor is compromised by scarce resources (Hunt, 2007:1-2; Richardson, 2007:2). The poor are deprived of health care, food and safe environments (Ljubotina & Ljubotina, 2007:1; Oldewage-Theron & Slabbert, 2008:3).

The extended households experienced insufficient food for family members and children living under one roof. It was costly to buy food on a daily basis. Employment was scarce, including domestic work. The male family members could not obtain permanent employment. Some had employment in the building trade as casual labourers, which ended on the completion of the specific contract. Casual work was becoming scarce. The children especially, indicated that they were always hungry.

5.5.1.5 Concluding remarks

The recurring themes in the focus groups and extended household interviews included inadequate food provision. Sound management skills were required to achieve the IFNP's objective to ensure an integrated approach to increase household food production (Rahaman & Varis, 2005:15; Boyle,2003:374). In the absence of a collaborative team effort, adequate food for impoverished households was not attained. Consequently, the development of sustainable household food gardens was not achieved.

According to the IFNP policy framework, adequate household nutrition was part of the food packages, especially for households with children, the elderly and the disabled

who may have special food needs, through a food basket for specific household compositions. This was to be the responsibility of the Department of Health. The Department of Agriculture was to assist impoverished households to establish food gardens to supplement their daily food needs. The above objectives of the IFNP were not familiar to the focus group and extended household participants.

The majority of the beneficiaries were only aware of the food packages. The researcher only became aware of the distribution of school uniforms by the local Social Development office during the focus group and extended household interviews. This aspect came up frequently during the interviews, especially from the children during the extended household interviews, who did not receive any school uniforms.

5.5.2 Question 2: “How were you assisted to establish food gardens?”

5.5.2.1 Focus group responses

Focus group 1	
Participant 1	<i>“We need a nice space. The space is too small to grow vegetables to sell.”</i>
Participant 2	<i>“I grow spinach, carrots, beetroots. They grow very well. I did it on my own. I did not receive any help.”</i>
Participant 3	<i>“I received the groceries only. Not any help for gardening.”</i>
Participant 4:	<i>“I do not have the space for a garden.”</i>
Participant 5	<i>“I only received seed packets. I did not receive any food parcels.”</i>
Focus group 2	
Participant 1	<i>“I received both the food parcels and the seed packets.”</i>
Participant 2	<i>“I want assistance to grow vegetables.”</i>
Participant 3	<i>“I want more training with gardening.”</i>
Participant 4:	<i>“We work very hard to grow our own vegetables. Then we sell them. We did not receive any training.”</i>
Participant 5	<i>“I want a bigger place for my chicken business, not for growing vegetables.”</i>
Focus group 3	
Participant 1	<i>“I planted a garden, but I need more training.”</i>
Participant 2	<i>“I need training to grow vegetables and also training to sew clothes.”</i>

Participant 3	<i>“I received a hosepipe. But I need training to start the vegetable garden.”</i>
Participant 4:	<i>“The space is not enough to grow my daily food needs.”</i>
Participant 5	<i>“Nobody came to train me in growing vegetables.”</i>
Focus group 4	
Participant 1	<i>“I need more space to plant seeds and to repair shoes at home.”</i>
Participant 2	<i>“I need the space to expand my sewing business.”</i>
Participant 3	<i>“I need the space to expand my baking business.”</i>
Participant 4:	<i>“I live alone. My children are grown up. I do piece jobs for a living. I would like assistance to plan a repairing business or some other business.”</i>
Participant 5	<i>“I did not receive any help to establish a vegetable garden. No one came to help me.”</i>
Focus group 5	
Participant 1	<i>“I received a hosepipe, a spade, a fork, but no wheelbarrow.”</i>
Participant 2	<i>“I received the food parcels only, but no assistance with the vegetable garden.”</i>
Participant 3	<i>“I received a week’s training with some other people at the clinic, on how to plant the seeds at home in beds.”</i>
Participant 4:	<i>“I could not continue with the vegetable garden, as I ran out of seeds. I did not collect the seeds. Was I supposed to?”</i>
Participant 5	<i>“I received the fork, the hosepipe and the spade, but no seeds. I still have the tools. I did not use them.”</i>
Focus group 6	
Participant 1	<i>“I have a small garden, but no plants growing. There is only hard ground.”</i>
Participant 2	<i>“I used the tools given to me to plant spinach and onions. We ate this very nicely.”</i>
Participant 3	<i>“I did not receive any tools, or any training.”</i>
Participant 4	<i>“I received a spade, a hosepipe and only one training session.”</i>
Participant 5	<i>“I did not receive any training.”</i>

