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# Strategies to deal with child poverty in Africa: A case study of South Africa's cash transfer policy

KHAN Sultan

## ABSTRACT

*Africa, just like its counterparts in the global South finds itself wanting to support its child development programmes due to poverty. It is a continent ravished by many socio-economic and political factors that impedes the healthy growth of its children. In order for Africa to advance itself, investment in its vulnerable children can help secure the next generation of active and participating citizens. One way to achieve this is through cash transfers which is lauded to alleviate child poverty. South Africa has followed suite to the cash transfer paradigm in its attempt to alleviate poverty amongst millions of its children which takes up a significant share of the national budget. Although South Africa has been generous in providing cash transfers for child care, its efficacy has been both positive and negative. The exact extent of its effects is a grey area. Notwithstanding, the study aims at analysing how child support grants has fared since its implementation and whether mechanisms can be put in place for child and youth care workers to support governments attempt at alleviating child poverty through cash transfers. A total of 45 articles were reviewed of which 13 were in the international domain, 17 in the African continent and the remaining 15 in the South African context. The articles contained policy reports, legislations, statistical reports, minutes of parliamentary meetings and reports, which provided a backdrop to the study. The review covered the contemporary period dating 2015 to 2021. Of these articles, 16 were identified for its relevance, context and conceptual framework in understanding cash transfers and its potential to ameliorate child poverty. Themes derived from these sources of information focussed on the global, continental and South African state of child poverty, the nature of child and multi-dimensional poverty, attempts made in the continent and South Africa to arrest child poverty through cash transfers and the need to look at other social and child care resources that are necessary to supplement child poverty programmes through cash transfers.*

***KEY TERMS:*** *Child Support Grant, cash transfer, child poverty, childcare, unconditional cash transfer, South Africa*

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***Author/s details***
*Sultan Khan, School of Social Science, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Email: Khans@ukzn.ac.za,*

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## INTRODUCTION

The future of children in the developing world is precarious given the many challenges these nation states face. Children make up almost a third of the world's population and nearly one half of the population live in less developed countries. UNICEF's projections are that Africa's child population will reach 1 billion by 2055, making it the largest child population among all continents. Given the underdevelopment of nation states in the continent, basic child care needs are compromised making the child vulnerable to myriad number of risk factors that affects their development. Chief amongst these factors are poverty and related issues that impacts negatively on child development. As a safety measure Africa has witnessed a progressive expansion of social transfers since the 1990s which is used as an instrument to ameliorate poverty amongst a large segment of children who are pushed to the margins of society to the point of destitution. The efficacy of cash transfers in helping to alleviate child poverty is met with mixed reception. Notwithstanding such disagreement, its efficacy is known to have some positive impact on children to a marked extent. In the South African context, upon liberation from centuries of colonial rule and later apartheid neglected the well-being of majority of its indigenous children. It inherited a fragmented and under resourced social welfare system which it had to remedy within a context of scarce resources. In a bid to ameliorate the condition of children living in poverty, it opted for cash transfers in the form of Child Support Grants (CSG) in 1998. It is in this context that this article interrogates the concept of cash transfers as a mechanism through which child development can be promoted. An overview of the state of children in the African continent is made followed by an examination of South Africa's cash transfer policy through its CSG's and some of the challenges it experiences. This article uses South Africa as a case study to analyse whether cash transfers can be supported through social and childcare resources to limit the risks of children being vulnerable to poverty.

## METHODOLOGY

This article draws from a literature review of the most contemporary information on childcare in both Africa and South Africa between the period 2015-2021. The article draws from statistical database, policy documents, and parliamentary reports and minutes of parliamentary meetings, localised, continental and international data in the public domain was reviewed. These data was accessed primarily through the internet. A total of 45 data sources were reviewed, of which 18 were used to inform the main assumptions made by the study. The 16 sources of data primarily comprised secondary sources of information, which contained primary research findings and observations. Given the contemporary standing of the data, the study provides the most up to date insight on the state of child poverty in the continent and South Africa. The data analysis focussed on the nature and extent of child poverty, mechanisms put in place through cash transfers to remediate child poverty, the extraneous factors that constrain child development and the support mechanisms necessary to enhance the efficacy of cash transfers.

