

Food Environments in Africa: Addressing Malnutrition Using A Syndemics Approach (Foodsamsa)



The FoodSAMSA consortium (<https://foodsamsa.samrc.ac.za/>)

The double burden of malnutrition in South Africa

Double Burden of Malnutrition

Co-existence and interaction of high rates of undernutrition (stunting, wasting, underweight, micronutrient deficiencies) with high rates of overweight, obesity, or diet-related NCDs, at the population, household and/or individual level

Nutritional situation in South Africa

27%
of children
<5 years are stunted

31%
of women
>15 years are anemic

54%
of adults are
overweight or obese

Aim of the FoodSAMSA project

Addressing the Double Burden of Malnutrition in South Africa with a multi-level approach, by assessing its determinants and by exploring interventions at the macro-(policy), meso-(community), and micro-(individual) level.



WP1: Complex systems mapping

Aim & Method

- Identifying drivers and levers of the double burden of malnutrition at the individual/ household (micro-), and the community/local policy (meso-) level in the Cape Town metro.

35

in-depth interviews with

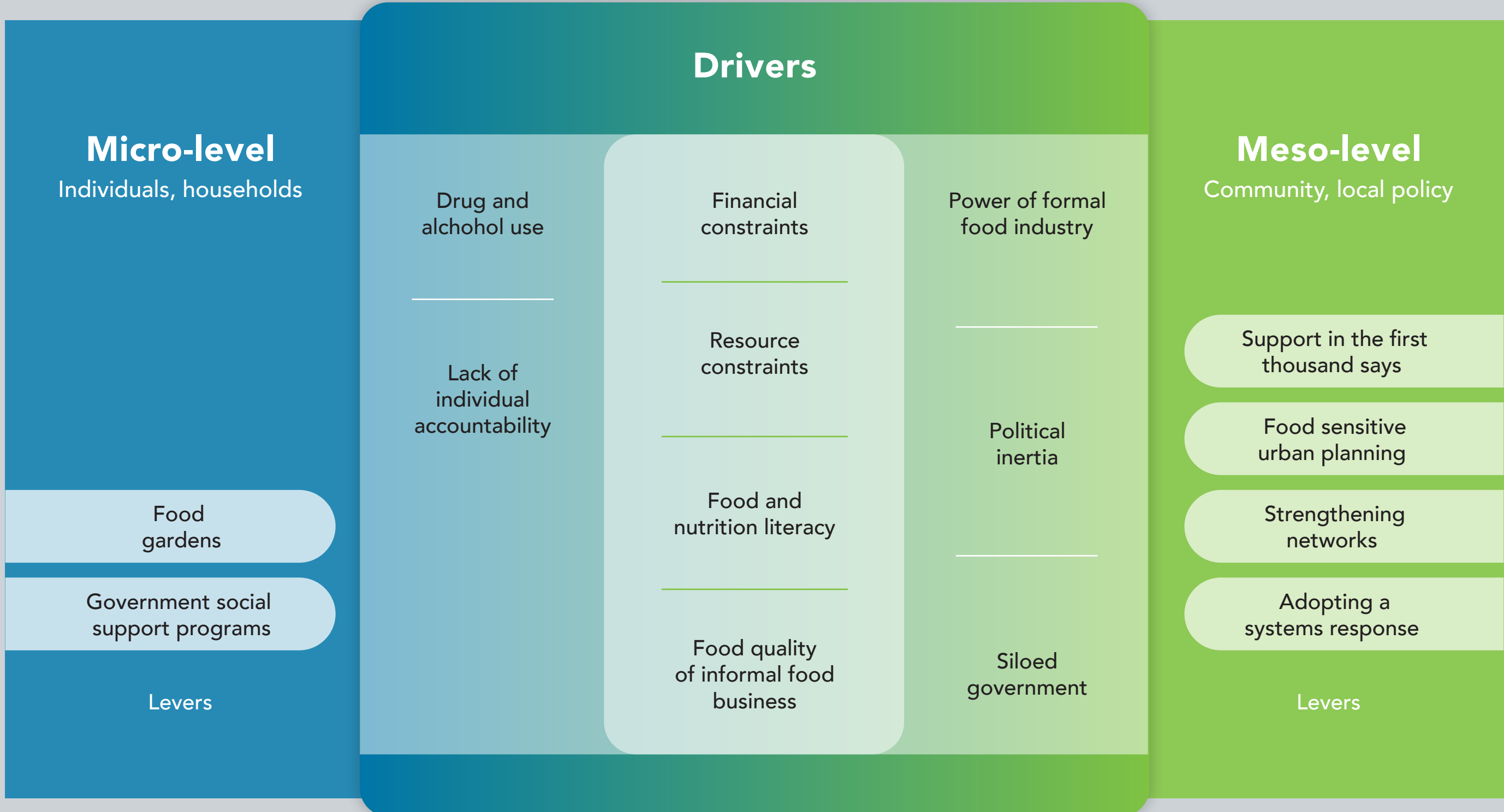
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community health workers, and