5.5.2.2 Extended household responses

Extended household 1	
Participant 1	<i>“We did not receive any assistance to develop a food garden. Nor did we receive any training.”</i>

Extended household 2	
Participant 1	<i>“No government official came to train us.”</i>
Extended household 3	
Participant 1	<i>“No one came to train us.”</i>
Extended household 4	
Participant 1	<i>“We received the food parcels as well as the training for a vegetable garden. We received a hosepipe and the seeds. The people came to train us at home.”</i>

5.5.2.3 Main theme from Question 2

The main theme from Question 2 is the **fragmented service provision** to assist impoverished households to establish food gardens. Equipment and seeds were handed out but the participants did not receive comprehensive guidance in utilising what was given to them.

5.5.2.4 Sub-theme from Question 2

The sub-themes from Question 2 include **the need for specific training** that the participants wanted that did not have a bearing on growing vegetables for household needs and for selling surplus vegetables.

Overall, several members indicated that they had received training for a week by the Department of Agriculture. The rest indicated that they were not assisted to improve their household food needs through the establishment of food gardens. Fragmented service provisioning was apparent in the distribution of tools and training to establish food gardens. In reply to the question whether a household food garden would assist them to supplement their daily food needs, they agreed that it would. However, the researcher observed from the group’s non-verbal communication that they were not so interested in establishing household gardens. They did not appear to be very enthusiastic about this aspect as they related how difficult it is to ensure food production from poor soil, small backyard spaces and the long wait between planting and harvesting.

The extended household visits provided a better visual response to the question than at the focus groups. Three of the extended households did not receive any agricultural implements to establish food gardens. They were not aware that the IFNP was

aligned with the establishment of home and community food gardens. The researcher observed that their back and front yards consisted mostly of baked earth which would have required much hard work to improve the soil in order to establish a home garden.

The researcher observed several gardens in the neighbourhood (which were not part of the extended household interviews) assisted through the Department of Agriculture. Most were in a state of neglect. In one case, the mother of the household, who was disabled, could not manage the food garden. Her husband, who was elderly, could not assist either. The remains of plants which once sprouted were withered. Weeds had overtaken the speck of ground that previously yielded vegetables. Yet in this particular home, the front fence boasted a splendid yellow rose hedge which was tenderly cared for.

One other house was the exception to all those in a state of neglect. The householder had extended his vegetable garden onto the vacant land. There were rows of vegetables, carefully nurtured, a veritable small scale farmer on a micro scale. This particular household member had received training and continued to implement the knowledge he received. This initiative was not operating on high profit margins, but helped the family with their food needs and brought in some income. Surplus vegetables were sold to neighbours. This was seasonal, when the produce was ready.

A stark difference was evident between the withered, the non-existing and the flourishing gardens. Evidently the flourishing garden required labour intensive effort to bear fruit. This is an important factor in establishing food gardens, where poor communities require ongoing training to maintain the synergy between the gardener, the environment and the produced crops.

5.5.2.5 Concluding remarks

Gardening difficulties included using scarce water, inadequate spaces for gardening and inadequate returns for daily household provision. Many poverty policies and strategies neglect agricultural production and markets (London & Bailie, 2001:569; Robertson *et al.*, 2004:62). The correlation for Kungwini was the need for the IFNP to establish household and community gardens that simultaneously allowed for the

trading of the goods produced. As agriculture remains a key policy strategy to reduce poverty, it is important to address arid soil conditions and pestilence and crop diseases through effective management (Ghai, 2000:128; Steady, 2003:24; O’ Riordan *et al.*, 2008:154). Without the foregoing aspects, subsistence farming leads to food insecurity without skilled assistance (Hansen, 2002:321; Vink & Kirsten, 2001:117).

Appropriate agricultural training was crucial in Kungwini to enable small scale farming initiatives to balance good crop yields and reduce crop diseases. One flourishing garden made a visual difference in Kungwini. There may be other similar initiatives in the rest of the community. This indicates the willingness of some impoverished households to learn and apply new skills. With additional numbers of impoverished households developing productive food gardens, there would be an improvement in the lives of the poor in Kungwini. The above aspects illustrate the need for inter-departmental collaboration to sustain poverty programmes.

