
The Role of Ghana's Planting for Food and Jobs Policy in Local Economic Development

Jemima Jennifer Acquah Donkoh*

**University of Ghana, Legon, Ghana.*

Corresponding Email: jemimadonkoh24@gmail.com

Received: 02 February 2024

Accepted: 19 April 2024

Published: 03 June 2024

Abstract: This study investigates the role of Planting for Food and Jobs in local economic development. Specifically, it assessed challenges faced by planting for food and jobs in local economic development, and how planting for food and jobs has affected Ghana's local economic development. The study adopted the interpretive paradigm and the case study approach to emphasize how Planting for Food and Jobs affects local economic development from the participant's point of view and perception of reality. The study employed both qualitative and quantitative methods and was conducted in Ghana. The study found that the program's challenges with service delivery can be attributed to a lack of government financing, which has also led to other issues including the failure of various programs that were intended to promote development. Findings revealed that the creation of jobs through Planting for Food and Jobs has increased the number of farmers, which has a direct impact on the pace of output. The introduction of the program has helped farmers improve their businesses and provided opportunities for individuals to engage in farming, which led to a minor improvement in the status of the local economy. It is then recommended that the Government should support the program with enough funds to increase the program's local economic development potential.

Keywords: *Economic Development, Food and Jobs.*

1. INTRODUCTION

A study conducted by [1] asserts that amid several food insecurities and scarcity in some parts of the country, and higher food prices, the flagship program was dubbed the "Planting for Food and Jobs. Studies conducted by [2], [3], [4], and [5] revealed that Planting for Food and Jobs is a program that focuses on providing farmers with input subsidizes, extension in pest management and other agricultural services to improve the annual or seasonal production of farmers and also improve the welfare of the farmers. Studies conducted by [6] and [7] assert that planting for food and jobs may more frequently result in surging poverty as well as

development differences between areas in which it has been implemented. This is because agricultural areas are more severely affected by the issue of active engagement than urban areas are. Despite the current food price increases and food insecurity, the Planting for Food and Jobs continues to function to address food shortage concerns, cut back on the importation of essential food items, and boost exports to nearby countries to strengthen the cedi [8]. Although it has been demonstrated observationally that there is a positive link between Planting for Food and Jobs and economic development, [4], [1], and [5] acknowledge that there is a significant correlation between Planting for Food and Jobs and economic development. Strengthening relevant farmers may help tremendously with development. Even studies of local economic development have largely been conducted outside and in emerging nations, leaving a huge portion of Africa unexplored for investigation. Hence, it is encouraging to learn that Ghana, in particular, will serve as the setting for this study project's implementation. Thus, it is important to quantify, access, and investigate how Planting for Food and Jobs is affecting local economic development by utilizing data from Ghana within the larger framework of the national economy and using a qualitative technique to comprehend in depth the numerous elements of this phenomenon.

The overall objective of this study is to investigate the role of Planting for Food and Jobs on local economic development. To achieve this, the specific objectives.

1. To investigate challenges faced by planting for food and jobs in local economic development.
2. To analyse how planting for food and jobs has affected Ghana's local economic development.

2. RELATED WORKS

A study conducted by [3] developed an impact assessment methodology for PFJ that is easy for the government to implement by combining data from several public sources and independent reviews. The technique is straightforward and efficient. It may also be easily modified to fit various situations. Based on the model results, maize and rice production levels are almost 40% greater than they would have been if PFJ hadn't been implemented, which greatly increases Ghana's access to food and calories. Nonetheless, there is ample opportunity to enhance efficiency, which would augment the return on investment.

