

South African Non-Governmental Organisations' (NGOs) objectives,  
methodologies, and their impact on development and poverty  
alleviation in South Africa.

Lerato Mahwai, ASRI Research Associate

Contributors: Angelo Fick, ASRI Research Director and Tazzkiyyah Amrah

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## 1. Executive summary

The researcher conducted a qualitative research study to understand South African Non-Governmental Organisations' (NGOs') objectives, methodologies, and the impact that they have on development and poverty alleviation in South Africa. A combination of telephonic in-depth interviews (with 7 NGOs' most senior managers), self-completed questionnaire option (with 1 NGO's most senior manager) and desktop research (with 2 organisations) data collection methods were utilised to collect in-depth information for this study. NGO's that were operating in South Africa were purposively selected, and then their most senior managers were invited to participate in the study. Only 8 respondents participated in this study and 2 NGOs' secondary data was collected, which brought the total sample to 10.

The primary objectives of participating NGOs range from activism and research to providing skills training and education, disaster relief, greening, infrastructure improvements, nutrition, and health, and encouraging vulnerable people to break the cycle of poverty. A combination of welfare and development methods were utilised by all participating NGOs in this study. Although these NGOs engaged in a combination of welfare and development methods, they were more inclined to one method over the other.

Most respondents reported that the issue of impact is subjective and beneficiaries would be better positioned to evaluate the effects NGOs' welfare services had in their lives and communities, and two respondents refrained from specifying this since they did not want to make presumptions. Almost all respondents, nevertheless, believed that their welfare and development efforts helped to reduce poverty in some way.

## 2. Introduction and background

Poverty and inequality are significant challenges in South Africa as approximately 55.5% of the country's population is lives in poverty at the national upper poverty line while 25% are experiencing food poverty (Sulla, 2020). According to Statistics South Africa (2020a), the extreme poverty line is R585, which refers to the money an individual needs per month to afford the minimum required daily energy intake; for the lower-bound poverty line it is R840 and R1 268 for the upper-bound poverty line; these also includes non-food items in households whose food expenditure is equal to the food poverty line (Stats SA, 2020a).

The current economy is also in crisis, as according to the Quarterly Labour Force Survey (Statistics South Africa, 2020) the unemployment rate continues to rise reaching 32,5% in the 4th quarter of 2020. South Africa also experiences low and inequitable levels of learning outcomes despite increasing school enrolment rates and government investment in education (Department of Basic Education, 2019).

Furthermore, nutritional deprivation in South Africa has resulted in stunting for over 1.5 million children under the age of five (UNICEF South Africa, 2020). Since 1999, stunting rates in South Africa have been at 27%, indicating no improvement over the last 20 years (May, Witten, & Lake, 2020). Stuntedness has adverse effects on children's potential to reach their full physical and cognitive growth and development, which in turn affects their potential to exit the poverty cycle (UNICEF South Africa, 2020).

The South African government's lockdown response to the Corona-virus pandemic (Covid-19) has also exacerbated the depth of poverty in South Africa, as more respondents in a survey conducted by Statistics South Africa reported loss of income and experiencing food insecurity during the Covid-19 lockdown compared to the month prior to the lockdown (Stats SA, 2020b). During this period there were also reports of a rise in essential food prices, although price gouging had been declared unlawful under the regulations promulgated by the government's invocation of the Disaster Management Act (Competition Commission, 2020). An investigation of the matter revealed that at the onset of the lockdown, price increases were attributed to wholesale and retail market panic buying behaviour, to "exchange rate movements as well as the actions of various governments such as limiting exports to ensure food security" (Competition Commission, 2020, p. 1). However, the price difference between wholesale and retail have remained higher than before the pandemic, as wholesale prices have returned to normal while retail prices have been slower to respond to cost reductions (Competition Commission, 2020). Moreover, according to the QLFS: Quarter 4 (Statistics South Africa, 2020), since QLFS' inception in 2008 the unemployment rate of 32,5% was the highest ever recorded.

According to research on colonial and apartheid South Africa done by Wilson and Ramphela (1989 cited in Mubangizi, 2009) the political economy of the country and ethnic capitalism were the key causes of poverty in the region for decades. They contended that all poverty alleviation initiatives had to start with a strong understanding of the need for a fundamental power redistribution (Mubangizi, 2009). The Poverty and Inequality Report (cited in

Mubangizi, 2009) emphasized the importance of fostering economic development and the creation of higher-quality job opportunities as vital self-sustaining methods in poverty alleviation. In addition to these self-sustaining methods of poverty alleviation, the importance of skills development and training have been emphasized (Lupton, 2015). Furthermore, according to Golle (2007) taking decisive steps to improve housing, health care, and other services is also necessary to alleviate poverty. While the post-apartheid government has a variety of such initiatives aimed at alleviating poverty in South Africa, however poverty rates remain high (The World Bank Group, 2018).

In addition to government's initiatives, NGOs provide various types of aid in efforts to combat poverty (Golle, 2007). The NGO sector in South Africa play a vital role in the economy, and is amongst the largest NGO sectors in world, as it outweighs the average size of such sectors in other, comparable developing countries (Kumaran, Samuel, & Winston, 2012). This phenomenon's origin can be traced back to the apartheid period in South Africa and was instrumental in the abolition of apartheid (Kumaran, Samuel, & Winston, 2012). Civil society organizations (CSOs) and NGOs received substantial foreign aid as they were needed to oppose the apartheid government and provide services to communities neglected by the apartheid government (Hendrickse, 2008). International aid policies changed after apartheid, leading South African CSOs and NGOs to collaborate with the government to deliver services to those unreached communities (Hendrickse, 2008). Many NGOs have shut down consequent to this reprioritising of international donor funding (Hendrickse, 2008). However, it does not mean that South African NGOs only receive foreign aid, as funding can also be obtained from the government, the citizens, and the private sector (Hendrickse, 2008).

Moyo (2010) identifies 3 types of aid: humanitarian or emergency aid, charity-based aid and systematic aid. Emergency aid refers to aid mobilised and dispensed in response to disasters (Moyo, 2010). According to Lupton (2015) emergency aid such as the distribution of emergency food supply during a pandemic or disaster is an appropriate intervention for starvation but not for chronic hunger. Aid provided by charitable organisations to institutions or individuals on the ground is known as charity-based aid (Moyo, 2010). Charity based aid facilitates poor people's access to various social services (Golle, 2007). Systematic aid refers to aid that is paid directly to governments (Moyo, 2010).

In the ambit of this study the following categories of aid will be examined: emergency relief interventions, which include humanitarian or emergency aid as defined by Moyo (2010). Charity-based aid will be divided into social philanthropy and the social development approach. Social philanthropy here refers to a form of social welfare where private charity or provision of goods and services are directed to people in need (Midgley, 1995; Patel, 2003). Philanthropy is frequently guided by religious values, with the goal of meeting personal and social needs while also promoting the server's growth and development (Patel, 2003). It is characterised by short term solutions for non-crises emergencies such as money for rent, food supplies, etc. (Lupton, 2015).

Midgley (1995) first defined social development as “a process of planned social change designed to promote the well-being of the population as a whole in conjunction with a dynamic process of economic development” (p. 25). This concept is in line with Lupton's (2015) assertion that economic growth is the most successful form of alleviating poverty. However, Midgley (2014) amends his view by suggesting that social development also involves processes of planned social change intended to facilitate the well-being of the entire community within the framework of a complex multifaceted development process. This later definition goes beyond economic development and includes human capital development, social capital development, creating employment, microenterprise and microfinance, asset building, social protection, social planning, and other facets (Midgley, 2014). His latest conceptualisation of social development approach frames this research. According Wah & Lee (2010) the developmental approach to social welfare issues refutes the core neoliberal claim that social services are fundamentally harmful to individuals' growth.