5.5.3 Question 3: “How were you assisted with skills development?”

5.5.3.1 Focus group responses

Focus group 1	
Participant 1:	<i>“I am rearing chickens to sell. I need assistance to grow my business.”</i>
Participant 2:	<i>“I need skills training to sew clothes to sell.”</i>
Participant 3:	<i>“We want skills training to get jobs, as we are not working. No one came to train us.”</i>
Participant 4:	<i>“We are struggling, we are poor; we are not educated and we need skills training to get jobs.”</i>
Participant 5:	<i>“I already own a small business, selling chickens. I need to improve my business. Nobody came to help.”</i>
Focus group 2	
Participant 1	<i>“I would like to have a business that hires out tents and chairs. But nobody came to help me.”</i>
Participant 2	<i>“I have a business selling fruit juice. I want to improve my business. Nobody came to help me.”</i>
Participant 3	<i>“I am 45 years and I want a job. I need skills training.”</i>

Participant 4	<i>“I sew clothes for people. I need training to improve my business.”</i>
Participant 5	<i>“I have a disabled arm. My disability is no problem. I have a small business that I need to expand. I need training.”</i>
Focus group 3	
Participant 1	<i>“We work very hard to sell various goods. We need training to make our business better.”</i>
Participant 2	<i>“We do not have vegetables from our gardens to sell. We need skills training to help us to get work to care for our families.”</i>
Participant 3	<i>“We have a small business, selling our vegetables that we grow ourselves. We need skills training to grow better vegetables and to sell them at a profit.”</i>
Participant 4:	<i>“We live in poverty, because we do not have the skills to get work to help our families.”</i>
Participant 5	<i>“We are two ladies who have a successful chicken business which we started after the food parcels stopped. We came here to share with you how well we are doing. We rear day old chicks for resale. From 600 chicks, we end up with 500, which we sell in about 5 to 6 weeks at a profit. We hope our story encourages the group. We too want skills training to expand our business and also to create employment opportunities.”</i>
Focus group 4	
Participant 1	<i>“My partner and I used part of the money she received from the foster care grant and the money my husband gave me to begin a business which is now successful.”</i>
Participant 2	<i>“The government should empower the youth, especially in skills development. The government should assist in any way they can to improve our lives.”</i>
Participant 3	<i>“We need further training for the food gardens we planted.”</i>
Participant 4:	<i>“I need a certificate as I am doing home baking and selling. This will help to improve my skills and also to get better work.”</i>
Focus group 5	
Participant 1	<i>“As youth, we have no jobs. We have completed our schooling, but do not have the skills to go out and get work.”</i>
Participant 2	<i>“I have a business selling food near the school. I need to improve my business to make it better.”</i>
Participant 3	<i>“I have a business repairing shoes at home. I need help to expand my business and also to improve my garden to get better vegetables.”</i>
Participant 4	<i>“I sell food on the street in town to the labourers. I need help to improve my business, like a caravan.”</i>

Focus group 6	
Participant 1	<i>“Skills training will help the youth to get jobs. My brother wants to go further with his studies. He had a space at university, but did not have a bursary to attend.”</i>
Participant 2	<i>“I did not finish my matric. I need help to complete my education and to get some skills to get work. I live with my parents with my children.”</i>
Participant 3	<i>“If I expand my business, we can have a better life.”</i>
Participant 4	<i>“We run a shelter for children. We need training in management and organisation to improve our services.”</i>

5.5.3.2 Extended household responses

Extended household 1	
Participant 1	<i>“No, we were not provided with any skills training.”</i>
Extended household 2	
Participant 2	<i>“No, we did not receive any skills training. I would like to receive training in sewing clothes.”</i>
Extended household 3	
Participant 1	<i>“No, we did not receive any skills training. I would like to develop a business where I could earn more money, as I am working part-time as a domestic.”</i>
Extended household 4	
Participant 1	<i>“I have a business selling chickens and some goats. I need training and more help to expand my business for better income. The young ones in the family especially need more work opportunities.”</i>

5.5.3.3 Main theme from Question 3

The main theme from Question 3 is the participants’ **eagerness to learn new skills** to overcome their poverty situation.

5.5.3.4 Sub-themes from Question 3

The sub-themes from Question 3 are the need of many impoverished households that were engaged in various low paid jobs **to earn a better living**. The participants required **training to improve their businesses** as well as **work opportunities** to enable them to take financial responsibility for their families.