14

researchers, city and provincial government employees, civil society representatives, followed by group model building.

Main Findings



WP2: Mapping and benchmarking of formal food industry policies

Aim & Method

- To identify and select relevant indicators regarding the role of the formal food industry in addressing the double burden of malnutrition through a systematic review followed by a Delphi study with 30 experts.
- Assess and benchmark the voluntary commitments and practices of the 29 largest food and beverage companies (by market share) operating in South Africa, using the INFORMAS Business Impact Assessment on Obesity and Population-level Nutrition (BIA-Obesity) across 7 domains.

Main Findings

SA companies: Potential for substantial improvements in the domains of product formulation, nutrition labelling, promotion practices, and product pricing, availability and positioning.

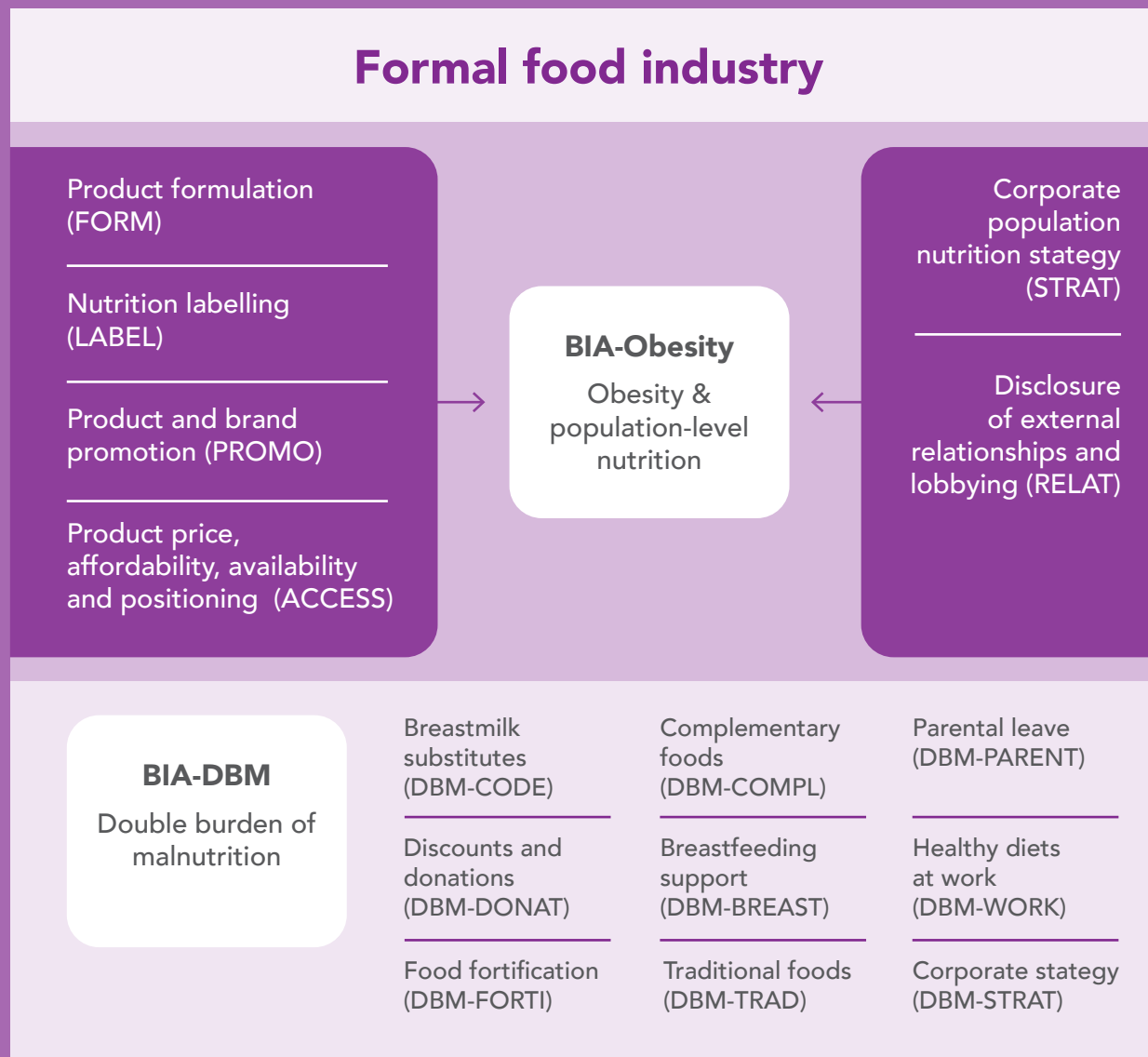


Figure 3: BIA-Obesity tool and BIA-DBM extension for countries with a double burden of malnutrition (= 7 assessment domains)

WP3: Mapping and benchmarking of public nutrition policies

Aim & Method

- Assessing the extent of implementation of healthy food environment public policies in South Africa using the INFORMAS Healthy Food Environment Policy Index (Food-EPI) protocol across 60 good practice indicators
- Invitation of 23 national experts from government, academia, and civil society to benchmark and develop priority actions

Main Findings

72%
of indicators were rated
very low to low levels
of implementation

Areas with higher level of implementation included Food Labeling, Food Provision, and Food Composition

Improvement of mean level of implementation since 2016

10 priority actions for the South African government:



Figure 1: FoodSAMSA project overview

Macro level: Policy determinants

- WP2: Mapping and benchmarking of formal food industry policies (BIA-Obesity)
- WP3: Mapping and benchmarking of public nutrition policies (Food-EPI)

Meso level: Community determinants

- WP4: Assessing community food environments
- WP5: Improving the informal food business / Spaza shops environment (Informal Food Business Model)

Micro level: (Inter-)Personal determinants

- WP6: Leveraging digital solutions (multi-media edutainment intervention) and local social networks (Community Health Worker Training)

WP1: Complex systems mapping

WP7: Capacity and network building

WP8: Integrated knowledge translation

WP4: Assessing community food environments

Aim & Method

- Mapping the outdoor food and beverage advertising environment of three townships in Cape Town (Gugulethu, Kensington, Nyanga)
- Direct observation and documentation of ads in the field following the INFORMAS Outdoor Food Advertising Protocol – mapping of ads with QGIS software.