*Table 1: Summary of literature reviewed*

| Article number | Title | Authors |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Conditional vs Unconditional Cash Transfers: A Study of Poverty Demographics in Pakistan - 2019 | Afzal, A., Mirza, N and Arshad, F. |
| 2 | Africa's Agenda for Children 2040 – Fostering an Africa Fit for Children. 2016 | African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child |
| 3 | Dynamics of Multidimensional Child Poverty and its Triggers: Evidence from Ethiopia using Multilevel Mixed Effect Model. 2017 | Birhanu, M.Y., Birhanu, A. and Mulu, Y. |
| 4 | Children and Social Assistance. 2016 | Delany, A., Grinspun, A. and Nyokangi, E. |
| 5 | National Child Care and Protection Policy – Working Together to Advance the Rights of all Children to Care and Protection. 2019 | Department of Social Development |
| 6 | White Paper for Social Welfare - Principles, Guidelines, Recommendations, Proposed Policies and Programmes for Developmental Social Welfare in South Africa. 1997 | Department of Social Development |

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|---|---|---|
| 7 | Plight of Unemployed Social Workers. 2019 | Department of Social Development |
| 8 | Annual Reports 2019-2020. 2020 | Department of Social Development |
| 9 | Employment of Social Work Graduates. 2020 | Department of Social Development |
| 10 | Conditional versus Unconditional Cash: A Commentary. 2012 | Gaarder, M |
| 11 | The Impact of a Conditional Cash Transfer on Multidimensional Deprivation of Young women: Evidence from South Africa. 2020 | Kilburn, K., Ferrone, L., Pettifor, A., Wagner, R., Xavier, F.,Olivé, G. and· Kahn, K |
| 12 | The Utilisation of the Child Support Grant by Caregivers: The Case of Phalaborwa Municipality in Limpopo Province. 2017 | Khosa, P. and Kaseke, E. |
| 13 | Conditional or Unconditional Cash transfers? From Ideology to Policy Dialogue. 2018 | Hemsteede, R. |
| 14 | Child Support Grants in South Africa: A Pathway to Women's Empowerment and Child Well-being? 2015 | Patel, L, Knijn, T. and van Wel, F.W. |
| 15 | Vulnerable Groups Indicator Report 2017<br>Child Poverty in South Africa: A Multiple Overlapping Deprivation Analysis. 2020 | Statistics South Africa<br>Statistics South Africa, |
| 16 | Child Poverty in Africa: An SDG Emergency in the Making. 2019 | Watkins, K and Quattri, M. |
| 17 | Why South Africa is the World's most Unequal Society? 2019 | Webster, D. |
| 18 | Social Grants, Remittances, and Food Security: Does the source of Income Matter? 2019 | Waidler, J and Devereux, S. |

## RESULTS

The findings suggest that although cash transfers hold potential to ameliorate child poverty, persistent levels of multidimensional poverty plagues any attempt to reduce the socio-economic well-being of children in the African continent and South Africa. There is evidence to suggest that cash transfers can improve the socio-economic status of children provided that necessary infrastructure are in place to support this intervention. In the South African context, a significant amount of the GDP is expended to support cash transfers to children who find themselves in vulnerable situations. Cash transfer in South Africa is hampered by the lack of support at a local level to support this initiative. A reservoir of unemployed social work practitioners and child and youth care workers are available to provide support at a local level so that cash transfers can be monitored and evaluated in the best interest of the child found in circumstances of vulnerability.

