



planning, monitoring and evaluation

Department:
Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Report on the Assessment of Government Evaluations

Evaluation Title:	Mid-Term Evaluation of the Siyazondla Homestead Food Gardens Programme
Evaluation Number:	444
Evaluation Completion Date:	15 May 2012
Period of Evaluation:	6 months
Submitted:	13 January 2015 by Robin Richards
Approved:	30 January 2015 by Mike Leslie

Evaluation Details

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Period of Evaluation:	6 months
Known Cost:	R 246 692.00
Known Cost Type:	Referenced
Initiated By:	Gauteng Provincial Government
Initiated By Internal:	No
Undertaken By:	Siyakhana Initiative for Ecological Health and Food Security
Undertaken By Internal:	No

Assessors

Robin Richards	robinr@netactive.co.za
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Assessment Documents

Document Name:	Document Type:	Added By:	Added On:
Siyazondla Food Gardens_Final Eval Report_2013.doc	Evaluation report	Mike Leslie	21 November 2014
1 - SIYAZONDLA Evaluation ToRs 18 05 2012.docx	Terms of Reference (ToR) for the evaluation	Robin Richards	11 December 2014
1 - SIYAZONDLA Siyakhana Proposal for Siyazondla.pdf	The proposal selected to conduct the evaluation	Robin Richards	11 December 2014
5- GDARD Management Response to Siyazondla Eval_2012.docx	Any other relevant documentation pertaining to the evaluation process	Robin Richards	11 December 2014
5 - Letter to GDARD requesting Management Response for Siyazondla Eval_2012.pdf	Any other relevant documentation pertaining to the evaluation process	Robin Richards	11 December 2014
4 - SIYAZONDLA Presentation of draft report by service provider_April 2012.pptx	Any other relevant documentation pertaining to the evaluation process	Robin Richards	11 December 2014
Assessment Report at Moderation.pdf	Assessment Report at Moderation	Mike Leslie	08 January 2015

Quality Assessment Summary

The overarching quality assessment score is 3.34 out of a total of 5 when applying the Quality Assessment Tool (EQAT). The evaluation was part of a Mid-Term Review process to assess the current status of key programmes within the Gauteng Provincial Government that were initiated by the Office of the Premier. The project ToRs stated the objectives were to also assess food gardens' current status and to determine key indicators to assess the success of the gardens. The evaluation was commissioned to assess programme implementation and impact dimensions and how implementation could be improved in the future.

A score of 2.84 was recorded for the planning and design of the evaluation. Although the Terms of Reference provided a contextual backdrop to the evaluation and the service provider felt that the ToR was clear, the TORs contained both implementation and impact components and were vague on which aspects should receive priority in the evaluation. A more clearly defined focus would have been useful because the evaluation had to be implemented in a short period of time making it difficult to cover both implementation and impact components thoroughly. Nevertheless the service provider referred to the evaluation as an impact study and seemed to place greater emphasis on this component.

Although there was no formal external peer review process of the evaluation, inputs from key partners to the programme were provided in the development of the ToR. Other key strengths in this phase were evidence of a review of relevant policy and programme documents as well as appropriate literature for the study. The evaluation also appeared to be adequately resourced in terms of human capacity and the establishment of a Steering Committee to provide inputs into the evaluation and facilitate its successful completion.

With respect to the implementation of the evaluation, the overall score was 3.39. The service provider appeared to be impartial and was able to work independently and without interference from the client. A further strong point was the consistency between the planned method and the methods employed during the evaluation. Another strong point was that despite the time limitations of the evaluation, there were no major extensions to the timeframe and it was undertaken within the agreed budget.

A weakness with implementation was no capacity development of staff members on the client side during the evaluation. However this was not planned for or a requirement in the ToR and the time limitations for the completion of the evaluation were not conducive to staff development. Capacity development of young researchers on the service provider side appeared to be on-the-job rather than formal capacity building.

An overarching score of 3.30 out of five was received for the Report phase of the project. The strengths of the Reporting phase were the Completeness of the Reporting Structure and Recommendations. With respect to the Reporting Structure, the key strengths were the comprehensive acknowledgement of the limitations of the methodology and clearly articulated recommendations and succinct conclusions. The extent to which recommendations are being incorporated into programme policy indicates the appropriateness of recommendations. A score of 3.77 was given for this aspect of the evaluation. Overall, the report was professionally presented with few inconsistencies in the reporting structure. Findings were also clearly articulated. Key weaknesses included no mention of the Intervention Logic or Theory of Change in the Conclusions, despite this having been mentioned as a theme in the beginning of the report addressing the scope of the study. The Conclusions also do not take into account relevant empirical or analytical work from other similar studies. A further weakness was the low number of key informant interviews which limited the scope for analysis of the qualitative data in the findings section of the report (a score of 2.73 for Robustness of findings). There was also no appropriate recognition of the possibility of alternative interpretations of the data in the findings.

An overall score of 3.88 was recorded for Follow-up Use and Learning. The strengths of this phase were the symbolic value of the programme. For example, beneficiaries acknowledged the value of the programme and the importance for beneficiary households. In addition, monitoring of the implementation of the recommendations from the evaluation have been incorporated into the Provincial Programme of Action, thereby raising its profile. The evaluation has also been recognized and referenced in government workshops and policy documents such as the National Symposium on Food Security and in the 2012/2013 Gauteng Food Security Plan. The evaluation has also added conceptual value, for example by highlighting the fact that food security is not just an agricultural problem in a largely urban environment. The final evaluation report is also user-friendly, being written in plain English and following a clear logic. A score of 3.89 for Evaluation Use was recorded in this respect.

Overall this was a competent evaluation which produced a set of valuable findings and recommendations that are being implemented by the lead department within budgetary constraints.

