



Urban Youth Engagement with Community Gardening Initiatives in South African Cities: A Mixed Methods Impact Study on Empowerment Levels

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Abstract

Urban youth engagement in community gardening initiatives has been identified as a potential pathway for empowerment, particularly in South African cities where such programmes are increasingly prevalent. A mixed-methods approach combining surveys with ethnographic observations is employed. Data collection includes structured interviews, focus groups, and participant observation in six selected cities. Participants reported a significant increase (34%) in self-reported empowerment levels following engagement in community gardening initiatives over the study period. The findings suggest that community gardens can serve as effective platforms for youth empowerment, though further research is needed to explore long-term effects and scalability. Policy makers should consider integrating such programmes into existing youth development frameworks and monitor their impact more systematically.

Keywords: *Sub-Saharan, African, ethnographic, research, cultural, social anthropology, qualitative*

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