Some home businesses have some success, such as the chicken farming and shoe repair businesses, whilst for others it was a daily struggle to earn a living by selling goods at schools and on the streets. For all, there is the challenge of hard work, with no high returns for their labour.

This specific question encouraged more lively discussions amongst the participants in all the focus groups than the previous questions. The groups became animated and contributed freely towards the discussion. The members were, without exception, eager to acquire new skills for employment or to begin their own business enterprises. Even among the elderly, there were many requests to be trained. This was paramount to them. It appeared to surpass the need for adequate food. The researcher observed from this particular discussion at the groups, that the participants felt that if only they could do something for themselves, they would. This was a poignant moment during the group discussions.

There was unanimous agreement that no skills training was provided for any of the group members and that they did not know of any such training having taken place in Kungwini in relation to the IFNP. The exception was the few cases that received a week's training to establish home food gardens by the Department of Agriculture. The majority of the group members had no knowledge that any skills training was provided by the Departments of Social Development, Education, Health and Agriculture in relation to the IFNP.

Three female group members had come to the group to specifically share their experiences in developing their own business all on their own. Two have established a poultry business and the third a bakery. One male stated that he was assisting a person who owned a shoe repair business to learn the trade. He would establish his own business shortly. A few days later, during a walk-about in Kungwini, the researcher came across the same poultry business and was pleasantly surprised to observe that the business was established along sound business principles. A huge lamp was suspended over the feeding area, surrounded by dozens of day old chicks. Various feeding enclosures held a number of older chickens, some ready for sale in a few days. It was a well-run operation. The women sourced poultry farming methods from magazines and in discussions with local poultry farmers.

The question regarding skills training drew a blank from most of the family members in the extended households. It appeared that the hopelessness of their poverty situation excluded a prospect such as skills training. They all agreed that they would participate in any skills training programme that was presented. They too, were not aware that the various departments provided skills training. The children (girls) indicated that they would like to pursue careers as teachers, social workers and nurses, while the boys indicated that they would pursue careers as pilots and IT technicians.

This question did not elicit any lively discussions in the extended households as it did in the focus groups. The researcher observed the poverty-stricken conditions of the extended households and became aware of the irrelevance towards skills training in this context. It appeared that skills training and their immediate need for adequate food and a better quality of life could not be reconciled. The female head of the household's non-verbal gestures appeared to indicate resignation and hopelessness.

The adolescent and young adult females in the households appeared to be hesitant in their responses, although they viewed skills training as a good idea. In three of the extended households, the young female adolescents and adults carried a young child, while two other family children who may have been their own, or family children, held onto them. It appeared as if skills training would require further effort in addition to taking care of the family daily, with the associated burdens of poverty. The young males on the other hand, expressed interest in skills training and indicated that they would participate in these endeavours.

5.5.3.5 Concluding remarks

Kungwini may be described as two worlds in one, which, according to Adato *et al.*, (2006:226), is viewed as social exclusion with a high human development index in one (formal economy) and low human index in the other (informal economy). The question remains whether the IFNP would have been able to address the socio-economic needs of impoverished households in Kungwini. The response is found in the correlation between the IFNP and the Growth, Employment and Redistribution Programme (GEAR). GEAR failed to address the serious lack of socio-economic

development in poor communities in South Africa (Institute for a Democratic Alternative Annual Report, 2006:6-8).

The two-worlds-in-one description of Kungwini describes the lack of an asset base that would have assisted the poor to gain access to economic markets. The gap between the informal and the formal sectors in Kungwini is so wide that it may be impossible to close the chasm between the two sectors. Even with social assistance, the poor in Kungwini may not be able to overcome socio-economic barriers without considerable assistance from related spheres of government. Radical intervention strategies aligned to human and financial resources are required to assist impoverished households in Kungwini to overcome their adverse circumstances (Chen, 2005:6; Adato *et al.*, 2006:226).

As part of the MDG, developing countries undertook to apportion 0,7% from the national gross savings towards local development (Love *et al.*, 2006:731). This aspect needs to be tracked by government to ascertain whether the 0,7% from economic growth was indeed being filtered down to grassroots level in Kungwini to reduce poverty.

