The ability of individuals and households to access adequately nutritious food is a fundamental human right, as recognised within the United Nations’ Declaration of Human Rights. The right to food is also recognised as a principal economic and social Security Policy, and Education Policy. The government therefore has an important role to play in establishing and supporting food systems and food policies alike. However, as evident in this study it is clear that South Africa’s current food and nutrition policies are far from reaching this objective.

The National Vision, Policy Space and Policy Alignment

1. Assess the full South African national policy landscape pertaining to the food system in order to understand policy alignment and coherence across and within sectors.
2. Indicate the implications.
3. Provide an alternative way to view the South African food system.
4. Provide a framing for more effective alignment and coherence in food policy in order to ensure adequate food and nutrition security.

Conclusions

• Food insecurity within South Africa is not a short term phenomena, but rather a long-term, chronic threat that is grounded within various economic, political, social and institutional factors.
• The causes and what to do about them remain highly contested.
• Therefore on the part of policy makers, there is a need for a thorough understanding surrounding the dynamic, intricate nature of the system, in order to fully tackle the ‘wicked’ problem of food and nutrition insecurity in South Africa.
• Due to the food system being a convergent point for the many socio-economic and environmental issues facing society today, the development of the transdisciplinary approach within the policy environment is vital to the creation of sustainable and effective policies.
• Together with the failures of understanding and appreciating the rapid transformation of the food system in South Africa, policies have largely failed to address the system’s structural underpinnings.
• The study revealed three key dimensions that are evidently overlooked due to the food system being a convergent point for the many socio-economic and environmental issues facing society today. One of these dimensions, ‘ecological system’, was discussed and how the shape of the system’s ecological framework has led to the complex nature of the interactions between the various components and the environment in which it is found. Environmental Protection, Social Protection, Food Self-Sufficiency, and Poverty Reduction and Control of Illicit Drugs. Upon inspection of the policy matrix and through use of the social–ecological system approach, results clearly demonstrate significant levels of redundancy, contradiction and internal and external sector misalignment. This in turn, has important implications for policy makers.