Lupton (2015, p. 1) argues that “charity often hurts the people it was designed to help” and has resulted in the poor becoming poorer. Furthermore, recipients have become dependent on the charity, and are not able to exit the poverty cycle despite receiving charity over an extensive period of time (Lupton, 2011). For example, Cousins, Cousins, Hornby, Kingwill, Royston, & Smit (2005) argued that it has become increasingly clear in South Africa that development alone will not alleviate poverty and inequality, and that enhanced social services and grants will not solve the root cause of the problem: the economy's entrenched structural features. However, according to Golle (2007), NGOs' emergency programs for people in distress, as well as long-term support activities that assist people in rebuilding their lives, finding their place in society as actors, and reclaiming their basic right to a dignified life, are core

components of successful poverty alleviation. NGOs attempt to fulfil their mandate by collaborating with people who are poor or socially excluded, as well as public institutions and local systems, to make it easier for the poor to access various social services (Golle, 2007). NGOs also aim to educate the public, mobilise society, make recommendations, and eliminate poverty (Golle, 2007).

### **3. Purpose of the research and methods chosen.**

The researcher was approached to conduct phase 2 of a 3-phase research study in 6 months by Tazkiyyah Amra, which aimed to understand the objectives, methodologies, and impact that South African NGOs have on development and poverty alleviation in South Africa. Amra wanted to revisit models of charity and development to work towards new modes of uplifting the poor, modes which will allow the poor to not only build resilience in the face of uncertainty, but exit the poverty cycle in the medium and longer terms.

The target population for this research study were the most senior managers in South African NGOs across the country's social spectrum. Fifteen South African NGOs were purposively selected and approached to participate in this study, but only 8 senior managers participated. To achieve data saturation in qualitative research, as Vasileiou Barnett, Thorpe, and Young (2018) suggest that a minimum sample size with no less than 12 participants should be used. Efforts were made to extend the duration of the study, but the desired sample size of at least 12 respondents was not achieved. To get the study's sample size closer to the recommended minimum of 12, it was decided to collect secondary data from 2 NGOs' websites. Given the time constraints, it was more practical to use those 2 NGOs.

This study used a qualitative approach within an interpretivist framework to elicit rich data to understand the objectives, methodologies, and impact of South African NGOs on development and poverty alleviation in the country. Hence, in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted telephonically with 7 most senior officials in the NGO (1 respondent was a former manager) and 1 respondent decided to fill out their responses themselves (self-completed). Furthermore, desktop research was conducted with 2 South African NGOs but this did not reveal the necessary in-depth information that was required for this study, however it shed a light on how these NGOs operate and contribute towards poverty alleviation. Thematic content analysis was used to draw out common themes.

## 4. Findings and discussions

### 4.1. NGOs' background information

The total sample for this study was 10 (Table 1). Most of NGOs surveyed had been operating in South Africa for more than 10 years (n=8), however 6 NGOs operated internationally and 4 nationally. Most NGOs were faith-based (n=7) almost all were of the Muslim denomination.

Table 1: Summary of NGOs' background Information

Respondent/Organization ID no.	No. of years' operating in SA	Secular or Faith Based	If Faith-Based, which faith do you identify with	Geographical presence
Respondent 1	29 years	Secular		International
Respondent 2	10 years	Secular		International
Respondent 3	46 years	Faith-based	Muslim	National
Respondent 4	2 years	Faith-based	Muslim	National
Respondent 5 (Self-completed)	17 years	Faith-based	Muslim	International
Respondent 6	28 years	Faith-based	Muslim and other faith denominations	International
Respondent 7	20 years	Faith-based	Muslim	National
Respondent 8 (Former manager)	46 years	Faith-based	Muslim	National
Organization 1 (Desktop research)	6 years	Secular		International
Organization 2 (Desktop research)	16 years	Faith-based	Muslim	International

Some of the NGOs in this sample, having been active in South Africa for a long time, have played a significant role in social growth, and economic development, while the emergence of newer NGOs suggests that the sector is still growing (Kumaran, Samuel, & Winston, 2012). Furthermore, the international involvement of some NGOs is unsurprising, as NGOs often provide opportunities for people to engage in international and transnational projects (Patel, 2003). Since the majority of the NGOs participating in the study identify as Muslim organisations, it is believed that their ideological foundations are based on the Islamic principle of *zakat* (Isgandarova, 2010).

### 4.2. Understanding poverty

To understand how South African NGOs' activities contribute to poverty alleviation, it was important to first find out how they understood poverty. This section will discuss how they conceptualised poverty.

#### 4.2.1. Conceptualising poverty

When respondents were asked to define poverty, the following themes emerged:

##### **Poverty is multifaceted.**

It seems that some respondents understood poverty to be multifaceted and differs from one context to another. This notion is consistent with most conceptualisations of poverty (Kwon, Kim, & Park, 2017) and is captured in the following responses:

In our minds we think that poverty is or rather looks a certain way or affects a certain people because they don't match what we have – it's a misconception that's why I say the faces of poverty are very different (Respondent 4)

... poverty is measured differently in different context. (Respondent 6).

That poverty is multifaceted is also highlighted in the following quote from a secondary source:

Poverty is multi-layered and is about power. Inclusion, participation, and voice or lack thereof, determines people's poverty status (Organization 1).

##### **Lack of and/or access to basic needs**

Poverty was also understood to be characterised by the persistent lack of and access to basic needs such as food and water. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the lack of and/or access to basic needs intensifies individuals' motivation to fulfil such needs, as they cannot move to fulfil the highest hierarchy of needs such as self-actualisation (Carducci, 2020):

for us it is about food security when it comes to poverty (Respondent 2),

and

I would define poverty as individuals or families not being able to access adequate nutrition and food regularly, food and water for that matter (Respondent 4),

and

...it's the lack of basic needs (Respondent 8).

## **Lack of opportunities and capacities**

Poverty is described as a lack of ability and capacity to obtain basic needs, which is similar to the lack of basic needs. Thus, poverty is not limited to physical deprivation but also includes social deprivation (Brittas, 2020). This notion is encapsulated in the following responses:

...that inability for whatever reason in terms of lack of education or opportunities or capacities, anything ranging up to climate change (Respondent 1),

...people do not have the affordability to have proper housing, education sector, and health...general well-being of people not having access to proper solutions for their overall well-being (Respondent 2),

...when people lack the means to address their own basic needs (Respondent 3),

and

A person is considered as poor if he/she does not have the required necessities to fulfil his basic needs for a healthy individual and social life (Respondent 5).

People's inability to access basic necessities affect their social welfare. One organisation cited the United Nations' definition of poverty which summarises the themes very well:

Fundamentally, poverty is a denial of choices and opportunities, a violation of human dignity. It means lack of basic capacity to participate effectively in society. It means not having enough to feed and clothe a family, not having a school or clinic to go to, not having the land on which to grow one's food or a job to earn one's living, not having access to credit. It means insecurity, powerlessness and exclusion of individuals, households, and communities. It means susceptibility to violence, and it often implies living in marginal or fragile environments, without access to clean water or sanitation (United Nations, 1998).

### **4.2.2. Causes of poverty**

Understanding the causes of poverty is imperative to finding suitable solutions aimed at combating poverty (Hapazari & Loubser, 2021). When respondents were asked what causes

poverty 5 themes emerged: structural inequalities, corruption, rural-urban migration, legacy, and people's willingness to do something about it.