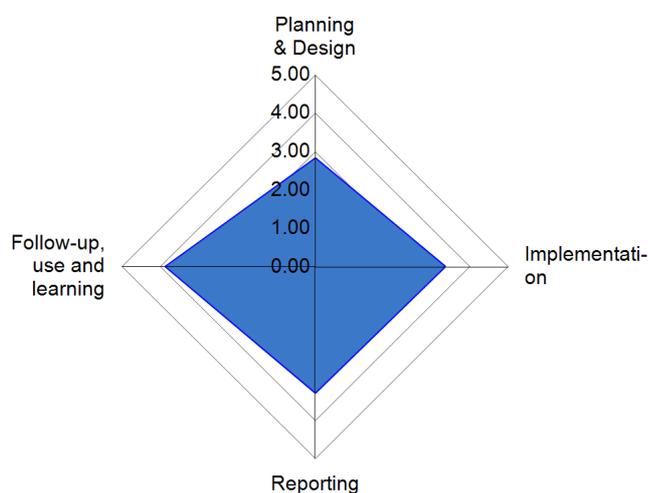
Quality Assessment Scores

Phase of Evaluation	Score
Planning & Design	2.84
Implementation	3.39
Reporting	3.30

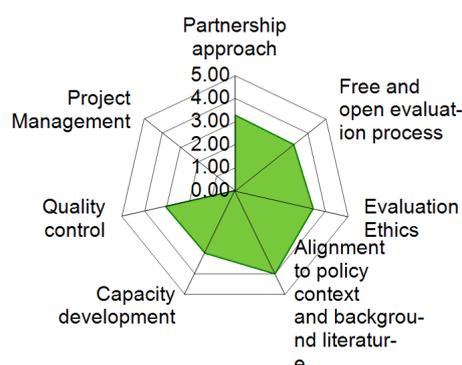
Follow-up, use and learning	3.88
Total	3.34

Overarching Consideration	Score
Partnership approach	3.28
Free and open evaluation process	3.23
Evaluation Ethics	3.44
Alignment to policy context and background literature	4.00
Capacity development	3.00
Quality control	3.07
Project Management	
Total	3.34

Scores: Phases of Evaluation



Scores: Overarching Considerations



Phase of Evaluation	Area of Evaluation	Score
Planning & Design	Quality of the TOR	2.67
Planning & Design	Adequacy of resourcing	3.18
Planning & Design	Alignment to policy context and background literature	3.40
Planning & Design	Appropriateness of the evaluation design and methodology	2.83
Planning & Design	Project management (Planning phase)	2.00
Implementation	Evaluation ethics and independence	3.64
Implementation	Participation and M&E skills development	2.57
Implementation	Methodological integrity	3.52
Implementation	Project management (Implementation phase)	3.00
Reporting	Completeness of the evaluation report	4.00
Reporting	Accessibility of content	3.27
Reporting	Robustness of findings	2.73
Reporting	Strength of conclusions	2.86
Reporting	Suitability of recommendations	3.77

Phase of Evaluation	Area of Evaluation	Score
Reporting	Acknowledgement of ethical considerations	3.08
Reporting	Project management (Reporting phase)	3.00
Follow-up, use and learning	Resource utilisation	3.80
Follow-up, use and learning	Evaluation use	3.89
Total	Total	3.34

Planning & Design

Quality of the TOR

Standard:	The evaluation was guided by a well-structured and complete TOR or a well-structured and complete internal evaluation proposal (e.g. Background, Purpose, Evaluation Questions, Design & Methodology, Deliverables & Timeframes, Resource requirements, Intended Audience & Utilisation, etc).
Comment and Analysis:	The ToR provided a contextual background to the evaluation as well as the objectives of the project and scope of the work. Time frames of the project as well as the technical requirements to complete the project were also specified. To assist bidders, the ToR could have highlighted the of Theory of Change guiding the programme, because the programme had already been in operation for several years in addition, to further assist prospective bidders, knowledge of household food gardening and urban agriculture could also have been mentioned in the ToR as an advantage to companies bidding for the evaluation.
Rating:	3: The evaluation was guided by a well-structured and complete TOR or internal evaluation proposal of an adequate standard
Standard:	The purpose of the evaluation stated in the TOR (or an internal evaluation proposal) was clear and e
Comment and Analysis:	Although the Service provider indicated that the ToR were clear, the ToR should have stated more clearly whether this was a process or an impact evaluation. The Scope of the evaluation specified in the TOR highlighted a number of areas that the evaluation should explore. These did suggest that both impact and process factors were important. However exploring both aspects of the programme has time and cost implications for the service providers. It would therefore have assisted bidders for the project to have been more explicit about which aspect service providers should focus on in their proposals, given the short time frames for the implementation of the evaluation (less than one month).
Rating:	3: 3
Standard:	The approach and type of evaluation was suited to the purpose and scope of the evaluation TOR (or an internal evaluation proposal)
Comment and Analysis:	The ToR did not specify whether this was an impact evaluation or an implementation evaluation. However, the scope of the evaluation suggested that this was a hybrid, comprising elements of both implementation and impact evaluations. Given the resource and time limitations it would have benefitted the evaluation if the ToR had defined the scope of the evaluation more clearly.
Rating:	2: The approach and type of the evaluation requested in the TOR was not appropriate given the purpose and scope of the evaluation
Standard:	The TOR (or an internal evaluation proposal) identified the intended users of the evaluation and their information needs
Comment and Analysis:	The ToR mentioned that the intended users of the evaluation was the Gauteng Provincial Government and the Gauteng Department of Agricultural and Rural Development.
Rating:	3: The TOR (or an internal evaluation proposal) identified the intended users of the evaluation and their information needs

Standard:	The evaluation questions in the TOR (or an internal evaluation proposal) were clearly stated and ap
Comment and Analysis:	Although the evaluation questions in the ToR were listed, there was some ambiguity with these questions under the section "Scope of the Work". For example the last bullet "the extent to which government-initiated household food gardens are sustainable and the factors contributing to their sustainability" would suggest that the process factors (the way the programme is implemented) should also be an important area for the evaluation to focus on. However in the next section of the ToR that lists the activities of the evaluation, this aspect is referred to in a more general way and in the context of interviewing provincial officials and beneficiaries to obtain their perceptions on the "successes and challenges experienced".
Rating:	2: 2

Standard:	Key stakeholders were involved in the scoping of the TOR and choosing the purpose of the evaluation
Comment and Analysis:	There was some degree of stakeholder involvement in the scoping of the ToR. ToRs were developed by the Provincial Government -Premier's Office and the respondent from the Premier's office indicated that comments/inputs were solicited from GDARD. However according to a key informant from GDARD, there were no inputs from GDARD.
Rating:	3: Key stakeholders were involved in the scoping of the TOR and choosing the purpose of the evaluation

