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Moving towards Redistributive and Transformative Social Security?

Gendered Social and Economic Outcomes in South Africa

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New Directions in Social Policy:
Alternatives from and for the Global South

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This paper is part of a series of outputs from the research project New Directions in Social Policy: Alternatives from and for the Global South.

The project examines the emergence, nature and effectiveness of recent developments in social policy in emerging economies and developing countries. The purpose is to understand whether these are fundamentally new approaches to social policy or welfare systems which could offer alternative solutions to the critical development challenges facing low- and middle-income countries in the 21st century. This research aims to shed light on the policy options and choices of emerging/developing countries; how economic, social, political and institutional arrangements can be designed to achieve better social outcomes given the challenges of the contemporary development context; how the values and norms of human rights, equity, sustainability and social justice can be operationalized through “new” social policies; and how experiences, knowledge and learning about innovative approaches can be shared among countries in the South. For further information on the project visit www.unrisd.org/ndsp.

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Abstract

This paper explores whether South Africa's social security policies offer consistent, synergistic and long-term positive impacts on poverty and gender, by interrogating the redistributive and transformative outcomes of three different kinds of social security instruments. The instruments examined are the Child Support Grant as an example of social assistance, the Unemployment Insurance Fund as an example of social insurance, and the Expanded Public Works Programme's Social Sector as an example of public works. The programmes have some similarities in that they are all based on trying to address poverty in pro-poor, redistributive ways that pay attention to the inequities of the past. Designs are very different, but all evidence innovative thinking and attempts to engage with gender inequality. Overall, the CSG does much better than the other instruments in relation to redistribution and transformative gender effects. However, the effects across the social security spectrum are disappointing, with limited achievements in the UIF and EPWP especially, although gendered redistribution is taking place in all cases. Social transformation is lagging behind, and the problems can be largely laid at the door of implementation inefficiencies and unresponsive institutions.

Acronyms

BCEA	Basic Conditions of Employment Act
COIDA	Compensation for Injuries and Diseases Act
CSG	Child Support Grant
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DPW	Department of Public Works
DSD	Department of Social Development
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EPWP	Expanded Public Works Programme
FTE	Full-time equivalent
HCBC	Home Community-Based Care
NGO	Non-governmental organization
SASSA	South African Social Security Agency
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
TCC	Thuthuzela Care Centres
UIA	Unemployment Insurance Act
UIF	Unemployment Insurance Fund
UNRISD	United Nations Research Institute for Social Development
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