

# POVERTY AND FOOD SECURITY



# Poverty, food security and social exclusion

Research-based solutions for vulnerable communities







All our research eventually aims to contribute towards alleviating poverty through research and development, but some of the research is directed towards interventions that could directly influence the dire situation of deprived communities. For this reason our studies also centre on social exclusion of certain groups from engaging fully in society, and what can be done at policy level to improve their situation.

## The gendered dimensions of food security

### The focus

This study involved a literature review of the role gender plays in food security, with reference to the current, critical literature relevant to South and southern Africa, and to a lesser extent, Africa. It describes the local environment that influences the relationship between gender, policy and food security; addresses the socio-political context of gender and food insecurity, existing policies, some theoretical approaches to food security; and concludes with programmatic and policy interventions.

## The bigger picture

The results of the study demonstrated that there was a gap in our knowledge about the gendered dimensions of food security, necessitating further research into the empirical, theoretical and policy implications for food security of this aspect of gender. Preliminary evidence suggested that women and girls were most-at-risk-populations and therefore vulnerable to food insecurity due to their limited access to and control of resources, be it land, water or failing support systems, compared to men.

There was also a mismatch between policy and programmatic work; this was a real, material and policy variable that requires attention in future work. The study suggested that gender needs should be more strongly foregrounded as a feature of the policy framework, and that programmes focused on female-headed households required attention.

*- Policy Analysis and Capacity Enhancement*

## Women and poverty reduction

### The focus

This project, informed by the notion that women are disproportionately affected by poverty, examined the implications of taking action to moderate the gendered aspects of poverty in South Africa. It also aimed to identify and analyse local and international integrated approaches to this facet of poverty.

Unlike many projects, which address poverty from the researchers' and policy perspectives, this project framed 'voice', 'dialogue' and 'targeting' as central to understanding gender and poverty reduction in South Africa. To achieve this a symposium was held in which various partners – among them the ministries of social development; women, children and people with disabilities; and the University of Fort Hare – contributed papers and deliberated on the issues pertaining to this subject.

A special edition of the feminist journal, *Agenda*, appeared in 2009 on the theme of gender and poverty reduction. The guest editors were Professors Relebohile Moletsane and Vasu Reddy (both from the HSRC), with contributions from a wide variety of stakeholders, including those who presented at the symposium, and others not represented at the conference.



## The bigger picture

From the collected data the study will identify implications for policy and practice in devising poverty reduction strategies, looking through a gender lens and by the perspectives and voices of those targeted, and those who develop and implement interventions aimed at serving the needs of the poor.

*- Policy Analysis and Capacity Enhancement*

## Developing an indigent exit strategy for the City of Tshwane

### The focus

National legislation indicates that indigent residents have access to basic municipal services, and those households are put onto an indigent registry. Studies in this area generally focus on appropriate poverty alleviation mechanisms for specific situations. But in this groundbreaking study, the City of Tshwane municipality commissioned the HSRC to develop a strategy and monitoring tools with foresight as to the ladder out of this state of poverty, called an exit strategy.

The strength of the project lies in recognising the link between the form that the indigent register takes and the resultant exit strategy. The comparative focus on other metros and their respective approaches to the construction of an indigent register resulted in nuanced recommendations for Tshwane Municipality to follow, informed by practice and empirical reality.

## The bigger picture

The study highlighted the problematic and elusive nature of categorising poverty, and the more intractable problem of getting people out of poverty and breaking the cycle of dependency.

Many approaches have been tried, none of which have been an unqualified success. Proposals following from this study included the necessary caveats and avoided dogma by enumerating the strategic issues to be considered as part of any model going forward.

- *Centre for Service Delivery*

## Skills workshop to profile multiple deprivation in Limpopo

### The focus

A workshop in collaboration with Oxford University to teach people the skills of profiling multiple deprivation in Limpopo using a statistical software package (STATA) and the South African Index of Multiple Deprivation (SAIMD) data set, formed part of a joint project between the HSRC and the Centre for Analysis of SA Social Policy. The Monitoring and Learning Facility, which provides pro-poor policy development support in the office of the Presidency, supplied additional resources to enable two academics from the University of Venda to attend the event.

### The bigger picture

This project-based learning initiative, whereby people acquire skills during the workshop and then apply these skills to collectively identified projects directly relevant to their work and areas of interest, targeted senior civil servants in the Limpopo provincial government and staff at the HSRC.

- *Policy Analysis and Capacity Enhancement*

## Improving quality of life in Limpopo

### The focus

The office of the premier in Limpopo approached the HSRC to provide technical assistance in the review of Limpopo's 2004-2014 provincial growth and development strategy (PGDS), and to recommend baselines and performance targets that could be used to review progress made towards the goals and objectives of the PGDS.