Also, a study conducted by [2] investigated the impact of Planting for Food and Jobs (PFJ), the agricultural strategy of the Ghanaian government, on the wellbeing and productivity of rice farmers in the northern region of the country. The study made use of survey information gathered from project participants who farmed rice throughout the 2018 growing season, including beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries. After selecting respondents at random, the data were examined empirically using the local average treatment effect and inverse propensity weighting estimation. The findings show that while farm expenditures have significantly decreased, monthly spending per capita has increased, and family income poverty has decreased, there has been a negligible gain in income levels from rice production. The results show that the agricultural methods used in the Planting for Food and Jobs initiative have a favourable effect on the welfare and productivity of rice farmers in Northern Ghana.

3. METHODOLOGY

The interpretive paradigm was used in this study, the in-depth interviews allowed for subjectivity in the research, and the interpretive research philosophy was crucial in producing the in-depth analysis of the phenomenon (Planting for Food and Jobs) in local economic development. The qualitative method approach was mostly used in the study since it allowed for a full analysis of the problem. The goal of qualitative research is to collect and examine non-numerical data to comprehend the administration of Planting for Food and Jobs.

A case study approach was taken for this study. The study's emphasis on how Planting for Food and Jobs affects local economic development from the participant's point of view and perception of reality was mirrored in the adoption of this inquiry design.

The population of the study are officers who participated in Planting for Food and Jobs, placing them in a better position to grasp and comprehend the difficulties and to provide the data required for this study. The Ministry of Food and Agriculture's Agricultural Extension Officer and Extension Agents were among the respondents.

Because the qualitative approach is non-probability based, this study specifically employed the purposive sampling methodology, to purposeful select information based on the traits the respondents possesses. Each selection sample technique was chosen with a specific goal in mind. While this technique did provide answers for how each person was affected, it did not provide results for how the population as a whole was affected. To compare different locations, the purposive sample's goal is employed to narrow down on site characteristics. The Ministry of Food and Agriculture's top officials made up the target demographic, and they were purposefully chosen. Nevertheless, the researcher chose six (6) agricultural officers and four (4) administrators of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture. Ten (10) respondents in total took part in the survey.

The respondents were interviewed by the researcher with closed- and open-ended interview questions at their workplaces. The interview provided them with the chance to respond to the research's questions and other pertinent issues about Planting for Food and Jobs and its roles in local development.

Thematic analysis was used in this study to analyze the data since it is the most typical type of analysis used in qualitative research and focuses on identifying and examining the patterns of data collection for themes. The themes were developed from the objectives of the research study, namely;

1. Challenges faced by planting for food and jobs in local economic development.
2. How planting for food and jobs has affected Ghana's local economic development.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings are organized into themes, such as the current goals of Ghana's "planting for food and jobs" challenges in local economic development and planting for food and jobs influence local economic development in Ghana, as well as a summary of the findings and a conclusion.

Theme 1 – Challenges faced by planting for food and jobs in local economic development

Although they could speak directly about the difficulties they have in putting Planting for Food and Jobs into practice and carrying it out, the participants' response rate was low. Although considered a strategic strategy to alleviate the poverty, unemployment, and inequities that the majority of local farmers face, the study showed that Planting for Food and Jobs has a restricted budget. These claims show that agricultural officials and farmers, confront significant obstacles that hinder the effective execution of Planting for Food and Jobs. It is obvious that there is still a dearth of the skills necessary to drive growth and development, administrative ability, and efficient execution of development policy frameworks, and this negatively impacts development.

Participant 1: stated that *“There are many challenges; first of all, the economy has slowed down so the economic downturn is affecting many things such our budget which is currently in deficiency. It is evident that resources allocated for MOFA is not enough for the programme”*.

Participant 3 mentioned that: *“Though funds relate to activities in line with objectives, they are not enough to cover all the demands of farmers”*.

The extension officers' comments indicate that their problems are not just financial; they are also having problems with service delivery, which is a side consequence of other problems that have not yet been resolved. Because the economy has slowed down as a result of the unresolved issues, poverty, unemployment, and inequality have grown. It might be argued that the program's service delivery issues are driven by a lack of government financing, which has also led to other issues including the failure of other programs intended to promote development. According to Participants 3, 7, 8, and 10, planting for food and jobs is intended to create income and so achieve its goal or benefit. Nevertheless, if bad management or an inability to utilize resources effectively and efficiently prevails, the project's goals and objectives will not be achieved.

