



# CHILD SUPPORT GRANT EVALUATION 2010

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QUALITATIVE  
RESEARCH REPORT  
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## **Child Support Grant Evaluation 2010: Qualitative Research Report**

### **June 2011**

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# **CHILD SUPPORT GRANT EVALUATION 2010**

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**QUALITATIVE RESEARCH REPORT**

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# ACRONYMS

ACASI	Audio Computer Assisted Self interview
CSG	Child Support Grant
DoE	Department of Education
DSD	Department of Social Development
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EPRI	Economic Policy Research Institute
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
HS	High School
IDS	Institute of Development Studies
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
ILO	International Labour Organization
KII	Key Informant Interviews
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
MIS	Management Information System
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NAFCOC	National African Federated Chamber of Commerce and Industry
PSU	Primary Sampling Unit
RDC	Reform Development Consulting
SASSA	Social Security Agency
SOCPEN	Social Pension System
SWS	Social Welfare Services
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

# CONTENTS

Acronyms.....	d
Executive Summary .....	1
Chapter 1 Introduction .....	8
1.1 Overview of the Child Support Grant	8
1.2 The 2009/10 CSG evaluation	8
1.3 Genesis of this study	9
1.4 Study aims, objectives and purpose	9
1.5 Project deliverables and activities	10
1.6 Research topics and issues	11
Chapter 2 Methodology.....	13
2.1 Research methods	13
2.1.1 Focus group discussions	13
2.1.2 Key informant interviews	14
2.2 Sampling	14
2.2.1 Provinces	14
2.2.2 Localities	15
2.2.3 Individuals	16
2.3 Training	17
2.4 Fieldwork	20
2.4.1 Roles and responsibilities of the field teams	20
2.4.2 Fieldwork schedule	20
2.5 Data management and analysis	21
2.6 Note to the reader	23
Chapter 3 Grant access .....	24
3.1 Eligibility criteria	24
3.2 Extension of age threshold	26
3.3 Documentation required	27
3.4 Reasons for not applying	28
3.5 Improvements in grant access	30
3.6 Corruption and fraud	32
3.6.1 Alleged corruption by officials	32
3.6.2 Alleged fraud by claimants	32
3.7 Suggestions for improvement	33
3.7.1 Improved accessibility	33
3.7.2 Shorter queues	33
3.7.3 Higher payments	34
3.7.4 Vouchers	34
3.8 Conclusion	35
Chapter 4 Pay-point issues.....	36
4.1 Diversity of collection points	36
4.2 Advantages of alternative collection points	37

4.3 Disadvantages of alternative collection points	37
4.4 Conclusion	39
<b>Chapter 5 Use of grant.....</b>	<b>40</b>
5.1 How CSG money is used	40
5.2 Misuse of the Child Support Grant	42
5.3 Differences in the use of CSG money and other money	45
5.4 Decision making regarding use of CSG within the household	47
5.5 Access to CSG and grant-sharing within the household	48
5.6 Conclusion	49
<b>Chapter 6 Education.....</b>	<b>51</b>
6.1 Why children miss days of school – economic causes	51
6.1.1 Lack of money and material things	52
6.1.2 Work instead of school	55
6.2 Why children drop out of school – economic causes	55
6.2.1 Lack of money and material things	56
6.2.2 Relationships with older men for money	57
6.2.3 Working instead of going to school	57
6.3 Why children miss days of school – social causes	58
6.3.1 Peer pressure and influence	58
6.3.2 Drug or alcohol use	58
6.3.3 Crime	58
6.3.4 Relationships with girls/boys	59
6.3.5 Laziness or lack of interest	59
6.3.6 Problems and responsibilities at home	59
6.3.7 Problems with teachers	60
6.4 Why children drop out of school – social causes	60
6.4.1 Peer pressure and influence	60
6.4.2 Drugs and alcohol	60
6.4.3 Crime	61
6.4.4 Relationships with girls/boys	61
6.4.5 Pregnancy	61
6.4.6 Laziness or lack of interest	62
6.4.7 Care of family members	62
6.5 Perceptions of the effects of the CSG on education	63
6.6 What is needed to keep children in school	64
6.6.2 Parental and teacher involvement	66
6.6.3 Government involvement	66
6.6.4 Social worker support	66
6.6.5 The new conditionality policy	67
6.7 Conclusion	67
<b>Chapter 7 Health.....</b>	<b>69</b>
7.1 Birth certificates	69
7.2 Access to health care	69
7.3 Conclusion	71
<b>Chapter 8 Child work and child labour.....</b>	<b>72</b>
8.1 Children's economic activities	72
8.2 Household chores	74
8.3 Reasons why children work	75

8.4 Children's work and education	76
8.5 Conclusion	78
<b>Chapter 9 Adolescent risk</b>	<b>79</b>
9.1 What are the main risks that adolescents face?	79
9.2 The role of income poverty in adolescent risk	81
9.2.1 Girls' relationships with older men	81
9.2.2 Sharing the CSG with children	84
9.3 Other risk factors: Crime, substance abuse and the family environment	86
9.4 Does the CSG reduce adolescent risk?	87
9.5 Conclusion	90
<b>Chapter 10 Social welfare</b>	<b>91</b>
10.1 Interactions with social workers	91
10.2 Attitudes and accessibility of social workers	91
10.3 The role of social workers	92
10.4 Positive experiences with social workers	92
10.5 Negative experiences with social workers	93
10.6 Conclusion	95
<b>Chapter 11 Early Childhood Development services</b>	<b>96</b>
11.1 Attitudes to ECD services	96
11.2 Costs of ECD services	97
11.3 Contribution of CSG to ECD	98
11.4 Conclusion	99
<b>Chapter 12 Conclusion</b>	<b>100</b>
12.1 Summary of findings	100
12.1.1 Grant access	100
12.1.2 Pay-point issues	100
12.1.3 Use of grant	100
12.1.4 Education	101
12.1.5 Health	101
12.1.6 Child work and child labour	101
12.1.7 Adolescent risk	102
12.1.8 Social welfare	102
12.1.9 ECD services	102
12.2 Recommendations	103
12.3 Planning for the Phase 4 qualitative evaluation	103
12.3.1 Timing	103
12.3.2 Process of identification of key issues for Phase 4 study	103
12.3.3 Proposed research methods for Phase 4	104
12.3.4 Lessons from the qualitative field report to inform future work	104
<b>Annexure 1 Strategic Overview of the CSG Evaluation</b>	<b>105</b>
<b>Annexure 2 Research Instruments</b>	<b>108</b>
<b>Annexure 3 NVivo Code List for CSG Qualitative Study</b>	<b>137</b>



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## TABLES

---

Table 1	Child Support Grant beneficiaries by selected provinces, 30 September 2007	15
Table 2	Localities selected for qualitative fieldwork	15
Table 3	CSG qualitative study – training workshop agenda	19
Table 4	Qualitative fieldwork time frame	21
Table 5	Tags for direct quotations by fieldwork respondents	23
Table 6	Prevalence of misperceptions of CSG eligibility criteria	25
Table 7	Reasons for applying late for CSG	29
Table 8	Disadvantages of alternative collection points	39
Table 9	Uses of Child Support Grant	40
Table 10	School-related uses of the Child Support Grant, by location	41
Table 11	Misuses of grant	42
Table 12	Sharing patterns of Child Support Grant money	49
Table 13	Why children miss days of school	51
Table 14	Why children miss school	52
Table 15	Why children drop out of school	54
Table 16	Why children drop out of school (frequencies)	55
Table 17	How the CSG helps with schooling	63
Table 18	Main ways in which the CSG helps with schooling (frequencies)	64
Table 19	What is needed to keep children in school	65
Table 20	Adolescent risks	80
Table 21	Risks faced by adolescents	80
Table 22	Why girls date older men	81
Table 23	Driving factors of risky sexual behaviour	87
Table 24	How the CSG affects risky behaviour	87
Table 25	Relationship between CSG and risk	88
Table 26	Support provided by social workers	93
Table 27	Complaints about social workers	94

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## BOXES

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Box 1	Attitudes of SASSA officials to computerisation	31
Box 2	Mothers who relinquish care of child but not control and benefits of grant	43
Box 3	One woman's perceptions about of CSG money	44
Box 4	Inter-generational dynamics concerning use and control of grant	47
Box 5	Access to education: Transport problems in Limpopo province	53
Box 6	Income-earning activities by boys	73
Box 7	Income-earning activities by girls	73
Box 8	Illicit income-earning activities by boys and girls	74
Box 9	Dating older men for money in Meyerton: Poverty and peer influence	84
Box 10	The CSG as an alternative source of money: Reducing the incentive for high-risk behaviour among adolescents in Shoshanguve	89
Box 11	Reasons why ECD services are valued by parents and carers	96

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## FIGURE

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Figure 1	Proportion of young South African women ages 15–19 years who dropped out of high school, by current sex partner age difference	82
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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This summary introduces the preparatory qualitative study and explains the research methodology, summarises key findings by topic area, and then outlines the main recommendations.

## INTRODUCTION

The Child Support Grant (CSG) is a rare example in Africa of a comprehensive social grant programme for poor children, reaching 9.85 million children as of June 2010. In 2009 the Department of Social Development (DSD), the Social Security Agency (SASSA) and UNICEF South Africa commissioned an evaluation of the Child Support Grant, the first impact evaluation to date using a rigorous, quasi-experimental research design. The evaluation follows a mixed-method approach, integrating quantitative and qualitative research methods. The first phase of the work includes developing an evaluation strategy, conducting a qualitative assessment and undertaking a baseline survey for the quantitative assessment. Later proposed phases of this evaluation will include a second qualitative study and an evaluation survey. This report presents the results of the first qualitative assessment undertaken in 2010.

The ‘theory of change’ underpinning this evaluation is that access to the Child Support Grant improves the well-being of recipients and beneficiaries through a number of key transmission mechanisms. These include the following propositions, which are tested in this evaluation:

1. Cash grants targeted at children directly reduce the poverty and vulnerability of children living in poor households.
2. In addition to funding increased consumption, cash grants enable poor households and carers to participate in productive economic activity (e.g. to look for work).
3. Cash grants address the underlying causes of poverty, by enabling poor households to invest in physical, social and human capital assets (i.e. education, health, nutrition), that can generate future streams of income.
4. Receipt of cash grants can reduce the adoption of risky behaviours, such as transactional sex, alcohol consumption or substance abuse.
5. Specific features of the CSG (including that it is unconditional, that it targets caregivers, that it is delivered periodically and predictably, and that transaction costs are relatively low) all ensure that the overall net effectiveness of the programme is maximised.

It was recognised during inception meetings for the impact evaluation that the baseline survey design and analytical framework would be greatly enhanced by conducting a preparatory qualitative research study, prior to finalising the quantitative research design and instruments (specifically, the household and community questionnaires). Qualitative research aims to add depth and context to the quantitative impact analysis, a better understanding of impact pathways, and insights into institutional and social issues that are less amenable to illumination through quantitative techniques.

The three primary motivations for this Stage 1 qualitative study are:

1. To inform and improve the analytical framework and survey design.
2. To provide additional depth, dimension and insight that can only come from qualitative data.
3. To begin exploring selected additional issues that will be investigated in more depth during the full qualitative evaluation planned for Phase 4.

This qualitative research study focused on a set of topics that were identified as having the highest priority at this preparatory stage of the evaluation, with particular relevance for the quantitative survey design, as well as some topics of special relevance to UNICEF.

These include:

1. Decisions and processes surrounding CSG applications, and the role of different factors in explaining grant knowledge, application decisions and follow-up, and CSG participation.
2. Experiences around receipt of the grant at pay-points, including accessibility and service delivery standards.
3. Use of the grant and service access, including what the grant is spent on, and influence of the grant on accessing services, particularly education and health.

4. Life circumstances of and issues concerning adolescent girls and boys, including school enrolment and attendance, and risk-taking behaviour, such as substance abuse and risky sexual practices, and influence of the grant on these practices.
5. Child protection and early childhood development.

## METHODOLOGY

Two principal research methods were used: focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIIs). Focus groups were chosen as the exclusive method of data collection in this research with CSG beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries based on budget availability for this first phase of qualitative research. Focus groups are the most efficient means of collecting the most data possible, but more importantly the strengths and advantages of focus groups are particularly appropriate and efficient for identifying the full range of issues for further investigation through the survey and the next phase of qualitative research. The qualitative research was carried out in four of the five provinces in which the quantitative survey will take place, i.e. Eastern Cape, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo, and in three localities in each province (12 localities in total). Our sample was stratified to reflect diversity with respect to rural, urban and peri-urban settlements.

The selection of focus group participants was purposive and stratified, in that individuals were invited to participate in each discussion based on identified characteristics, i.e. their age, gender, access to or exclusion from the Child Support Grant, and age of their children at the time the grant was first received.

Individuals selected for focus group participation were purposively selected to construct the following seven groups:

1. **Women – early recipients:** primary caregivers with children 9–10 years old who received the grant early in the child's life (0–2 years).
2. **Women – late recipients:** primary caregivers with children 9–10 years old who received the grant later in the child's life (approximately 5–7 years).
3. **Non-beneficiaries:** Women with eligible children (with young children and teenagers) who do not receive the CSG.
4. **Men:** Male partners of CSG recipients and non-recipients (may also include some male-direct CSG recipients).
5. **Adolescent girls:** 14–16 year old girls who receive and do not receive the CSG.
6. **Adolescent boys:** 14–16 year old boys who receive and do not receive the CSG.
7. **Women – older children:** CSG recipients and non-recipients; primary caregivers with children 14–16 years old.

Four key informants were interviewed in each of the selected study communities:

1. SASSA staff
2. Education worker (teacher or principal)
3. Health worker (nurse or doctor)
4. Community leader

One week of fieldwork time was allocated per locality in each province including travel, organisation and implementation of focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews with key informants at the locality level.

The process was synchronised across the provinces, such that all four research teams operated in parallel, i.e. doing fieldwork and working in the office at the same time on translation, transcribing and coding. This allowed the fieldwork to be completed in ten calendar weeks from late February through to early May. Additional coding took place following the end of the fieldwork period.

The first stage of data analysis involved developing a code scheme for the study for the purpose of data management, indexing and content analysis. We used the qualitative data analysis software programme NVivo.

The coding and the generation of coding queries was followed by a further step of manual categorisation of the data

into a finer set of themes and findings, as well as some quantification of data.

## GRANT ACCESS

- ≈ Most participants in the research are aware of the main eligibility criteria related to the child's age, the applicant's income and citizenship status. The recent extension of age eligibility to 18 years has been well communicated and is widely understood, including its phasing in and the need for 16-year-olds to re-apply. However, many people are not well informed on crucial eligibility details, especially the income threshold for the CSG means test. There is also a common misperception that people who are working, especially government employees, are automatically disqualified.
- ≈ Reasons why potentially eligible people do not apply for the CSG, or were late to apply when the CSG was first launched, included in order of frequency mentioned: difficulties or delays in procuring required documents (mainly ID documents and birth certificates); lack of information about how to apply; application process was too slow or complex; application process was too expensive (especially transport costs); eligibility criteria were misunderstood; and intra-family tensions prevented applications being made.
- ≈ Many of these difficulties, especially concerning CSG application procedures, have improved significantly in recent years. Five areas of improvement were mentioned favourably, especially by CSG beneficiaries: i) Fewer documents are required than before; ii) Information about registration procedures and documentation requirements is widely publicised; iii) The application process is much faster (it takes days rather than months); iv) More flexibility and choice about collecting grant money; v) Less perceived corruption.
- ≈ SASSA officials appreciate the introduction of computers and the SOCPEN (social pension system) database, which has made their work easier, and more efficient and accurate.

