Stephen Devereux

South Africa’s social protection system: comprehensive but incomplete
A technical analysis of South Africa’s social protection system, in terms of its comprehensiveness, should ask 3 questions:

1. What progress has South Africa made towards achieving the 4 guarantees of the Social Protection Floor – income security and health care for all?
2. What are the gaps in horizontal coverage (i.e. progress towards achieving universal income security and access to health care) and vertical coverage (adequacy of benefits, and quality of health care)?
3. What policy interventions or policy reforms are needed to reduce these gaps in horizontal and vertical coverage, thereby achieving socially desired outcomes such as poverty eradication and zero hunger?

A political analysis should ask just 1 question: why do poverty, food insecurity and inequality persist in South Africa, despite its apparently comprehensive social protection system?
The social security staircase

ILO (2010) Extending social security to all
### The Social Protection Floor

#### THE FLOOR: Four essential guarantees
- Access to essential health care for all

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income security children</th>
<th>Assistance unemployed and poor</th>
<th>Income security elderly and disabled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Child Support Grant</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>11,934,065</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Foster Child Grant</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>481,217</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Care Dependency Grant</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>130,572</td>
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#### EPWP I [2004–09]:
- **185,000 full-time jobs**

#### EPWP II [2009–2014]:
- **Target = 400,000+ jobs**

#### Unemployment [2013]:
- **4,700,000 (25%)**

#### EPWP impact <10%.

**Older Person’s Grant**
- 3,196,258

**Disability Grant**
- 1,071,662

**Total beneficiaries** = **16,953,937**

[SASSA, April 2016]
The food security paradox in South Africa

National food availability exceeds needs …

… but 1 in 5 children remain stunted …

… even though 12 million of 18 million children (2 in 3) now receive the Child Support Grant.

Why?
Social grants are not enough

**Multiple users**

- “We are poor, so it ends up being used in the household.”
- “Since most people are not working this money cannot be used on the child alone, but it has to be used on the whole family.”

“This is not for the whole family. It’s for your daughter of 4 years.”

“Do you mean this has to be used for her only? This is crazy. Don’t they know we are all hungry?”

‘*Hunger Eats a Man*’
– Nkosinathi Sithole

**Multiple uses**

- Soap
- Health
- Clothing
- School-fees
- Food
- Transport
- Groceries
- Nappies
- Church
- Pocket-money
- Church
- Debits
- Airtime
- Creche
- Investment
- Cosmetics
- Job-search
- Shoes

DSD et al. 2011

‘He thinks about the amount of the grant, trying to ascertain its actual worth to a family of four. “If people lived only by eating, this money would still be small.”’

Child Support Grant = **R350** (April 2016)

Cost of an adequate, balanced diet for a young child = **R547**

CSG covers only **64%** of food needs – if all CSG cash is spent on food, and only on that child.

PACSA 2016
Is this a success story?

Child Support Grant beneficiaries 1998 to 2014
“The people shall share in the country’s wealth!”

Freedom Charter