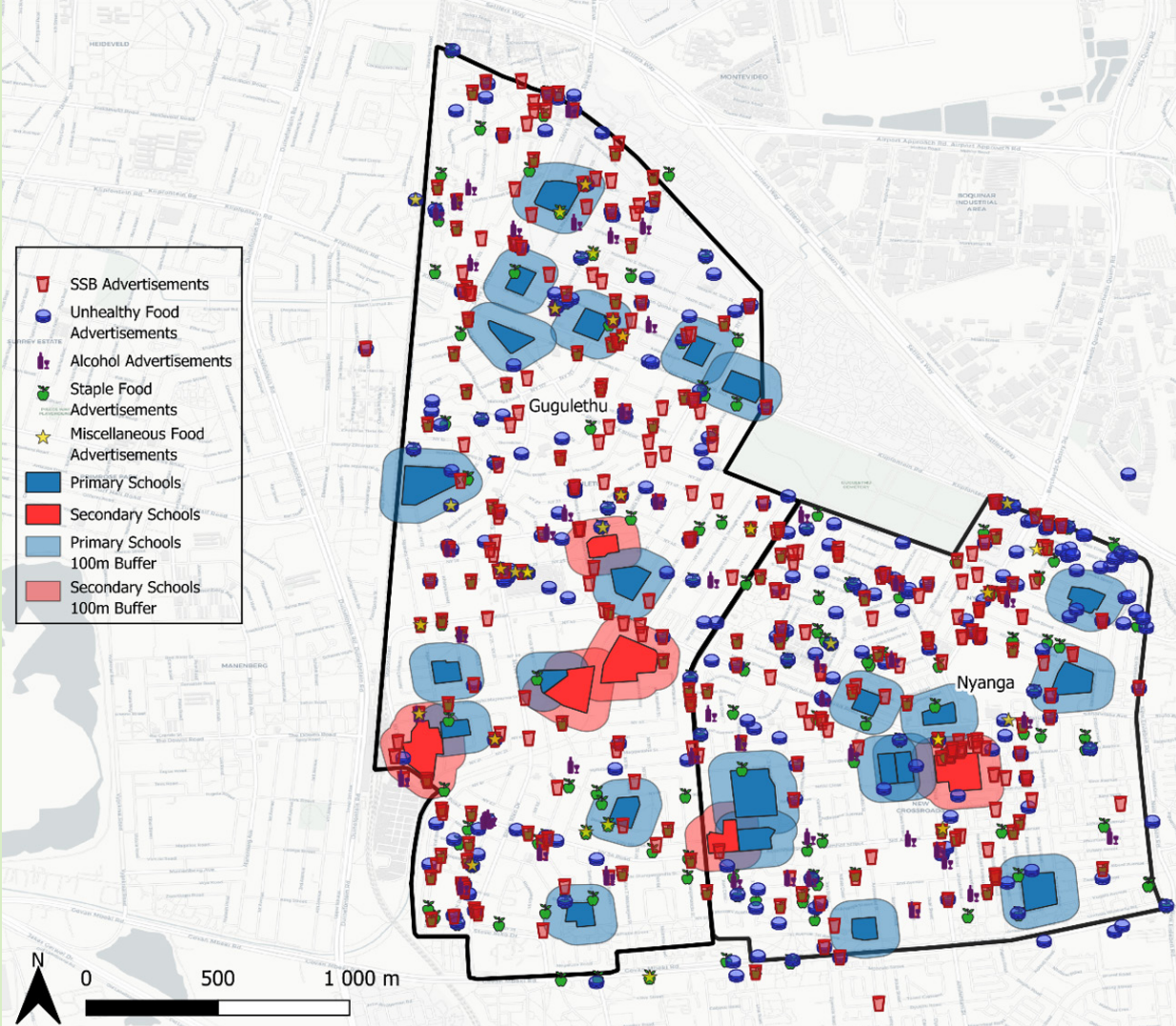


Figure 4: Outdoor food and beverage advertisements in Gugulethu and Nyanga

WP5: Improving the informal food business / spaza shops environment

Aim & Method

- Provide evidence of the value of a new Informal Food Business Model for empowering informal food entrepreneurs to run financially sustainable and health-compliant businesses that encourage healthier food choices for consumers
- Secondary data analysis, Spaza shop mapping and observations, Spaza shop owner and consumer surveys, Focus group discussion and in-depth interviews

Main Findings

- Mapping of 368 Spaza shops in the three townships
- Spaza shop owners/shopkeepers mostly male (68%) and foreign nationals (86%)
- Shops operated 7 days a week for > 8 hours per day
- < 50 of shops have certificate of acceptability by the DoH
- Most frequent available items: rice, sweets & chocolates, milk, cooking oil, soft & energy drinks, water, bread