## PAY-POINT ISSUES

- ≈ The recent proliferation of collection options for CSG cash is an innovation in the CSG delivery system that is greatly welcomed by recipients. Although each option has its drawbacks, the choice and ease of switching options was welcome, and each option had positive features identified that outweighed the negatives. The fact that all options are being used by significant numbers of recipients suggests that each option is the first preference for many. Recipients also appreciate the clear information about collection options that SASSA provides.

## USE OF THE GRANT

- ≈ Regardless of the intended and perceived purpose of the CSG, our findings show that it is used primarily as a household income top-up and as such is used to buy basic food and consumption needs for the whole household. The reasons frequently given for this (as opposed to child-specific usage) are related to widespread poverty, lack of employment and limited income sources for household members. The cash transfer is, understandably, diluted across household members. The evidence that this widespread 'transfer dilution' may be causally related to poverty suggests that less poor households are more able to target the grant on children, or even on a specific child.
- ≈ In the majority of cases, the female caregiver who receives the grant is the person who has most control of the cash in terms of decision making on its use and distribution within the household. This general finding is modified within households with more than two generations, particularly where the grant recipient is a teenager and she is living with her mother who has ultimate control over the entire household budget. Tensions can arise in these cases and grant use may not be beneficial to the general household consumption or child-specific needs. In some cases, the grant may accrue entirely to the needs of individuals who are not the intended beneficiaries of the programme.
- ≈ Men have very limited access and control over the CSG. They benefit from it in as much as it is used as a general

household budget top-up. There are some cases where men are able to access it for alcohol, gambling and smoking, however this is the exception rather than the rule.

- ≈ Children are often recipients of pocket money from the CSG. Many teenagers are aware of their rights to the grant, but very few control grant use and decision making.

## EDUCATION

- ≈ Children miss days of school, or drop out altogether, due to many economic and social drivers. The main reasons are economic: money for school fees, uniforms, shoes, transportation, the need to work for income, food at home so they can concentrate and food that they can bring to school. Those factors that are often indirectly related to cash constraints and poverty, mainly affecting adolescents, are involvement with boyfriends or girlfriends, dating older men or women, drugs, alcohol, gangs, crime and pregnancy, to the extent that these social factors have economic causes.
- ≈ Peer pressure is another major factor identified throughout the study that leads to behaviours that affect schooling, including children missing school or dropping out because they are ashamed to go to school in old uniforms or without 'label clothing'.
- ≈ Another factor affecting schooling outcomes was the need to take care of children or ill adults in the household, which also has an economic dimension to the extent that cash could provide child-care opportunities (and possibly someone who could look after the ill, although this is normally provided by family members among poorer households).
- ≈ The fact that most of the drivers are economic factors that do not involve large sums of money (i.e. school expenses, transportation and food), suggests that the CSG can potentially have an impact on school attendance and retention, and many people say that it does. Other social problems are more complex and it is unlikely that the CSG can tackle these alone – though it may be able to play a role to the extent that it might undermine risky behaviour linked to peer pressure and a need for cash.

- ≈ Other social causes of school absences and drop-outs relate to adolescent rebellion, disciplinary problems, lack of interest and social problems within households (abuse, whether parents are supportive and encourage schooling), and discipline.
- ≈ Teachers also play a role, i.e. how much they encourage students on a daily basis, as well as more serious problems such as whether they have sexual relationships with students that cause them to miss school or drop out, either because they get pregnant or have problems with the teacher later.
- ≈ Complementary interventions that are needed to address school attendance and retention, alongside cash, include involving social workers and psychologists in the schools; more parent-teacher interaction; better systems for monitoring attendance; improving school-based recreation activities; school lunches in secondary schools; increasing old uniform donation programmes; free transportation through school buses; and eliminating 'casual Fridays'.

## HEALTH

- ≈ There is an important reciprocal relationship between the Child Support Grant and health care services: health services facilitate access to the CSG, and CSG cash is used to access health care.
- ≈ In the past, CSG applicants received immunisation cards from the clinics, which they would take to Home Affairs to apply for the birth certificate used to obtain the CSG. Currently, birth certificates are issued in hospitals upon birth with the support of nurses and/or Home Affairs staff who visit these health facilities. This greatly facilitates CSG access, as applicants can now take their birth certificates directly to the SASSA office.
- ≈ CSG cash is spent on many basic needs, including health care. It is used to pay for health care for any household member, not only the beneficiary child. However, since children are prone to childhood illnesses and injuries, the CSG plays an important role in protecting the health of poor children. Costs of public health services in South Africa are subsidised so that charges are zero or nominal,

especially for poor citizens. However, some public health facilities do levy charges (e.g. consultation fees or in-patient charges reportedly ranging from between R2 and R80) and indirect costs can be high (notably transport of patients and caregivers, especially if multiple visits are required). Sometimes the CSG is used to pay for private health care, which is more expensive but avoids long queues and according to some provides better quality services.

- ≈ Because illness is unpredictable, families may need a significant amount of cash for health care at short notice, and recipients can borrow against the CSG cash they will be paid in future. In this sense, the Child Support Grant also performs an informal health insurance role.

## CHILD WORK AND CHILD LABOUR

- ≈ Child work and child labour is very prevalent. Boys in our fieldwork localities engage in a range of income-earning economic activities, including: petty trading, gardening, agricultural labour, taxi conductor, house construction and personal services (barbering, shoe-shining). Girls have fewer options for paid work than boys, and are more likely to provide personal services (domestic work, hair-dressing, child care) or to work in the retail sector as shop assistants. According to our respondents, girls are more likely to engage in illicit or 'immoral' activities such as transactional sex, but some boys do join gangs and rob people or sell drugs for money.
- ≈ Children also perform household chores, which are usually not onerous, but some parents and carers are accused by their neighbours of taking older children (usually girls) out of school to look after younger siblings while the parent or carer goes to work or looks for a job.
- ≈ Children's work becomes child labour when it interferes with education which can occur in several ways: children skip classes or miss school days because of their jobs; children drop out of school to earn money; children who work after school cannot do their homework or concentrate in class; once children start earning money, they no longer see the value of education.

- ≈ Some parents or carers send their children out to work for income. There is disapproval of this practice if the child skips school or drops out. However, when children work in the afternoons and weekends it is generally considered acceptable, especially if it contributes to household income. Some children who are working do this partly to finance their own education, so there can be a positive synergy rather than a negative trade-off between school and work.

- ≈ To the extent that child labour is driven by economic imperatives, social grants that are well targeted at poor households can make a positive difference. The qualitative study did not find evidence that the CSG is reducing the extent of children's participation in economic activities – such an effect can only be assessed by a quantitative survey.

## ADOLESCENT RISK

- ≈ Adolescents in South Africa face a vast array of serious risks. The greatest of these risks identified, with respect to prevalence of the problem and significance of the impacts, is where girls date older men in order to obtain cash, food, clothing, gifts and transport. These normally involve transactional sexual relationships, placing them at risk of dropping out of school, pregnancy and HIV. Sometimes the gifts extend to the family, where boyfriends buy groceries for the household; occasionally the family role is stronger – where adults actually facilitate sexual relationships between children in their care and older men because of the financial benefit to the household or carer.
- ≈ The size of the 'transfers' from these boyfriends has implications for whether the CSG can undermine the incentive to engage in these risky practices. The amounts of money can be as little as R5, or as high as R1 000. Whether or not some of the CSG cash is given by the primary caregiver directly to adolescents or is used for them also has implications for the grant's potential to reduce risk. If some of the grant is used to meet the needs of adolescents, this may help to undermine the incentive to date older men.



- ≈ There are also social or psychological drivers of these relationships that the CSG cannot address: feeling cared for, peer pressure to experience sex and wear nice clothes, and being seen in nice cars. But primarily, adults and adolescents describe these relationships in stark economic terms.
- ≈ Other significant adolescent risks include drugs and alcohol, criminal activity and sexual abuse.
- ≈ Community members and key informants had mixed perspectives on whether the CSG could help to reduce adolescent risk. While some see social drivers of risk to be greater than the economic drivers, or the grant to be too small to make a difference, more people perceive that the CSG, particularly as it is extended to older children, has some actual or potential protective effect. This needs to be tested in the quantitative survey.

## SOCIAL WORKERS

- ≈ Social workers play important and positive roles in the lives of many South Africans, including children. But in many communities they are perceived as inaccessible, mainly because they are over-stretched – there are too few social workers in each locality and there are heavy demands on their time. The most common complaint reported is that social workers failed to follow up on issues raised with them, so that personal and social problems that fall within the mandate of social work are avoided or not resolved.
- ≈ Social workers are visited at their offices and at hospitals. They often participate in community outreach programmes and visit schools to advise children. They are rarely seen at social grant pay-points. They are valued by many for the advice and support they provide on domestic problems (including child abuse and rape), reproductive health (including AIDS) and social grants. Social workers assist many in applying for the Child Support Grant, and they also sometimes intervene to ensure that grants are correctly used to meet the needs of the intended beneficiaries.

## EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

- ≈ Early Childhood Development (ECD) services – crèches, pre-schools and day-care centres – are highly valued by parents and caregivers in South Africa. ECD services are seen as important for several reasons: pre-school learning gives children a head start when they start at primary school; children need to interact with others to acquire social skills; crèches and day-care centres provide a secure environment for children; and ECD services provide child care during the day, which is especially important for working mothers.
- ≈ ECD services vary greatly in terms of quality and cost. The cheapest facilities charge only R20 or R30 per month, but some of these ‘day-care mamas’ and ‘back-yard crèches’ provide low-quality services – poor food, no sanitation and neglect of children. The most expensive facilities cost R150, R200 or even R250 per month – equivalent to the full value of the Child Support Grant – but they provide a better service: safety, cleanliness and good food. Recipients who send their children to these facilities are effectively allocating all of their CSG money to ECD services.
- ≈ Apart from fees, ECD services involve many other expenses, such as food (if this is not provided), transport, clothes and toiletries. Because of these costs, many non-recipients, and even some recipients, are discouraged from sending their children to pre-school, arguing that the cost is unaffordable. On the other hand, many respondents reported that the CSG is used to pay for ECD services, that the CSG is specifically intended to contribute to these costs, and that without the CSG they might struggle to send their children to pre-school. It is clear from this evidence that the Child Support Grant plays a vital role in securing access to ECD services for young children from low-income households.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Clearer communication and regular updates are needed to address three specific areas of confusion about application procedures for the Child Support Grant: i) income thresholds for the means test; ii) eligibility of caregivers who are formally employed; iii) eligibility by nationality, citizenship and residence status.
2. SASSA staff should wear name tags allowing them to be clearly identified.
3. The CSG payment amount should be automatically adjusted by the inflation rate every year, and regularly reviewed to assess whether it should be raised in real terms.
4. DSD or SASSA should monitor participating stores to stop the practice of recipients being compelled to spend some CSG money at the store before collecting the balance.
5. To promote financial inclusion of people on low incomes, participating banks should be incentivised to allow recipients to save some CSG money, rather than suspending their accounts if the money is not withdrawn within three months.
6. An evaluation is needed of the new 'soft conditionality' on education, to see whether it has an impact on school attendance and enrolment.
7. Instead of imposing an education condition on the Child Support Grant, interventions are needed to improve school attendance, such as integrating social workers into schools; increasing parent-teacher interaction; improving attendance monitoring; improving school-based recreation activities; providing school lunches in secondary schools; increasing donations of old uniforms; providing free transport on school buses; and eliminating 'casual Fridays'.
8. More social workers are urgently needed, especially in poor urban and peri-urban communities, where social problems and risky behaviours are concentrated.
9. Complementary interventions needed for adolescents include increasing the access of adolescents to social workers and psychologists.



# CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a brief introduction to the Child Support Grant (CSG), introduces the overall evaluation, and explains the objectives of this preparatory qualitative study.

## 1.1 OVERVIEW OF THE CHILD SUPPORT GRANT

The Child Support Grant is a rare example in Africa of a comprehensive social grant programme for poor children. The CSG was introduced in 1998 following a recommendation by the Lund Committee, which was established in 1996 with a mandate to review social security options for poor families and children, as part of the ANC government's commitment to poverty reduction. The CSG is a flat-rate benefit that was initially set at R100 per child per month (up to a maximum of six children), but it is increased regularly and currently stands at R250 per child per month.

The Lund Committee argued for a universal grant, being concerned about the administrative costs of targeting, potential exclusion bias against the poor (e.g. illiterate families without documents, living in isolated rural areas) and the risks of corruption that means testing often introduces. However, the Department of Welfare and Ministry of Finance were concerned about the cost and affordability of a universal grant, and were reluctant to 'waste' public resources on wealthy families that do not need government grants.

Eligibility for the CSG is therefore restricted to poor children, which is determined by a means test. The child's primary caregiver has to prove that their household's total income falls below a threshold that varies by location (urban or rural) and housing (formal or informal). The grant recipient is defined as the child's primary caregiver, which is significant in a context of high HIV and AIDS prevalence, since many vulnerable children in South Africa are cared for by relatives (e.g. grandparents) or by carers who are not the child's biological parents. Most CSG recipients are women, usually mothers.

When the programme started in 1998, eligibility was restricted to poor children under seven years of age, but age eligibility for the CSG has been steadily extended to older

children. In January 2010 it was raised (in a staggered phasing) to include children who will turn 18 years old in 2012.

The CSG reached 9.85 million children as of June 2010. The evidence suggests that the grant is well targeted at poorer households – compared to non-recipients, recipients tend to have lower education, fewer assets, and to be unemployed or in part-time employment. So inclusion errors (people receiving the grant who don't need it) are low. Uptake rates were low initially, though coverage increased steadily – from 10% in 2000 to 63% in 2005, and higher since – suggesting that exclusion errors (people not receiving the grant who need it and are entitled to receive it) are falling. Vulnerable groups who remain at particular risk of exclusion are street children and child-headed households – caregivers under 18 years of age cannot access the CSG.

Previous impact evaluations have found that the CSG is associated with a range of positive outcomes for children, including reduced hunger (over time and compared to children in poor households who do not receive the grant),<sup>1</sup> improved nutrition (CSG beneficiaries are taller than other children of the same age)<sup>2</sup> and higher rates of school enrolment and attendance.<sup>3</sup> The CSG also benefits mothers and other caregivers in several ways, such as reducing poverty gaps (i.e. CSG recipients are less poor than before), empowering women to manage cash and household budgets, and financing the costs of seeking (and finding) employment.<sup>4</sup>

## 1.2 THE 2009/10 CSG EVALUATION

In 2009, the Department of Social Development (DSD), the Social Security Agency (SASSA) and UNICEF South Africa commissioned the Economic Policy Research Institute (EPRI) to undertake an assessment of the Child

1. Samson, M., Heinrich, C., Regalia, F., Williams, M., Kaniki, S., Muzondo, T., MacQuene, K. and van Niekerk, I. (2010) 'Impacts of South Africa's Child Support Grant', Chapter 7 in S. Handa, S. Devereux and D. Webb (editors) *Social Protection for Africa's Children*. London: Routledge (in press).
2. Agüero, J., Carter, M. and Woolard, I. (2006) 'The Impact of Unconditional Cash Transfers on Nutrition: The South African Child Support Grant'.
3. Budlender, D. and Woolard, I. (2006) 'The impact of the South African Child Support and Old Age Grants on children's schooling and work', Geneva, International Labour Office.
4. Samson, S., Lee, U., Ndlebe, A., MacQuene, K., van Niekerk, I., Gandhi, V., Harigaya, T. and Abrahams, C. (2004) *The Social and Economic Impact of South Africa's Social Security System*. Cape Town: Economic Policy Research Institute (EPRI).