5.5.4 Question 4: “How were you assisted to access child or pension grants?”

5.5.4.1 Focus group responses

Focus group 1	
Participant 1	<i>“Since my mother passed away, the grant has been cut. Her grant helped the family to buy food. We need assistance now.”</i>
Participant 2	<i>“My children are going to school. We have problems getting grants for them.”</i>
Participant 3	<i>“There was no one working at home. The food parcels helped a little. Now my disabled pension helps my family.”</i>
Participant 4	<i>“We do not have work and my mother’s pension helps the family.”</i>
Focus group 2	
Participant 1	<i>“I receive a disability pension. I want to learn to make things to earn an income.”</i>
Participant 2	<i>“I am disabled and receive a grant. I also have a small home business.”</i>
Participant 3	<i>“My child is 18 and still at school. The grant was stopped.”</i>

Participant 4	<i>“I have 2 small children who receive the child support grant. Their papers were right.”</i>
Focus group 3	
Participant 1	<i>“The grants help us.”</i>
Participant 2	<i>“The grants are okay, especially the disabled grant.”</i>
Participant 3	<i>“I look after 6 children. For those under 18, we receive the child support grant.”</i>
Participant 4	<i>“We do not receive any grants for the children who are old and do not qualify.”</i>
Focus group 4	
Participant 1	<i>“I am disabled and in pain. The clinic could not find out what was the problem. I went to the office with a medical certificate, but was not assisted. I will go again and take the medical certificate to see what happens.”</i>
Participant 2	<i>“I have 10 grandchildren, including orphans. I receive the old age pension. Three of the grandchildren and the 5 orphans receive the grants.”</i>
Participant 3	<i>“I have 5 children and one grandchild. I have no work. My mother’s pension and the child support grant is the only income.”</i>
Participant 4	<i>“My grandmother’s pension is the only income, including the 2 child support grant we receive.”</i>
Participant 5	<i>“I am 23 years old with 2 children. My two sisters each have a child. My mother works as a domestic. The child support grant and my mother’s salary are the only family income.”</i>
Focus group 5	
Participant 1	<i>“My grandmother’s pension is the only income, including the child support grant for my 2 children. There is no other income.”</i>
Participant 2	<i>“We are six in our household, including 4 children. My sister and I are employed as domestic workers. The last child receives the child support grant. The others are too big.”</i>
Participant 3	<i>“I receive the child support grant for my two young children. My 15 year old is too big for the grant.”</i>
Participant 4	<i>“I have 3 children and my daughter has 2 children. Two of the children receive the child support grant. The other one, who is over 15 does not.”</i>
Focus group 6	
Participant 1	<i>“We are struggling. Government to please assist us.”</i>

Participant 2	<i>“I am disabled as I suffer from epilepsy. My grant is on and off. Sometimes I get the grant, sometimes I do not get the grant. The two young children get the child support grant.”</i>
Participant 3	<i>“I have 3 children and 2 family children who are orphans. The two orphans do not receive the grants, as they are in their early 20s. I understand this. I went to the office for some help with the orphans, but they could not help me.”</i>
Participant 4:	<i>“I am 22 years old with 2 children and I receive the child support grant. My mother receives the old age pension.”</i>

5.5.4.2 Extended household responses

Extended household 1	
Participant 1	<i>“I take care of 13 children, including 7 of my own, 4 grandchildren and 2 foster children aged 4 and 5. Only my husband works when he can get work. I receive the disability grant. Three of the children receive the child support grant, but not the two foster children, because of their birth certificates. Their mother, who is my niece, is mentally ill and has no ID. We applied a year ago for the ID at Home Affairs. Five years ago we applied for the one foster child’s birth certificate. One came back, but they put in male instead of female. We are still waiting for the 2 birth certificates.”</i>
Extended household 2	
Participant 1	<i>“My child is 5 years old and cannot go to school or receive the child support grant because of the birth certificate. I need help with this.”</i>
Extended household 3	
Participant 1	<i>“My two young children receive the child support grant. My 16 year old does not. I am now a single parent, as my husband passed away. The child support grant is the only regular income.”</i>
Extended household 4	
Participant 1	<i>“I receive the old age grant and the younger ones in the family receive the child support grant. The two older grandchildren do not receive any grants. They are over 15. My wife has a disability and we would like to apply for a disability grant. We need help with this.”</i>

5.5.4.3 Main theme from Question 4

The main theme from Question 4 is the **benefit** of the old age pension and the child support grant to **assist poor households financially**.