Adequacy of resourcing

Standard:	The evaluation was adequately resourced in terms of time and budget allocated
Comment and Analysis:	The service provider indicated in their proposal that the period of assessment suggested in the ToR was not conducive to a comprehensive assessment. Because the ToR suggested that the activities of the assignment would include implementation and impact dimensions, the one month time period allocated to the project did not seem sufficient. The Premier's Office also noted that the originally planned time-frame for the project had to be extended slightly.
Rating:	2: The evaluation was resourced with tight timeframes and budget which were challenging from the outset

Standard:	The evaluation was adequately resourced in terms of original budget
Comment and Analysis:	The researchers note in their report on findings that the budget for the study did restrict what they were able to achieve in terms of data collection. Beneficiary interviews had to be undertaken telephonically instead of face-to-face to save costs. However, the respondent from the Premier's Office felt that the resources were adequate.
Rating:	3: 3

Standard:	The team conducting the evaluation was adequately resourced in terms of staffing and skills sets
Comment and Analysis:	The evaluation was adequately resourced in terms of staffing and skill-sets. Team members comprised experts in public health; food security; community development/engagement and urban planning and food systems. The Premier's Office felt that this was a high-quality evaluation and that the team demonstrated the necessary expertise in evaluations as well as sector-expertise in food security/agriculture/nutrition and economic analysis to be able to undertake the work. In addition, the Siyakhana Initiative has undertaken studies/evaluations in this field before and is well networked within different sphere's of government that facilitated the successful completion of the evaluation.
Rating:	5: The staffing and skills sets required for the evaluation were ideal for the evaluation purpose, sector and incorporated high quality international expertise

Standard:	Where appropriate, the evaluation planned to incorporate an element of capacity building of partners
Comment and Analysis:	The service provider indicated that because capacity building was not mentioned as an objective in the project ToR and given the time limitations of the project, no training component was incorporated in the planning of the evaluation.
Rating:	2: 2

Alignment to policy context and background literature

Standard:	There was evidence that a review of the relevant policy and programme environments had been conducted
Comment and Analysis:	There was evidence that a review of the policy context and programme environment had been undertaken and used in the planning of the research. The evaluation strategy included a conceptual phase comprising a review of literature and this preceded interviews with various stakeholders. The broader policy framework of food security and urban agriculture, globally and in the Gauteng Region, and relating this to the Green Economy was covered in this phase.
Rating:	4: 4

Standard:	There was evidence of a review of appropriate literature having been conducted and used in planning
Comment and Analysis:	A perusal of a powerpoint presentation to the client by the service provider indicated evidence that a literature review had preceded the collection of raw data (from stakeholder interviews, site visits and sifting through programme records).
Rating:	3: 3

Appropriateness of the evaluation design and methodology

Standard:	There was explicit reference to the intervention logic or the theory of change of the evaluand in the planning of the evaluation
Comment and Analysis:	There was no explicit mention of an Intervention Logic or Theory of Change in the service provider's proposal and in the planning of the evaluation. The project ToR also did not include these two aspects.
Rating:	2: There was implied or indirect reference to the intervention logic or the theory of change in the TOR or the Inception Report

Standard:	Key stakeholders were consulted on the design and methodology of the evaluation
Comment and Analysis:	There were limited inputs from the Gauteng Provincial Government on the design of the methodology after a proposal was submitted. A Steering Committee reviewed the design and methodology of the evaluation and this was signed off by the Office of the Premier.
Rating:	3: 3

Standard:	The planned methodology was appropriate to the questions being asked
Comment and Analysis:	<p>The planned methodology was appropriate because, each component of the methodology was tied to specific questions underpinning the reasons for the evaluation. For example in the report, the researcher's elaborate that a documentary review was undertaken to answer a number of questions relating to the conceptual, administrative and impact components of the programme. Site visits and interviews with beneficiaries were planned to determine the impact of the programme and interviews with programme managers were undertaken to determine how the programme was implemented. The researchers included a number of dimensions of the programme in order to evaluate the programme comprehensively and address the ToR's and these were linked to the above-described methodology. The dimensions were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -How the project was conceptualised and the intervention logic -The criteria and processes for targeting and recruiting beneficiaries and how beneficiaries were tracked (for Monitoring and Evaluating (M & E) purposes)? -Components of the typical intervention and what training beneficiaries received? -The impact of the intervention on beneficiaries <p>However the service provider indicated that the methodology could have been improved through the use of electronic data capturing forms which may have enhanced the quality of captured data and, additional interviews could have been conducted with technical staff on the programme.</p>
Rating:	4: The planned methodology was well suited to the questions being asked and considered the data available

Standard:	The sampling planned was appropriate and adequate given the focus and purpose of evaluation
Comment and Analysis:	<p>The sampling of beneficiaries was adequate based on a combination of approaches to match the circumstances. Sampling comprised a convenience component, utilising existing limited contact details of beneficiaries; sampling based on probability proportional to size (based on the proportion of the total sample represented by each ward) and subsequent random selection from within this sample. Because this was an impact evaluation beneficiaries were prioritised over other stakeholders in the sampling design. The sampling of beneficiaries was distributed over the three time periods of the intervention and an 80% confidence level for the accuracy of the sample findings was set. However, common good practice among researchers is to utilise a 95% confidence level. In addition, the 80% level of accuracy of the sample was for a target sample size of 135 respondents (for one of the time periods), whereas the actual sample realised was 81 for the specific period of the intervention. With this size sample, the predictive power of the survey sample was weakened and confidence intervals would have been wider.</p>
Rating:	2: The sampling planned was not entirely appropriate given the focus and purpose of the evaluation

Standard:	There was a planned process for using the findings of the evaluation
Comment and Analysis:	There appeared to be a planned process for using the findings of the evaluation. The project ToRs indicated that the mid-term evaluation was undertaken to improve the implementation of the programme by determining for example the benefits of the programme at the household level. At the conclusion of the evaluation, the report on findings was submitted to GDARD (Gauteng Department of Agriculture) for comment. GDARD responded to the report by indicating areas where strengthening of the programme could be undertaken following the evaluation. However the service provider also indicated that after the report on findings had been submitted, there needed to have been more ongoing engagement facilitated by the department to properly engage with the findings and to determine how recommendations could be implemented over time and depending on circumstances.
Rating:	3: 3

