

Call for Contributions to the

ESR

REVIEW

Economic & Social Rights Review in Africa

ENSURING RIGHTS MAKE REAL CHANGE

The Right to Food and Nutrition Through a Public Health Lens: What Does Food Justice Look Like?

The Socio-Economic Rights Project (SERP) at the Dullah Omar Institute (DOI), University of the Western Cape invites contributions for the ESR Review, a quarterly publication aimed at informing and educating politicians, policymakers, NGOs, academics, and legal practitioners about key developments in socio-economic rights at both national and international levels.

The ESR Review also seeks to stimulate innovative thinking about how to advance these rights as a tool for poverty alleviation in South Africa and abroad. Therefore, relevant experiences or developments in other countries are welcomed. The upcoming ESR Review will focus on the intersection between the right to food, nutrition, and health.

Key Themes and Topics

Despite South Africa's strong commitment to human rights, its obligations under several international and regional instruments, and a constitutional framework that explicitly protects socio-economic rights, including the right to food, roughly [25 per cent](#) of South Africans still struggle daily to access adequate food and nutrition. At the same time, almost [50 per cent](#) of South African adults, and roughly [13 per cent](#) of children under five are now overweight or obese.

Addressing this double burden of malnutrition requires a public health approach, encompassing a range of integrated legislative measures, comprehensive policies, and targeted investments to effect change. Consequently, this ESR Review seeks to explore what a human rights-based approach to the right to food and nutrition should entail, highlighting both progress and ongoing challenges within South Africa's food system. The upcoming ESR Review will focus on key developments aimed at improving food and nutrition access and outcomes, focusing on the socio-economic implications thereof.

This call for contributions also aims to enhance the understanding of the state's obligations concerning the right to food, nutrition, and health, thereby contributing to the broader dialogue surrounding food justice in South Africa.

In addition, the rising increase of diet-related non-communicable diseases (NCDs) underscores the urgent need for a more equitable food system and systemic reform. Accordingly, this ESR Review will also investigate the social, commercial, and political determinants of health, recognising that the prevalence of diet-related NCDs is influenced by factors beyond the health system. This approach will help assess where progress has been made, and identify further opportunities to strengthen legal, policy, and regulatory measures aimed at creating a healthier food environment.

In this context, we invite articles that explore and critically examine the human rights and constitutional commitments concerning the right to food, nutrition, and health, with the aim of creating a more equitable food system and ensuring adequate access to food and nutrition for all. 'Still, South Africa suffers from high levels of hunger, food insecurity, and obesity - all of which are consequences of the country's broken food system. Better food systems are crucial for achieving everyone's right to food' - [Healthy Living Alliance](#).



Conceptual Themes

1. Law, Human Rights and the Right to Food

- a) Conceptualise a human rights framework for the right to food - what does this look like in policy and practice?
- b) The role of constitutional and legal frameworks in ensuring food and nutrition security.
- c) Discuss key components of human rights-based approaches in response to the right to food: challenges, opportunities, and lessons.
- d) Examine how food and nutrition insecurity exacerbate social and economic inequalities, especially for vulnerable and marginalised populations.

2. The Intersection Between the Right to Food, Nutrition and Health

- a) Explore the link between the right to food, nutrition, and health. How could state obligations under these frameworks create more equitable food systems?
- b) Focusing on the rise in overweight, obesity, and diet-related NCDs, what short-term and long-term legal strategies can be put in place to help reduce this burden?
- c) What role could National Health Insurance play in ensuring equitable access to health care for vulnerable and marginalised groups?
- d) Analyse preventative health care and health promotion strategies concerning food, nutrition, and diet-related NCDs.
- e) Investigate the intersection between socio-economic status, gender, physical ability, and the right to food and nutrition.

3. Conceptualising Food Justice in South Africa: Availability Versus Accessibility

- a) Improving equitable access to nutritious, affordable, and sustainable food - advocating for 'food justice' as part of the broader commitment to social justice in South Africa.
- b) Identify successful case studies of grassroots movements, community-based solutions, and advocacy efforts to improve food and nutrition outcomes.