5.5.4.4 *Sub-themes from Question 4*

The sub-themes from Question 4 are the **inability of the participants to access** the childcare grant and the disability grant due to lack of appropriate documentation. They do not have information regarding social security processes.

The child support and pension grants take the edge off poverty in most impoverished households. Assisted through the child support and pension grants, families will be strengthened to take care of family members, despite the limitations of poverty (Lund, 2002:177; Fong, 2001:225).

Social assistance ensures that impoverished families are able to bring up their children in adverse circumstances plagued by community instability and drug abuse. (Goldson, 2002:255; Kalil & Ziol-Guest, 2008:500). Children who are neglected, especially those from poor households, may remain deprived for most of their adolescent and adult years. The IFNP's objective to steer poor households in Kungwini to appropriate social security programmes was a positive strategy goal, to address their gross neglect in terms of their emotional and physical needs. (Daniel & Taylor, 2006:426; Goodvin, *et al.*, 2006:591).

The above aspects illustrate the implications of neglect for children living in poverty-stricken conditions, as outlined in the extended household interviews. The IFNP did not, however follow through on the diversion programmes aligned to the food distribution in terms of social security. The children who participated in the extended household interviews indicated that they were always hungry. The concern is that these children may suffer from calcium, iron and zinc deficiencies. Consequently, their physical and mental health may be compromised (Education and Training Unit, South Africa, 2006:10; Food 4 Africa.org, 2006:1).

In most instances, poor household income is spent on taking care of sick family members, especially in households affected by HIV/AIDS. The children therefore do not have adequate nutrition. The additional numbers of unemployed family members lead to severe poverty, evident in Kungwini. The unemployment situation in Kungwini is marked by low and irregular household income, apart from those homes that receive the child support grant and old age pension. The old age pension meets part of the daily food needs in poor homes (Cloete & Wissink, 2005:359).

Both the focus group and extended household interviews indicated the resilience of the poor when faced with adversity, especially some of the women, who undertook low paid work to feed their children and families, whether or not the family was in receipt of the child support grant or the old age pension. They were prepared to receive skills training to improve their circumstances. There was a need for the IFNP to have tapped this source of community strength (Jain, 2002:79; Rieger & Leibfried, 2003:133) to reinforce its objectives in relation to the socio-economic situation in Kungwini and the goals of the MDG.

5.5.4.5 Concluding remarks

The focus group and extended household participants were similar in that the old age pension and the child support grant assisted their families to provide household food and to pay for medical emergencies, lights and water. The social grants enabled many impoverished households to acquire some of the basic food commodities. However, it was apparent that the social grants did not meet all the needs of impoverished households.

As a result, the food that could be bought with grant money was inadequate for large extended families. Some of the participants expressed unhappiness with accessing the disability grants, where applications were unsuccessful. Some disability pensions were terminated, without the individuals being informed. The same applied to the child support grant. The lack of birth certificates and identification documents prevented some participants from accessing the grants. There is clearly a lack of understanding regarding the various grant processes.

5.5.5 Question 5: “How were you assisted to form community organisations?”

5.5.5.1 Focus group responses

Focus group 1	
Participant 1	<i>“We were not told. We will need a big place and also to create jobs.”</i>
Participant 2	<i>“We did not know. With the right training, we can have many businesses.”</i>
Participant 3	<i>“The youth will be assisted.”</i>

Participant 4	<i>“My poultry business would encourage others to do something. It can be done. See even the young people are nodding.”</i>
Focus group 2	
Participant 1	<i>“We will need money, some donation. Then it will work.”</i>
Participant 2	<i>“It is not about establishing community organisations. We need a clinic in extension 2. When it rains, the dirt roads are very bad. The children are always hungry. In my house, only one person works, earning R500.00 a month. We do not receive any grants. We have to pay for electricity, for food and to wash clothes for the children.”</i>
Participant 3	<i>“We also have to pay the children’s school fees, which is too much.”</i>
Participant 4	<i>“The community organisation is an important point.”</i>
Participant 5	<i>“We are from a community organisation and have a shelter at my house. We also have a site. The social workers say that we must have a house built on the site before the children can be in foster care. We are not being helped to do this or to get the finance.”</i>
Focus group 3	
Participant 1	<i>“No one came. We need management training to establish a community organisation.”</i>
Participant 2	<i>“We were not told. We need skills to do so.”</i>
Participant 3	<i>“We were not told about any community organisations. We will need big spaces.”</i>
Participant 4	<i>“We need training, but nobody came to train us.”</i>
Focus group 4	
Participant 1	<i>“We did not know about this. Although we have a small business at home, we can expand into new businesses like sewing, planting and baking.”</i>
Participant 2	<i>“Nobody came to assist us.”</i>
Participant 3	<i>“Nobody came to assist us or told us about this.”</i>
Participant 4:	<i>“We were not told about this.”</i>
Participant 5	<i>“We did not hear about this.”</i>
Focus group 5	
Participant 1	<i>“A community organisation? No I did not know.”</i>
Participant 2	<i>“No.”</i>
Participant 3	<i>“I do not know anything about this.”</i>
Participant 4:	<i>“No one came to us.”</i>