Project management (Planning phase)

Standard:	The inception phase was used to develop a common agreement on how the evaluation would be implemented
Comment and Analysis:	The service provider indicated that the time period for the project implementation was very short and therefore, there was only informal communication with the client to keep them informed of the progress being made with the evaluation. There were very few formal meetings with the client and no inception meeting. The Office of the Premier noted that although there was a project Steering Committee, the service provider was not part of this and attended a meeting of the committee only to present the final report.
Rating:	2: There was an inception phase but it was not utilised appropriately or failed to affirm a common agreement on how the evaluation would be implemented

Implementation

Evaluation ethics and independence

Standard: Where data was gathered in contexts where ethical sensitivity is high, informed consent, assurances of confidentiality and appropriate clearance were achieved; e.g. through an ethics review board, in evaluation involving minors, institutions where access usually requires ethical or bureaucratic clearance

Comment and Analysis: There was no mention of confidentiality being offered to respondents either in the responding proposal or the research methods. A perusal of the research instruments indicates that respondent names or contact details are not collected. The service provider indicated that interviewees were informed of the purpose of the evaluation and consent was obtained prior to conducting the interviews. The service provider noted that telephone interviews were undertaken with project beneficiaries, therefore the interviews were not face-to-face. Nevertheless, interviewers asked respondents to provide verbal consent to take part in the study. Verbal assurances were also given to respondents that their identities would be protected and they would remain anonymous

Rating: 3: There was clear evidence that ethical protocols were observed for some data collection instances including: informed consent agreements; confidentiality; documenting and storing data notes, recordings or transcripts; and ethics review board approvals where appropriate

Standard: Where external, the evaluation team was able to work without significant interference and given access to existing data and information sources

Comment and Analysis: Under the section on limitations of the evaluation, no mention was made by the service provider of interference in the undertaking of the evaluation. The service provider also indicated that the research team was able to undertake the work freely. The Premier's Office noted that a Steering Committee was established to assist in providing objective insights and diverse perspectives on various aspects of the evaluation and that the evaluation team was able to work without any interference and the Office of the Premier provided access to all relevant information on the programme and the evaluation findings were not altered in any way.

Rating: 4: The evaluation team was able to work freely without interference and was given access to all sought data and information sources

Standard: The evaluation team was impartial and there was no evidence of conflict of interest

Comment and Analysis: There was no evidence of a conflict of interest or the lack of impartiality of the evaluation team. The service provider is an independent organisation affiliated to the Wits Health Consortium. The service provider further noted that the GCRO and the Siyakhana Initiative is neither politically nor financially dependent on GDARD or any of its representatives. In addition the research team was instructed to maintain an objective stance during the evaluation.

Rating: 4: 4

Participation and M&E skills development

Standard: Key stakeholders were involved in the evaluation through a formalised mechanism or institutional arrangement

Comment and Analysis: According to the Premier's Office a reporting protocol for progress on the evaluation was less formal in the beginning, but once a Steering Committee had been established when the ToRs were developed in November 2011, reporting became more structured. However, the service provider was not part of the Steering Committee and this aspect may have reduced the effectiveness of the Steering Committee because of a lack of exchange of ideas and information between the client and service provider at such meetings.

Rating: 2: There was evidence that key stakeholders were consulted either indirectly or informally outside of an institutional arrangement

Standard: Where appropriate, an element of capacity building of partners responsible for the evaluand and evaluators was incorporated into the evaluation process

Comment and Analysis: There was no evidence of this in the service providers proposal or the evaluation report. The service provider was of the view that this was not a requirement in the project ToRs and this was not in their understanding of what was required for the project and therefore this was not undertaken.

Rating: : N/A

Methodological integrity

Standard: The methods employed in the process of the evaluation were consistent with those planned

Comment and Analysis: The methods elaborated on in the Expression of Interest were largely consistent with those presented in the final report. This comprised a documentary review; interviews with key stakeholders; site visits to gardens and interviews with beneficiaries.

Rating: 4: 4

Standard: The methods employed in the process of the evaluation were consistent with those planned and implemented adequately

Comment and Analysis: In order to cover the dimensions of the assessment, various data gathering techniques were utilised. These included a document review for conceptual and administrative aspects of the evaluation dealing with how the project was conceptualised; the intervention logic and various processes concerning project implementation. An interview with the Programme Director and a focus group with Assistant Directors, to ascertain the successes and challenges of the programme implementation, was also undertaken. A survey of 380 beneficiaries over three intervention periods of the programme. Site visits were also undertaken based on a small subsample from 3 areas, taking into account a geographic spread and concentrations of food gardens. Based on this triangulation of data gathering techniques, forms of data gathering were appropriate given the scope and time period for the evaluation.

Rating: 4: The methods employed in the process of the evaluation were consistent with those planned and implemented well (in terms of time, coverage, and content)

Standard:	A pilot of basic data collection instrumentation occurred prior to undertaking data collection and it was used to inform the research process
Comment and Analysis:	The purpose of the evaluation was to assess implementation and impact aspects of the programme. Beneficiary survey findings were analysed comprehensively in the report. However given the limited number of interviews with programme officials and no interviews with municipal officials, qualitative findings assessing implementation aspects of the programme were somewhat thin. A useful approach in the analysis was the use of a matrix of composite and sub-indicators comprising service delivery; food security; economic impact and sustainability. Each sub indicator was scored on a scale from 0-2. Based on the score from each indicator, a recommendation was provided where appropriate.
Rating:	3: A pilot of basic data collection instrumentation occurred prior to undertaking data collection and it was used to inform the research process