### The state of children in the African continent

In the African continent the demand for child and youth care development is wanting due to various socio-economic and political factors that militates against healthy growth in the different facets of life. The quality of life is unequal amongst most African nation states. A significant population of women, children and youth find themselves on the periphery of society in conditions of abject poverty. Poverty affects the different facets of human development in order for one to become a contributing member of society. It is also inter-generational as the children of today are reproducers of children for the future. It has lifelong repercussions on children's cognitive and physical development and their well-being with a perpetuate nature that could pass onto future generations and the possibility of trapping countries in a vicious cycle of impoverishment (Statistics South Africa, 2020:1).

Birhanu et al (2017) assert that child poverty has long-term outcomes including effects on the overall life of the child and social and economic costs on the community. They observe that child deprivation at an early age is often associated with undesirable life outcomes such as poor academic achievements, poor health, low economic status, pregnancy, behavioral problems, and other undesirable life skills and behaviors. Hence, child poverty reduction may have instrumental effect on improving societal well-being including efficiency of resource use, stock of human capital and extent of social problems.

In the African continent, child poverty is persistent making enormous demands on the social welfare system. The number of children exposed to child poverty is characterised by interaction with a multidimensional set of factors at a micro, meso and macro level. It is estimated that 70% of the world's poor live in Africa, with Sub-Saharan Africa being most afflicted. The impact of colonialism and weak government and infrastructure development post democracy has left many parts of the continent underdeveloped with adverse effects on the lives of children. Africa is also ravished by ethnic conflict, environmental degradation, droughts, food insecurity, child soldiers, migration and diseases amongst others. It is home to poor infrastructure deficits (lack of water, sanitation, energy) homelessness, low levels of education, poor health care facilities, forced migration and political corruption. It is against these contexts that the lives of Africa's children are ecologically centred.

The future of Africa's children is dire. Watkins and Quattri (2019:7) project that while the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) include a collective pledge by governments to eradicate extreme poverty by 2030 for 'all people everywhere' (UN, 2016), as things stand that pledge will be broken for African children. In updating projections they estimate that 304.7 million sub-Saharan African children (aged 0–19) will be living in extreme poverty in 2030. These children will account for 55% of world poverty in 2030, compared to 43% in 2018. In this region it is estimated that 40% of the region's population of 439m live on $1.9 a day and 80% of Africa's population live in rural areas (Watkins and Quattri, 2019:9). With such shocking projections, it becomes questionable as to whether Africa will be able to break the shackles of inter-generational child poverty in the years ahead.

Notwithstanding the appalling status of children in the continent, as early as 1979 the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) ratified the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. Nation states were called upon to ensure within their constitutional provision the best interest of the African child. Most nation states in Africa have endorsed the UN Convention on the Rights of Children despite their precarious socio-economic and political challenges pervading the country which has varying levels of child friendliness. In 1990 the newly formed African Union (AU) which set out to inspire an African Renaissance for the continent in an historic landmark adopted the African Children's Charter. By December 2015, the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC, 2016) reported that 47 AU member States, have accented to the charter. Its aspiration is to achieve an Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children by 2040. The Children's Charter has provided a continental basis for State accountability in all actions concerning the child undertaken by any person or authority - the best interests of the child shall be the primary consideration.

**Conditional and unconditional cash transfers to alleviate poverty**

Social assistance in the form of conditional and unconditional cash transfers gained currency in the 1990s. Conditional cash transfers (CCT) are premised on the expectation that social assistance is provided in exchange for certain socio-economic outcomes. Most CCT target the educational and health care needs of children who are most afflicted by poverty. In Brazil, Mexico, India and China cash transfers had produced positive results in protecting children from falling through the safety net due to poverty. It is estimated that of the 1.9 billion recipients of child safety programs, 37% receive cash transfers (Afzal et al. 2019: 3368-3369).Globally, 130 countries have implemented at least one cash transfer programme of which in the African continent, cash transfers are to be found in 40 African nation states which is in part financed, designed or implemented by government. The types of programme range from one-time emergency transfer, well established child grants, social pensions and conditional transfers which is tailored to achieve human development goals (Delany et al., 2016: 26). However, evidence suggests that the impact of CCTs on human development is greater, as compared to UCTs (Afzal et al, 2019:3374).