### **Structural Inequalities**

Respondents highlighted that poverty is a result of structural inequalities brought about by the apartheid regime:

We see poverty and its causes as structural (organization 1),

and

I think poverty is a side effect of inequality in our country that's what I think (Respondent 4).

Structural or systematic inequalities in South Africa have contributed to poverty issues in this country, especially amongst historically disadvantaged groups who were excluded from equally participating in the economy (Bhorat, Lilenstein, Oosthuizen, & Thornton, 2020). This notion is encapsulated in the following responses:

Economic injustice, limited educational opportunities, skewed development, not enough rural development (Respondent 5),

...legacies of apartheid and the economic system and the globalization of economic system is one thing... (Respondent 7),

and

So, poverty is a historical...planned in order to keep people oppressed, and marginalized and obedient... there is a legacy issue, generations before this were born into poverty (Respondent 8).

### **Corruption**

Some respondents understood that poverty is a precursor of corruption: 'corruption by government, I think that is a major reason' (Respondent 7), 'corruption' (Respondent 5), and 'lack of proper utilization of state resources' (Respondent 8). This is especially true, as corruption is one of the biggest issues in our country today as it deepens people's susceptibility to poverty and economic growth (Hassan, Bukhari, & Arshed, 2020).

## **Rural-urban migration**

Respondent 5 believed that rural-urban migration causes poverty. This notion is understandable because people move to urban areas in the hope to find work and access better services. Rural-urban migration, however, results in hard labour, low pay, very poor living conditions and social isolation which are all characteristics of poverty, unless they have relatives in urban areas (Buchner, 2020). Furthermore, urbanisation patterns in South Africa, also places a burden on the state to deliver services or plan (Todes, Kok, Wentzel, Van Zyl, & Cross, 2010).

## **People's willingness to do something about it**

Some respondents also stipulated that poverty is also caused by the lack of people's willingness to do something to about their issues. The following responses captures this notion:

...but also, the willingness of people to learn, to educate themselves, to grow in for example... (Respondent 7) ,

and

...at the individual level it is about mind-set and self-motivation. Does it make sense? So, it's about people's willingness to change- you have to be willing to change yourself to improve yourself (Respondent 8).

### **4.2.3. Consequences of poverty**

#### **Multifaceted effects of poverty**

Respondents stipulated that poverty affects various levels of society in many ways. This idea is reinforced by previous research, which suggests that because poverty is multifaceted, its consequences should be multifaceted as well (Kwon, Kim, & Park, 2017). The following responses highlight how poverty affects a variety of areas:

I think its pervasive I think it affects every level of our society. If you think from education to health, to housing to agriculture (Respondent 1),

and

Psychosocial issues... things related to physical development, things related to mental development, things that relate to planning of social planning, living conditions and then they start getting issues like unemployment, joblessness and crime and all of those things (Respondent 3).

Furthermore, the effects of poverty are not only diverse, but they are also interconnected. For example, one respondent clarified how hunger can lead to malnutrition, which can have a negative impact on a child's physical and mental growth. Previous studies on stunting, a malnutrition-related condition, backs up this claim. (UNICEF South Africa, 2020):

...there're lots of things that happen because of poverty very simply – you'll have children that become malnourished because they don't have access to adequate nutrition and now malnourishment and whatever now affects them from a physical developmental perspective as well as psychological development. (Respondent 4)

#### 4.2.4. Challenges exiting the poverty cycle.

When respondents were asked what challenges, poor people faced in navigating a new path to exiting the poverty cycle, 5 themes emerged: Dependency mind-set, lack of opportunities, education, and skills, lack of trust and commitment to programmes, and engaging in risky behaviour.

##### **Dependency mind-set**

According to Lupton (2011) a dependency mentality is created when we give those in need what they could achieve through their own efforts, thus affecting their ability to exit the poverty cycle. Respondent in this study alluded to this issue of dependency that keeps people in poverty:

...for issues like food packs and food hampers it's never enough, it's almost like putting something into a black hole, there's no end to it. That does create a dependency issue. (Respondent 4),

and

...at the individual level it is about mind-set and self-motivation (Respondent 8).

##### **Lack of opportunities, education, and skills**

The lack of opportunities, education and skills were identified by respondents as challenges that prevent people from navigating a new path to exit the poverty cycle. This notion is supported by Lupton (2015), who stressed the importance of education and business skills in reducing poverty:

I think is just opportunities to develop a skill and to get some sort of tertiary education it really does take you back from going forward (Respondent 2),

and

I would also put it down to lack of education and skills are also barriers to earning a decent living (Respondent 7).

In contemporary South Africa, low quality primary and secondary education significantly limits the youth's ability to take advantage of additional educational opportunities and employability (Spaull, 2013). This problem stems from an inability to remedy historical injustices (Spaull, 2013).

### **Lack of trust and/or commitment to programs**

Poverty may continue due to organizations' failure to adapt their missions to the needs of the poor (Lupton, 2015). Furthermore, Lupton (2015) emphasized the importance of organizations involving the community in their planning to be invited, recognized, and not viewed as mere marketing strategies. The following responses highlights these notions:

Organisations that have failed them. Other organizations that have been in touch with them and now that they have forgotten about them such that when they see another organisation they are just like: "now what are going to do now?" (Respondent 1),

and

from the beneficiary side is you know kind of getting them to buy into the solution, getting them to buy into you know committing to programmes (Respondent 3).

### **Engaging in risky behaviour**

Respondent 7 stipulated that poor people's engagement in risky behaviour such as alcoholism, gambling, debt extension, and smoking, which he would classify as wasteful spending because it not only harms the family but also creates barriers to exiting the poverty cycle. His view is consistent with previous studies that have shown that because of co-occurring physical and mental health issues, people who are addicted to alcohol may have difficulty finding and keeping jobs (Jones & Sumnall, 2016). However, there is no evidence that alcoholism and gambling can perpetuate poverty (Jones & Sumnall, 2016; Hahman & Matheson, 2017). According to some studies, problem gambling occurs before poverty (Hahman & Matheson, 2017).

#### 4.2.5. Perceived effective method for alleviating poverty

##### **No best method**

Two respondents stated that there may not be an effective method for alleviating poverty because if there was, poverty would not exist today. This notion is expressed in the following responses:

There is no effective method (chuckling) for alleviating poverty (Respondent 1),  
and

I think if one has an answer to that then I suppose we would not have poverty, right?  
(Respondent 3).

On the contrary, the Islamic law supports that poverty can be eradicated and *zakat* is possibly the most powerful instrument for poverty alleviation and distributive justice in Islamic ethics (Hashmi, 2010).

##### **Education and skills training programmes**

According to James (cited in Lupton, 2015), education is the secret to overcoming poverty, and his results indicate that educational attainment has a clear statistical association with earning potential. As a result, if children want to get out of poverty, they must get a good education. Lupton (Lupton, 2015). Furthermore, for disadvantaged people to thrive, initiatives must include both education and on-the-job training (Lupton, 2015). These notions are consistent with the following responses from some respondents:

Most effective way I think would be education, a culture of learning, a culture of development, a culture of growth, a culture of hard work (Respondent 7),

...people need to be given access to good education and training (Respondent 8),

and

...and there is not enough skills transfer, there is very basic skills that are happening. More money needs to be spent on upgrading those skills as we go along (Respondent 6).

However, one respondent stated that education alone will not alleviate poverty. Lupton (2015) supports this idea, stating that while education is important for a community's wellbeing, it is insufficient because it will not eradicate poverty, since it is impossible to educate or support a

community out of poverty. As a result, education must be combined with economic development (Lupton, 2015):

Mandela did say that education is the key to break the cycle and I do believe that but it's not education alone (Respondent 1).