Standard:	Data collection was not compromised by fieldwork-level problems or unplanned diversions from origina
Comment and Analysis:	The data collection was compromised through various fieldwork level problems. These were: a limited budget which made it difficult for researchers to interview beneficiaries through face-to-face interviews. Telephonic interviews were only feasible in this context. Secondly, there was incomplete and inconsistent documentation and records to assess project performance fully. This was especially the case with the contact details of beneficiaries. This limited the number of beneficiaries who could be contacted. The triangulation of findings from different data sources strengthened data-collection processes . As the researchers indicate for example, site visits to gardens were used to verify beneficiary views collected through telephone interviews. Although there was no baseline household data-collected at the beginning of the programme, before it was implemented, this challenge was mitigated through the use of 2006 data against which to compare household food security with the findings from the present study. The lack of baseline data on beneficiary-target areas and populations made it difficult to accurately track and assess progress that had been made as a result of this intervention on targeted communities.
Rating:	3: 3

Standard:	Data was collected from key stakeholders (e.g. implementers, governance structures, indirectly affected stakeholders) as data sources
Comment and Analysis:	The Executive Summary captures the key elements of the methodology as well as summarising the key Findings and Recommendations.
Rating:	4: Data was collected from the intended key stakeholder groupings in line with the envisioned range and type of stakeholders (approx. 80-89% of intended)

Standard:	The methodology included engaging beneficiaries appropriately as a key source of data and information
Comment and Analysis:	The context of the evaluation is made clear and this is explicitly indicated in the report by the researchers who note that the mid-term evaluation is linked to the eight provincial Outcome Areas of the Gauteng Department of Agriculture (GDARD) with a focus on Outcome 7, creating "Vibrant, equitable, sustainable rural communities contributing towards food security". Therefore the assessment of the impact of the programme in reducing poverty and tackling food security was important. The researchers note that developing small scale agriculture can reduce food insecurity; contribute towards creating more sustainable communities and provide a valuable income stream to households engaging in small scale agriculture.
Rating:	4: The methodology included meaningfully engaging beneficiaries as a primary source of data and information (or if based on secondary data, includes data from beneficiaries and beneficiaries consulted on emerging findings)

Standard:	Key stakeholders were significantly engaged as part of the methodology
Comment and Analysis:	Most key stakeholders were engaged in the evaluation. This included beneficiaries and GDARD/programme officials. However it did not appear that municipal officials were engaged. This stakeholder group was one of the target groups mentioned by the service provider in its Expression of Interest.
Rating:	2: 2

Standard:	The methodology included engaging beneficiaries appropriately as a key source of data and informatio
Comment and Analysis:	The methodology entailed a representative sample survey of programme beneficiaries and therefore beneficiaries appear to have been sufficiently engaged in the evaluation.
Rating:	4: 4

Project management (Implementation phase)

Standard:	The evaluation was conducted without significant shifts to scheduled project milestones and timefram
Comment and Analysis:	The service provider indicated that the evaluation was conducted within the allotted timeframe. However, the Premier's Office noted that time frames had been extended to accommodate further refinements to the draft report, including the addition of a cost-benefit analysis of the programme.
Rating:	3: 3

Standard:	The steering committee, technical working group and service provider worked together adequately to facilitate achievement of the objectives of the evaluation
Comment and Analysis:	The report does not list specific evaluation questions but lists four broad dimensions of the assessment that are linked to the evaluation objectives listed in the preceding section of the report and which form part of the Terms of Reference for the Project. These are framed as broad questions and relate to the reasons for the development of the Siyazondla Programme; process issues tied to the administration of the programme and activities of the programme as well as impact questions focussing on the effect of the programme on beneficiaries.
Rating:	3: The steering committee, technical working group and service provider worked together adequately to facilitate achievement of the objectives of the evaluation

Reporting

Completeness of the evaluation report

Standard:	The scope or focus of the evaluation is apparent in the report
Comment and Analysis:	The scope of the report is clear and indicates that the target population for this evaluation was all of the beneficiaries served by the programme during the periods 2009-2010, 2010-2011, 2011-2012. The report also lists the broad dimensions that the evaluation covered, namely: conceptualisation of the assessment; administration and programme processes; activities of the intervention and programme impact. Although implementation issues are covered in the report, findings from beneficiary interviews assessing programme impact are focussed on more extensively than implementation issues.
Rating:	4: 4

Standard:	A detailed methodology is outlined in the relevant section of the report to the point that a reader
Comment and Analysis:	The authors note that the evaluation methodology was designed to collect data to assess various aspects of the programme. The methodology included qualitative and quantitative components. Qualitative approaches included semi-structured interviews and site visits, while quantitative approaches included analysis of a telephonic survey. The approach outlined in the methodology is also linked specifically to the various dimensions of the assessment, namely to assess administrative and programme activity processes, programme activities and broad impact. Analysis and interpretation approaches for the methodology were not provided. The sampling strategy for beneficiaries was also articulated in the Methodology section together with the sampling Confidence Interval.
Rating:	4: 4

Standard:	Acknowledgement of limitations of all aspects of the methodology and findings are clearly and succinct
Comment and Analysis:	These were clearly articulated as: budgetary limitations affecting the representivity of the sample of beneficiaries; incomplete documents (the intentions of the programme and its targets and records of beneficiary data); no baseline data and the lack of good practise monitoring and evaluation procedures to assist with measuring programme impact.
Rating:	4: 4

Standard:	Key findings are presented in a clear way; they are made distinct from uncertain or speculative find
Comment and Analysis:	Key findings were presented in a logical and clear way according to the Dimensions of the assessment described in the Methodology section. These are: findings on the conceptualisation of the programme; findings on administrative processes and programme implementation and; beneficiary survey findings including the delivery of services to beneficiaries such as training and equipment; economic impacts for households and food security impacts. Speculative findings and unused data is not presented in the report. The Premier's Office was also satisfied with the quality of the report and the way the findings were presented.
Rating:	4: 4

Standard:	Conclusions and recommendations are clear and succinctly articulated
Comment and Analysis:	Conclusions presented crystallise the key findings of the evaluation and overarching recommendations to reconceptualise the programme from top down to bottom up; to invest in continued training and local capacity building and to provide continued support. Key recommendations are succinct and presented concisely in bullet form.
Rating:	5: 5