Support Grant, the first impact evaluation to date using a rigorous quasi-experimental research design. (A strategic overview of the overall evaluation is appended as Annexure 1.) The first phase of the work includes developing an evaluation strategy, conducting a preparatory qualitative assessment, and undertaking a baseline survey for the quantitative assessment.

The evaluation is following a mixed-method (quantitative plus qualitative) quasi-experimental research design. Two sets of issues are addressed by this evaluation: process (or ‘practice’) questions and impact (or ‘policy’) issues.

The process questions assess the operational effectiveness of the programme and identify lessons for improvement. The impact questions build the evidence base on the programme’s success in meeting its strategic objectives.

The ‘theory of change’ underpinning this evaluation is that access to the CSG improves the well-being of recipients and beneficiaries through a number of key transmission mechanisms. These include the following propositions, which are tested in this evaluation:

1. Cash grants targeted on children directly reduce the poverty and vulnerability of children living in poor households.
2. In addition to funding increased consumption, cash grants enable poor households and carers to participate in productive economic activity (e.g. to look for work).
3. Cash grants address the underlying causes of poverty by enabling poor households to invest in physical, social and human capital assets (i.e. education, health, nutrition) that can generate future streams of income.
4. Receipt of cash grants can reduce the adoption of risky behaviours, such as transactional sex, alcohol consumption or substance abuse.
5. Specific features of the CSG – including that it is unconditional, that it targets caregivers, that it is delivered periodically and predictably, and that transaction costs are relatively low – all ensure that the overall net effectiveness of the programme is maximised.

### 1.3 GENESIS OF THIS STUDY

This evaluation of the Child Support Grant includes a qualitative research component of the overall evaluation (Phase 4), probably following the baseline survey and before the evaluation survey. While this is still intended, it was recognised during inception meetings for the impact evaluation that the baseline survey design and analytical framework would be greatly enhanced by conducting a preparatory qualitative research study, prior to finalising the quantitative research design and instruments (specifically, the household and community questionnaires). The qualitative research aims to add depth and context to the quantitative impact analysis, a better understanding of impact pathways, and insights into institutional and social issues that are less amenable to illumination through quantitative techniques.

Doing qualitative work in preparation for quantitative studies is an emerging good practice in impact evaluation globally, and is necessary for a number of reasons. Most importantly, it ensures that the right questions are being asked at the overarching strategic level, and enables the development of the research questionnaires to proceed with a high level of confidence that survey questions and response options have been appropriately selected and structured.

### 1.4 STUDY AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND PURPOSE

The purpose of this research is to study the Child Support Grant, using qualitative methods, as the first stage of a multi-stage CSG impact evaluation for the M&E Chief Directorate of the Department of Social Development, Government of South Africa. The research will inform and optimise the design of the quantitative baseline survey of this impact evaluation, and produce additional information and interpretations that are best derived from qualitative approaches.

The use of qualitative methods as part of the current Child Support Grant Impact Evaluation recognises that integrating qualitative with quantitative methods (‘Q-squared’ approaches) generate data on impacts that are rigorous but also amenable to nuanced interpretation.

The three primary motivations for this Stage 1 qualitative study are to:

1. Inform and improve the analytical framework and survey design.
2. Provide additional depth, dimension and insight that can only come from qualitative data.
3. Begin exploring selected additional issues that will be investigated in more depth during the full qualitative evaluation planned for 2010 (Phase 4).

The specific objectives are to:

1. Ensure the identification of all relevant research issues within the scope of the evaluation, including anticipated and unanticipated issues.
2. Ensure the identification of the optimum survey questions and response options, based on people's actual experience, rather than relying solely on generic questions and indicators adapted from other surveys, and review of older literature on the CSG.
3. Test central tenets and assumptions of the quantitative evaluation design. This includes collecting information that is critical to empirical modelling of people's decision to participate in the CSG, and information that will inform model specification in the impact analysis – for example, information on the different circumstances of households who applied for the grants when children were younger versus older.
4. Provide data that will add depth, texture and context to the survey findings, provide insights to aid in the analysis of survey data, and permit triangulation of multiple data sources on parallel topics.
5. Enable investigation of selected social issues that are more difficult to understand through survey data than through the use of qualitative methods, for example, intra-household relationships (gender and intergenerational), and the nature and drivers of adolescent risk.

## 1.5 PROJECT DELIVERABLES AND ACTIVITIES

Six substantive outputs are due to be delivered under this project. Each deliverable has an associated set of activities.

These are described below.

### 1. Qualitative research design

The design phase included defining the key research questions, selecting appropriate qualitative research methods, elaborating the sampling strategy and data management protocols, devising a work plan and timetable, planning fieldwork logistics, and drafting a fieldwork manual.<sup>5</sup>

### 2. Qualitative research instruments

Checklists of questions (Guides) were drafted to assist fieldworkers to facilitate focus group discussions and to conduct key informant interviews. These research instruments were reviewed and pre-tested during the training workshop, and revised following feedback.<sup>6</sup>

### 3. Fieldwork and fieldwork report

Qualitative fieldwork was undertaken in 12 localities in four provinces, over a period of nine weeks. Four teams of two fieldworkers each were recruited (eight fieldworkers in total), one team for each province. All fieldworkers received training in the research instruments that were designed for this study. The three selected localities in each province were visited sequentially, but research in the four provinces was conducted in parallel. After fieldwork in each locality, the data were transcribed, translated and coded. A report was written after the fieldwork was completed, summarising the process and lessons learned.

### 4. Data analysis and qualitative – quantitative integration

The qualitative fieldwork had to be completed and the data analysed prior to the start of the baseline survey, in order to inform the design of the quantitative survey instruments. Achieving this required working to a very tight time frame, with design, fieldwork and data analysis all completed within a period of five months. Data coding began immediately after fieldwork was completed in each locality. Following a preliminary analysis of the qualitative data, an internal 'qual-quant' workshop involving the full evaluation team allowed the qualitative team to brief the quantitative team on all main research findings, and enabled the quantitative team to ask questions that helped

5. This is available as a separate document: Economic Policy Research Institute (EPRI), Institute of Development Studies (IDS), International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), Oxford Policy Management (OPM) and Reform Development Consulting (RDC) (November 2009). In *Preparatory Qualitative Research: Research Design and Field Manual*, Cape Town: EPRI.

6. These Guides are appended to this report as Annexure 2.

to inform their work on the survey. Subsequently, smaller mixed quantitative and qualitative teams were formed for each research topic, where researchers worked together to formally integrate the relevant qualitative findings into the design of the household and community questionnaires.

### 5. Qualitative research report

The findings from the preparatory qualitative fieldwork are presented in this stand-alone report, which was circulated for comments and presented and discussed in a project review workshop. Feedback was used to revise and finalise this report.

### 6. Baseline survey report

The baseline report will include findings from both the quantitative fieldwork (household and community surveys) as well as this preparatory qualitative fieldwork. Qualitative research findings will be incorporated into the draft baseline report. The draft report will be presented to the project clients, and the report will then be finalised.

## 1.6 RESEARCH TOPICS AND ISSUES

This qualitative research study focused on a set of topics that were identified as having the highest priority at this preparatory stage of the evaluation, with particular relevance for the quantitative survey design, as well as some topics of special relevance to UNICEF. The scope and depth of this initial investigation were limited by time and budget – both the scope and the depth will be expanded in Phase 4 of the qualitative research – with this study being designed to inform the finalisation of the survey design.

The issues explored in this research are aligned with the Key Questions on both process (or ‘practice’) as well as impact (or ‘policy’) issues, as elaborated in the Overall Evaluation Strategy. However, it is important to note that the Key Questions in the overall impact evaluation design were developed from a quantitative perspective, and some of these questions cannot be answered using qualitative methods. Rather, the qualitative research provides insights to inform the quantitative research on these issues. For example, one question in the quantitative design is: “How has early vs late vs no enrolment affected children’s well-being (measured in terms of schooling, health and nutrition, dietary quality, and child labour)?” The qualitative research is not able to assess this, as there are too many attribution problems that a small

sample cannot meaningfully solve – only a large statistical sample could establish causality. Instead, the qualitative research approaches the question of human capital from a different perspective, and contributes to answering this question in two ways. Firstly, we investigate all the factors that influence people’s behaviour with respect to education, health and child labour, and explore the effect of the CSG on these behaviours. However, this can only be in the present, as trying to assess whether these behaviours were affected by early or late enrolment is not possible. Secondly, we investigated factors explaining why people enrolled early or late, looking at factors both endogenous (e.g. family motivation) and exogenous (e.g. difficulties in applying) to the application process. This helps to inform the survey with respect to whether these groups and their circumstances are sufficiently comparable to validate the survey’s use of these two groups to measure CSG impact.

The evaluation aims to address three process questions concerning accessibility of poor children to the CSG and six questions concerning programme impacts – defined as all changes in the conditions and behaviours of beneficiaries that can be causally attributed to participation in the programme. Again, note that the questions below are taken directly from the quantitative research design, so the qualitative research does not necessarily address all of these directly. Rather, this research study contributes to each question in different ways.

### Process questions:

1. What are the enabling conditions that permit households to successfully access the Child Support Grant?
2. What factors limit access to the Child Support Grant?
3. What changes in design could ameliorate these limiting factors?

### Impact questions:

1. How has early vs late vs no enrolment affected children’s well-being (measured in terms of schooling, health and nutrition, dietary quality and child labour)?
2. What pathways or mechanisms led to changes in these well-being indicators?
3. How are critical life course events of adolescents (school continuation, workforce initiation, delay in take-up of risky behaviours) affected by extension of the CSG?

4. What are the pathways or mechanisms by which the CSG can affect these events (including income and resource pathways, time allocation pathways, use of public services, peer effects, attitudinal changes and continued schooling)?
5. What is the CSG's impact on recipient households (in terms of asset accumulation, labour supply, remittances, and intra-household decision making)?
6. What are the pathways or mechanisms that lead to these effects?

Turning to the questions that the qualitative research answered directly, the major topics (below) were explored to provide insights on the questions above. These topics were discussed and agreed upon in the workshop in June 2009, and then incorporated into the formal research proposal submitted and approved for the qualitative research in the current phase.

1. Decisions and processes surrounding CSG applications, and the role of different factors in explaining grant knowledge, application decisions and follow-up, and CSG participation. Among the issues that may emerge are:
  - ≈ Poverty and social exclusion
  - ≈ Gender, inter-generational and other household issues
  - ≈ Social networks and organisations providing information and support
  - ≈ Application process/experience
  - ≈ Access to documentation from SASSA and Department of Home Affairs
  - ≈ Application of means-test criteria.
2. Experiences around receipt of the grant at pay-points, including accessibility and service delivery standards:
  - ≈ Distance or walking time to nearest CSG pay-point
  - ≈ Cost of transport to and from the pay-point
  - ≈ Queuing time at the pay-point
  - ≈ Facilities at the pay-point
  - ≈ Attitude of pay-point staff (e.g. courtesy, patience)
  - ≈ Payment delays or incomplete payments.
3. Use of the grant and service access. Among the topics to be explored are:
  - ≈ Perception of the grant (who and what is it for; difference with respect to other income)
  - ≈ What the grant is spent on (e.g. consumption; human capital; work-seeking)
  - ≈ Who the grant is spent on (e.g. by gender; by age; biological/fostered; CSG/non-CSG children)
  - ≈ Influence of the grant on accessing services, particularly education and health.
4. Life circumstances of and issues concerning girls and boys ages 13–15. This will provide information to inform the survey design and also provide baseline qualitative data for follow-up in the next stage of the qualitative evaluation after grant expansion to these age groups. Among the issues to be explored are:
  - ≈ Economic and social reasons for decisions such as school enrolment, dropping out and daily attendance (e.g. costs; performance; perception of value; future aspirations)
  - ≈ Risk-taking behaviour (e.g. substance abuse; risky sexual practices)
  - ≈ Pregnancy decisions.
5. Child protection, social welfare and early childhood development (preliminary investigation):
  - ≈ Selected child-protection issues, including birth registration and child work.



# CHAPTER 2 METHODOLOGY

This chapter introduces the research methods and the sampling strategy for this qualitative research study, describes the training workshop, reviews the approach taken to fieldwork and explains how the data were managed and analysed.

## 2.1 RESEARCH METHODS

This section introduces and describes the specific research methods that were used to conduct this qualitative research study. Two principal research methods were selected for this phase of the study:

- ≈ Focus group discussions (FGD)
- ≈ Key informant interviews (KII)

Additional qualitative methods – including household case studies and participatory tools – will be designed and applied during Phase 4 of the CSG impact evaluation, to pursue issues in more depth and to add narrative texture to the findings.

### 2.1.1 Focus group discussions

A focus group typically consists of between six and eight people who engage in a facilitated discussion on specific topics. Focus group discussions are extremely effective for exploring predetermined issues in depth with relevant groups of people. Larger groups are more difficult to control and compromise the intention of ensuring that all participants contribute their views fully and freely. Participants are drawn from categories of people or households who are of interest to the study design. The purpose of discussing these issues with stratified groups is not to gather ‘collective’ views or experiences, but to stimulate debate and explore differences in attitudes and perceptions within and between groups.

Focus groups offer several advantages and disadvantages compared to in-depth-interview methods and case studies. In this study we take advantage of the strengths of focus groups – and recognise their limitations – and in Phase 4

we will benefit from the strengths of individual interview approaches.

#### Advantages of focus group methods (compared to individual in-depth interview methods):

- ≈ They are cost- and time-efficient, enabling larger numbers of people to be included.
- ≈ Discussions trigger ideas, recollections, opinions and debates.
- ≈ People may feel more comfortable discussing some sensitive issues when others initiate and participate, than when they are on their own.
- ≈ Good for broad initial identification of issues, particularly for informing survey designs.
- ≈ Shifts some power to participants, less control by interviewer.

#### Disadvantages of focus group methods (compared to individual in-depth interview methods):

- ≈ Less time and ability to probe individual opinions and circumstances, and pursue the depth needed to adequately explore an issue.
- ≈ Inability to analyse relationships between different factors in the lives of an individual or household.
- ≈ Uneven participation from louder and quieter voices.
- ≈ Peer pressure may result in silencing some experiences and views, or individuals may feel uncomfortable raising some sensitive issues in front of a group.
- ≈ Difficult to quantify results because it is difficult to count numbers of individuals within groups who hold one view vs another (and the purpose of FGDs are different). However, they can identify whether or not a finding is present, and can do a rough assessment of its strengths compared to other findings.

Focus groups were chosen as the exclusive method of data collection in the current phase of qualitative research with CSG beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries because of budget availability. It is also the most efficient means of collecting the most data possible, and more importantly the strengths/advantages of focus groups are particularly appropriate and efficient for informing quantitative survey design. For informing survey designs, we are most interested in identifying a full range of issues for further investigation and

less concerned with understanding all issues with the depth provided by intensive case studies.

Approximately one and a half hours (maximum two hours) was allocated for each focus group discussion in order to ensure that a full discussion occurred. Both members of the qualitative research team for each province were involved in all focus group discussions. One researcher was the facilitator while the other was the note-taker. Where both researchers were equally experienced, they rotated these roles, otherwise the senior researcher would always take the facilitator role. The facilitator kept the discussion on the topic and prevented any individuals from dominating the discussion. The note-taker completed the FGD interview form, made summary notes on the discussion, and also made observations regarding the participation and behaviour of participants (e.g. are some participants not saying anything? or, is one person too dominant?). These observations were discreetly communicated to the facilitator during the discussion, allowing corrective action to be taken. The entire discussion was recorded on an MP3 recorder, subject to participants giving their informed consent before starting the recording.

Several focus group discussion guides were designed for this research study (see Annexure 2).