### **Addressing structural inequality**

As previously discussed, structural inequalities in South Africa contribute to our poverty problems. Hence, some respondents also stated that addressing structural inequality will aid in poverty alleviation. This notion is consistent previous studies, for example, according to Rahman (2018) structural disparity necessitates structural remedies that are not limited to continuing human efforts:

I think it's definitely a systematic change (Respondent 1),

and

Poverty and inequality are two sides of the same coin. Systemic responses to poverty must address inequality (Organization 1).

Furthermore, limits on private control, investments in public goods, and regulatory supervision and regulation are suggested as three methods for redressing systemic inequality (Rahman, 2018).

### **Gentrification**

Gentrification is a way of allocating more economic opportunities to historically impoverished areas (Cole, Lamarca, Connolly, & Anguelovski, 2017) such as drawing in financial backers and resourced individuals, and to move achievers back to the local area (Lupton, 2015). This notion is alluded to by two respondents who believe that other ways alleviating poverty include making the nation more attractive to international investment and greening:

At the economic level, it's about countries becoming attractive for foreign investment (Respondent 3),

and

The greening of the environment (Respondent 7).

Green space enhancement projects are said to enhance community health and are thought to have economic benefits (Lupton, 2015; Cole, Lamarca, Connolly, & Anguelovski, 2017).

Hence, the improvement of green space is arguably a product of gentrification (Cole, Lamarca, Connolly, & Anguelovski, 2017). Gentrification of communities raises concerns about the displacement of low-income residents, however, poverty concentration has also been shown to be unpleasant for all of us, and thus long-term economic frameworks such as just gentrification are important for eradicating extreme poverty (Lupton, 2015; Cole, Lamarca, Connolly, & Anguelovski, 2017). Low-income residents become beneficiaries rather than victims of gentrification when they are involved in the preparation, implementation, and ongoing life of their revitalizing communities (Lupton, Charity Detox, 2015). In South Africa, gentrification seems to be unlikely, as historical spatial patterns can still be seen in new towns and cities, and it is often seen as one of the main implementation shortcomings that local government structures were designed to address and reverse (Storie, 2014).

### **Collaboration between different stakeholders**

In addition to building quality relationships and community involvement in activities, some respondents identified collaboration between different stakeholders as a means of reducing poverty: “Best method is that everybody working together, has some sort of plan together” (Respondent 2). Lack of collaboration and decision-making affects efforts towards eradicating poverty (Santoso, 2018) and according to Lupton (2015) it would be easier to find more viable and focused solutions to poverty alleviation if stakeholders are willing to collaborate. Thus, the notion that collaboration between different stakeholders can alleviate poverty is supported:

I am convinced that it [poverty] is a problem that can be solved if there’s cohesive and consented effort by all state players and all role players to work together you know... there needs to be a more cohesive, more relevant intervention and solutions (Respondent 4),

and

... and working together for ground-up alternatives, can build emancipatory power to end poverty and build just and equitable societies (Organization 1).

The importance of working collaboratively with other organizations was also emphasized in the following quote:

we shall join with other humanitarian actors to act as one in responding to suffering brought on by disasters, poverty and injustice (Organization 2).

## **Empowerment Initiatives**

Individuals have valuable information to offer, but they may lack the capacities, such as business skills, adequate education, and opportunities, that will enable them to break free from the poverty cycle, necessitating the implementation of empowerment initiatives. Involving and valuing community members' perspectives is also an important aspect of achieving empowerment and increasing beneficiary contribution to the program.

I think essentially it is to provide the enable people to become self-sufficient for me that is an effective means to alleviating poverty...empowering people at the micro level (Respondent 3),

and

Empowerment initiatives encourage people to give charitably towards such initiatives. Islam has a conception of a compulsory wealth tax, which if used effectively can make a very significant contribution (Respondent 5).

The notion of empowering people was also captured in the following quote:

Organised people, empowered with tools, political space, resources, critical knowledge about the interlocking systems of power that produce and reproduce poverty and inequalities (Organization 1).

## **Building trusting relationships with beneficiaries and/or communities**

Lupton (2015), specified that we should join forces with the poor to generate wealth based on their own aspirations and lifestyle, not our own, if we anticipate them to become self-sufficient and to build up their own emotionally supportive networks, both here and abroad. Furthermore, Lupton (2015) asserts that we must spend quality time in communities to understand the daily survival stressors which they face in effort to clarify a community's actual hierarchy of needs. A few respondents alluded to the importance of building relationships with beneficiaries and community leaders:

So, working with our beneficiaries is key to prevent challenges... we actually have a full-time community engagement specialist (Respondent 2),

and

In most case the relationships are built with community representatives, leaders etc... our welfare officers do speak regularly and build relationships with recipients and receive updates on their circumstances etc. (Respondent 5).

### **Program sustainability**

One respondent stipulated how government has initiated a lot of good programs that were working but discontinued them. He said that more funding and support needs to be directed at continuing these programs. This notion is encapsulated by the following quote:

So there needs to be a more sort of funding towards continuing the program rather than- funding is skewed towards the inception of the program rather than the continuation of the program... we are not 100% sure but we got an idea of the fact that in the first program initiation there is not enough support (Respondent 6).

Beneficiary and/or community engagement, education, stakeholder cooperation, and economic growth appear to be integrated strategies for reducing poverty in various communities.

## **4.3. NGOs' objectives, methodologies, and impact**

Some philanthropists require NGOs to have a strategy with specific priorities and targets, as well as a method for measuring observable outcomes. (Lupton, 2015). These requirements are necessary for showcasing return on investment (Lupton, 2015). This section will discuss the study's NGOs' goals, methodologies, and impact.

### **4.3.1. NGOs' objectives**

To be strategic, you must devise and carry out a well-thought-out course of action (Lupton, 2015). NGOs' objectives determine how they plan to implement their projects (Lupton, 2015). NGOs main objectives varied from engaging in advocacy and research work to providing skills training and education, responding to disasters, greening, improving infrastructure, nutrition and health, and empowering poor people to exist the poverty cycle. Findings suggest that most of this study's NGOs planned to provide humanitarian relief and philanthropy, and to develop and empower beneficiaries. Meanwhile a few NGOs planned to focus on greening, and social justice (advocacy and research work). Table 2 provides quotes in support of each theme.