Accessibility of content

Standard:	The final evaluation report is user-friendly, written in accessible language and adequate for publication (e.g. adequate layout and consistent formatting; complete sentences and no widespread grammatical or typographical errors; consistency of style and writing conventions; levels of formality; references complete and consistent with cited references in reference list and vice versa; etc.)
Comment and Analysis:	With respect to the survey findings of beneficiaries, data analysis seems to have been well executed. With respect to findings from the interviews with the Programme Director and Assistant Directors, it was not possible to determine this because of the limited number of interviews, leading to the aggregation of qualitative findings in the report.
Rating:	3: The final evaluation report is user-friendly, written in accessible language and adequate for sharing (e.g. some spelling, grammar or formatting mistakes but these do not seriously detract from the report)

Standard:	The final evaluation report is user-friendly, written in accessible language and its content follows
Comment and Analysis:	The report is user-friendly and accessible in terms of language. The authors provide a contextual backdrop to the findings, followed by a methodology; objectives of the evaluation and linked to this, the Scope/Dimensions of the evaluation. Findings are then presented and qualitative findings are separated from quantitative findings (beneficiary interviews) Recommendations and Conclusions conclude the report. The report also contains a set of annexures which incorporate the questionnaires and detailed explanatory notes on the cost-benefit analysis of the programme and the model.
Rating:	4: 4

Standard:	Quality of writing and presentation is adequate for publication including: adequate layout and consi
Comment and Analysis:	The quality of the writing and presentation of the report is adequate for publication. Layout and formatting is consistent. There are no widespread grammatical errors and the style of writing is consistent with a scientific report for the social sciences. Although there was a standard practise in evidence for the use of acronyms in the report, for ease of reading, the report could have benefitted from a list of acronyms at the beginning. In some few cases References/Footnotes appeared to be incomplete.
Rating:	3: 3

Standard: Figures, tables and appropriate conventions are used in presentation of data (e.g. use of appropriate statistical language; reporting of p-values where appropriate; not reporting statistically insignificant findings as significant; clarifying disaggregation categories in constructing percentages; not using quantitative language in reporting qualitative data, etc.) and are readily discernible to a reader familiar with data presentation conventions

Comment and Analysis: Given the descriptive nature of the evaluation, measuring the objective impact of the programme, including on food security, evidence presented did seem to be sufficiently and appropriately analysed to support the argument on this level. Findings from some key indicators were analysed comparatively across several time periods of the intervention to assess consistency of delivery and impact. However in some instances it would have been useful to bring more evidence to bear to support/corroborate statements such as for example the claim relating to processes for setting targets such as the distribution of starter packs, being guided by "convenience, political expediency, and overly simplistic calculations, rather than by actual need"

Rating: 3: Figures, tables and appropriate conventions are used in presentation of data and are readily discernible to a reader familiar with data presentation conventions

Standard: Appropriate conventions are used in presentation of data (e.g. use of appropriate statistical language)

Comment and Analysis: The survey data presented was descriptive and therefore the use of appropriate statistical language was not an issue. Programme delivery and impact were assessed and analysed across three intervention periods to track progress with programme implementation and changes in the food security status of beneficiaries. Variables presented in tables were clear and the language used to convey quantitative findings matched the level of detail in the tables.

Rating: 3: 3

Standard: The use of figures and tables is such that it supports communication and comprehension of results; a

Comment and Analysis: The tables supported the overall comprehension of the data. However, in some few instances it was not clear where percentages in the narrative underneath tables came from in the tables.

Rating: 3: 3

Robustness of findings

Standard: Data analysis appears to have been executed to an adequate standard

Comment and Analysis: The report appears to be largely free of analytic flaws. Although a multi-method approach was utilised, collecting data from different sources, the limited number of qualitative interviews and focus groups is one area of weakness. For example, it did not appear as if municipal officials were interviewed to determine how well the programme is integrated with pro-poor initiatives at the municipal level. The low number of in-depth interviews limited the scope of analysis that could be done from the qualitative component.

Rating: 2: Data analysis was executed to an extent but it appears inadequate or significantly lacking for some datasets

Standard: Findings are supported by evidence which is sufficiently and appropriately analysed to support the argument, integrating sources of data

Comment and Analysis: Conclusions do not take into account relevant empirical research or analytic work from related studies and evaluations.

Rating: 2: The evidence gathered has been analysed to support the argument to an extent but this is not entirely sufficient or appropriate, and different data sources may be presented separately rather than integrated

Standard: Findings are supported by available evidence

Comment and Analysis: Findings are supported by available evidence. Evidence from different sources such as site visits and telephone interviews was used in the report to confirm findings including relating to the size of gardens and the types of crops grown. The Premier's Office also felt this to be the case.

Rating: 4: 4

Standard: There is appropriate recognition and exploration of the possibility of alternative interpretations

Comment and Analysis: The Conclusions were somewhat limited but nevertheless address the evaluation purpose and questions. For example the Conclusion returns to the four key indicators of service delivery, food security, cost/benefit, and sustainability and rates the programme at 46% overall. It indicates where the weaknesses lie and where there have been successes and what type of progress still needs to be made to improve the programme's impacts.

Rating: 3: There is appropriate recognition of the possibility of alternative interpretations

Standard: The report appears free of significant methodological and analytic flaws

Comment and Analysis: There was no mention of the Intervention Logic or Theory of Change in the Conclusions, even-though this was mentioned as a question in the researchers' description of the dimensions of the evaluation.

Rating: 2: The report appears to include some minor methodological and analytic flaws, but these are not significant

Standard: There is appropriate recognition of the possibility of alternative interpretations

Comment and Analysis: There was no appropriate recognition of the possibility of alternative interpretations.

Rating: 2: 2

Standard: Limitations of all aspects of the methodology and findings are clearly articulated (e.g. limitations of scope or evaluation design, recommendation for additional research, data collection challenges, etc)

Comment and Analysis: The report was submitted to the Gauteng Department of Agriculture for comment. GDARD responded and commented on the report in a Memorandum to the Gauteng Provincial Government. However, recommendations were not modified following this process. Further, the draft report and recommendation were presented to GDARD and the Office of the Premier at a workshop/meeting. Siyakhanya and its key partners on the project were able to engage with the report and recommendations to discuss these aspects and modify if appropriate.