### 2.1.2 Key informant interviews

Key informant interviews are semi-structured discussions with individuals who have specialist knowledge or expertise on topics that are relevant to the research study. For this study, identification of these individuals required prior knowledge of the operation and context of the Child Support Grant, and checklists of questions were designed that drew out the specific insights that each individual can provide.

Key informant interviews were conducted with individuals who were selected because they have direct contact with the local community and therefore have important relevant information to share, or expert knowledge on a theme that is important for understanding either the delivery of the Child Support Grant (e.g. SASSA workers) or its impacts

(e.g. teachers and health workers). Four key informants were interviewed in each selected study community.

These interviews were semi-structured, meaning that the interviewer had a checklist of questions to structure the conversation, but also probed and asked follow-up questions depending on the responses provided by the informant. Although the topics covered by the key informant interviews were similar to the focus group discussions, the key informants offered different insights because they are not directly benefiting as recipients of the Child Support Grant. Also, key informants are better placed to provide information at the community rather than the individual level, for instance on the relationship between the community and the Child Support Grant.

Only one interviewer was needed for each key informant interview. These interviews were recorded, subject to the informant providing informed consent. The interviewer also completed the KII form, and took notes during the discussion as a hand-written back-up in case of problems with the recording equipment or sound quality.

Detailed key informant interview guides are provided in Annexure 2.

## 2.2 SAMPLING

Sampling took place in three stages: provinces, localities and individuals (i.e. focus group participants, key informants).

### 2.2.1 Provinces

The qualitative research was carried out in four of the five provinces in which the quantitative survey will take place: Eastern Cape, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo. The fifth survey province, the Western Cape, has been excluded from this phase because of budget constraints. Almost three-quarters (71%) of all CSG beneficiaries (which totalled 8 053 545 in September 2007) are resident in these four provinces (see Table 1).



**Table 1** Child Support Grant beneficiaries by selected provinces, 30 September 2007

Beneficiaries	Eastern Cape	Gauteng	KwaZulu-Natal	Limpopo	Total
Numbers	1 511 947	935 144	1 990 085	1 261 711	5 698 887
% of total	18.8%	11.6%	24.7%	15.7%	70.8%

Source: SASSA Social Security Statistical Report (2007)

### 2.2.2 Localities

Qualitative fieldwork was conducted in three localities in each province (12 localities in total). The primary sampling unit (PSU) for both the quantitative and qualitative fieldwork is the CSG pay-point. Each pay-point constitutes a locality, for purposes of our fieldwork. The quantitative survey will sample an average of 18 PSUs per province. From the list of localities already selected for the quantitative survey, three localities were selected for the qualitative fieldwork, using a stratified random methodology.

Stratification recognises that a random selection of very small samples (three localities/provinces) could yield a random bias, whereas choosing sites purposively allows us to capture specific criteria of interest to the study.

Our sample was stratified to reflect diversity with respect to rural, urban and peri-urban settlements. Urban localities are likely to have higher population densities and better developed infrastructure and services. Rural localities are likely to have less well educated populations, less developed infrastructure and services, and higher proportions of eligible children who are excluded from the Child Support Grant.

The procedure for selecting localities was as follows:

1. All candidate localities in each province were ranked using a random number generator.
2. The first locality was chosen and classified as either urban, peri-urban or rural.
3. The second locality on the list was selected if it was in a different category to the first, otherwise it was discarded.
4. This procedure was repeated until three localities were selected – one urban, one peri-urban and one rural.
5. In cases where the beneficiary population of a selected locality was too small to enable the qualitative fieldwork to be conducted, it was discarded and the next locality on the list in the same category was selected instead.

Classifying localities is not straightforward. SASSA has a complete list of caregivers and children, and their addresses, for each pay-point or each location in every province. Each address includes the suburb or town, which will assist in the identification of the location as urban, peri-urban or rural. However, local knowledge was required for confirmation. The definition of these categories is also not straightforward.

For our purposes, we define ‘urban’ localities as large settlements (>1 000 households); ‘peri-urban’ locations as either satellite suburbs around large metropolitan areas or small rural hamlets (<1 000 households); and ‘rural’ localities as dispersed settlements with no defined centre.

In Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal, one urban, one peri-urban and one rural settlement were selected using

**Table 2** Localities selected for qualitative fieldwork

Province	Type of locality	Name of locality
Eastern Cape	Urban	Boesak Ground, Missionvale, Port Elizabeth
	Peri-urban	First Avenue, Umtata
	Rural	Engcobo
KwaZulu-Natal	Urban	Umlazi
	Peri-urban	Merrivale
	Rural	Izingolweni
Gauteng	Urban	Flamboyant, Middle Crescent, Kwaggasrand
	Urban	Jewels Avenue, Extension 13, Lenasia
	Peri-urban	Extension 2, Sicelo Village, Meyerton
Limpopo	Peri-urban	Zone 2, Seshego
	Rural	Groothoek
	Rural	Koloti

the procedure described above. In Gauteng and Limpopo, a modification was adopted. Because Gauteng is a largely urban province, two urban and one peri-urban localities were selected. Because Limpopo is a largely rural province, one peri-urban and two rural localities were selected (see Table 2).

### 2.2.3 Individuals

For each selected locality, a list of names and addresses of CSG recipients, organised according to characteristics of interest in terms of the various focus groups that needed to be recruited, was provided to the qualitative team (e.g. women with children 8–9 years who received the grant early in the child's life). This assisted the research teams in identifying candidates for focus group discussions.

#### 2.2.3.1 Focus group discussion participants

The sampling strategy for focus group discussions was designed to ensure that the experiences of particular groups of people were captured in terms of their relationship to the Child Support Grant, while at the same time ensuring some consistency (for purposes of analysis and interpretation of findings) in the composition of focus groups across localities and provinces.

The selection of focus group participants was purposive and stratified, in that individuals were invited to participate in each discussion based on identified characteristics, i.e. their age, gender and access to or exclusion from the Child Support Grant. Individuals selected for focus group participation were purposively selected to construct the following seven groups.

**Focus group (1): *Women (early recipients)*:** Primary caregivers with children 9–10 years old who received the grant early in the child's life (0–2 years)

**Focus group (2): *Women (late recipients)*:** Primary caregivers with children 9–10 years old who received the grant later in the child's life (4–7 years)

**Focus group (3): *Non-beneficiaries*:** Women with eligible children (young children and teenagers) who do not receive the CSG

**Focus group (4): *Men*:** Male partners of CSG recipients and non-recipients (may also include some male-direct CSG recipients)

**Focus group (5): *Adolescent girls*:** Girls 14–16 years old who receive and do not receive the CSG

**Focus group (6): *Adolescent boys*:** Boys 14–16 years old who receive and do not receive the CSG

**Focus group (7): *Women (older children)*:** CSG recipients and non-recipients: primary caregivers with children 14–16 years old

Overall, five of the seven focus groups conducted in each community were with adults, in their role as recipients or non-recipients of the Child Support Grant, and two focus groups consisted of older children (teenagers), in their role as beneficiaries or non-beneficiaries of the Grant.<sup>7</sup>

Three of the adult focus groups consisted entirely of women and one consisted entirely of men. It is standard practice in qualitative research to separate men and women for purposes of group discussions or community-level fieldwork, for two reasons. Firstly, men and women have sharply different experiences in many areas of interest to researchers (e.g. in terms of control over household income and resources) that are likely to be blurred or glossed over in any discussion that includes both groups. Secondly, in many cultures men dominate public spaces and discourse, so that women's voices tend to be under-represented in community-level discussions and debates.

#### 2.2.3.2 Key informant interviewees

Four key informants were interviewed in each of the selected study communities. These respondents were selected for their knowledge of programme administration or relevant services, including SASSA staff members who administer the CSG for each of the selected study communities, local education workers (teachers or principals) and local health workers (nurses or doctors). The key informants were identified using the following procedures.

7. Note that we draw a distinction between the *beneficiary* of the CSG, who is always a named child, and the *recipient* of the CSG, who is typically the child's primary caregiver.

Key informant 1: SASSA staff

Key informant 2: Education worker

Key informant 3: Health worker

Key informant 4: Community leader

1. **SASSA staff member:** Individuals who accept and process applications for the CSG, and otherwise deal with CSG applicant and beneficiary questions. The names of these officials were verified by the qualitative research team during their first meeting with the community on arrival in each locality. Contact details were obtained and an interview was arranged with at least one official.
2. **Education worker:** In the initial meeting with the community or community leaders, local educational facilities were identified. The qualitative team then approached the main educational institutions (i.e. the local primary and secondary schools), explained the research to the school head or principal, and asked to interview a member of staff who interacts directly with children, some of whom are likely to be CSG beneficiaries. This teacher was approached and asked if they were willing to be interviewed. If they refused or could not find time for an appointment, an alternative teacher was approached instead.
3. **Health worker:** The procedure is similar to that for education workers. In the introductory meeting with each community, all local health facilities were identified. The qualitative team then approached the main public health facility that is used by poor people (e.g. the local clinic), explained the research to the senior health worker present, and asked to interview a member of staff who interacts directly with children (e.g. the senior health worker, or a nurse or a doctor who works in mother-child health clinics or on immunisation drives). This health worker was approached and asked if they were willing to be interviewed. If they refused or could not find time for an appointment, an alternative health worker was approached instead.
4. **Community leader or local knowledgeable person:** These are individuals who know the local community very well – a local councillor or community leader, or community

development worker (CDW). If possible, they should also have some knowledge of social grants (e.g. a pension committee member or a social worker).

Several KII guides were designed for this research study (see Annexure 2).

## 2.3 TRAINING

The training was hosted by Reform Development Consulting (RDC) during a six-day training workshop held at RDC's head office in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, 17–22 February 2010. It was attended by the four provincial field teams (two fieldworkers from each province), researchers from International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and Institute of Development Studies (IDS), and staff from DSD and SASSA. The workshop served both to train fieldworkers in the research instruments and to pilot test and revise the instruments. Training was conducted by the research management team (IDS, IFPRI and RDC), with assistance and participation from the client (DSD and SASSA). Participatory processes were used to facilitate optimal learning which is appropriate given the interactive nature of qualitative research.

Training was provided in:

- ≈ Background and design of the Child Support Grant programme so that researchers understand the programme well.
- ≈ Study objectives and overall study design.
- ≈ Two sets of qualitative methods – focus group discussions and key informant interviews. After a general introduction to each method, the specific tools that were designed for this study were introduced; they were translated and comprehension was assessed, then training was provided on each tool, using a mentored 'learning-by-doing' approach.
- ≈ Qualitative data analysis using qualitative data analysis software (NVivo). Research teams were trained in the conceptual analysis behind data coding, as well as use of the software.

In addition to coverage of this particular study and the research tools to be employed, training also covered practical concerns such as the electronic voice recorders used for the interviews and focus groups, as well as data management, such as the daily down-loading of electronic MP3 files from the day's research and their submission to the management team. Other areas addressed included logistics and overall field management protocols and reporting structures.

For each qualitative research instrument, six aspects were covered during the training.

#### **1. Introduce the general method:**

- ≈ What are focus group discussions and key informant interviews?
- ≈ Why do we do focus group discussions and key informant interviews?
- ≈ How do we do a focus group discussion and a key informant interview? (selecting participants, excluding observers, introductions, obtaining consent, questioning and probing, recording and note-taking, ending the interview)

#### **2. Introduce and discuss the specific CSG tool:**

- ≈ Talk through the guide for each category of focus group discussion, and key informant interview.
- ≈ Ensure the checklist of questions and topics is fully understood by all researchers.
- ≈ Translate each tool into the local language(s) for each province, ensuring there is consistency in interpretation of concepts within each team and across languages.

#### **3. Practice the CSG tool:**

- ≈ Trainees pair off and interview each other (for key informant interviews).
- ≈ The group conducts a simulated focus group discussion.

#### **4. Report-back – practising:**

- ≈ Results of practice session are reviewed and discussed.
- ≈ Trainees raise issues and suggest improvements to each tool.
- ≈ Make agreed modifications to each CSG tool.

#### **5. Piloting:**

- ≈ Trainees administer the research instruments to people in a nearby community.

#### **6. Report-back – piloting:**

- ≈ Results of pilot test are reviewed and discussed.
- ≈ Trainees raise issues and suggest improvements to each tool.
- ≈ Agreed modifications are made to each CSG tool, which is then finalised.

The training workshop agenda is provided in Table 3.

**Day 1:** Included presentations from DSD about services that DSD provides, as well as how the department is structured, the history and administration of the CSG. DSD showed a DVD on the CSG application processes, etc. Then the research study was introduced and the field teams were familiarised with the different qualitative methods that are being used.

**Day 2:** SASSA spoke about the administration of the social grants. In the afternoon, the research team and fieldworkers started working through the FGD guides in detail.

**Day 3:** Detailed training continued in comprehension, translation and practising the FGD guides, which were also revised and fine-tuned (with inputs from DSD). The KII guides were introduced.

**Day 4:** Pilot test was held in KwaMashu, with assistance from a very helpful local SASSA official. Four FGDs were held in different areas so each province team did one focus group, mentored by a member of the qualitative research team.

**Day 5:** Debriefing on the pilot test – logistics, securing access to communities, facilitation skills and content of the tools themselves. FGD guides were further revised.

**Day 6:** IFPRI provided NVivo training (using the software, coding, etc). KII guides were reviewed and finalised. Final preparations for the fieldwork were discussed.

After the training was completed, the field teams left for their respective provinces. The RDC, IDS and IFPRI team spent a further day preparing fieldwork logistics and packets of materials for the field teams, including notes on sampling procedures, data management protocols and forms to be completed before and after conducting each interview, etc.

Table 3 CSG qualitative study – training workshop agenda

Day 1: Wednesday 17 February	
Morning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction: Welcome, introductions and overview of the agenda</li> <li>• The Child Support Grant: Purpose, history, structure and administration</li> <li>• Overview of the evaluation: Objectives and research design (quantitative and qualitative)</li> <li>• Qualitative fieldwork strategy: Fieldwork preparation and processes</li> </ul>
Afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to qualitative research methodology: Purpose and methods</li> <li>• Data gathering techniques in this project               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Focus group discussions</li> <li>– Key informant interviews</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Day 2: Thursday 18 February	
Morning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research topics and instruments: Understanding, critique and language               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Topics 1, 2 and 3</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research topics and instruments               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Topics 4 and 5</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Language: Translation exercises</li> </ul>
Day 3: Friday 19 February	
Morning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuation: Research topics and instruments</li> <li>• Use of digital voice recorders</li> <li>• Practical exercises: Focus groups and semi-structured interviewing</li> </ul>
Afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data management and reporting               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Record-keeping instruments</li> <li>– Data management and security in the field</li> <li>– Reporting requirements and deliverables</li> <li>– Workflow, time frame and logistics</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Practical matters               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Transportation and accommodations</li> <li>– Community entry</li> <li>– Convening focus groups</li> <li>– Ethics, transparency and informed consent</li> <li>– Communications with supervisors and other research teams</li> <li>– Physical safety</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Day 4: Saturday 20 February	
All day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pilot-testing survey instruments</li> </ul>
End of day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Debrief</li> </ul>
Day 5: Sunday 21 February	
Morning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion of pilot and revised instrument</li> <li>• Data analysis 1: Coding concepts and principles</li> </ul>
Afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data analysis 2: Coding in NVivo software</li> <li>• Wrap up and logistics for Monday-Tuesday</li> </ul>
Day 6: Monday 22 February	
Morning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuation of data analysis 2: Coding in NVivo software</li> </ul>



## 2.4 FIELDWORK

On Wednesday 24 February, fieldwork began simultaneously in all four provinces, with mentoring support provided by IFPRI (Gauteng team), IDS (KwaZulu-Natal team) and RDC (Eastern Cape and Limpopo teams).

