



# Going to scale

A Randomised Community Trial to Determine the Cost-Effectiveness of Alternative Interventions to Support Highly Vulnerable Children and Families in the Context of HIV, AIDS and Poverty

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# Purpose of presentation

- *Going to Scale* is a research project aimed at generating useable knowledge about how children in South Africa, affected by the co-occurring crisis of poverty, HIV and AIDS, can best be assisted at scale
- Purpose of this presentation is to
  - Share *Going to Scale* proposed design and significance
  - Gather insights about how it can be enhanced to improve potential for the project to provide information that can be used to improve support for vulnerable children

# Structure of presentation

- Context and rationale
- Research design
- Method, questions and value of research stages
- Funding and collaborators
- Ethical issues
- Conclusion

# Context and rationale

- Much progress in expansion of support for children affected by poverty and other factors
  - Especially in income support via the unconditional Child Support Grant (CSG)
- But child poverty remains extensive and deep
  - Recent research based on Income and Expenditure Survey 2005 which used income per adult equivalent as the measure find 61.5% of South African children to be poor
  - Poverty headcount higher in some provinces:
    - Eastern Cape 75%
    - Limpopo 74,5%
    - KwaZulu-Natal 70.5%

# Context and rationale

- Research on relationship between income, services and child outcomes limited and shows:
  - Child poverty multi-dimensional - those in bottom income deciles have less access to services, poorer quality services and poorer outcomes.
- HIV and AIDS compounding difficulties of poor children
  - Estimates are that 14% of all children age 2-18 years have lost one or both parents
  - Adult illness and death is affecting child security, health and schooling

# Context and rationale

- Cash transfers have emerged at international level as a strong policy option to mitigate the combined effects of poverty and HIV and AIDS on children
- SA is one of the countries that has illustrated most starkly the potential of income support to alleviate poverty and promote child development



# Context and rationale

- Research shown CSG helps but has limitations
  - Take up is high – over 80% in most provinces
  - CSG a vital source of income in households that fall in bottom two income quintiles
  - CSG is associated with better child nutrition outcomes and improve school attendance

But

- Large numbers still not accessing
- Insufficient integration with other measures
- Critical questions about design, reach and impact of CSG and correlation between child poverty, other adverse experiences and child outcomes remain unanswered

# Context and rationale

- A recent development, that makes *Going to Scale* particularly valuable, is government indication that it is considering introducing conditions for the CSG
- This potential policy shift first signalled in the 2006 Regulations in terms of the Social Assistance Act 13 of 2004
- More recently by the Finance Minister in the 2008 Budget Speech



# Context and rationale

*“The Minister of Social Development has indicated the need to review eligibility criteria or conditions, in line with practice in many countries, aimed at reinforcing the responsibilities of caregivers towards benefiting children. These might include regular school attendance, for example, or immunization, of children in keeping with health requirements. There is rightly public interest in these matters and we should ask this House to lead an active debate”*

*(Minister of Finance, Budget Speech 2008:9-10).*

# Context and rationale

- Is an urgent need for research on this potential conditionality policy shift
- Whilst linkage of income transfers to conditions that promote human capital development is a major international trend since mid 1980s no scientific research to date in South Africa on cost-benefit of introducing conditions in CSG
- Also no scientific evidence from any other country demonstrating that a conditional programme is more cost-effective than an unconditional cash transfer programme

# Research design

- *Going to scale* is a large scale, medium-term scientifically rigorous intervention study which aims to test
  - What the barriers to income support and services amongst vulnerable children are and how they can be addressed
  - The comparative costs and benefits of a small additional transfer delivered either conditionally or unconditionally to the poorest families in communities highly affected by HIV and AIDS

# Research design

- The design is a place-randomized effectiveness trial of variations in income support in 90 communities in the Msunduzi area of KwaZulu-Natal
- 9 000 7- to 10-year-old children and their families in the 90 school communities are to be followed in the study
  - Numbers and ages have been determined to generate sufficient statistical power to identify presence of effects