**Table 2: NGOs objectives**

Emerg Themes	Quotes
<b>Humanitarian relief and philanthropy</b>	<p>“Together we will inspire and enable people to respond rapidly to disasters and fight poverty through our Islamic values, expertise and global reach.” (Organization 1)</p> <p>“The aim is to help those that aren’t able to access help in any level. So, in our case it’s a simple issue of serving people that are in need as quickly as possible and as dignified manner as possible.” (Respondent 6)</p> <p>“...not all South Africans have access to social services to assist them with poverty alleviation.... mostly on welfare...” (Respondent 3)</p> <p>“It also works to be able to provide relief to individual families who maybe in dire need or vulnerable.” (Respondent 4)</p> <p>“To do whatever it takes to make a lasting difference to the neediest around the world, by providing sustainable projects that aim to give them a brighter future to work towards. Our mission is to alleviate poverty and provide humanitarian services in crisis and non-crisis situations to the neediest orphans, widows and destitute, irrespective of race, religion, culture, creed, and geographical boundary.” (Respondent 5)</p> <p>“The aim is to help those that aren’t able to access help in any level. So, in our case it’s a simple issue of serving people that are in need as quickly as possible and as dignified manner as possible.” (Respondent 6)</p> <p>“... but they do a whole lot of other things including feeding, assisting people with rent and welfare needs, they sort of got to balance between welfare and development.” (Respondent 8)</p>
<b>Development and empowerment</b>	<p>“our vision is creating an institution to empower people and the way we do this through our mission, number one is to educate people to creating programs on the whole concept of what we call awqaf. Secondly, it’s about mobilization program of awqaf resources from the community. The third part of is we create and fund humanitarian community development projects” (Respondent 7)</p> <p>“We’re aiming towards eradicating hunger in Southern Africa and we focus on early childhood development and then we linked to education so nutrition and education... we improve their facilities for the early childhood development sector.” (Respondents 2)</p> <p>“Our focus is a lot on orphaned and vulnerable children, water projects, focusing on food insecurity, domestic violence, education and health. Firstly, trying to break the poverty cycle or get people out of the poverty but over and above that to be able to have some kind of element of change, be it sustainable element of long term change or some kind of short term change.” (Respondent 4)</p> <p>“...then eventually we started... including development and empowerment in our offering... to address poverty is probably education and to also give the people opportunity to develop a skill or qualifications and helping become financially self-sufficient.” (Respondent 3)</p> <p>“...its primary focus has been education, training, and development...” (Respondent 8)</p>
<b>Greening</b>	<p>“And mainly we focus on greening throughout communities of South Africa both urban and rural and we focus on teaching communities how to grow their own food gardens or market gardens in order to be more food secure, to know where food comes from and to provide nutritional support to the communities” (Respondent 1)</p>
<b>Social Justice</b>	<p>“...vision is self-organised people actively creating a just, democratic and sustainable world where power and resources are shared, everyone lives in dignity, and poverty and inequality are no more...contributes to lasting solutions to the injustice of poverty” (Organization 2)</p>

### 4.3.2. Identifying beneficiaries

Understanding how NGOs classify or target beneficiaries is critical because it allows us to determine how their objectives are informed and whether they are appropriate for the beneficiaries they are targeting (Lupton, 2011). Some respondents stipulated that they do not approach beneficiaries, beneficiaries come to them. According to one respondent (Respondent 1) when beneficiaries approach an NGO, it indicates that they are aware of and may understand

the NGO's goals, consequently they are able to take action (empowering them to find their own solutions).

Some NGOs relied on community forums, which highlights that they involved and valued the community. Some NGOs utilized screening procedures, databases, and the emergence of disasters. The methods that NGOs in this sample use to identify and target suitable beneficiaries seems to align with their objectives and type of aid they provide. For example, Sharia law determines respondent 3 beneficiary eligibility criteria, where the poor are characterized “by two levels of poverty which virtually represent all such groups of individuals potentially present in any economy at any time: (a) those living at or below the poverty level defined as the poor (al fuqara), and (b) those living very much below it, defined as the destitutes (al masakin)” (Korayem & Mashhour, 2014, pp. 3-4). The social philanthropic approach is known for using this form of selection process (Patel, Chapter 7: Theoretical perspectives on the political economy of civic service, 2003).

Furthermore, it appears that NGOs beneficiary selection methods do not seek to impose aid on communities, rather they seek to work collaboratively with beneficiaries/communities and building trusting relationships.

**Table 3: Identifying beneficiaries**

<b>Emerged Themes</b>	<b>Quotes</b>
<b>Are approached</b>	<p>“We do not target, beneficiaries approach us.” (Respondent 1)</p> <p>“Very often we will get a request from the community, then we’d be able to do it either through ourselves or through our agencies to do an investigation and take a decision on whether we are going to be engaging with them.” (Respondent 7)</p> <p>“So currently they have a - currently people come to the organisation. We do not go out of our way looking for people. We may find them when we are going to communities but generally people find their way to the organisation.” (Respondent 8)</p>
<b>Community forums</b>	<p>“Use ECD community forums and for relief-select other NGOs.” (Respondent 2)</p> <p>“Through a network of partners and offices locally and internationally. We also work with tribal leaders, religious leaders and local authorities.” (Respondent 5)</p> <p>“... and engaging with community leaders and community persons to understand the dynamic.” (Respondent 4)</p>
<b>Screening procedures</b>	<p>“Identify communities in need of assistance we have to follow a very specific process that is govern by Sharia law which is our Islamic law, so we must ensure those obligations...we target- it’s both on need and on criteria for fulling zakat possibilities.” (Respondent 3)</p> <p>“By conducting baseline assessments analysis on the community...” (Respondent 4)</p> <p>“Beneficiaries are screened with selection criteria based on each location.” (Respondent 5)</p>
<b>Disasters</b>	<p>“First of all, in terms of our disastrous situation it is pretty self-explanatory, if there is a disaster and we need to help people so that’s quite straight forward.” (Respondent 6)</p>
<b>Databases</b>	<p>“...but in terms of the poverty context again we have an excellent database which is made available by the department of social development and SASSA, but also by various academic institutions, by NGOs like ourselves and by other NGOs, NPOs and charities where there is this database, large bank of data where communities have been checked and identified.” (Respondent 6)</p>

### 4.3.3. NGOs methods of welfare and development

Almost all the NGOs in this sample used a mix of welfare and development approaches, depending on beneficiaries' needs and contexts.

#### **Emergency relief approach**

A few organizations' work seems to primarily be focused on emergency relief work:

By responding to disasters, rebuilding lives and preparing people in case disaster strikes we save lives before they are lost (Organization 2),

and

Essentially, we are a medically based, humanitarian disaster organisation... (Respondent 6).

In the self-completed survey, respondent 5 indicated that probably 65% of their work is focused on relief and 35% on development. I could not however probe whether the relief they provided was emergency relief or philanthropic. However, the following response alludes to the utilization of both emergency relief and social philanthropic approaches:

Our mission is to alleviate poverty and provide humanitarian services in crisis and non-crisis situations to the neediest orphans, widows and destitute, irrespective of race, religion, culture, creed, and geographical boundary (Respondent 5).

Most respondents revealed that in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown in 2020, the bulk of their work mostly involved relief work, even though it used to be more developmentally inclined. They were specifically aimed at addressing food insecurity and financial assistance during these unprecedented times:

...because of Covid we discover that we have to channel a lot of our development funding towards food relief and financial assistance at the moment. So currently we are on 70% [development]-30 % [relief] (Respondent 3).

If we are talking short term relief in the last year meaning in 2020, the majority of the work has been relief work and I think that is obviously taking into account the current situation that we found ourselves in which is Covid and lockdown and economic hardship as a result of the lockdown...Currently...I would say 80% [relief]-20% [developmental] (Respondent 4),

and

I think like the obvious thing that when Covid hit was like food, we mobilised a lot of food in the communities (Respondent 7).

The requirement for NGOs to focus on crisis alleviation during the Covid-19 pandemic is upheld by Lupton (2015) who specifies that when starvation sweeps a country, starvation for enormous quantities of individuals, crisis food supplies should be surged in immediately to save lives. One respondent whose organization's work was more developmentally inclined expressed how she found emergency relief work difficult to sustain in the long run:

No, I started saying something about food parcels but it is not right because there was a place for them in Covid, we just feel like it's not a very sustainable thing and that's why we stuck to what we know and what we do (Respondent 1).

### **Social philanthropy**

Some respondents' responses indicate that their NGOs use social philanthropy approaches to social welfare:

Yes, anything to do with day to day needs like I said, rent, lights, water, transport, food, anything sort of the basic needs level. It's not disaster relief like (organization 6) It's more daily needs relief (Organization 8),

We launched our orphan's sponsorship program to provide assistance to child-headed households, girl children and homes with infants and younger children (Organization 2),

and

...and the rest (food packages) will go into predominately our ECD program (Respondent 2).