This section describes the roles and responsibilities of the field teams including the fieldwork supervisor, as well as the fieldwork schedule.

### 2.4.1 Roles and responsibilities of the field teams

Four qualitative field teams were deployed, one in each province – Eastern Cape, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo. Each team consisted of two qualitative researchers, the more senior of whom was considered the team leader. The teams were allocated to their respective provinces according to their language abilities, cultural background and professional experience. All researchers have a degree (or are progressing towards completing a degree), fluency in local languages, and extensive experience in conducting qualitative fieldwork and facilitation.

The four province teams were managed by RDC, divided between the RDC offices in Durban and Johannesburg, such that two provinces were covered by each office: Durban managed KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape, while Johannesburg was the base for teams in Gauteng and Limpopo.

One week of fieldwork time was allocated per locality in each province, including travel, organisation and implementation of focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews with key informants at the locality level. This meant that each team had, on average, six days to complete the required research within a community. The teams normally organised their time in each locality as follows:

**Day 1:** Arrival in the community and contact with key liaison (i.e. DSD or SASSA official) to negotiate and discuss

community access; preliminary planning around focus group participants.

**Day 2:** Recruitment of focus group participants; conduct of first focus group discussion.

**Day 3:** Conduct of further focus groups; conduct of initial key informant interviews.

**Day 4:** Conduct of further focus groups and key informant interviews.

**Day 5:** Conduct of any remaining focus groups and key informant interviews; consolidation and finalisation of gathered data and any final interviews still required.

**Day 6:** Finish up; depart from community.

Teams carried out data collection, transcription, translation and coding sequentially for the first locality in each province, followed by the same process for the second and then the third locality. Each week in the field was followed by a week during which the field teams worked in the office, transcribing and translating the fieldwork data. This was then followed by a team of researchers in the Durban head office coding this transcribed data.

The fieldwork supervisor supervised and coordinated the qualitative fieldwork across all four provinces. The fieldwork supervisor conducted one quality control visit per locality, during which he sat in on focus group discussions and key informant interviews, to observe the work of the qualitative researchers. The fieldwork supervisor also oversaw the management, recording and backing-up of data (on micro-recorders, paper, computers and memory sticks), and the maintenance of the team's field kit. In addition, the fieldwork supervisor wrote a report on the process of the qualitative fieldwork.

### 2.4.2 Fieldwork schedule

Fieldwork in each locality was scheduled to require one week. This was followed by two weeks in the office, transcribing and coding the data, before the team departed to the

next locality. Therefore, including breaks for weekends, each locality required three weeks to complete both fieldwork and data capture. With 12 localities to be surveyed (three per province across four provinces), this means that 36 weeks of fieldwork plus office-based transcribing and coding was required. However, the process was synchronised across the provinces, such that all four research teams operated in parallel doing fieldwork and working in the office at the same time. This allowed the work to be completed in ten calendar weeks, or 11 weeks including the training workshop (see Table 4).

## 2.5 DATA MANAGEMENT AND ANALYSIS

The first stage of data analysis involved developing a code scheme for the study. Coding serves several related purposes: first and foremost, it is a method of content analysis. Content analysis enables researchers to take textual communications (in this case, interview and focus group transcripts) and systematically identify and organise its different meanings.<sup>8</sup> Content analysis can involve a count of the frequencies

of concepts and findings, as well as analysis of meaning. (Keywords can also be counted, but where we include quantitative information we have chosen to quantify concepts represented by codes, not keywords – which are far less precise and less reliable than coded concepts.) Another way of looking at coding is that it is an indexing of qualitative data so that it is well organised, and text on particular topics is easy to find and retrieve for analysis. It is also a method for developing the hierarchical structures of themes and sub-themes, findings and sub-findings necessary for analysis of the report and organising its structure.

We used the qualitative data analysis software programme NVivo. The coding scheme was developed in a three-stage process.

1. We drew up an initial list of codes using a hierarchical tree structure with three levels of codes, based on the topic guides and questions in the focus group and key informant interview guides.
2. We added codes based on our notes from data collection that occurred in the pre-test and first round of research, and after reading several interview transcripts.
3. Coders added new codes as determined to be necessary during the coding process. In addition to the main 'tree code list', a second type of code was included called 'free codes' which included codes for 'boys' and 'girls'. These free codes were used in a double-coding process to be used in later Boolean searches, where codes would be assigned to a finding, e.g. 'drugs and alcohol' plus 'girls' or 'boys', so that we could separate out the findings by gender for the analysis. The code list is appended as Annexure 3.

Prior to coding the data, each interview script was linked to a "case", which is a special kind of code that allows attributes to be assigned to each interview script. Each case represented a focus group interview (one case each for focus groups 1–7). Attributes assigned included: 'province', 'community', 'focus group type' (1–7) and 'key informant type' (1–4). This allows us to disaggregate the data by these attributes for any given codes.

**Table 4 Qualitative fieldwork time frame**

Activity	Week										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Training	■										
Locality 1: Fieldwork		■									
Locality 1: Office			■	■							
Locality 2: Fieldwork					■						
Locality 2: Office						■	■				
Locality 3: Fieldwork								■			
Locality 3: Office											
Final coding and field report											

8. According to Stemler (2001) content analysis is "a systematic, replicable technique for compressing many words of text into fewer content categories based on explicit rules of coding" (Stemler, S., *An Overview of Content Analysis* (2001): <http://pareonline.net/getvn.asp?v=78&n=17>).



Following the creation of the code list and attributes, interviews were imported into NVivo, and the team of coders based at RDC coded all of the interview transcripts. Coders had been trained during the training workshop in February 2010, with follow-up training conducted just before the process started. The actual process of coding consisted of assigning various parts of each interview script (phrases, paragraphs, etc.) to one or more codes. After all of the material was coded, 'queries' or searches were run on each code (with a separate search for key informant data and for beneficiary and non-beneficiary data) in order to generate reports that consisted of all the data that had been assigned to each code. This allowed for the main themes and findings to be identified, as well as the selection of data for direct quotation in the report.

Note that the relative balance of material presented in this report reflects the prevalence of data under each code. For instance, education issues generated much more discussion in focus groups and key informant interviews than did health issues, so the education chapter (with 19% of all coded mentions) is correspondingly longer than the health chapter (with only 4% of coded mentions). Following the coding process, the actual breakdown of data by broad topic area following the chapter structure of this report was as shown as follows:

Chapter	Topic	Entries	%
3	Grant access	1 566	28%
4	Pay-point	130	2%
5	Use of grant	987	18%
6	Education	1 097	19%
7	Health	225	4%
8	Child labour	194	3%
9	Risky behaviours	807	14%
10	Social welfare	187	3%
11	ECD	128	2%
	Miscellaneous	335	6%
<b>Total</b>		<b>5 656</b>	<b>100%</b>

From these queries or sorted data, another analytical process followed, involving manual categorisation of the data into a finer set of themes and findings. To identify themes, patterns, frequencies and other key materials for the report, thematic matrices were also created. All of the coded material relating to each specific code was organised in these matrices by province, community and focus group or key informant type, allowing for comparisons to be drawn across communities as well as by type of informant. For selected issues, tables were created consisting of quantitative data on frequencies to determine general patterns and prevalence across communities, or relative strengths of findings – without imputing statistical significance.

There are two different types of tables. One type shows the number and proportion of study communities (out of the total of 12) in which an issue appears, to provide an idea of the geographic spread of a particular finding. The second type of table shows the frequencies with which a particular issue is raised or a point is made across all the sources of data in all communities.

These tables provide the number of sources (out of a total possible number of 132 focus group and key informant interviews) in the middle column, and the number of instances or exchanges (frequencies) in which a point was made in the right-hand column. It is important to note that these numbers should be taken as rough indications of the relative importance of these risk factors that need to be confirmed or corrected by the quantitative survey. There are several reasons for this caution:

1. Focus group material is particularly difficult to quantify because data is disaggregated by group and not by individual respondent. These tables thus cannot reflect how many different people raised a particular issue, only the number of exchanges in which an issue was discussed.
2. The frequencies do not denote the nature of their point on the topic. Thus, an instance of 'drugs' could be saying "drugs are not a problem in this community" or "drugs are a serious problem in this community," and both would count toward an instance. However, far more often where

material is coded this way in response to a question about sources of risk, it implies that the factor is a problem.

3. The numbers in the right-hand column refer to ‘instances’ in which a point was made, often representing ‘*exchanges*’ during the focus groups in which this point was made, not the number of people who made the point. An ‘exchange’ refers to a single-coded section of material often involving more than one speaker, where several points are made in a focus group discussion; frequently, several people make a similar point within a single exchange. Therefore, the numbers in these frequency tables generally represent a substantial undercount of the number of people who actually made the point.
4. To some extent, different coders will code material differently, and thus some relevant material may not be counted under a particular code where it otherwise could have appeared. Although coding training involves exercises in inter-coder reliability, there will always be some discrepancies, which are mostly fixed in later stages of the

data analysis where we review the material and refine and reorganise categories of data.

Bearing these cautions in mind, these frequency tables are useful in showing roughly the relative importance of different issues factors, e.g. the relative importance of insufficient food versus pregnancy in explaining why girls miss days of school.

## 2.6 NOTE TO THE READER

Most direct quotations from respondents in this report are tagged by their location (province and locality) and type of respondent (focus group participant or key informant). The following table summarises the information needed to interpret these tags. For example: [*Lim-P/FG-6*] means Limpopo, peri-urban, focus group #6: an adolescent boy who participated in a focus group discussion in Seshogo, Limpopo province.

Table 5 Tags for direct quotations by fieldwork respondents

Province	Type	Locality
Gau	U	Shoshanguve
	U	Lenasia
	P	Meyerton
Lim	P	Seshego
	R	Groothoek
	R	Moletjie
KZN	U	Umlazi
	P	Izingolweni
	R	Merrivale
EC	U	Port Elizabeth
	R	Engcobo
	P	Umtata

Method	Respondent
Focus groups	
FG-1	Women: early recipients
FG-2	Women: late recipients
FG-3	Non-beneficiaries
FG-4	Men
FG-5	Adolescent girls
FG-6	Adolescent boys
FG-7	Women: older children
Key informants	
KI-1	SASSA staff
KI-2	Education worker
KI-3	Health worker
KI-4	Community leader

## CHAPTER 3 GRANT ACCESS

This chapter discusses the understanding of beneficiaries, non-beneficiaries and key informants about the eligibility criteria for the CSG, with a particular focus on the recent extension of the age threshold up to 18 years, and on documentation required during the application process. Eligible non-beneficiaries and key informants were asked about reasons for not applying as well, and these reasons are also discussed. The chapter also presents perceptions about recent improvements in the application process, and about problems such as corruption and fraud. Finally, respondents offered suggestions for further improvements, and these are reviewed.

### 3.1 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Eligibility for the Child Support Grant is determined by three sets of factors: income, age and nationality. The means test assesses the income of the CSG *applicant* (the child's biological parent or primary caregiver<sup>9</sup>), the income of their spouse or partner, and the income of the *beneficiary* (the dependent child). The sum of all three incomes must fall below a threshold that is adjusted every year, in order for the child to qualify as eligible. In 2010/11, the means test threshold for the CSG was set at R2 500 per month (= R30 000 p.a.) for a single caregiver and R5 000 per month (= R60 000 p.a.) for a married caregiver plus spouse, plus dependent children.

A SASSA official from Port Elizabeth explained how enforcement of the means test has recently been tightened up, aided by the computerisation of the beneficiary database:

*"The means test is now very strict, because those people who are eligible for the grant do not get the grant and it is being accessed by people who are not eligible for it. For example, many applicants have been government employees and did not disclose that they were working in government institutions. We are now in the process of picking all of them in the system and calling them in to provide us with their bank statements and other documents, such as a letter that states which department they were working*

*for. We have given them a period of three months to provide these documents."* [EC-U/KI-1]

There appears to be universal understanding among recipients and non-recipients that a means test is applied on the CSG, but often confusion or misinformation about the details, specifically the income threshold and whether people who are formally employed (especially government workers) are automatically disqualified. Many respondents believe that the income threshold is lower than it actually is, perhaps not realising that it has been raised every year. For example, only the first of the four statements below is true; the second statement is simply wrong, and while the third and fourth statements might have been true some years ago, since the CSG income threshold has been raised to R2 500, they are no longer accurate.

#### Statement 1

*"Even if you are unemployed or not permanent at work or if you get a salary less than R1 500, you are allowed to receive the CSG."* [KZN-U/FG-1]

#### Statement 2

*"We never tried because I was working piece jobs, and I just heard that if you work it does not matter how much you earn, you don't qualify."* [Gau-U/FG-4]

#### Statement 3

*"I will talk for those who do not receive. You find that if your parent is working and she's earning around R1 000, you don't qualify to get the grant."* [Gau-P/FG-5]

#### Statement 4

*"I remember when I was working at one construction company they wanted to pay me through my account, and they told me if they can deposit an amount of more than R1 000, or R1 000, they will cut CSG money."* [Gau-U/FG-1]

A SASSA official from KwaZulu-Natal pointed out that people who are employed often believe that this disqualifies them from the CSG, not realising that it is the income threshold that matters rather than employment status, and that the income threshold applies even to people earning a (low) wage or salary. (*"Some people don't apply because they are working so they think they are ineligible, because they heard about*

9. The Social Assistance Act of 2004 defines a primary caregiver as "a person older than 16 years, whether or not related to a child, who takes primary responsibility for meeting the daily needs of that child".

*the means test, but if they are earning only a little money they might still be eligible so they should apply.*" [KZN-U/KI-1])

A woman from rural Limpopo who is separated (but not divorced) from her husband has not applied for the CSG because she believes the fact that her husband is a government employee makes her ineligible:

*"My husband left me in the house and was a government employee, now it's been five years since he left me. His employment under government still affects me and we still have a marriage certificate. So it's hard for me to go and apply, because I heard that when you are married to someone who works you cannot apply because it's on the computer system, and I'm also scared because it will appear on the computer. But I am suffering because I'm still not employed and have no income."* [Lim-R/FG3]

This woman is misinformed, and as a consequence has not applied for the CSG even though she might well be eligible. Sometimes SASSA officials and social workers are the source of this misleading information, according to a non-beneficiary from Limpopo and a woman recipient from the rural Eastern Cape. ("Some situations you find that the mother

*is not working and the father is working but he does not look after the kids for no apparent reason, but when the mother visits the office to apply, they will tell her that she can't get the CSG because the father is working."* [Lim-R/FG3] "I went to social workers and asked them about the grant and they asked me whether my husband was working or myself, I said no and then they said I qualify to apply." [EC-R/FG2])

It is quite likely that confusion about the income threshold and the belief that being employed makes people ineligible is discouraging many other eligible caregivers from applying for the CSG. The implication is that detailed information about CSG eligibility criteria needs to be more widely disseminated – and regularly updated as the criteria change. On the other hand, most of the misunderstandings about employment status and CSG eligibility in our fieldwork came from just two focus groups – in Umtata in the Eastern Cape and Merrivale in KwaZulu-Natal (see Table 6), which suggests that the source of misinformation might be only a few social workers or SASSA staff.