Unconditional cash transfers (UCT) do not require any specific actions to be undertaken by targeted beneficiaries. Unconditional cash transfers does not contain socio-economic expectations as found in CCT. Non like CCTs which are costly to implement, monitor and evaluate, UCT does not. It has earned itself an undesirable image of supporting the poor with 'handouts' and providing little inducement to work. UCTs do not provide mechanisms to monitor expenditures of "taboo" items such as alcohol, cigarettes, gambling and in some instances drugs. It is also perceived that UCTs lead to dependency and complacency (Hemsteede. 2018). On the other hand conditionality places the responsibility of underutilisation of services on the household. It assumes that the poor do not know what is good for them, hence requiring prodding in making the correct decisions about their well-being (Gaarder, 2012:131).

In a review of the effect of cash transfers on childhood poverty across different settings (Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, and transition economies), Kilburn et al (2020:868) observe that overall, cash transfers have a positive impact, regardless of whether they are conditional or unconditional cash transfers (Kilburn et al 2020:868). At a country level the efficacy of cash transfers is contingent on the social and economic condition prevalent on the ground. Developing countries are challenged by multi-dimensional set of factors that affects their capability to address child poverty effectively. These multiple dimensions of deprivations is likely to affect the well-being of children and hinders their growth and development. Given the high levels of poverty and infrastructure deficits, total reliance on CTs to address child development without integrating it within childcare and social work programmes on the ground provides a disservice in formulating intervention strategies in developing countries. Hence, social and community childcare workers become important resource systems to support CT aiming at child development. Given the precarious socio-economic condition that developing countries find themselves in, engagement with Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Faith-based Organisations (FBOs), Community Based Organisations (CBOs) and other not for profit organisations can provide an important source of human capital that can be integrated in child development programmes.

Just like other developing countires, infrastructure deficits constrain education and health care needs with efficacy in the African continent. For instance cash transfers to achieve educational advancement, can be constrained by many socio-economic factors at a country level. Although schools may be available, crowded classrooms, disproportionate teacher and learner ratio, poor school infrastructure in rural schools, the lack of teaching and learning resources, lack of transport, poor housing condition, absence of parental supervision and other infrastructure (water, sanitation, energy) deficits makes the objective of cash transfer to attain educational goals a challenge. With such dire socio-economic contexts, the rationale for using UCT approaches in child poverty alleviation becomes an inevitable choice (Gaarder, 2012:131).

Specifically in South Africa, due to its colonial and apartheid past is no different to what is to be found in the rest of the continent. Upon democracy in 1994, the child and youth care sector has undergone many reforms to keep pace with continental and global policies and mandates. Although policies are in place, the child and youth care sector is struggling to meet national and international standards of care due to a variety of ecological factors inherited from its past. In these periods, the needs of majority of indigenous children were neglected and so were socio-economic resources for their development. Post-apartheid, South Africa inherited a fragmented and under resourced social welfare system which it had to remedy through proactive policy measures. In a bid to ameliorate the condition of children living in poverty, it opted for cash transfers in the form of Child Support Grants (CSG) in 1998. Initially it opted for Conditional Transfers (CT) around child health but later abandoned it due to monitoring challenges for Unconditional Transfers (UT). These UTs reaches out to more than twelve million children in the country