Participant 2: stated that: *“One major challenge with this program is unfair distribution of funds and food commodities. It has become a thing for political leaders deviating the purpose of the program, Planting for Food and Jobs has been politicized which is causing more harm than good.”*

Lack of maintenance funds and bad relations between political leaders and the general public were the primary problems. The participants demonstrated that since certain public authorities politicize LED programs, poor service delivery and prejudice result. As a result, farmers lack the motivation to participate in Planting for Food and Jobs projects. Several of the respondents claimed that while they were aware of Planting for Food and Jobs and its potential advantages, accessing them to take part and profit from them such as employment was the main obstacle. According to the findings from the respondents, Planting for Food and Jobs was often recorded, but the bad aspect was a lack of sound implementation methods and adequate funding to carry them out. The results support the claim that governments failed to effectively coordinate farmers to work together to combat poverty and ultimately eradicate it. Farmers do not attend Planting for Food and Jobs events, according to extension staff, since they believe the organization is only interested in serving the demands of political institutions. As a result, it is more challenging for the government to propose and put into practice planting for food and jobs, a program that will benefit all farmers and aim to boost the local economy.

Theme 2 - how planting for food and jobs have affected Ghana's local economic development

The respondent's answers propose that methods like infrastructure and employment should be taken into account to enhance Planting for Food and Jobs to comprehend how it supports local economic growth. Also, conclusions from this study's findings emphasize that LED is the process by which the general public and other stakeholders come together to improve the circumstances for Ghana's economic growth and employment creation.

Participant 1 mentioned that: *“There has not been project or physical structure provided. It has not brought any impact in the district”*.

Participant 5 also noted that: *“The impact of Planting for Food and Jobs has not significantly improved the local economy”*.

The creation of jobs through Planting for Food and Jobs has increased the number of farmers, which has a direct impact on the pace of output. When harvest setup and post-harvest management are constructed by Participant 5, infrastructure development under the influence of Planting for Food and Jobs is accomplished. Contrary to earlier claims, Participant 8 stated that planting for food and jobs has assisted the Ghana in building some temporary and permanent infrastructure to support farmers in their endeavors.

Participant 1 mentioned that: *“Planting for Food and Jobs has done badly in terms of job creation. It is the same farmers that has been supported with seedlings to grow more food aside that it has not created any opportunity for the younger ones and the entire people as a whole”*.

Participant 2 mentioned that: *“Post-harvest techniques has maximized human inputs to sustain and harvest enough crops, and technology and initiatives from Planting for Food and Jobs have created enough jobs for innovative agriculture”*.

Participant 3 noted that: *“Planting for Food and Jobs has led to innovative agriculture, extension training and employment, and processing and production jobs”*

Participant 5 mentioned that: *“Planting for Food and Jobs has the tendency of recruiting over 20 percent graduates and recruited skilled agricultural farmers”*.

According to the respondents' opinions, it has been determined that the Planting for Food and Jobs project has the propensity to support young people who are interested in agriculture by opening up jobs for people at home, particularly graduates. Respondents demonstrated a substantial association between Planting for Food and Jobs and jobs, demonstrating that the program's expansion or contraction has a real impact on local job growth. This shows that increasing productivity may not always translate into a rise in the employment rate. This result is unexpected considering that the goals of Planting for Food and Jobs are typically put in the hands of people with little resources and perhaps no outside help to grow their companies and open up job opportunities for others.

Participant 3 mentioned that: *“The local economy has been sustainable under the introduction of Planting for Food and Jobs. The regulation of local markets especially target on goods and item prices from Agriculture has not seen a major increase along the year of pandemics and conflict internationally”*.