Another specific eligibility issue affects teenage mothers who are already receiving the Child Support Grant, because the

**Table 6** Prevalence of misperceptions of CSG eligibility criteria

Location	Wrong information about CSG income threshold	Self or partner working disqualifies from CSG	Government workers are CSG disqualified	Non-South African citizens are CSG disqualified
E. Cape		M/NB W/ER W/ER W/LR W/LR W/LR W/LR W/LR W/LR	W/ER	
Gauteng	W/ER W/NB W/NB	W/LR		M/NB
KZN	W/ER	W/LR W/LR W/LR		
Limpopo		M/NB	M/NB W/NB	KI/CL
Urban	W/ER W/ER	M/NB W/ER W/ER W/LR W/LR	W/ER	M/NB
Peri-urban	W/NB W/NB	W/LR W/LR W/LR W/LR W/LR W/LR W/LR		
Rural		M/NB W/LR	M/NB W/NB	KI/CL

Note: Each occurrence is referenced twice: by province and by locality (urban, peri-urban or rural)

Key: B=Boy; G=Girl; M=Man; W=Woman; ER=Early Recipient; LR=Late Recipient; NB=Non Beneficiary KI=Key Informant; CL=Community Leader; EW=Education Worker; HW=Health Worker; SA=SASSA

applicant cannot be simultaneously an applicant and a beneficiary. A SASSA official from KwaZulu-Natal explained the implications:

*"Sometimes you find that a teenager gives birth to a child while she is still under her parents' supervision and she receives the CSG. Then it becomes problematic because a teenage mother who still receives the CSG cannot receive the CSG for herself and the child. So in those circumstances you as a parent have to decide whether you want to receive your own CSG or for the child because you cannot receive both grants at the same time, instead it gets suspended. The best thing is to allow the parent of the teenage mother to receive both grants until the teenage mother is kicked out of the system, then she can claim back her child's CSG." [KZN-P/KI-1]*

A further source of confusion, though mentioned in only a few cases, concerns the eligibility of non-citizens and non-residents. The legal position is that the CSG is accessible to all applicants (i.e. caregivers) who are South African citizens or permanent residents, irrespective of the nationality of the beneficiary child. So it is the citizenship status of the adult and not the child that determines eligibility for the CSG. The common perception is that eligibility for the CSG is determined not by nationality but by whether the applicant has the required documents, so non-citizens are ineligible because they don't possess birth certificates and ID documents. One case reported from Lenasia in Gauteng highlights the point that it is the status of the primary caregiver that is crucial – in this case, the mother rather than the father:

*"They told her she is not a resident and as a non-resident the child won't be able to get a birth certificate. And she told them: 'I do have an ID' but they said it doesn't matter. If the father is a resident and the mother is not, you can't get the birth certificate and you can't get the CSG." [Gau-U/FG-4]*

Many foreign nationals are in the process of applying for South African citizenship or residence status, and the expectation is that they will be able to register their children for the CSG once their status is resolved. According to a community leader in rural Limpopo, this affects several people living in Moletjie. ("Some of the people they have no citizenship, so there is no way they can get help because they have to wait for citizenship." [Lim-R/KI-4])

### 3.2 EXTENSION OF AGE THRESHOLD

There is widespread awareness, across all communities visited and all categories of respondents, that eligibility for the Child Support Grant has recently been extended to children up to 18 years of age. ("It was 14 years and they increased it to 16 years. And now they announced that it will be 18 years." [Gau-P/FG7]) "We must go and re-apply because the child is supposed to get grant till the age of 18." [Lim-3/FG-7] "My child is turning 16 this year, so I will go to re-apply." [EC-U/FG-7]) Some respondents understand the phasing process in detail. ("It is 18 but for now it is 15 and next they are going to include 16-year-olds." [KZN-P/FG-4]) "From 1 April all those born in 1994 who will be turning 15 or 16." [KZN-U/FG-4]) Other parents and carers are less clear about these details. ("I went to apply and I was told he does not qualify because his birth month was October." [Lim-P/FG-3])

When asked why they think the age limit has been extended, respondents related the reason to the transition from school to adulthood and employment. ("I think this is because a child is only regarded as an adult once a child reaches the age of 18." [KZN-P/FG-4]) "When the child is 18 years then after that he will work for himself." [Lim-R/FG-4]) Some speculated that paying the CSG until 18 years might keep the child in school up to Matric. ("I think it is because some kids they finish school at 16 years but some at 18 years are still in school." [Gau-P/FG-7])

The extension of age eligibility seems to have been well communicated, by SASSA contacting eligible caregivers directly and through information campaigns in the media. ("I received a letter from SASSA informing me to come to re-apply." [EC-U/FG-7]) "We heard about it on the radio, that a child who is 16 can now receive grant till the age of 18." [Lim-P/FG-3]) Information about the CSG is also disseminated through schools. ("Mine said the teachers at school announced that children born in 1994 can register for CSG." [KZN-U/FG-7]) A SASSA official from Limpopo listed some of the communication strategies they have used to inform local people about the CSG, particularly the age extension. ("We distribute pamphlets and do road shows, and we go to the local radio station and give information, also to the indunas in the rural areas." [Lim-R/KI-1])



Notably, teenagers who heard about the extension of the age threshold are encouraging their parents to re-apply. Some are arguing that they need this money for education expenses. (*"She comes to me and says: 'Mom, I would really love you to go and apply for CSG money for me, so that you can pay for my things at school'."* [Lim-P/FG-7] *"I was also told by my child: 'Mama, go and apply so I can get transport fare to school, because you do not make enough money from vending'."* [KZN-U/FG-7]) Others want the CSG money for more frivolous reasons. (*"Mom, please apply for CSG so you can buy me cosmetics!"* [Lim-P/FG-7]) Some children insisted that their parents register for the CSG as their entitlement. (*"For my child I always need to apply because he says: 'It is my money, I have a right for it, and my friends are getting it'."* [Gau-P/FG-7])

### 3.3 DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED

A lot of discussion in focus groups revolved around the issue of documents required to register for the CSG. Among the documents mentioned as being needed were: the parents' ID documents, the child's birth certificate, a clinic (immunisation or 'road to health') card, marriage certificate and proof of address.

Additional documents are needed in special circumstances. These include: a police affidavit (if any key documents are missing); a letter with the ward councillor's stamp (if there is no other way of establishing proof of address); the mother's ID document (if the child is registered by someone else, e.g. a grandmother); and proof of (un)employment for the means test. (*"My role was to provide her the proof that I was no longer employed, so I gave her the retrenchment letter to confirm to the SASSA office that I was not working anymore."* [KZN-1/FG-4])

Getting all the necessary paperwork together can be difficult, and in some cases this causes applicants to give up:

*"Sometimes they ask you to provide proof of residence, or electricity or water. If you are unemployed or staying in RDP houses you cannot have these things, because we do not pay for water and do not use metered electricity. So you might end up being discouraged*

*to continue trying, because they will not assist you without these documents."* [KZN-1/FG-4]

*"We are discouraged by the process of applying and the treatment we get at SASSA."* [Lim-R/FG-7]

*"You find that they ask you too many questions which you cannot respond to and you end up giving up."* [Lim-R/FG-7]

*"When you get there they tell you to go and get an affidavit, and when you come back they tell you it is wrong."* [Lim-R/FG-7]

*"I help a lot of people to write affidavits for SASSA. They do not treat them well, they also do not understand that an old person does not even know how to read and does not understand what the affidavit is for."* [Lim-R/FG-7]

*"I am not going to re-apply. This thing of coming here is time-consuming and they ask a lot of things including documents."* [KZN-P/FG-3]

Some documents are required to access others. For instance, the child's clinic card is used to get a birth certificate from Home Affairs. (*"The 'road to health' card at the clinic gave you the access to get the birth certificate of the child; it means if you don't have the documents you won't get CSG. So we will get the birth certificate and identity document from Home Affairs."* [Gau-U/FG-1])

Information about the child's father is also needed, especially his income (*"They wanted my husband's pay-slip"* [EC-U/FG-2]), or employment status. (*"Before you can get CSG you have to bring your boyfriend's affidavit that he is not working."* [Gau-U/FG-1]) Particular challenges arise when the father of the child is absent, and his permission is needed to register the child. (*"They wanted an affidavit proving that the father of the child has agreed that you apply for the CSG."* [EC-U/FG-2]) Sometimes the father is difficult to trace:

*"I live with my late sister's child who is supposed to be getting the grant but isn't because I was told to go look for the father of this child whom I do not know because my sister had never even shown me. So it causes a problem because the child is not getting the grant due to this."* [KZN-U/FG-3]

If the relationship between the child's parents has ended badly, the father can be deliberately obstructive, as one education worker from KwaZulu-Natal acknowledged:

*"Some have family tensions like the father may refuse to go to SASSA and confirm that the child is theirs." [KZN-R/KI-2]*

*"The father of my child is refusing to give me the child's certificate and I had a certified copy, but these people are refusing to help me, instead they are saying that I should go get the certificate. I ask them how because the father is refusing and they tell me they have no idea how because we want the certificate otherwise we will not register you." [KZN-U/FG-3]*

*"It is difficult when they want your partner also to do an affidavit, because my partner doesn't want me to apply for CSG. And if the father discovers that the child is getting CSG, he goes to SASSA and tells them and they cut the CSG." [Gau-U/FG-1]*

We heard many stories of people who tried to apply for the CSG but failed because of problems with their documents. (*"She had a problem with her ID book, so she couldn't register. The child was only registered six years later because of no ID." [Gau-U/FG-4]*) Often applicants blamed unhelpful social workers or Home Affairs staff. (*"Social welfare officials were not informing us about all the required documents, so you have to go up and down." [EC-R/FG-2]* *"You can lose your ID and go to Home Affairs to get another one, and you find that you do not get it for a long time and so you cannot register." [KZN-R/FG-6]*) If children and their primary caregivers do not share the same surname, this can also confuse matters and delay the CSG application process. (*"I have an adopted child who could not apply for CSG because we had different surnames, I struggled to get her surname changed, I paid R70 at Home Affairs and finally got the birth certificate."*)

Moving somewhere new can also create difficulties, especially if it requires cooperation from community leaders and neighbours. (*"You are required to register in your headman's area and this was a problem because I don't come from that area." [EC-R/FG-2]* *"If welfare officials are in a certain village and you go and try to apply, people from that village wouldn't allow you to apply." [EC-R/FG-2]*)

### 3.4 REASONS FOR NOT APPLYING

There are many reasons why people who might be eligible for the CSG do not apply, or applied late despite possibly being eligible. As noted above, these include complaints about paperwork requirements and the time-consuming application process, misunderstandings about the means test, as well as non-cooperation by applicants' partners (especially absent or hostile fathers). Several other explanations were suggested during fieldwork, including prohibitive transport costs, lack of awareness, conflict within the family, social stigma and dependency.

Some people were cautious at first and waited for others to take the lead in applying for the CSG. (*"We wanted to see if other people go and get the grant before we can go and apply. Actually we never believed it is true that there is money for children!" [Lim-R/FG-1]*)

A SASSA official in the Eastern Cape suggested that transport costs might be prohibitive for poor people who have to travel from deep rural areas to apply for the CSG. (*"What you find is that these people have to spend R100 for transport (which is too much for them) to the offices." [EC-P/KI-1]*) This was confirmed by one man from Izingolweni in KZN, who complained that his wife spent hundreds of rand travelling back and forth collecting documents and applying for the CSG. (*"My wife used up a lot of my money during the application process; I ended up spending more for the application than what we were going to get!" [KZN-P/FG-4]*)

Lack of information was a severe constraint in the early years of the CSG. (*"I did not have the right information; I didn't know where to go." [Lim-R/FG-1]*) A health worker in the Eastern Cape speculated that lack of awareness might be a reason why caregivers do not apply, even today. (*"Some of the parents are not aware that they are eligible to apply for the CSG." [EC-P/KI-3]*) Given the extensive information campaigns and rapid increase in CSG uptake in recent years, this surely refers to an increasingly small minority.

In some families there might be confusion or conflict about who should register a child for the CSG and collect the cash.





*wants to register the child wherever she is staying and working.*" (Health worker, KwaZulu-Natal) [KZN-P/KI-3]

Some education and health workers speculated that people might not apply for the CSG for self-respect reasons – to avoid embarrassment or stigma. (*"I think some people don't apply for grants because they feel ashamed of what people will say."* [Lim-R/KI-3] *"It has to do with the self-esteem of the people but I think they are few, because you can see in our community those people who are suffering."* [Gau-U/KI-2]) Alternatively, people might not apply because they are resisting dependency on government grants. (*"I think some people tend to want to do things themselves, they are afraid of this dependency thing. They don't want to depend, they want to struggle, and they are so used to this poverty thing."* [Gau-U/KI-2])

Interestingly, no community members (neither CSG beneficiaries nor non-beneficiaries) mentioned either stigma or dependency as reasons for not applying.

Some respondents told us they were initially given inadequate or incorrect information by their neighbours and community leaders, but once they went to the SASSA office they received the correct information and were able to apply successfully for the CSG. (*"We did not apply because the chief induna did not explain to us very well, but we applied after we met SASSA people."* [KZN-R/FG-2])

SASSA staff are generally perceived as helpful by applicants, but they are occasionally criticised for being impatient or rude, and this might also intimidate some people or even discourage them from applying. (*"Those officials who are rude to us need to get more training about how to treat a person if you work with the community."* [EC-P/FG-2])

Table 7 summarises responses from our fieldwork on reasons for applying late for the CSG, by location and type of respondent. By far the most common reason given related to difficulties or delays in procuring the documents required, especially ID documents and birth certificates [n=35]; followed by lack of information about how to apply [n=20]; application process was too slow or complex [n=16]; application process was too expensive, especially transport costs [n=15]; misunderstanding of eligibility criteria [n=13]; and

tensions within the family [n=13]. Most of these problems were experienced across all four provinces and localities, but problems with documents were reported mostly in the Eastern Cape and family tensions were most frequent in KwaZulu-Natal. Lack of information affected rural respondents more than urban. There were only four mentions of corruption in the application process, three from KZN and one from the Eastern Cape.

### 3.5 IMPROVEMENTS IN GRANT ACCESS

There is consensus across communities that the process of applying for the CSG has improved dramatically in recent years, on several levels. Firstly, documentation requirements are less.

*"It is easy now, but back then it was difficult, because you find that you don't have the marriage certificate – you separated from your husband, and he left with the documents, and it is going to be a long process to find the documents."*

*"Now they want the certificates of the child who you are applying for the grant. In olden days you were asked to bring a letter from the councillor and the school principal to sign, but now it is easier compared to previous years."* [EC-R/FG-2]

Secondly, information about registration procedures and documentation requirements is widely publicised and clearly communicated.

*"There are changes – now it is easy. Before, you had to go up and down to collect the documents needed, but now they announce that on that date they will be in a community hall and they mention all the documents."* [EC-U/FG-1]

The government's proactive effort to increase uptake rates has contributed to this improvement.

*"There is this lady in our community who goes out to find people who are going to register for the grant, and takes their names and tells them to come to the offices on which date, and when you get there your name is called according to the list that she brought to the office, thus making our lives much easier."* [EC-P/FG-1]

*“It is better now than in 2001 because welfare officials come to school. I don’t need to spend money anymore to go to town to apply for the grant.” [EC-R/FG-1]*

Thirdly, the application process is much faster.

*“Before, you had to wait for a few months to get your grant, but now you apply this month and get it the following month.” [EC-U/FG-1]*

*“I have a grandson who is three years old. I came in about 2 p.m. and at the end of that day, I got out with everything that clearly stated when the date that I will get the first payment is. The process of application is much faster than before, when I first registered.” [KZN-U/FG-2]*

A SASSA official from KwaZulu-Natal pointed out that CSG payments can now even be made before the required documents are provided by the applicant.