## Child support grants in South Africa

The Constitution (1996) of the Republic of South Africa makes provision for the needs of children and youth by enshrining their rights to family care, or parental care or to appropriate care when removed from the family environment. South Africa emerged after decades of isolation by the international community due to apartheid and as part of its integration into the globe it needed to interact with international, continental and regional mandates in the sphere of child and youth care. On 16 June 1995, a day that South Africans observe the national youth day in commemoration of the youth revolt in June 1976, ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Children. This was an important step to safeguard the many children and youth who find themselves in vulnerable environments. In pursuance of commitment to care for children that are vulnerable, the White Paper on Social Welfare (1997) was accented to. The paper focusses on family life that needs to be strengthened and promoted through family-oriented policies and programmes. More specifically, the care of children was legislated in 2005 through the Children's Act 38 which focusses on the different facets of child and youth care. The Act provided precedence to family centred care over alternative forms. Emphasis on preserving families is made, and alternative care is considered only as a last step. More recently, the National Child Care and Protection Policy was introduced (Department of Social Development, 2019:34a). The policy seeks to provide a common and unifying framework for the effective and systemic translation of government's care and protection responsibilities to ensure the optimal development of all children (Department of Social Development, 2019a:34).

South Africa has a very youthful population. Out of a population of 54m, children below the age of 17 years make up approximately 19.5m, which is more than a third (36.1%) of the population. The male to female ratio in urban and rural context make up 35.1% and 42.1% respectively. Post liberation, it had many socio-economic and political challenges to surmount given the inequities inherited from centuries of colonialism and decades of apartheid. It is a country which has enormous disparities in income and wealth which leaves very little to go around for the socio-economic needs of the majority that have been politically disadvantaged. Webster (2019) observes that South Africa is the world's most unequal societies based on the World Inequality Database. He notes that the top 1% of South African earners take home almost 20% of all income in the country, while the top 10%

take home 65%. The remaining 90% of South African earners get only 35% of total income. With such disparity in income levels it is not surprising to find chronic levels of child poverty in the country, impacting negatively on child development.

Using a money-metric approach to define who is poor, households that fall below the lower bound poverty line of R647 per person per month are defined as such. The Living Conditions Survey (2015) has shown that in South Africa 3,1 million of the 21,9 million people living below the lower-bound poverty line are children, and those aged 0–17 are among the hardest hit by poverty as compared to other age cohorts (Statistics South Africa, 2017:2). In a further study focussing on multidimensionally poor children made up of seven dimensions (i.e. Housing, Protection, Nutrition, Health, Information, WASH (Drinking water source, Sanitation and Waste disposal), and Education/Child development found that about 62,1% of children aged 0–17 years are multidimensionally poor in South Africa (Statistics South Africa, 2020:xv). The study also found that the majority (73.7%) of children in rural areas are deprived in 3 or more dimensions of well-being simultaneously compared to 39.6% of children residing in urban localities (Statistics South Africa, 2020:18). Hence, multiple dimensions of deprivation affects the well-being of children and hinders growth and development. Additionally it reduces the chances of survival as those who are multidimensionally poor are most vulnerable. Women in particular those that find themselves in female headed households are most affected by multidimensional poverty.

The overwhelming number of children that find themselves in poverty places the responsibility on government agencies to care for its children and uphold their socio-economic rights. One way that the state has adopted to uphold their rights is to make un-conditional cash transfers to indigent individuals and households through a variety of social assistance programmes. The state offers three types of social grants in the form of the child support, foster care and care dependency. In 2016, as depicted in Table 2 the government supported approximately twelve million children with child support grants (CSG) amounting to R360 per month (South African Child Gauge, 2016:24). This makes up 15 per cent of government spending and 3.4 per cent of GDP. Social assistance, together with compulsory schooling and health care, are free for poor children, although many problems remain with the quality of education as well as care services and access to health services (Patel et al., 2015: 3).