The participants also argued that the introduction of Planting for Food and Jobs helped farmers improve their businesses and provided opportunities for individuals to engage in farming, which led to a minor improvement in the status of the local economy. The district's economy has benefited from the rice industry and other farms. Participants 1 and 2 also noted that, despite the micro economy's stress from unforeseen occurrences, the local economy has remained sustainable and is still at a standstill with no sign of any kind of progress.

Discussion

The findings above are supported by [1], who found that Planting for Food and Jobs increases food security in rural regions while also creating jobs. Planting for Food and Jobs, which is based on the aforementioned concepts, seeks to address economic failures by lowering obstacles to employment, especially for those who are most in need of assistance. Based on these presumptions, Planting for Food and Jobs is more appropriately compared to a strategy used to promote farming as a moral and successful industry. According to [9], Planting for Food and Jobs must provide all farmers with comprehensive support and coordination following Ghanaian government regulations governing local area duties. A study conducted by [5] contend that the lack of funding for Planting for Food and Jobs undermines the intended development goals and that this is a result of extension officers' inability to effectively assist local farmers when they need help with Planting for Food and Jobs projects because of a lack of funding. In a larger context, [10] contend that farmers face a range of challenges, including a lack of qualified laborers, which is one of the barriers to reducing LED as it relates to planting for food and jobs. According to [4], the Ministry of Food and Agriculture should keep creating initiatives to engage in planning and development activities effectively and efficiently and to make sure that experienced people are retained in regional fields like agriculture. According to [11], empowerment should be used as a tactic to encourage LED activities and the shaping of LED by local authorities in collaboration with specific businesses or economic institutions. To find sustainable and sustainable ways to promote socio-economic development and to improve quality of life through poverty alleviation and open job opportunities, local areas should be strategic, developmental, and dedicated to working with citizens, civil society organizations, as well as private sectors. This claim is corroborated by research by [12], and [13], which found that, in a more typical setting, the majority of LED initiatives do not see obvious impacts on the physical structure of communities and do not, thus, produce a meaningful change. The creation of jobs through Planting for Food and Jobs has increased the number of farmers, which has a direct impact on the pace of output. The failure might be caused by one or a combination of factors, such as resistance to change, an ineffective process, a lack of institutional support, bad timing, etc., according to [14]. But, it's possible that transformation initiatives ultimately failed due to a lack of funding and the politicization of the program, as claimed by several responders. Also, some foods are available and affordable, which encourages more graduates to get more active in planting for food and jobs. This is consistent with the findings of [9], who found that efficient local development can narrow the gap between rich and poor areas, increase the number of locally created businesses and jobs, boost overall private sector investment, enhance communication between investors and developers, and boost the coherence and confidence of local economic strategies. This finding is consistent with [15] findings that LED programs do have a major influence on job creation. Nevertheless, this result runs counter to

that of [16], whose study indicates a strong and adverse association between LED programs and local job growth. This finding implies that neither the program nor poverty reduction is impacted by the creation of new jobs. This result was achieved because there was a considerable correlation between Planting for Food and Jobs performance and the growth of local employment. The result is plausible since organizations like MoFA, whose major objective is to support agriculture by creating employment, have fallen short over time, and contrary to what [9] claim. The outcome also differs from that of [15], who think that the LED strategy can result in the establishment of local jobs, lowering poverty over time. When markets are not functioning properly, planting for food and jobs may be very helpful. A study conducted by [6] claim that they are more interested in whose interests the market serves than whether or not market mechanisms are effective.

5. CONCLUSION

The results of the study have demonstrated that the challenges that planting for food and jobs is experiencing are a result of a lack of enough financial resources, a budget that is too small to effectively implement the plan, a lack of management based on the program's excessive politicization, and other factors. The study concluded by recommending that Planting for Food and Jobs be enhanced and to support training programs as well as the expansion and retention of employment, based on the data gathered and important results. In an environment of limited time and resources, the strength of Planting for Food and Jobs is its ability to tap into professional and community networks for resources, advice, and the exchange of partnerships, which will result in successful local economic development. Improving Planting for Food and Jobs means being able to foster and support productive relationships and effective partnerships.