Rating: 4: Limitations of all aspects of the methodology and findings are clearly articulated and distinguish between different kinds of limitations

Strength of conclusions

Standard:	Conclusions are derived from evidence
Comment and Analysis:	The evaluation report was submitted to the Gauteng Department of Agriculture for comment and GDARD responded through a memorandum and commented on the report. Further, once the draft report was completed, there was an oral presentation at the Premiers Office to which GDARD was invited. According to a key informant from GDARD, the Recommendations were not modified following this process. The Premier's Office also noted that inputs to the report was facilitated through the Steering Committee which included relevant stakeholders. Their inputs were incorporated, based on agreement in the Steering Committee.
Rating:	3: Conclusions are derived from evidence

Standard:	Conclusions are derived from evidence
Comment and Analysis:	This was the case. The researchers assessed the programme against a set of composite and sub-indicators using a matrix and, based their conclusions on the findings from these indicators.
Rating:	4: 4

Standard:	Conclusions address the original evaluation purpose and questions
Comment and Analysis:	The Recommendations were aimed at GDARD, the Implementing Department. Most of the recommendations seem to be practical and feasible. In its Memorandum responding to the report, GDARD indicates that the recommendations relating to institutional linkages are supported. In other areas, although it concurs that budgets for the project should be increased, it notes that budgets are on a 3 year cycle and the project's budget is a major limiting factor because demand for services are greater than the budget allocation.
Rating:	4: Conclusions address the original evaluation purpose and questions well

Standard:	Conclusions are drawn with explicit reference to the intervention logic or theory of change
Comment and Analysis:	Relevant design limitations of the evaluation were not noted in the report.
Rating:	2: Conclusions make implicit or indirect reference to the intervention logic or theory of change

Suitability of recommendations

Standard:	Recommendations are made in consultation with relevant government officials, stakeholders and sectoral experts
Comment and Analysis:	The full report does not document procedures intended to ensure the confidentiality of beneficiaries. The included specimen questionnaires in the report also do not advise respondents that the information they supply will be treated confidentially and that they will remain anonymous.
Rating:	2: Recommendations are made with indirect or partial consultation of government officials, stakeholders and sectoral experts

Standard:	Recommendations are useful- they are relevant, specific, feasible, affordable and acceptable
Comment and Analysis:	The service provider reported that findings were presented to officials from the relevant departments in a workshop which permitted dialogue and interrogation of findings. In addition the Premier's Office indicated that the report had been circulated amongst staff of the lead/implementing department. According to the Office of the Premier, the report the evaluation was presented as a best practice example at a workshop on the Provincial Evaluation Plan, held with GPG officials in 2012. The report was well-received by stakeholders, including the Gauteng Provincial EXCO, the political and administrative heads of the lead department, GDARD, and the programme manager and staff.
Rating:	5: Recommendations are exceptionally well-formulated and insightful - they differentiate between users and are relevant to the policy context, specifically targetted, feasible to implement, affordable and acceptable to key stakeholders

Standard:	Recommendations are relevant to the current policy context
Comment and Analysis:	Recommendations are relevant to the current policy context. For example the researchers recommend that continuity with other development programmes should be formalised as one way of identifying new gardeners for the Siyazondla programme. Recommendations were also informed by examples from international best practice and the service provider indicated that they were also informed by the team's own experience of training and support for household food gardeners. The Premier's Office also felt that the Recommendations were still relevant.
Rating:	4: 4

Acknowledgement of ethical considerations

Standard:	The full report documents procedures intended to ensure confidentiality and to secure informed consent where necessary (in some cases this is not needed - e.g. evaluation synthesis - in which case N/A should be recorded)
Comment and Analysis:	The service provider indicated that the evaluation was completed within the agreed budget.
Rating:	5: The full report documents all ethical procedures applied in text and provides examples of all confidentiality statements and informed consent agreements as appendices, as well as indicates how data will be stored and/or disposed of in the future

Standard:	Peer review of the draft evaluation report occurred prior to finalisation of the evaluation report
Comment and Analysis:	A key informant at GDARD indicated that because of the time limitations to complete the evaluation, there was no formal external peer review process after the submission of the draft evaluation report.
Rating:	2: 2

Standard:	There are no risks to participants or institutions in disseminating the evaluation report on a public website
Comment and Analysis:	According to the service provider, the report is not currently publically available. However the Office of the Premier indicated that the report is currently available.
Rating:	2: There are some risks to either participants or institutions in disseminating a summary version of the evaluation report on a public website

Standard:	There are no risks to participants in disseminating the original report on a public website
Comment and Analysis:	The service provider and a GDARD key informant felt that there were no risks involved to either programme staff or beneficiaries. The Office of the Premier also noted that they had already given the DPME permission to release the report.
Rating:	4: 4

Standard:	There are no unfair risks to institutions in disseminating the original report on a public website
Comment and Analysis:	A GDARD key informant felt that there are no unfair risks to institutions in disseminating the original report. However the official in the Premier's office felt that information in the report may be used or distorted or manipulated for political or malicious gain by government opponents. Nevertheless, the Premier's Office has already granted permission for the report to be made publically available.
Rating:	4: 4

Project management (Reporting phase)

Standard:	A project closure meeting that reflected on the challenges and strengths of the evaluation process o
Comment and Analysis:	The service provider indicated that there had been such a meeting and this was part of the presentation of the findings of the report. Representatives of the DPME and GDARD were present at the meeting. However the scope of this was limited because of budget constraints. It was also noted that there was a need for an ongoing engagement/conversation with GDARD on how to implement the recommendations from the evaluation. The service -provider indicated that this needed to have happened and that they have an "unfunded mandate" to keep engaging with the department to keep track on policy development and implementation.
Rating:	3: 3

Follow-up, use and learning

Resource utilisation

Standard:	The evaluation was completed within the planned timeframes
Comment and Analysis:	The service provider indicated that this was achieved. However the Premier's Office reported that some extension of the evaluation was granted to finalise the report, but this was not a long period.
Rating:	3: 3