*Table 2: Types of grants and number of beneficiaries*

| **Social grants** | **No. of beneficiaries (Mar 2016)** | **Monthly grant value (Oct 2016)** | **Budget allocation (2016/17)** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Child Support Grant | 11,972,900 | R360 | R52.0 billion |
| Old Age Grant | 3,194,087 | R1,510 | R58.9 billion |
| Disability Grant | 1,085,541 | R1,510 | R20.4 billion |
| Foster Child Grant | 470,015 | R890 | R5.5 billion |
| Care Dependency | 131,040 | R1,510 | R2.7 billion |
| All social grants | 16,991,634 | - | R140 billion |

*Source: Delany, Grinspun and Nyokangi (2016, p. 28)*

Delany et al (2016:27) assert that the programme like the CSG reduces household poverty and inequality, improves child wellbeing, and can help unleash the productive potential of South Africa’s poor. Similarly Patel et al (2015:2) note that the outcomes include a decline in poverty levels, improvements in the nutrition of children, improved school enrolments, lower school dropout rates and a lowered incidence of child labour (Patel et al., 2015: 2). These developmental effects are stronger for children who received the grant early in life and for a continued period (Delany et al, 2016:26.). Beneficiaries are also exempt from paying school fees, school nutrition programmes are made available, free health care for pregnant women and children under the age of six, and free primary health care at public facilities (Delany et al, 2016:29-30). Earlier UNICEF (2009) noted that South Africa’s CSG has shown positive impacts from cash alone, although there has been concern that the amount paid to beneficiaries is not enough to cover the basic costs of childcare.

A more recent study undertaken by Khosa and Kaseke (2017:365) on the utilisation of CSG is received with mixed outcomes. On the positive side, the grants were utilised to benefit children directly by paying for food, clothes, and school-related needs such as school uniforms, attendance at early child development centres and transport. The knock on effect of the CSG also benefitted other family members in the household. On the negative side there has been incidences in which recipients misused the grant by purchasing drugs, alcohol, gambling, buying fancy clothes for themselves, spending money on boyfriends, spoiling themselves with fast food and dealing with loan sharks. Significantly savings for burial expenses featured in the study. One reason could be the prevalence of cash resources which old age pensioners contribute to for a dignified funeral. The extent of misuse of CSG is an area that needs further study.

**Some child care resources to support CSG**

Although the CSG does not have the material value to arrest all aspects of child care, skilled human resources in the field of child care are necessary to support the CSG programme. There are many child care resources available for this support. A few will be discussed that can help support the enormous burden of child care. In rural households child care support can be found within the family and kinship structures in these areas. Single parents, grandparents, relatives and communities provide an important source of social capital for the care of children found in the context of socio-economic deprivation. For instance, households in receipt of Old Age Pensions (OAP) provide an extra source of income when it is combined with the CSG. Waidler and Devereux, (2019:685) observed that households in receipt of Old Age Pension (OAP) made a significant impact on the household income as more than half also received the CSG. This, according to Waidler and Devereux (2019:686) is consistent with evidence of a high number of multi-generational households in South Africa with elderly individuals pooling their income and living with children. The value of the OAP was almost four times the value of the CSG.

Non Profit Organisations (NPO) play an important role in ameliorating child poverty. They vary in size and scope of work with children. In South Africa there are 231 000 NPOs (Department of Social Development, 2020a) comprising Faith Based Organisations (FBOs), Community Based Organisations (CBOs), Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Community Security Organisations (CSOs) and a range of other not for profit making organisations, registered with the Department of Social Development. In some instances NPOs receive government subsidies whilst others secure funding from philanthropic sources. When the number of NPOs are aggregated based on the population of the country it amounts to one NPO to 234 persons. Whilst this is an important source of social capital, it needs to be monitored and evaluated for its efficacy when working with vulnerable children, families and communities. The lack of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms make public resources susceptible to abuse and mismanagement. In 2020 only 60000 to 70000 of the NPOs were compliant with their annual financial reports making it difficult to monitor their activities (Department of Social Development, 2020a).

Human resources in the form of social and child care workers are essential to provide adequate services to children and families. In 2007 the Department of Social Development set out on an ambitious plan to fund the training of social workers. However due to fiscal constraints, 7000 unemployed social workers are registered on the department's database which excludes the 5000 unemployed who benefitted through a scholarship programme (Department of Social Development, 2019). Despite the projections made by the National Development Plan to encompass the employment of 55000 social services practitioners by the end of 2030, the need to meet current needs, is dire.