6. REFERENCES

1. K. Pauw, G. Rosenbach and J. Thurlow, "Development Strategy, Agri-food System Transformation, and Job Creation: Prospects for the "Planting for Food and Jobs" Initiative in Ghana. Presented at the 21st Annual Conference on Global Economic," 2018.
2. M. Tanko, S. Ismaila and S. A. Sadiq, "Planting for Food and Jobs (PFJ): A panacea for productivity and welfare of rice farmers in Northern Ghana.," *Cogent Economics & Finance*, vol. 7, no. 1, 2019.
3. K. Pauw, "A review of Ghana's planting for food and jobs program: implementation, impacts, benefits, and costs," *Food Security*, 2022.
4. S. Ismaila and M. Tanko, "Exploring relative deprivation theory in the rice industry: Planting for Food and Jobs (PFJ) in northern Ghana.," *Technology in Society*, p. 65, 2021.
5. I. G. K. Ansah, M. Lambongang and S. A. Donkoh, "Ghana's Planting for Food and Jobs Programme: A Look at the Role of Capability in Farmers' Participation.," *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities*, vol. 21, no. 2, pp. 161-182, 2020.

6. D. G. Torvikey, K. O. Tsekpo and A. Afram, "Dynamics of Poverty and Inequality among Crop Farmers in Ghana.," UDS International Journal of Development, vol. 6, no. 2, p. 97–113, 2019.
7. W. Adzawla, S. B. Azumah, P. Y. Anani and S. A. Donkoh, Gender perspectives of climate change adaptation in two selected districts of Ghana., vol. 5, Heliyon, 2019, p. 11.
8. N. Tekuni, G. H. Kyere, S. A. Anang and N. O. Mensah, "Robustness of food security and policy trust on smallholder participation in Ghana's planting for food and jobs programme.," African Journal of Agricultural Research, vol. 17, no. 12, p. 1517–1523, 2021.
9. E. B. Ali, E. B. Agyekum and P. Adadi, "Agriculture for Sustainable Development: A SWOT-AHP Assessment of Ghana's Planting for Food and Jobs Initiative.," Sustainability, vol. 13, no. 2, p. 638, 2021.
10. C. Ragasa, S. K. Agyakwah, R. Asmah, E. T.-D. Mensah, S. Amewu and M. Oyih, "Accelerating pond aquaculture development and resilience beyond COVID: Ensuring food and jobs in Ghana.," Aquaculture, p. 547, 2022.
11. M. Hoedoafia and Akosua., "Private Sector Development in Ghana: An Overview.," 2019.
12. K. Birkhölzer, "Local economic development. Local Economy.," The Journal of the Local Economy Policy Unit, vol. 14, no. 1, pp. 43-54, 1999.
13. E. Nel, "Local Economic Development: A Review and Assessment of its Current Status in South Africa.," Urban Studies, vol. 38, no. 7, p. 1003–1024, 2001.
14. F. Drummond and J. Snowball, "Cultural Clusters as a Local Economic Development Strategy in Rural Small-Town Areas: Sarah Baartman District in South Africa.," Bulletin of Geography. Socio-Economic Series, vol. 43, no. 43, pp. 107-119, 2019.
15. S. Asher and P. Novosad, "Rural Roads and Local Economic Development.," American Economic Review, vol. 110, no. 3, pp. 797-823, 2020.
16. D. Fu, "The Reform Practice of Integrating "Entrepreneurship in Wenzhou" Into Three Classes' to Improve Local Employment and Entrepreneurship Rate: A Case Study of Wenzhou Polytechnic.," International Journal of Education and Humanities, vol. 5, no. 2, p. 138, 2022.