Approaches to social welfare that are socially philanthropic play an important role in building community wellbeing (Patel, 2003). This notion is highlighted in the following quotation:

We mobilise the power of people to claim their rights and participate fully in shaping decisions, policies and processes that affect their lives and hold power to account, challenging systems which perpetuate poverty and inequality. (organization 1)

It is important to note that most organizations who engaged in social philanthropic work also promote developmental approaches to social welfare (Midgley, Social development: The developmental perspective in social welfare, 1995). For example, Respondent 2 indicated that their delivery of food packages to their ECD program is meant to save ECD centres some money that can be directed at developing it.

### **Social development approach**

Social development according to Patel (Patel, 2015, p. 85) refers to “policies and programmes that meet needs, promote rights, manage and prevent social problems, facilitate the optimal use of opportunities to achieve social well-being and the promotion of human empowerment and social inclusion”. The social development approach is thus concerned with helping people become more self-sufficient through sustainable long-term solutions such as investing in improving education and training skills, health care services, infrastructure, and the environment (Midgley, 2014). The following responses seem to suggest that these NGOs use the social development approach to social welfare:

We are in development and because we look at long term solutions... incapacitating an enabling community members to provide for their families, to either grow food and sell it or either take home fresh vegetables, to provide nutrition to school kids and even if we talking about urban greening (Respondent 1),

...kind of projects and programmes we design and create needs to provide self-sufficiency, so the programme needs to be sustainable people must know (how) to run the programme themselves, must know how to access further help. And so, we do contribute to poverty alleviation (Respondent 3),

and

I think 90% is developmental and... the bottom line is community development and empowerment, growth of the community in terms of education...funding for sustainable developments (Respondent 7).

The social development strategy aims to foster human, social and economic development, as well as the inclusion of the socially marginalized in development initiatives and concrete

changes in people's welfare (Patel, Chapter 7: Theoretical perspectives on the political economy of civic service, 2003). This notion is also highlighted in the following responses:

We also provide support to the household by offering skills training and development to guardians so that they can become self-sufficient. Other services offered... educational and bursary support, food and nutritional support, healthcare, and water solutions. We also advocate this country's most vulnerable people who are facing issues like food insecurity, poverty, and domestic violence (Organization 2),

and

We also have projects aimed at the various aspects of deprivation, so projects focussed on water provision, increasing access to healthcare, education and nutrition support and empowerment initiatives (Respondent 5).

Working together with community leaders and stakeholders is also a part of the social development approach (Midgley, Social development: The developmental perspective in social welfare, 1995). This notion is reflected in the following responses:

...also promote sustainable economic and social development by working with local communities – regardless of race, religion or gender (Organization 2),

In most cases the relationships are built with community representatives, leaders etc. In some contexts, beneficiaries are involved in monitoring and evaluation (Respondent 5),

and

We actually have a full-time community engagement specialist...So, working with our beneficiaries is key to prevent challenges (Respondent 2).

#### **4.3.4. Challenges NGOs face**

Working collaboratively and building trusting and interdependent relationships between non-governmental organizations and communities was identified earlier in this report as one of the strategies that respondents believed could alleviate poverty. Community dynamics and socio-

political realities, on the other hand, made it difficult for organizations to build rapport with some communities. Most respondents observed that group dynamics and socio-political realities make it difficult for NGOs to establish rapport with communities, both locally and internationally. They recorded dealing with challenging and dishonest beneficiaries, some of whom felt entitled, on the other side. Security issues were also raised by respondents when delivering services in the field. These results support Lupton's (2011) assertion that charity breeds dependency and discord rather than freedom and reverence.

According to most respondents, one of the issues is a lack of organizational resources and support, which causes certain vulnerable people's needs to go unmet because demand exceeds available resources. Changing currencies, according to one respondent from an international organization, influences funding issues and impact. When respondents were asked about challenges in finding a new path for poor people leaving the poverty cycle, the issue of insufficient funding and services came up again.

One respondent suggests that NGOs do not focus their intervention strategies because they want to do everything, resulting in organizations undertaking so many projects. According to Lupton (2011), this endeavour is impossible because no single organization can address the entirety of a struggling community's difficulties. This idea is reinforced by the difficulties in supporting and raising funds for other programs, which has culminated in their cancellation. According to Lupton (2011), we must be laser focused, if we are interested in determining the success of our efforts. Perhaps this explains why, as Respondent 3 points out, finding a tool to measure impact is challenging.

**Table 4: Challenges NGOs face**

Emerg ed Themes	Quotes
<b>Misunderstanding &amp; Community buy in</b>	<p><i>"Sometimes there might be misunderstanding within a community...the community decides that you know they don't want you there...our own growing biggest challenge that there's no working together, real collaboration."</i> (Respondent 2)</p> <p><i>"...community members or dynamics in the community..."</i> (Respondent 4)</p> <p><i>"Dealing with changing socio-political realities in the countries where we operate."</i> (Respondent 5)</p> <p><i>"...some resistance for working with us."</i> (Respondent 8)</p>
<b>Safety &amp; security</b>	<i>"challenges of security when we are in the field."</i> (Respondent 3)
<b>Difficult beneficiaries</b>	<p><i>"...someone is going to misuse the food."</i> (Respondent 2)</p> <p><i>"... some people that have an entitlement attitude."</i> (Respondent 3)</p> <p><i>"...that people want to take advantage of you, sometimes some people might be dishonest in the request. when doing loans and stuff like that people... because you are a charity organisation... don't want to pay you back."</i> (Respondent 7)</p>
<b>Limited funding &amp; resources</b>	<p><i>"...you just feel like there's not enough time, there not enough funding, there's not enough resources...cannot help everybody as a single organisation."</i> (Respondent 1)</p> <p><i>"...we can't help everybody... so, then it comes to an issue of resources and it becomes the issue about funding"</i> (Respondent 3)</p> <p><i>"Firstly, limited resources making us unable to engage with everyone..."</i> (Respondent 4)</p> <p><i>"Vastness of need and limited funding to sustain all projects... Fluctuations in the market as a devalued rand means that any fundraising done locally has less impact than it would have had previously"</i> (Respondent 5)</p> <p><i>"...the real challenge here is of funding although we suffer less than most people."</i> (Respondent 6)</p> <p><i>"...one is at the organisational level, and it's about capacity and resources...challenge of resources."</i> (Respondent 8)</p>
<b>Measuring Impact</b>	<i>"...finding a tool to measure impact."</i> (Respondent 3)
<b>Unfocused intervention strategies</b>	<p><i>"The other is the challenge of the mind-set of an NGO that we want to be everything to everyone, rather than being a specialised focused group."</i> (Respondent 8)</p> <p><i>"The challenges probably is that your solution needs to be personalised and that's difficult when you are working with hundreds thousands of people."</i> (Respondent 3)</p>
<b>Donors</b>	<i>"...variability to satisfy the donor base means less focus on each project area. Donor dependency and donor fatigue."</i> (Respondent 5)
<b>Project sustainability</b>	<p><i>"Difficulty in marketing and promoting certain types of projects..."</i> (Respondent 5)</p> <p><i>"Non-cooperation or noncompliance in the fields on the project side, projects that were limited or cancelled."</i> (Respondent 4)</p>

#### 4.3.5. Funds raised and spent

The researcher requested an estimation of how much funds this sample's NGOs raise and spend in a year, which is illustrated in Table 4 below. Some NGOs financials were not readily available, and most of the financial information I got were just rough estimates, meanwhile others were obtained from financial statements. According to Hendrickse (2008) an accountable NGO should be transparent, allowing funders, beneficiaries, and other stakeholders to easily access its accounts and records, to ensure that it makes good use of its resources and does not engage in practices that are incompatible with its non-profit status.