4. Social, Commercial, and Political Determinants of Health

- a) Unpack the underlying determinants of health and related risk factors.

- b) Explore the impact of issues such as poverty, inequality, globalisation, and climate change on food and nutrition outcomes, including diet-related NCDs.
- c) Challenge the current *status quo* of corporate control and influence over the food system, to improve food and beverage industry accountability and promote equitable and sustainable business practices that benefit producers and consumers.

5. Evaluating Legal, Regulatory, and Fiscal Measures to Create Healthier Food Environments

- a) Review and assess measures aimed at reducing the consumption of unhealthy foods: the Health Promotion Levy and front-of-pack warning labels (Draft Regulation R3337).
- b) Identify opportunities for improving existing interventions and social security mechanisms: Food Assistance Programmes including food parcels and vouchers, the National School Nutrition Programme, social grants, and food procurement in public institutions.

6. The Role of Parliament, the Judiciary, and the Executive in Responding to the Non-communicable Diseases Epidemic

- a) Examine the roles and responsibilities across the three branches of government in creating a more equitable public health system.

7. The Right to Food in Africa: Strengthening Regional Mechanisms

- a) Examine the role of regional human rights bodies in ensuring accountability towards realising the right to food and nutrition, including addressing diet-related NCDs.
- b) Comparative analysis of laws, policies, and regulations on the right to food and nutrition in African countries.

8. Reflections on Contemporary Debates and States' Responses to Public Health Epidemics

- a) Discuss the challenges and opportunities of prioritising food and health as a tool for poverty alleviation.
- b) Using a public health lens, how could more equitable food systems help ensure all individuals have an opportunity to lead healthy lives?

Writing Guidelines

1. Article Length

- Articles should be no longer than 3,000 words. Contributions for the case review should be 2,500 words; policy developments and legislation analysis should be 1,500 words; events section should be 1,500 words; and the publications (book review) section should be 1,000 words.

2. Content and Language

- Contributions should preferably articulate and amplify the voice of the author.
- Contributions should be written in a simple, clear style, avoiding technical language and legal jargon where possible, ensuring accessibility for both legal practitioners and grassroots human rights organisations.
- Contributions should be opinion pieces or serve an advocacy function, rather than simply stating legal principles or being purely descriptive.
- Contributions should not be a marketing exercise for a particular project or programme.
- Contributions should lean towards offering opinion

pieces or fulfilling an advocacy role, as opposed to merely presenting legal principles or providing purely descriptive content.

3. References and notes

- No footnotes. Rather try to work explanations into the text.
- Where possible, contributions can use hyperlinks instead of references.
- Use the abbreviated Harvard style of referencing, for example: “Child abuse is rising (Author 1999:10)” or “According to Author (1999:10), child abuse is rising”.
- Keep references to the absolute minimum - preferably only for publications from which direct quotes have been taken, or for backing up potentially contentious statements.
- Provide a list of the key references at the end of the contribution.
- Style related issues: Font: Times New Roman or Arial 11, Spacing: 1,5, Quotes: double quotation marks, Headings: We encourage the use of headings, but they should not go beyond heading 2.

Submission Guidelines

- Send contributions in electronic format (MS Word) to at serp@uwc.ac.za and pknipe@uwc.ac.za - by 18 September 2024.
- **Identification:** Provide your full name and current position. Titles and qualifications are not necessary.
- **Publications:** If the article has been published elsewhere, provide full details, including whether it has been shortened, updated, or substantially changed for the ESR Review and whether the required authorisations have been granted.
- **Contact:** For any questions or further clarifications, please reach out to the editors at serp@uwc.ac.za, and pknipe@uwc.ac.za.

Previous Issues ESR Review are available online at [ESR Review](#) or [Journals.co.za](#)

We look forward to your insightful contributions and to advancing the conversation on law, human rights and non-communicable diseases in Africa