The research focused on the objective in the PGDS as laid out in the document *Improve the Institutional Efficiency and Effectiveness of Government*. The findings and recommendations of the research would be used by the office of the premier and Econosec-Limpopo in their review of the PGDS.

The results of this research were presented to the Limpopo Monitoring and Evaluation Forum

at the end of August 2009. All data, analyses and recommendations from this research have been submitted to Econosec-Limpopo and the office of the premier for them to draw on.

Some of the key issues coming out of the research were role confusion and unclear vision; incorrect appointments being made; politicians did not understand the implications of new decisions and the chaos and uncertainty that came with that; and spending the budget was more important than how well it was spent.

The Latin roots of the word 'moral' address the essence of what it is to be human: to be flourishing individuals within flourishing communities... we flourish through promoting the flourishing of others

(Archbishop Thabo Makgoba, Moral State of the Nation Address, 3 February 2010)

### The bigger picture

This research will be used by the research-based consultancy AFRc to assist the Limpopo office of the premier to establish and implement a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework. M&E, as a discipline, has a large vocabulary of terms and phrases, and the implementation of any such framework must be supported by a common understanding and usage of this vocabulary.

This document was written with the understanding that the 2009 PGDS and the supporting M&E framework, to be established with the help of AFRc, were the lead documents with respect to M&E in the province.

- *Policy Analysis and Capacity Enhancement*

## Policy to support vulnerable children in Namibia

### The focus

With 106 000 beneficiaries in September 2009, Namibia's rapidly growing system of income grants to support orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) wished to benefit from an evaluation geared towards improving its efficiency and effectiveness.



Commissioned by the Namibian ministry of gender equality and child welfare and UNICEF Namibia, the HSRC worked in collaboration with Survey Warehouse to do a qualitative study, involving focus groups and key informant interviews in three regions of the country.

The study focused on barriers to grant access; the contribution of the grants to meeting child basic needs and enhancing access to critical services; and the impact of grant administration on social worker capacity to fulfil other service delivery obligations.

The study found that transport costs, lack of awareness, bureaucratic challenges and problems with essential documentation were the most cited barriers to obtaining grants. While grants contributed to basic needs such as food and clothing, many recipients also used grant income to pay school fees and related expenses from which OVC are supposed to be exempt.

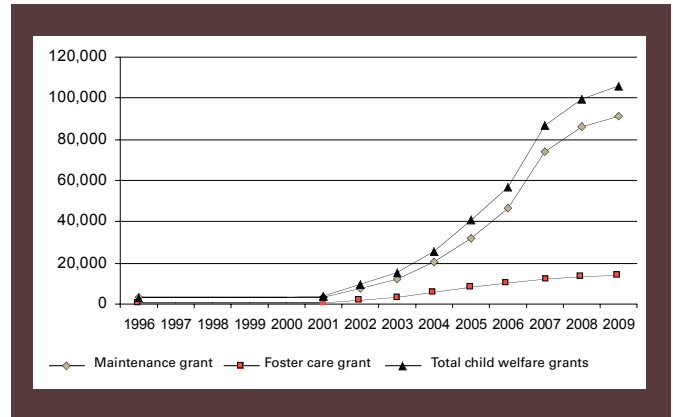
There were also reports of OVC being turned away from public health facilities because they could not pay user fees, or being made to wait while paying clients were attended to first. Finally, the study found that the processing of applications for foster care grants placed significant strain on governmental human resources, which weakens provision of other critical services for child wellbeing, such as psychosocial support and progress monitoring.

### The bigger picture

The Namibian government acted on a key recommendation of the study, namely that the value of all child welfare grants should be equalised. Other recommendations included making a single universal grant – potentially means-tested – available to all Namibian children regardless of their orphan status,

and raising the value of grants to reflect the real costs of caring for a child.

Figure 1: Rapid growth in number of beneficiaries of maintenance and foster care grants in Namibia since 1996



- Child, Youth, Family and Social Development

## A society with more than a few good men

### The focus

Men are frequently portrayed as neglectful, abusive, sexually uncontrolled and violent. On the other hand, the notion of ‘the good man’ is a deeply and prevalently valued ideal – devoted son, loyal friend, diligent worker, loving father and wise guardian.

Seed funding from the department of science and technology’s Grand Challenges of Human and Social Dynamics was used to begin a five-year study focusing on men’s morality, asking questions about who are ‘good men’ and in whose view.

The study includes collaborators and research trainees from six South African universities and two international institutions. Achievements to date include establishing a research agenda, running a successful symposium in November 2009 and preparing a special issue for the *Journal of Moral Education*, to be published in September 2010.

### The bigger picture

The study investigates the social, cultural and environmental requirements for a society with more than just ‘a few good men’, as seen from different perspectives. In particular the study asks what defines a good man, how men’s values have changed over time, and the role of culture and poverty in producing different ideas of morality.