# Research design

- Design allows for rigorous testing of:
  - The influence of policy on children's poverty, psychosocial, educational, and health status
  - Whilst simultaneously allowing for children's outcomes to be examined as a function of community-level factors (such as resources and norms), household factors (poverty and illness-related risks) and adverse childhood experiences (such as lack of food and withdrawal from school)
  - Micro and macro level models of how risk factors affect child well-being that are informing design presented in the paper

# Research design

- Final, but critical point to note about design of *Going to Scale*
  - Not designed to study how and to what benefit the CSG should be conditioned
  - Rather to investigate whether a supplement to the CSG helps the poorest families, and whether it makes a difference whether the supplement is conditional or not



# Method, questions and value of research stages

- *Going to Scale* is to be implemented in four stages over five years
- Each will answer questions that are vital for improving the design, reach and impact of the South African government's child income support and broader social protection measures

# Stage 1 questions, method and value

- Questions: Which children are not receiving the CSG and other grants and why? What is the relationship between poverty, health status and access to social grants?
- Method: A census will be conducted in each household with at least one child younger than 10 years of age in 90 communities (the 200-300 households that make up the catchment area of a primary school)
- Value: Information on:
  - Size and characteristics of child population not yet receiving the CSG and other benefits
  - Interaction between child income poverty, deprivation in access to services and other adverse experiences
  - Child and adult perceptions of access to and quality of social services

## Stage 2 questions, method and value

- Questions: How can barriers to full uptake of the CSG and other social grants be overcome?
- Method: Families not in receipt of income assistance (CSG and other grants) to which they are entitled will be enabled to receive the grants due through local collaborations between government and civil society organizations. Strategies will be informed by findings from Stage 1
- Value: Rigorous evaluation of the grant access strategy will provide information that can be used to guide roll-out of similar strategies in other areas

# Stage 3 questions, method and value

- Questions: What is the impact on children and families of full implementation of the CSG?
- Method: Impact evaluation of the CSG after full implementation of the grant access strategy, after 18 months of implementation, based on before and after measures of children, families and communities
- Value: Reliable information on the impact of full uptake of government's current income support and other provisioning on children's outcomes (including health, education and psychosocial development)

# Stage 4 questions, method and value

- Questions: What is the impact, on children, households and communities of a small income supplement for the poorest households with children? Are there important differences in the cost and effectiveness of providing supplemental income unconditionally vs. conditionally?
- Method: Impact of evaluation of two additional income interventions – 30 randomly selected communities will receive a small conditional supplement and 30 a small unconditional supplement. Children, families and schools in the 60 communities will be assessed before and after supplemental income for at least 18 months.
- Value: Information on:
  - Impact on child outcomes of additional income support to the poorest of poor children
  - Whether it is more cost effective to provide it unconditionally or conditionally

# Funding and Collaborators

- *Going to Scale* to date supported by the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Ford Foundation and World Bank
- Scientific work funded by a grant from the National Institute for Child Health and Development in the USA
- Application for funding the supplemental transfers is to be made to SA government
- Project is being undertaken by a team of researchers at the HSRC in South Africa, New York University (NYU) in the USA and collaborators locally and internationally
- Team working in close collaboration with the South African government, the World Bank and UNICEF
- Collaboration vital for project success

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# Ethical issues

- Project team cognizant of the ethical challenges
- Particular attention being given to ethical issues, including those associated with withdrawing the additional benefits on conclusion of the project
- Application for funding the supplemental transfers is to be made to SA government
- Study subject to approval of HSRC Research Ethics Committee as well as the Institutional Review Board of New York University
- International Scientific Advisory Board and Community Advisory Board in process of being constituted

# Conclusion



- *Going to Scale* will
  - Generate evidence on the relative contribution of family, community, and policy level factors in determining well-being of South African children
  - Provide information on options for enhancing the integration of the CSG with other social protection measures targeted at children
  - Bring scientific evidence to bear on the debate over whether and how conditions should be introduced into the CSG
- *Going to Scale* therefore has the potential to play a vital supporting role in improving the design and implementation of child social protection policy in South Africa

THANK YOU!

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