Child and youth care (CYC) has a long history in the South African context. During apartheid the National Association of Child Care Workers (NACCW) was formed in 1975. Since its inception it provided leadership on CYC matters in the different regions of the country despite racial divisions amongst practitioners. It has taken a lead in the training of child care workers in the 1980s and made training in the field as a pre-requisite for those intending to work with children. This training programme was directed at practitioners in residential child and youth care settings. In addition, it established a Journal titled Child and Youth Care Worker, which linked regions, nationally and internationally. It became the professional voice of child and youth care workers in the country. After a difficult and long journey spanning three decades, its advocacy with the government department materialised for a separate professional board that registered child and youth care workers to hold them professionally accountable when working with children. On the 11 March 2013, the child care community celebrated the inauguration of their profession with the Professional Board for Child and Youth Care (PBCYC). As of 29 June 2020, 9219 child and youth care workers had been registered - 91 child and youth care workers at professional level, 7376 at auxiliary level, 1547 child and youth care workers at FET colleges and 205 child and youth care students at universities.

In 2011 the NACCW pioneered an innovative community based child and youth care programme to work with vulnerable children and families largely in rural areas. This child care programme called Isibindi in the Nguni language means "courage". It draws from indigenous knowledge systems on the care of children premised on the African understanding that it takes an entire village to raise a child. The principles of Ubuntu, which means that people are people through a recognition of the individual's humanity underlines this community based programme. The project was implemented in partnership with the Department of Social Development resulting in 366 sites being established nationally. In terms of the memorandum of understanding (MOU), the partnership between the DSD and NACCW terminated in 2018 and the projects were handed over to DSD in 2019 based on a new model for community-based services at prevention and early intervention. By August 2019 there were only

53 Isibindi Projects employing 1069 CYCWs who were provided with varying stipends to sustain themselves (Department of Social Development, 2019). In 2020, in order to utilise its human resources effectively, it proposes to engage with accredited child care workers to perform ground work which will allow social workers more time to focus on statutory matters concerning the care of children (Department of Social Development, 2020b).

## IMPLICATIONS

The evidence that cash transfers helps to ameliorate child poverty is inconclusive as most children find themselves in African nation states that are multidimensionally poor. Multidimensional poverty adds to the burden of child development, as it demands huge investments in their ecological space for them to develop as contributing members of society. Notwithstanding such challenges, cash transfers for child development becomes the inevitable choice to provide a safety net for children who are vulnerable. In the case of South Africa, the rollout of cash transfers has reached many children who have been excluded previously from child care support. Although not fully sufficient to meet all child care needs, its efficacy depends on the pooling of other resources to be found in the household and community. Additionally, South Africa has a pool of social and human capital that can support child development if integrated into its child care programmes.

## CONCLUSION

The article highlights the state of child poverty in Africa and South Africa and the mechanism put in place to ameliorate it. Mechanisms put in place are defined by international, continental and local policies, declarations and charters on child care. Compliance with these mechanisms demands that governments take remedial and proactive measures to alleviate child poverty. Given the level of multidimensional poverty, governments need to invest more on infrastructure development so that it impacts positively on child development. In order to protect children from hunger, health care and educational deficits, cash transfers become one way of providing income so that these needs are met. In the South African context, the implementation of cash transfers is greeted with mixed outcomes. Whilst the government has rolled out child support grants to avert child poverty within its fiscal means, monitoring and evaluation of its efficacy is not integrated to provide a holistic child care programme from a local level to support the benefits of such transfers. South Africa has a reservoir of unemployed social work practitioners and child care professionals who remain on the margins of its social welfare system and child development initiatives which could be used to ameliorate persistent levels of child poverty. Cash transfers needs support from the local level in order for the child care ecology to contribute positively on child development.

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