Standard:	The evaluation was completed within the planned timeframes and budget
Comment and Analysis:	<p>The service provider felt that this was the case. The study indicated that despite the implementation of the programme, dietary diversity of beneficiaries was still low and the study indicated that the programme needed to develop a broader vision besides just the distribution of food packs in order to ensure sustainability. There was also the realisation that food security is not just an agricultural problem in urban areas.</p> <p>Some of the key recommendations from the study have been included in the 2012/2013 Gauteng Food Security Plan.</p> <p>Furthermore, according to the service provider, the commissioning organisation requested the research team to present the findings during a subsequent DPME workshop as an example of good practice. The findings were subsequently reflected by senior management of GDARD during a national symposium on food security and poverty alleviation convened by the National Development Agency (NDA), indicating that the report's recommendations and findings were being seriously considered and may lead to a revision of agricultural extension paradigms and methodologies.</p> <p>The Premier's Office noted to some extent recommendations been incorporated into the Provincial Programme of Action and the results of which are reported on a monthly and quarterly basis to EXCO.</p>
Rating:	5: The evaluation was completed within the planned timeframes and budget with much more value and insight achieved as a result of exceptional project management

Evaluation use

Standard:	Results of the evaluation have been presented to relevant stakeholders
Comment and Analysis:	<p>The service provider noted that the findings have since been reflected on by senior management of GDARD during a national symposium on food security and poverty alleviation convened by the National Development Agency (NDA), indicating that the report's recommendations and findings were being seriously considered and may lead to a revision of agricultural extension policies.</p> <p>Further it was noted by the Premier's Office that the finding of the evaluation contributed towards the development of Food Banks in Gauteng and GDARD also the linking of successful food gardeners to small farmer support programmes and facilitated water provision issues with municipalities.</p>
Rating:	: N/A

Standard:	A reflective process has been undertaken by the steering committee with the service provider (if no steering committee exists then by the evaluation management team or the involved department officials) to reflect on what could be done to strengthen future evaluations
Comment and Analysis:	The service provider indicated that young researchers/interviewers has been trained during the research process and some have remained with the organisation to assist with similar projects. The service provider indicated that there was no transfer of skills to either GDARD or GDED staff. A key informant from GDARD confirmed that there was no planned capacity building of officials in GDARD, during the evaluation.
Rating:	4: A reflective process has been undertaken by the steering committee with the service provider and reflections on how to strengthen future evaluations have been documented

Standard:	A reflective process has been undertaken by the steering committee (if no steering committee exists)
Comment and Analysis:	A key informant from GDARD indicated that there was no reflective process undertaken to reflect on what could be done to strengthen evaluations in the future after this evaluation. This may have been due to the fact that there has been a change in political leadership and staff resulting from the departure of Nomvula Mokonyane as Premier of Gauteng.
Rating:	2: 2

Standard:	The evaluation study is seen by interviewed stakeholders as having added significant symbolic value
Comment and Analysis:	This seemed to be the case according to the service provider. It was noted that through the evaluation beneficiaries indicated that they had benefitted from the programme and expressed gratitude to GDARD and the Province for the roll-out of the programme. The Premier's Office noted that recommendations received quite a bit of attention by the lead department after the release of the report. Some Recommendations have been incorporated into the Provincial Programme of Action, the results of which are reported to EXCO on a monthly and quarterly basis.
Rating:	5: 5

Standard:	The evaluation study is seen by interviewed stakeholders as having added significant symbolic value to the policy or programme (e.g. raised its profile)
Comment and Analysis:	There was no formal independent peer review process. Key informants indicated that the Gauteng Provincial Government and to a limited extent the (Gauteng City-Region Observatory (GCRO) provided inputs. The Office of the Premier indicated that the evaluation design and methodology were reviewed by the Steering Committee and signed-off by the Office of the Premier.
Rating:	2: The evaluation study is seen by interviewed stakeholders as being of limited symbolic value to the policy or programme

Standard:	The evaluation study is of conceptual value in understanding what has happened and possibly in shaping future policy and practice
Comment and Analysis:	The report indicates that survey instrument was piloted by field researchers with a sub-sample of beneficiaries and modified where necessary following this process.
Rating:	4: The evaluation study is of conceptual value in understanding what has happened and some interviewed stakeholders indicated the likelihood of it constructively shaping policy and practice

Standard:	Development of a draft improvement plan has been started, but not completed, based on the findings a
Comment and Analysis:	An official in GDARD indicated that whilst there has been no development of a draft improvement plan, resulting from the evaluation, some of the recommendations from the evaluation are already being implemented, such as the distribution of more seeds to urban food gardeners. The Premier's Office noted that not all of the recommendations could be implemented because of budgetary constraints.
Rating:	3: 3

Standard:	There is clear evidence of instrumental use - that the recommendations of the evaluation were implem
Comment and Analysis:	<p>The extent to which the recommendations have been implemented is however uncertain. In addition according to the Premier's Office, recommendations have been incorporated in the Provincial Programme of Action and the results of which are reported on a monthly and quarterly basis to EXCO.</p> <p>The Premier's Office noted that some improvements were incorporated into the operations of the Siyazondla programme as well as other programmes. For example, the evaluation foregrounded significant levels of hunger, particularly in the winter period. This was seen as a contributing factor in the development of Food Banks in Gauteng to provide food to those in need as well as other anti-poverty interventions. The provincial government played a key role in this regard. GDARD also pursued further the linking of successful food gardeners to small farmer support programmes and facilitated water provision issues with municipalities.</p>
Rating:	4: 4

References

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Siyakhana Initiative for Ecological Health and Food Security. Siyazondla Homestead Food Gardening Programme. Presentention of Mid-/term Evaluation Report.Florian Kroll and Moira Beery. 24 August 2012

Department: Agriculture and Rural Development, Gauteng Province. Memorandum, GDARD Responses and Comments: Mid-Term Evaluation of the Siyazondla Homestead Food Gardens Programme. 16 April 2012

List of Interviewees

Florian Kroll. Wits Syakhana Initiative. Project Evaluation Manager. 9 and 11 December 2014

Lorato Mathews, Deputy Director Food Security, GDARD. 15 December 2014

Felicity Kitchen, Independent Consultant with the Gauteng City-Region Observatory and the Gauteng Provincial Government. 12 December 2014

Annette Greissel, Deputy Director General: Performance Monitoring and Evalution and Gender, Youth and People with Disabilities, Gauteng Planning Commission, Office of the Premier.18 December 2014