*“SASSA has added in our system something called ‘7777’, in which if a child does not have a birth certificate but has already*

*applied at Home Affairs and is waiting for it, the child can get the CSG while still waiting. SASSA uses that system also if the parent does not have an ID – we use the ‘7777’ so that the child can get the CSG while the mother is waiting for her ID.” [KZN-R/KI-1]*

Fourthly, there is more flexibility and choice in terms of collection of grant money, which is explained during the application process. (*“They ask you if you want to get the grant from the bank, then they transfer the grant to the bank and you withdraw it there at any time during receiving dates.” [EC-P/FG-2]* *“You can now choose your own pay date.” [Lim-R/FG-2]*) Also, payments are more frequent. (*“They get the grant every month and not after three months anymore.” [Lim-R/FG-4]*)

Fifthly, the new procedures appear to be associated with a reduction in levels of corruption, which has been a concern in South Africa’s social grant system.

*“We should also thank Mr Cele for being a councillor, because since he came in four years ago there is improvement because they fear that he may report them. Also because most of the corrupt*

### Box 1 Attitudes of SASSA officials to computerisation

#### Positive

- “Social pension system (SOCPEN) and management information system (MIS) helps to check your backlogs. But SOCPEN is guaranteed. When a person applies it is easy to trace if it is genuine or not genuine. You capture the mistakes – SOCPEN informs you if you press a wrong button, it is back to you.” (SASSA official, Eastern Cape) [EC-R/KI-1]
- “When they do applications, we check on a system that those children were not getting the grant from other provinces. If they are not in the system we can do the application, but if they are on the system we have to check and do investigation and do transfers.” (SASSA official, Gauteng) [Gau-U/KI-1]
- “All information found in SOCPEN is never deleted, so we get access to all past information on the person getting the grant.” (SASSA official, KwaZulu-Natal) [KZN-P/KI-1]
- “Now it is all computerised and we have same-day processing – so the application is entered in the computer and the applicant knows the result the same day.” (SASSA official, KwaZulu-Natal) [KZN-U/KI-1]
- “The database also tells you if children are already registered for CSG. When the applicant brings documents you can enter the details to check if the child has been registered in another pay-point, or by another caregiver, to prevent people collecting twice for the same child.” (SASSA official, KwaZulu-Natal) [KZN-U/KI-1]

#### Negative

- “Information technology is the main problem – not enough computers. All our staff don’t have computers in the work stations.” (SASSA official, Eastern Cape) [EC-U/KI-1]
- “The other problem for the delay in processing applications is that our network is always failing and slow. Sometimes we have lack of network.” (SASSA official, Eastern Cape) [EC-U/KI-1]

*officials were dismissed or jailed just like the councillor's brother who is in jail with a four-year sentence for being corrupt."* [KZN-P/FG-1])

Credit for speeding up the CSG application process is frequently attributed to computerisation.

*"Computers help to process fast." [Lim-R/FG-2] "With the implementation of using computers, things are easy now. In the past, you apply here and the application forms were sent to Pietermaritzburg for processing and that process was time-consuming. And if you come here before the date they had estimated, as I have, they'll treat you like a dog and tell you to go to Pietermaritzburg."* [KZN-P/FG-1])

SASSA officials are equally enthusiastic about computerised databases, as this makes their work of processing applications for social grants easier and more accurate (see Box 1).

### 3.6 CORRUPTION AND FRAUD

Isolated cases were mentioned of corruption by officials, and of fraud by applicants.

#### 3.6.1 Alleged corruption by officials

Corruption was mentioned by a few respondents as a problem that affected the application process for the CSG in the past.

*"Corruption – people were fed up about not being assisted while SASSA officials' relatives and friends were assisted left, right and centre. And the question of trust: people did not want to give their personal details to people they do not know."* [KZN-P/FG-1]

*"Most people were afraid to apply because corruption has been rife in government departments and they were not sure whether this was another away of robbing them."* [KZN-R/FG-1]

*"Some security staff demanded bribes for you to get the forms to apply."* [EC-U/FG-2]

These concerns referred more to the past than to the present. There were only a few mentions of corruption allegedly

occurring today in the CSG system, and since they are unsubstantiated it is not clear whether this is genuine corruption or misunderstanding of application procedures or eligibility criteria by applicants.

*"The SASSA officials here are corrupt. There is nothing sadder than finding out that your child is supposed to be receiving the CSG but someone else is taking it, and the officials claim that they do not know about this. Who then are you going to apply to? They just say: 'Go to the minister'. But where are you going to find the minister?"* [KZN-U/FG-4]

*"Home Affairs has something to do with these fraud issues, because we have been to a meeting where we told people at Home Affairs that the forged documents are actually made at Home Affairs. Also, people are buying clinic cards from the nurses which they use to register for birth certificates."* (SASSA official, Eastern Cape) [EC-P/KI-1]

*"Whenever I get any reports of bribery by officials I don't deal with it myself, I send the cases to our compliance unit in East London to do an investigation. Bribery is done by the members of the community, it is normally reported to us by clients."* (SASSA official, Eastern Cape) [EC-U/KI-1]

Asked for suggestions about how alleged cases of corruption or incompetence can be tackled, one respondent made a suggestion that would enhance accountability. (*"We would like to see these officials wearing their name tags so that we can send them to court if they have thrown our applications away."* [KZN-U/FG-4])

#### 3.6.2 Alleged fraud by claimants

SASSA officials gave many examples of how applicants attempt to mislead or deceive them in an attempt to register for the CSG.

*"Fraud is too high. They change the age of the child in order to be eligible for the grant. Maybe the child is not even aware that she is getting paid! In some cases we find that the person is not even having a child, but applied because she has all the requirements we need. We suspect if you see the child crying as if she is with*

*a stranger. They use the same child, they just change the clothes. Other children die but people do not report this, so they continue to receive the grant. Sometimes we go there to verify the children, we find that there is one child but she said she has three.” (SASSA official, Eastern Cape) [EC-R/KI-1]*

*“Back then we had a lot of cases of fraud. Even now there are a few of them. What I can say is that Home Affairs is helping us very well and effectively. Like the birth certificates have changed, because now they have the mother’s ID number and that’s what they helped a lot with.” (SASSA official, KwaZulu-Natal) [KZN-R/KI-1]*

*“If someone claims to have twins we ask to see both the twins. Last year about 40 people came to apply for CSG with twins around the same time, so we suspected something was wrong so we asked to see them and only eight mothers came back with both kids. Some people lend their kids to each other – “Loan me your child and I will pay you R200” – and make fraudulent documents to register children falsely.” (SASSA official, KwaZulu-Natal) [KZN-U/KI-1]*

*“When we interview people who are applying for the CSG we ask if they are working, and if they say yes, how much do you earn, and we ask to see their pay-slip. We have a form for the applicant to take to the employer to verify their employment and their salary. If they work for the government we have the information about their salary on the database. Some cleaners and road-sweepers earn only R300 a month. Sometimes people take a chance and lie to us, then we have to do home visits if we suspect the person is fraudulent, and we ask their neighbours to check up on their situation.” (SASSA official, KwaZulu-Natal) [KZN-U/KI-1]*

An education worker from KwaZulu-Natal argued that the Departments of Social Development and Education need to cooperate to reduce fraud. *“There must be a working relationship between DSD and DoE so we can deal with fraudulent cases.” [KZN-R/KI-2]*

### 3.7 SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Although it was almost universally recognised that the application process for the CSG has improved significantly, respondents offered many suggestions for further improvement. The most common concerned improving the accessibility of the relevant government agencies (especially SASSA and Home Affairs), and reducing queuing times at offices and pay-points.

#### 3.7.1 Improved accessibility

There is a need for more decentralised SASSA offices *“If the access of grants is to be made easier for people especially us in rural areas, SASSA people should decentralise to local level rather than for us to go to Engcobo” [EC-R/FG-2]* and mobile SASSA offices *“It will be good if SASSA could come to the villages” [EC-R/FG-2]*. Applying for birth certificates and ID documents at Home Affairs is also seen as a bottleneck in the CSG application process, and Home Affairs is requested to improve its accessibility as well. *“Home Affairs should come regularly to register for birth certificates because the real problem is Home Affairs.” [EC-R/FG-2]*

Also on the issue of improved administrative access, a suggestion was made to locate all relevant government agencies close to each other. *“I would suggest that the SASSA office, municipal office including the councillor’s, Home Affairs, izinduna, social workers and police stations be located in the same area so that when there is a missing document you can just go to a nearer place rather than having to catch a bus to another office or having to walk long distances to locate the councillor.” [KZN-P/FG-1]* *“If they can make SASSA and the police station to be together and then drop this proof of residence thing because it is useless.” [KZN-R/FG-1]*

#### 3.7.2 Shorter queues

While computerisation is appreciated, it also brings its own problems because of unreliable electricity supplies. *“SASSA officials tell you that the system is off-line and sometimes they tell you that they are done for the day, for example they say they have*



*closed. Like today they said they have closed at around 10 a.m. in the morning.” [KZN-P/FG-3]*

SASSA is also asked to increase its staffing levels and to process more applicants each day. (*“On the first day you can’t complete everything because they cut the queues and we have to come back tomorrow. Even tomorrow they can cut you again and you came day after.” [Gau-U/FG-2]* *“If SASSA have enough staff we will not wait for a long time there.” [EC-P/FG-2]* *“At SASSA they need more staff so that they can work faster than they do, because you find that there are only four people taking the applications and one of them has to also verify all the information provided.” [KZN-R/FG-1]* *“What we need more importantly is that there must be increased numbers taken each day and it must be fixed. If they take a limited number at least they must take 70 or 80 people.” [KZN-R/FG-1]*)

SASSA staff recognise that they are under-staffed. (*“Our main problem is lack of staff – we have only two people taking applications here, and they can only register 50 people in a day. So we tell them in the morning that we can only register the first 100, and we give them appointments to come back if there are too many for that day. That is why we also have to work overtime unpaid over weekends.”* (SASSA official, KwaZulu-Natal) [KZN-U/KI-1])

### 3.7.3 Higher payments

Perhaps predictably, several respondents requested an increase in the CSG payment level.

*“The government should increase the grant, the money is little for example you pay for Grade R, and what is left doesn’t cater for all needs of the children.” [EC-R/FG-2]*

*“The old age pension was increased by R70. Maybe for the CSG they should have added maybe let’s say R50 and that would have been much better than R10. Government is like a father to most families because you boys make babies and then run away so families are being fed off this little R240 and an increase will do well to most families out there. This money is our father’s tax money so government should rethink this R10 increase, we must get a fair*

*share since we are far from getting the old age pension and maybe I won’t even live to get a chance to get my pension.” [KZN-U/FG-2]*

### 3.7.4 Vouchers

There was an interesting exchange in one focus group on whether CSG payments should be made in the form of vouchers rather than cash. The argument in favour of commodity vouchers is that they retain their value even in the face of rising prices. (*“If it was possible it would have been better if we got vouchers instead of money.” [Lim-R/FG-1]*) The counter-argument is that vouchers are inflexible and do not allow recipients to meet their non-food needs, such as education and transport. (*“I disagree with the voucher suggestion, because you also need to take the child to crèche and also for transport.” [Lim-R/FG-1]*)

A community leader in Limpopo supported the idea of vouchers, specifically for teenagers, not only for food but also for clothes, arguing that vouchers would reduce misuse of grant money. (*“Those need to get vouchers specifically to buy clothes and food but for teenage mothers, not for adults because some adults depends on the CSG money for living, it takes care of them, it reduces poverty. Even if it can be a family of three or four it benefits a lot. Teenagers need to get vouchers because they drink that money.” [Lim-R/KI-4]*)

The qualitative study team does not support switching CSG payments from cash to vouchers, for several reasons. Firstly, cash is the most flexible form of income transfer, and this report will show that cash grants are used to pay for a range of essential goods and services, not only food. Secondly, the assumption that administrators know better than beneficiaries which spending needs should be prioritised is patronising and demeaning. Thirdly, using vouchers to influence consumption behaviour is likely to be ineffective, since vouchers can also be sold for cash or exchanged for other commodities. Fourthly, vouchers are less practical than cash – the recent proliferation of delivery systems for the CSG (e.g. ATMs, as discussed in the next chapter) is only possible because transfers are made in cash rather than commodities or vouchers.



### 3.8 CONCLUSION

Most participants in this research are aware that eligibility for the Child Support Grant is determined by the child's age, the applicant's income and citizenship status. The recent extension of age eligibility to 18 years has been well communicated and is widely understood, including its phasing in and the need for 16-year-olds to re-apply. However, many people are not well informed on crucial eligibility details, especially the income threshold for the CSG means test. There is also a common misperception that people who are working, especially government employees, are automatically disqualified.

Many reasons were mentioned by focus group participants and key informants as to why people who might be eligible for the CSG don't apply, or were late in applying when the CSG was first launched.

Ranked by frequency of being mentioned during fieldwork, these reasons included: difficulties or delays in procuring the documents required, especially ID documents and birth certificates; lack of information about how to apply; the application process was too slow or complex; the application process was too expensive (especially transport costs), eligibility criteria were misunderstood; and intra-family tensions prevented applications being made.

Many of these difficulties, especially concerning CSG application procedures, have improved significantly in recent years. Five areas of improvement were mentioned favourably by respondents, especially CSG beneficiaries.

1. Fewer documents are required than before.
2. Information about registration procedures and documentation requirements is widely publicised.
3. The application process is much faster – it now takes days rather than months – partly attributed to computerisation.
4. Beneficiaries have more flexibility and choice about collecting grant money.
5. Corruption in the CSG system is believed to have been reduced. SASSA officials also appreciate the introduction of computers and the SOCPEN database, which has made their work easier, more efficient and more accurate.

### Recommendations

1. Although information about the CSG is widely and effectively disseminated through a range of media, there are three areas of confusion where clearer communication and regular updates are urgently needed: (i) income thresholds for the means test; (ii) the fact that working adults can apply, even those who are formally employed; (iii) eligibility of applicants and beneficiaries by their nationality, citizenship and residence status.
2. To improve accountability and minimise the risk of corrupt practices, such as soliciting bribes, one respondent recommended that SASSA staff wear name tags allowing them to be clearly identified; we endorse this suggestion.
3. Many suggestions made by respondents related to improved convenience in application processes, such as more decentralised SASSA and Home Affairs offices, and more staff to shorten queuing times. These are always desirable, but since service delivery levels have improved and complaints about inaccessibility and lengthy queues are not widespread, this is a second order recommendation rather than a top priority.
4. Some respondents requested higher CSG payment levels, and vouchers were suggested as an alternative to cash in one community. In our view, the CSG should automatically be adjusted by the inflation rate every year, and should be reviewed every three years to assess whether it should be raised in real terms. We disagree with the replacement of cash by vouchers, for reasons explained above.

## CHAPTER 4 PAY-POINT ISSUES

This chapter focuses on CSG delivery mechanisms – how, where and when recipients collect their cash, the range of options available, and the advantages and disadvantages of each – and the effectiveness of communication strategies to inform beneficiaries about these options.

### 4.1 DIVERSITY OF COLLECTION POINTS

‘Push’ and ‘pull’ mechanisms are being used side by side to deliver CSG cash, with recipients often having a choice between them. ‘Push’ mechanisms transfer money into bank accounts and use electronic methods such as swipe-cards and ATMs, which give beneficiaries choice and flexibility about where and when to collect their cash. ‘Pull’ mechanisms require recipients to come to specified places where cash is handed over manually. The recently introduced ‘push’ mechanisms on the Child Support Grant (banks and ATMs, shops) have several advantages – notably no queuing, compared to the traditional ‘pull’ mechanisms (government offices, post offices, mobile pay-points), where beneficiaries have to report and queue up on specific days.