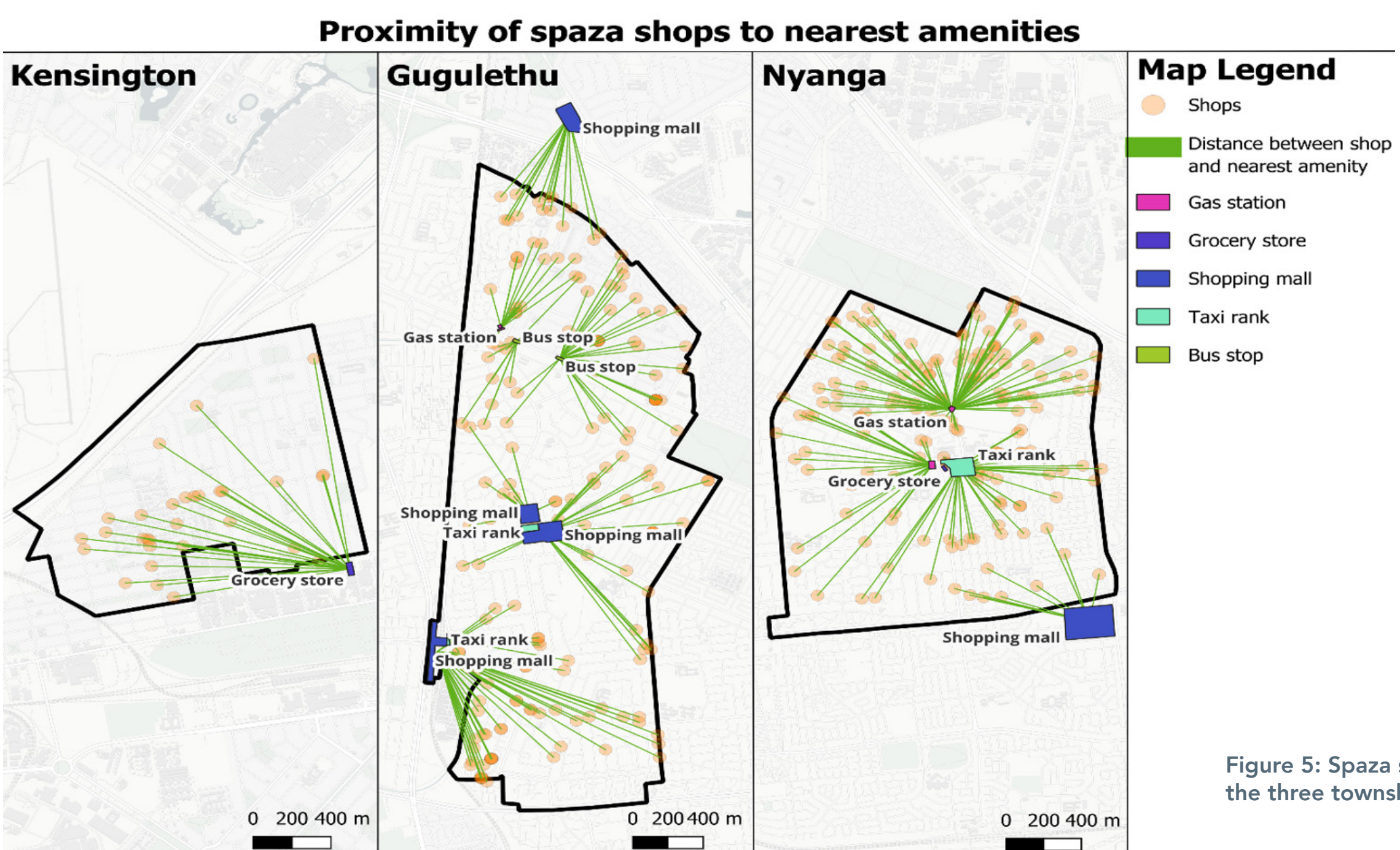


Figure 5: Spaza shop mapping and spatial analysis for the three townships Kensington, Gugulethu and Nyanga

WP6: Leveraging digital solutions

Aim & Method

- Development of an acceptable, suitable, and feasible Multi-Media Edutainment intervention to improve the food and nutrition literacy of community health workers (CHWs)
- Nutrition and health messages distributed through WhatsApp & SMS, conveyed through entertaining short stories in the form of comic booklets and animation videos
- Focus Group Discussions with 30 CHWs to receive feedback on their perceptions and acceptability of the materials

Main Findings

CHWs found the materials to be user-friendly, easy to understand, and generally acceptable with regard to time and language

MAXIMIZE YOUR MONEY

Make your money work for you and your family.