Focus group 6	
Participant 1	<i>“No one told us. No, we did not know.”</i>
Participant 2	<i>“No, I did not know about this.”</i>
Participant 3	<i>“No, we did not know about this. We need a big place. We can also create jobs and employ others and expand businesses.”</i>
Participant 4	<i>“Nobody told us about this. The government needs to provide a big ground for the community.”</i>

5.5.5.2 Extended household response

Extended household 1	
Participant 1	<i>“Nobody came. Yes I can be involved in community projects.”</i>
Extended household 2	
Participant 1	<i>“Nobody told me about this. We can get involved in community projects, even if my wife is disabled.”</i>
Extended household 3	
Participant 1	<i>“No, I did not know about this. I do not think that I can get involved in any community activities. My situation is difficult for me.”</i>
Extended household 4	
Participant 1	<i>“I do not know about this. As I am farming with chickens and goats, I can see that we will need a big place. For me, I need to have a big place to start other businesses, also for a bigger house and office space.”</i>

5.5.5.3 Main theme from Question 5

The main theme from question 5 is that the **community was not informed or assisted** to establish community organisations.

5.5.5.4 Sub-themes from Question 5

The sub-theme from question 5 is the **willingness of the community** to become involved in establishing community organisations. They have specific ideas, however, of what assistance they require to develop community businesses versus the community gardens as proposed by the IFNP.

Two key constraints to addressing poverty effectively in Kungwini include the lack of understanding regarding the nature of the problem and the appropriate measures to address various types of poverty. It was important to distinguish between the chronic

poor who are likely to remain in poverty and the transitory poor, who need assistance to overcome poverty (Aliber 2003:473; McEvan, 2007:1) in order to maximise valuable IFNP resources in terms of establishing community organisations that would mainly create community food gardens to address food insecurity in Kungwini.

Apart from service delivery and resource allocation based on a linear mode, which according to Potter and Subrahmanian (1998:23), proceeds from hasty programme planning to programme implementation, there is a need to gather facts and information regarding the specific targets for which the services are intended before establishing community organisations to assist impoverished households. During the focus group and extended household interviews, it was evident that the above aspects were not pursued prior to establishing the IFNP.

The IFNP did not use specific criteria to identify elderly and female-headed households who represent the diverse categories of the chronic poor. A blanket decision was taken to distribute food packages to random households visited by local politicians, which indicates pressure groups agendas in policy processes and programme implementation.

Because of improper targeting, the IFNP's primary objective to address poverty effectively was compromised. During the food distribution in 2006, the researcher observed a number of individuals in threadbare clothes, milling around the distribution points and waiting in vain for food packages. They were not part of the process. A further observation during the focus group discussions were the elderly, the disabled and those who have a severe lack of skills, who could be classified as the chronically poor. The youth, some elderly members including the disabled and those persons who do not have any skills, could be classified as the transitory poor (Aliber, 2003:473-476). Members from these groups could be appropriately skilled to participate in community organisations.

In order for community organisations to ensure food security to address poverty, it is imperative that crucial issues influencing the poor are addressed through a collaborative effort by various government departments. This includes creating the environment for economic development, upgrading social and health services and ensuring social protection for vulnerable groups (Chaskin, 2001:291; Cronrath *et al.*,

2005:10). The various strengths of the communities in Kungwini should be harnessed to reduce poverty through various community organisations that address a range of issues.