Thus, NGOs whose financial statement are publicly accessible reflect accountability and transparency.

It appears that most NGOs try to follow the 80/20 approach, where approximately 80% of funds are dedicated to their direct project costs and approximately 20% on administrative cost. However, administrative costs should ideally account for no more than 15% of an NGO's budget if they want to strike a sustainable balance between capital and current spending (Hendrickse, 2008). It means that the 80/20 approach fails to achieve the recommended sustainable balance. However, Respondent 2 claims that his NGO's operating costs are high due to the food packages' storage and transportation costs, as well as their distribution. Respondent 4 mentioned that because her NGO has a limited staff, she is able to keep administrative costs low. A significant portion of an organization's budget should not be spent on personnel, as an organization's financial sustainability would be negatively impacted.

**Table 4: Funds raised and spent.**

<b>Respondent/Organization ID no.</b>	<b>Funds Raised</b>	<b>Proportion Spent on actual activities</b>
<b>Respondent 1</b>	<i>R32 million (2019)</i>	<i>Direct project costs: 80% Internal processes: 20%</i>
<b>Respondent 2</b>	<i>R10 million</i>	<i>Development of beneficiaries: 80% Operations: 20%</i>
<b>Respondent 3</b>	<i>R167 million (in 2020) Usually between R150 to 160 million per annum</i>	<i>Charity Work: 88% Costs:12%</i>
<b>Respondent 4</b>	<i>R 10million (in 2020)</i>	<i>Charity Work: 85% Costs:15%</i>
<b>Respondent 5</b>	<i>Donation Received: R 291,765,627 (2018) Other Income: R2,807,303</i>	<i>Donations Distributed: R297,986,396 Total Expenditure: R691,664</i>
<b>Respondent 6</b>	<i>Not available</i>	<i>Spent R32 billion in 44 countries in 28years</i>
<b>Respondent 7</b>	<i>Average R5 million per annum</i>	<i>Spent between R5 -R10 million per annum</i>
<b>Respondent 8</b>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>
<b>Organization 1 (Desktop research)</b>	<i>Not available</i>	<i>Not available</i>
<b>Organization 2 (Desktop research)</b>	<i>Donation income- R91,547,374 (in 2019)</i>	<i>Direct project expenses: R72,021,270 (in 2019) Operating expenses: R19,524,838 (in 2019)</i>

#### 4.3.6. Return on investment

NGOs are under increasing pressure to evaluate their activities to demonstrate their efficiency, achieve authenticity, and receive funding (Barman, 2007). This notion is best captured by the phrase return on investment (ROI), it is a metric used by CEOs and CFOs to track how effective they are in regard to their bottom line (Lupton, 2015). According to Lupton (2015), tracking results forces benefactors to focus their attention on concrete targets, keep themselves accountable, and gain insight into what works and why. In this study we explored ways in which NGOs were track their beneficiaries and evaluating their impact.

#### 4.3.6.1. Tracking beneficiaries

Most of the NGOs in this sample had some sort of system in place to track beneficiaries; however, some NGOs did this only for certain projects and not others. These systems ranged from spreadsheets, lists, phone calls with community leaders, community forums, files, and database maintenance. Most respondents admitted that they do not have sophisticated systems, but they do keep records, particularly for those involved in long-term projects such as bursary students. Beneficiary records are mostly kept by NGOs in order for donors to calculate their return on investment (ROI), or impact on the beneficiaries (Lupton, 2015).

Furthermore, they emphasized that tracking progress made by beneficiaries on short-term projects, such as emergency relief, was much more difficult than tracking progress made by beneficiaries on long-term projects. According to Patel (2003), the limited monitoring of beneficiaries in short-term projects could be because humanitarian and social philanthropic aid programs consider beneficiaries to be “passive receivers of goods and services” (2003, p. 93).

**Table 5. Tracking beneficiaries**

Respondent/Organization ID no.	Do they have systems in place to track beneficiaries	If yes, how do they track them
Respondent 1	Yes	“...we use spreadsheets.”
Respondent 2	Yes	“most community ECD’s have ECD forums so it’s obviously not difficult to find our specific beneficiaries”.
Respondent 3	Yes	“it is very much done manually... our learners and our bursary students... we do track their performance and we collect their results...When it comes to welfare assistance, we have a file for every recipient... we are able to search that recipient information through the ID number.”
Respondent 4	Yes	“Not really on the M& E side, we rely a lot on the information provided to us on the ground and being able to know that through community leaders we can access the community in order to assess individuals again should we need to.”
Respondent 5	Sometimes (for certain projects)	“For certain ongoing support projects, such as welfare programmes, orphan sponsorship, bursaries etc. We maintain a database and files are reviewed regularly...”
Respondent 6	Yes	“there is a record, there is a list available through the various sectors of people that we work with ...people on the lists available.”
Respondent 7	Sometimes (for certain projects)	“...work telephonically and through networks of people to check what’s going on. Other times we... access other implementation agencies, that have the capacity... to do the investigation and give us the report.”
Respondent 8	Yes	“So, there may be some system, so computer system and if you want access to that system you can get it, but there isn’t a deliberate attempt to check people”
Organization 1 (Desktop research)	Not available	Not available
Organization 2 (Desktop research)	Not available	Not available

#### 4.5.3.2. Measuring impact

Program impact here refers to the changes or differences made by NGOs’ intervention programmes (Patel, 2016). According to Patel (2016), measuring the impact made by organizations programmes or interventions is quite challenging, and the most effective way is

to conduct an experimental design. However, experimental designs are costly and raise ethical concerns as they involve withholding welfare to one group of people (Patel, 2016). Furthermore, according to Patel (2016) monitoring and evaluation costs of programmes and their impact should also be included in the budget. There are other ways in which NGOs can measure the impact of their intervention programmes such as process evaluations, structured observations, interviews, narratives, focus groups, surveys, etc. (Patel, 2016; Hobson, Mayne, & Hamilton, 2014).

Most respondents highlighted that they do measure their activities impact. Some organizations utilize monitoring and evaluation systems such as measuring outcomes against their objectives. This is one way to measure success, since monitoring and monitoring processes are critical for assessing progress and proactively addressing issues with activity implementation (Patel, 2016). Furthermore, NGOs priorities, and scheduled events help organizations understand what they are trying to accomplish, and so these will assist them in identifying measurable indicators (Hobson, Mayne, & Hamilton, 2014).

One respondent stipulated that their NGO conducted interviews with their beneficiaries to find out what impact they made. Although interviews may assist NGOs in exploring expectations and experiences of changes and/or explanations of change, they may not be as accurate as other approaches because participants can simply say what they feel the NGOs want to hear (Hobson, Mayne, & Hamilton, 2014).

Respondent 8 stipulated that the NGO where they used to work did not spend a lot of time on tracking and monitoring impact, they only did it on an *ad hoc* basis. While Monitoring and Evaluation systems do require time and money to implement it is best to invest in these systems because they can help NGOs decide if they need to make any adjustments to their programs (Hobson, Mayne, & Hamilton, 2014).