THEME 1

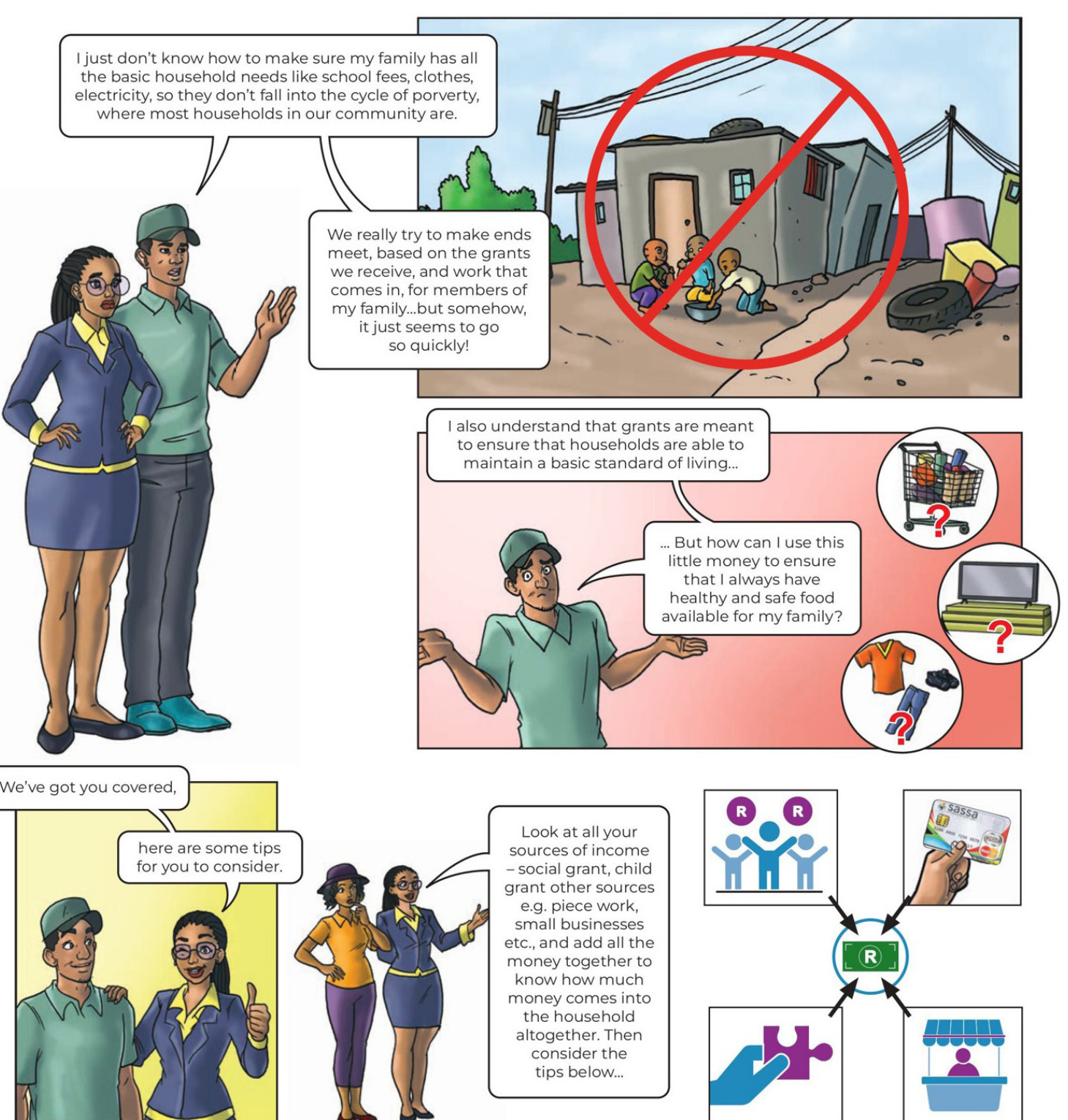


Figure 6: Comic booklet developed as part of the Multi-Media Edutainment intervention