5.5.5.5 Concluding remarks

The participants' non-verbal cues appeared to register a sense of hesitancy regarding food security through the establishment of community organisations to address poverty in Kungwini. The vulnerable circumstances of the poor should be addressed in a sensitive manner to ensure that they are not exposed to further vulnerability (Wacquant, 2007:66; Sacks, 2008:177). It was imperative to have enlisted their co-operation to reduce their vulnerability. Creating a positive environment that ensured a co-ordinated effort to address poverty in Kungwini would have assisted the IFNP to achieve its objectives (May, 1997:5; Kayizzi-Mugerwa, 2003:23; Cloete & Wissink, 2005:191).

Various adverse factors that affect poverty in Kungwini should have been thoroughly assessed before assisting impoverished households to develop community organisations. This includes the health status of the elderly and promoting home-based care for the chronically ill. Community networks empower the poor and include community driven enterprises to improve service delivery, based on grassroots experiences and skills (Boyle, 2003:342; Spira & Wall, 2006:390).

The partnership between government and civil society in Kungwini was crucial to address extreme poverty and hunger. Vulnerable groups have the right to receive assistance to address their need for adequate food and wealth distribution from economic development. These remain crucial issues in establishing community organisations (Gailbraith, 2000:65; Development Gateway, 2006:11).

5.6 SUMMARY

The data for the qualitative approach to the research study was gathered through focus group interviews and extended household interviews. The researcher used the same set of questions in both cases. Data was enriched through observation.

The responses from the focus group and extended household interviews indicated that the IFNP required interactive participation to reduce poverty in Kungwini. A

number of crucial factors adversely affected the IFNP's objective to address poverty effectively in Kungwini. These include the lack of inter-departmental and civil society collaboration and programme sustainability. This aspect aligns with the main theme in Question 5, namely that the community was not informed or assisted to establish community organisations that would take responsibility for the IFNP programme.

Inequalities between urban and rural communities have been clearly identified in Kungwini. A common factor includes the inequality in rural areas, where farming is the primary economic activity. In Kungwini, the primary focus of the IFNP was on agricultural development through household and community food gardens, which would then be expanded to include socio-economic activities.

This aspect aligns with the sub-theme in Question 1, namely the inadequacy of the food packages to meet the participants' daily food needs and the failure to address the adverse socio-economic circumstances in Kungwini

Finding employment however, remains a huge problem for the majority of the poor in Kungwini, who continue to eke out a daily living through menial labour. In order to bridge the wide gap between the poor and the wealthy in terms of human development and the economy, there is a need to fast track socio-economic development, including agricultural initiatives.

The question remains whether agricultural initiatives will address poverty adequately in Kungwini in terms of establishing food and community gardens, as climate change impacts negatively on the environment. This aspect aligns with the sub-theme in Question 2, namely the need for specific training that the participants preferred, rather than the focus on developing household food gardens to provide for their family needs.

Anti-poverty programmes should therefore include a range of related projects to achieve concrete outcomes, based on specific targeting, and effective monitoring and evaluation. A well-planned and executed poverty reduction project will ensure policy success. Most public poverty programmes operate independently and in the process, services to the poor are duplicated. Poverty should be viewed as a multi-dimensional problem requiring integrated multi-sectoral intervention. This was crucial for the IFNP processes in Kungwini. This aspect aligns with the theme in Question 2, namely

fragmented service provisioning that did not assist impoverished households to establish food gardens.

Sound management skills will achieve policy objectives through effective planning, goal setting and a public environment that promotes optimum service standards. This aspect aligns with the theme and sub-themes in Question 4, namely the benefits of various social security grants, which aligns with the inability of the participants to access the grants.

The policy development process includes continuous policy evaluation to determine whether a programme has achieved its stated goals and reached its intended target. Terminating a programme requires an assessment to determine whether the problem was effectively dealt with. By terminating the IFNP, the crucial question remains: At what point did policy makers decide that the needs of impoverished households in Kungwini were met? This aspect aligns with the theme in Question 4, namely that the participants were not able to access social security grants prior to and after the implementation of the IFNP.

Government's commitment to the poor should be translated into effective policy management by those entrusted to bring change to millions of poor in South Africa. The above aspects paint a gloomy picture for Kungwini, which illustrates on the one hand the right motives in establishing the IFNP, and on the other, that the programme was placed on shaky ground without considering low economic growth in South Africa and the difficulties the poor have to access capital funding to establish their own business. The key factor for policy equity and efficiency continues to be collaboration and programme sustainability based on alternative solutions if the current programme is not achieving its objectives. This aspect aligns with the sub-theme in Question 5, namely the willingness of the community to be involved in programmes to alleviate poverty in Kungwini.