One respondent just said that it was difficult to measure impact. Some respondents shared this view as they were not confident in their ways of measuring impact. According to Lupton (2015) numbers are one of the metrics used to measure outcomes, this notion is consistent with some respondents' responses who indicated that their NGOs used numbers, such as the number beneficiaries and demographic percentages (i.e. how many women, girls, black, etc.) to measure impact. However, numbers do not always imply quality (Lupton, 2015).

It was also highlighted that NGOs get a lot of pressure to measure and demonstrate their impact from donors, which is supported by previous research, as donors want to see a return on their

investment (Barman, 2007; Lupton, 2015). It also appears that demographics play a major role in donor criteria in South Africa, however, Respondent 6 argued that we should no longer be using race-related imagery in post-apartheid South Africa. This notion is captured in the following response:

...where people were giving us funding wanted a record 75% of aid goes to black African people whatever that means I would expect that we are all Africans so we are always battling those kinds of garbage (Respondent 6).

On the other hand, as stated earlier in the report, the political economy of South Africa and ethnic capitalism have been the key causes of poverty in the region for decades, hence socioeconomic and gender inequality are highest amongst the black population (Makgetla, 2020; Statistics South Africa, 2019). Is it not possible that donors are concerned with establishing that the majority of their funding covers beneficiaries that are mostly affected by those factors, of which poverty is mostly prevalent amongst the black population, women and children (Patel, 2011).

**Table 6: Measuring impact**

<b>Respondent/Organization ID no.</b>	<b>Do they measure impact</b>	<b>If yes, how do they measure them</b>
<b>Respondent 1</b>	Yes	<i>"constantly evolving process as well, I mean monitoring an evaluation within an NGO sector is a buzzword at the moment because donors are asking for indicator by...gathering information and tracking information through monitoring and evaluation systems. You need to be tracking internally what your indicators are against your goals and objectives...various compliance indicators that needs to be reported on in terms of terms demographics groups indicators across how many trees? And how many organisations benefitted?"</i>
<b>Respondent 2</b>	Yes	<i>"...part of our monitoring and evaluation system. percentage of buildings of classrooms or the number of meals-nutritious meal served- double check the wellbeing and health of the children and the impact we are making in the health of the children"</i>
<b>Respondent 3</b>	Yes	<i>"If we were to find the tool to measure impact that would be so awesome, I think a lot of organisation are struggling to measure impact but I think how we would measure our impact we look at the achievement of our objectives."</i>
<b>Respondent 4</b>	Yes	<i>"The main objective of the project from that. So, its indicators of success that we have -a post evaluation that has to be done to determine all of this."</i>
<b>Respondent 5</b>	Yes	<i>"This is done through interviews with the beneficiaries themselves or community representatives. We seek to build databases of success stories that we can learn from. Our ongoing and long-term projects include regular monitoring and evaluation programmes."</i>
<b>Respondent 6</b>	Yes	<i>"Is self-explanatory-is we use appreciation by people because we don't like- So yeah I think that is how we measure, we don't wait for feedback or we don't wait for people to thank us... within that kind of context we have to fill in forms and all of that so there is obviously a way that we need to measure the impact and we do that actually work out that we are giving to 50%women10%men or 50%children so you know we do respect race visuals"</i>
<b>Respondent 7</b>	Uncertain	<i>"Difficult very difficult. You can't use what is pending measurements, you can say by people kind of assisting you."</i>
<b>Respondent 8</b>	Yes, on adhoc basis	<i>"not scientifically, no. it's sort of guess work. Again not sufficient time is given in tracking and monitoring the progress that is done sort of "by the way", because of the high number of requests you busy solving all the time, and you don't necessarily have the time to track and monitor...It is not done for all beneficiaries or the majority of beneficiaries. It is done at an adhoc basis"</i>
<b>Organization 1 (Desktop research)</b>	Not available	Not available
<b>Organization 2 (Desktop research)</b>	Not available	Not available

#### 4.5.3.3. NGOs' perceived impact

Most respondents indicated that measuring impact is difficult and that beneficiaries would be best placed to indicate the impact of NGOs welfare programs on their lives and communities, two respondents preferred not to make assumptions, so they refrained from providing absolute answers. It is true that measuring impact is difficult however, they are types of monitoring and evaluation methods that can help track the progress and impact of their programmes, as discussed in previous section.

One respondent simply stated that he was not going to answer that, and the other just expressed what impact they aimed to achieve and that they did not prioritize measuring impact. Almost all respondents, nevertheless, believed that their welfare and development efforts helped to reduce poverty in some way. Lupton (2015), however still contends that business development is essential to moving the poverty needle; all other efforts only help to boost community wellbeing and ease poverty experiences, but they do not eliminate poverty. Nonetheless this

study’s findings indicate that social welfare and social development programs in the South African context are meant to help government in delivering services to poor people, promoting social well-being and reducing poverty (Patel, 2015).

**Table 7: Perceived impact**

Emerg Themes	Quotes
<b>Unsure, but believes there is an Impact</b>	<p>“ Yho that is a tough question I don’t think that- I can’t answer that for the simple reason that is for people to tell ...and the fact that we are growing all the time means that we have we’ve had a huge impact just from the feedback and the demand for our services.” (Respondent 6)</p> <p>“...how you would measure that either, I think it is a very subjective thing to look at... there are some beautiful case studies in the stories that are coming out about this difference in their lives.” (Respondent 1)</p> <p>“...share-I could probably give you letters and comments and things from students and parents and all of those that clearly prove and believe that we have made a difference. So, I think we don’t doubt that we are making a difference, but I think to say what difference I have made probably it’s a question based on recipients themselves.” (Respondent 3)</p>
<b>Confident they are making an impact</b>	<p>“We have received numerous reports from school authorities describing how our Make Breakfast possible school feeding has a major impact on learner concentration, attendance and even performance...we are able (to) restore vision and make significant impacts on the quality of life of patients who may have otherwise been unable to afford treatment.” (Respondent 5)</p> <p>“Monitoring and evaluation- count number of beneficiaries and monitor ECD progress. Overall view of impact: that is important for our donors. You know just in the development of ECD’s, we are helping to create jobs, microenterprises... the wellbeing and health of the children and the impact we are making in the health of the children.” (Respondent 2)</p> <p>“...overall if I just look at all the projects like briefly 80%. Overall, we’ve been happy with the results that we have seen.” (Respondent 4)</p>
<b>Refrained from presuming</b>	<p>“To measure impact is very difficult, I can’t tell you that really.” (Respondent 7)</p> <p>“So, the idea is to move beneficiaries off the welfare queue to make them earn on their own rather than make them dependent on charity... Again, not sufficient time is given in tracking and monitoring the progress that is done.” (Respondent 8)</p>

## 5. Conclusion

Addressing poverty alleviation is complicated and differs from one group to the next. This complexity is due to corruption in South Africa, as well as an inherited structure that continues to deny people access to resources such as schooling, skills training, and employment, which are important tools for them to raise themselves out of poverty. The lockdown regulations which shut down large parts of the economy caused the unemployment rates to rise, resulting in more households becoming food insecure. Respondents also stated that the effects of Covid-19 caused them to change their approaches to emergency relief.

The findings also suggest that addressing poverty is only possible through deliberate collaboration and the development of trusting relationships among all stakeholders and community members, as more holistic and focused strategies can be developed and are easier to implement because no one is imposing their ideas on the community on the ground. Respondents seem to have learned that charity work can foster a dependence mentality among recipients and is difficult to maintain, so services should concentrate on assisting them in

becoming more self-sufficient. They also seem to have realized that they need to include community members in their work to promote community enforcement and cooperation. They have, however, struggled to focus their intervention strategies due to the vastness of the need, making it difficult to track performance and impact.

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