CSG recipients reported collecting their money from a remarkably diverse range of outlets, including SASSA offices, mobile pay-points (especially in rural areas), fixed pay-points (at local civic centres, community halls or hospitals), post offices, bank branches or ATMs (ABSA, Capitec and Ithala Banks were mentioned by name), and several supermarkets or retail chains (Boxer, Checkers, Checkout, Payrite, Pick’n Win, Rhino, Shoprite, Spar). The options available depend partly on location. (“You will collect your money from different pay-points; it depends on where you stay.” [Gau-U/FG1-J]) This diversity of collection options is appreciated by recipients. (“Collecting the money has been made easier, in the sense that before there was only one pay-point and now there are lots, so we no longer have to travel to get the money.” [KZN-P/FG-2]) “What used to happen in the past is that you were told at which pay-point you were going to get your money, but now you can get your money at any pay-point you choose.” [KZN-U/FG-2])

There is widespread agreement that information provided by SASSA about where and when CSG money can be collected has improved. (“The thing of not being told the exact day has

been done away with. Now people are given a letter that clearly states when and where they are going to get their money.” [K-P/FG2]) Most CSG recipients in all four provinces confirmed that after their application was processed and approved, they were given a letter informing them about the location of their pay-point and the date when they should collect their money. (“I got a letter from Social Welfare confirming my pay-point.” [EC-U/FG-2]) “They tell you at SASSA where to pick up the money by giving us letters or a slip which comes with the application results.” [KZN-R/FG-2])

SASSA officials were generally acknowledged for their helpfulness, in terms of explaining about collection point options. (“It is always clear where to pick and when if you are assisted by an official who likes their job, because if you cannot read and ask them to tell you, they do not hesitate. But if you come across those officials who do not have time for you, they just tell you that it is written on your slip results.” [KZN-R/FG-2]).

It is also appreciated that a designated pay-point can be changed on request. (“It is written on the slips that we get which pay-point to use. Then you can change if you want to.” [KZN-P/FG-1])

More recently, electronic payment systems have been introduced. At post offices, biometric scanners replaced thumb-prints for people who cannot sign their names, but these have now been superseded by swipe-cards in many places. (“At the post office they stopped me from using my thumb-print, and now I just swipe using a card that was given to me.” [KZN-P/FG-2]) “I still use the old system of putting my thumb in that small light thing.” [KZN-P/FG-2]) For others, CSG money is transferred directly into recipients’ accounts and they are notified by SMS on their cell phones. (“They were telling everyone who had registered when they should go and check if their money has been deposited to their accounts. This thing of getting a letter or SMS is something they started doing recently.” [KZN-P/FG-2])

## 4.2 ADVANTAGES OF ALTERNATIVE COLLECTION POINTS

Because post offices are used for many purposes and people are familiar with them, they are widely popular. (*“Post office is the best!”* [Lim-R/FG-2])

Mobile pay-points are also popular, especially in deep rural areas, because they come to the communities, reducing travelling time and transport costs. (*“Mobile pay-points have made it very easy because they come to all the places that we stay in.”* [KZN-P/FG-2] *“At SASSA they have grouped the pay-points according to the ward councillors and you know that if you are under this councillor you may choose which pay-point you go to, depending also on your surname.”* [KZN-R/FG-1])

However, mobile pay-points only come once a month. Conversely, banks are favoured because they allow cash to be withdrawn at any time – so reporting on specific dates and queuing for hours can be avoided. (*“I pick up my grant from the bank, because if queues are long I can come back the following day, whereas in mobile pay-points you have to wait because once they are gone you’ll not get it until the second month.”* [KZN-R/FG-1] *“I pick my money from the bank, because even if I did not collect it that month the following month it is there, unlike in pay-points.”* [KZN-P/FG-1])

Many CSG recipients have switched to banks because of their greater convenience. (*“I used to get paid by cheque and then I moved to the bank when I got the card.”* *“Before, you used to collect money at the pay-point, but now you can collect money at the bank.”*) It is simple to switch over, and the assistance of SASSA staff in this respect is appreciated. (*“If you want to change to a bank or store you have to go back to SASSA offices and they will help you there.”* [KZN-R/FG-1])

Some banks allegedly offer better service than others. (*“My wife gets her money from Standard Bank and she informs me that Standard Bank is better than Ithala because at Ithala Bank people do not get their money sometimes.”* [KZN-R/FG-4])

Another option that has recently been introduced and is rapidly gaining in popularity is using a swipe-card to collect

CSG cash from shops. (*“These days, I just go to Shoprite and swipe!”* [Gau-P/FG-1])

One reason for their popularity is the number of retail chains involved, so many recipients can withdraw their cash from their local supermarket. (*“I have a whole list of shops that I can get the money from.”* [KZN-U/FG-2] *“They even tell you at SASSA which stores you could use, because not every shop gives out payments.”* [KZN-P/FG-1] *“The choice is always mine as to where I want to collect the money and buy from.”* [KZN-U/FG-2])

Swipe-cards are also popular with shopkeepers, because this is good for business.

Customers sometimes spend all of their month’s CSG money at the store. (*“In some shops like Payrite they told me to buy with R140 and I had no choice because at home we had no food at that time, so I ended up using the whole R240 on food.”* [KZN-P/FG-2] *“First thing I need to buy are groceries and then other things for the children, so I spent all of R240 that day.”* [Gau-U/FG-1])

Some recipients even use the CSG to make purchases from local shops on credit, and repay these debts when they collect the cash. (*“Immediately I get the money I pay for my credit at the shop, that is where my pay-point is.”* [L-P/FG1])

Shops have another reported advantage – that the CSG cash can be accessed earlier than at pay-points and banks.

*“Getting my money from the shops is very good because at the shop the money is available five or even six days before the date that I am supposed to get it at the pay-point. So I prefer getting it from the shop rather than having to wait for the day at the pay-point. At the bank there is no way you can get the money a few days before payment.”* [KZN-U/FG-2]

## 4.3 DISADVANTAGES OF ALTERNATIVE COLLECTION POINTS

Problems mentioned with collecting CSG cash varied across different delivery mechanisms.

Long queues were mentioned by many recipients, especially at fixed pay-points on pay days. (*“At the pay-point we face long queues.”* [Lim-R/FG-2] *“At the pay-point in hospital the problem we face is the long queues, because most of the zones in Seshego come to this pay-point.”* [Lim-P/FG-2]) These delays are exacerbated if there are power cuts. (*“At times when we are getting paid there is electricity failure and we have to wait for a long time. We ask SASSA to provide generators so that we don’t spend a long time waiting at pay-points.”*) Partly because post offices are popular and multi-functional, they are also associated with lengthy waits. (*“I go to the post office every time during receiving dates. The queue is always too long when I go there.”* [EC-P/FG-2] *“I get mine from the post office and there are no problems except the long queues.”* [KZN-R/FG-1])

*“I get money at the post office. Sometimes when you get there they tell you that: ‘The money is finished, please come back tomorrow’ – and they don’t even give us numbers that maybe say where about in the queue you were. The problem is that you wake up early again to be maybe first in the queue the next day. There are times when I get there and they tell me that I’m only getting paid the next day.”* [KZN-P/FG-2]

Computerisation also has its problems, as reported in one peri-urban community in Limpopo. (*“At the post office it is bad because the system is not working always. When you come at 12:30 they will tell you: ‘The computer is off-line, come back at 17:30’ – but then the computers are still off-line and they will tell you to come back the following day.”* [Lim-P/FG-2])

One recipient who collects from a civic centre in urban Gauteng complained about having to bribe security guards to retain their place in the queue. (*“Some people find problems with the queues – you have to pay R10 to the security so that you mustn’t be cut off the line.”* [Gau-U/FG-2])

The main drawback with drawing the CSG money from bank branches or ATMs is the charges that banks levy on withdrawals. (*“At the bank the problem is the charges.”* [Lim-P/FG-2] *“I can’t go to the bank because of charges.”* [Lim-R/FG-2]) For others, the bank charges are not prohibitive. (*“I get my money at Capitec Bank. It is fine, even the charges are fine, they are not much.”* [Gau-U/FG-2])

The main problem reported with collecting CSG cash from shops is the requirement imposed by many retailers to spend some of this money at the shop at the same time. Some shops do not make this demand. (*“I get the money from Pick ‘n Win and that shop is the best shop ever, because they don’t want me to even spend a cent, I get my R240 just as it is.”* [KZN-U/FG-2]) In other cases only a nominal amount has to be spent to facilitate withdrawing cash from the till. (*“You have to buy something so they can give you cash.”* [Gau-P/FG-2] *“The Spar does not need me to spend any money, but I must buy something so they can open the till. Last time I just bought something for R2, to test them, and they gave me the rest of the money back.”* [KZN-U/FG-2])

This practice seems to be widespread but the amount of money that has to be spent varies across different retail chains and even, according to some respondents, at different branches of the same chain. In other retail outlets, reported spending requirements range from R20 [KZN-U/FG-2] – at another branch of Spar supermarket – to R24 (*“When I collect the money at Rhino the shop-owner requires me to spend at least R24 of the money that I am coming to collect”* [KZN-U/FG-2]), to R30 (*“For each child you have to at least buy for R30 at the supermarket, then you can get change”*), to R50 (*“They require you to use R50 to buy things at the shop, and it depends on how many kids you are receiving CSG money for.”* [Lim-R/FG-2])

For most recipients, this spending requirement is not very problematic since they would buy food and groceries anyway; they have a range of retail outlets to choose from, and shops do not deduct any handling fee from the CSG money. (*“I only have to use R24 at any particular shop then I get my change to use it on school fees, clothes, pocket money and many other things that are needed by my child or family.”* [KZN-U/FG-2])

Table 8 summarises the qualitative data on reported disadvantages of alternative CSG cash collection points. The single issue mentioned most frequently was the requirement by certain shops that recipients spend some CSG cash at the store [n=16], though it should be noted that most of these mentions were clustered in four focus group discussions in peri-urban and rural communities of KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo. Long queues at mobile and fixed pay-points were

Table 8 Disadvantages of alternative collection points

Location	Pay-points: long queues	Post office: long queues	Bank: charges	Shop: compulsory spending
E. Cape		W/LR	KI/SA	
Gauteng	W/LR KI/SA		W/LR	W/LR
KZN	W/ER W/ER W/ER	W/LR W/LR		W/ER W/ER W/ER W/LR W/LR W/LR W/LR W/LR W/LR
Limpopo	W/LR W/LR W/LR W/LR		W/LR W/LR	W/LR W/LR W/LR W/LR W/LR W/LR
Urban	W/LR KI/SA		W/LR	W/LR W/LR W/LR
Peri-urban	W/LR	W/LR W/LR	W/LR W/LR KI/SA	W/ER W/LR W/LR W/LR W/LR W/LR
Rural	W/ER W/ER W/ER W/LR W/ LR W/LR	W/LR	W/LR	W/ER W/ER W/LR W/LR W/LR W/LR W/LR

Note: Each occurrence is referenced twice: by province, and by locality (urban, peri-urban or rural)

Key: B=Boy; G=Girl; M=Man; W=Woman; ER=Early Recipient; LR=Late Recipient; NB=Non Beneficiary KI=Key Informant; CL=Community Leader; EW=Education Worker; HW=Health Worker; SA=SASSA

also mentioned frequently [n=9], most often by respondents in rural areas where power cuts can delay payment. Complaints were also made about long queues at post offices, sometimes caused by computers being off-line. Finally, four respondents, including a SASSA official from Umtata, mentioned bank charges as a disincentive to making withdrawals from bank branches or ATMs.

#### 4.4 CONCLUSION

The recent proliferation of collection options for CSG cash is an innovation in the CSG delivery system that is greatly welcomed by recipients. Although each option has its drawbacks, the fact that recipients have choices is highly appreciated, and positive features of each option were identified that outweighed the negatives.

Moreover, since all options are being used by significant numbers of recipients suggests that each option is the first preference for many. Recipients also appreciate the clear information about collection options that SASSA provides, as well as the ease with which they can switch from one collection mechanism to another on request.

#### Recommendations

1. Shops should not be forcing recipients to spend some of their CSG cash in the store before they can withdraw their money. This practice appears to be widespread across several retail chains. Clear instructions should be given to participating stores to stop doing this, and SASSA or DSD should follow up with beneficiaries or by monitoring local retail outlets to ensure compliance.
2. A SASSA official from Umlazi pointed out that beneficiaries are discouraged from saving some CSG money by a 'use it or lose it' provision after three months. (*"Some people want to leave the money in the bank and not withdraw it, as a kind of savings – say for their daughter to go to high school later – but the banks don't allow this, so if you don't collect your money for three months they will suspend your account and stop payments. Then these people have to go to the SASSA office for review and renewal. The grant is not supposed to be saved – the government argues that they are giving you this money because you need it now."* [KZN-U/KI-1]) However, the involvement of banks in the CSG delivery system gives poor South Africans an opportunity to access financial services which has potential developmental impacts and should therefore be encouraged.



## CHAPTER 5 USE OF GRANT

This chapter presents qualitative findings on how recipients or beneficiaries spend their CSG money, allegations of ‘misuse’ of this money (in terms of both how the money is spent and who it is spent on), intra-household decision making about the use of the grant, and how this money is shared within the household.

### 5.1 HOW CSG MONEY IS USED

The programme theory of change underpinning the CSG would suggest that as caregivers are the recipients of the grant, they are likely to use this money for the benefit of those in their care, in this case children. This, coupled with information campaigns stressing that the grant is child-specific and intended for educational support, should lead to a range of child-specific uses of the grant. Below we investigate these outcomes, drawing on the qualitative data.

The use to which the grant is put is very varied across the sample, as shown in Table 9 below. The most frequently cited use of the grant was with respect to school-related expenses. These were mentioned in 52 separate interviews; within these 52 interviews, school-related expenses were mentioned a total of 95 times.

Almost as frequently cited was food expenditure (mainly general household food, but sometimes child-specific).

**Table 9 Uses of Child Support Grant**

Use of grant	Number of different FGD where ‘use type’ was mentioned	Number of times mentioned in total
School-related expenses	52	95
Food	50	90
Clothing	25	36
Transport	6	8
Health	5	5
Beauty	5	5
Investment	2	2
Job search	1	1

Other uses, though much less cited, included clothing (as well as shoes) and beauty or hairdressing. Transport, health care, debt, burial societies and investments were infrequently mentioned.

Table 10 disaggregates responses according to the types of school-related uses of the grant by location; we report the number of times the specific use was mentioned in the total sample.

According to primary caregivers, school-related expenses include items such as crèche fees, pre-school fees, Grade R fees, pens, bags, calculators, transport, soccer trips and clothing. Food-related expenses covered general groceries such as eggs, biscuits, mielie-meal, polony, yogurt, as well as child-specific food, such as formula milk, baby food, Lactogen, yogurt for kids, food for lunch boxes and school lunches. Soap and nappies were also highlighted by some respondents.

A number of female and male adults said that the CSG enabled them to take their children to clinics and for immunisations. At times it also helped when any family member was sick. Using the grant to pay for transport costs was mainly mentioned in relation to getting to school; once it was mentioned in relation to getting a job. Grants were also frequently used for payments to burial societies and societies at church, but this was very specific to Limpopo.

Adolescents who get some of the grant money indicate that they spend it on a range of items: covers for books, school uniforms, socks, calculators, shoes, sweets, toiletries, underpants, body spray, chips, juice, pies, lunch, CDs and airtime. The majority of discussions with adolescents who received CSG cash suggested that overall they view this as pocket money for personal consumption. Only a few mentioned that they buy school uniforms and shoes. A large majority used the money on food ‘treat’ items.

When asked what they think the CSG is for, many adolescents think it should be spent on them for clothes and school. A large number thought it was for the general household budget. One teenage boy said: *“We can save the money in the bank to pay for my university education.”* [Gau-U/FG-5]



Table 10 School-related uses of the Child Support Grant, by location

Province	Locality	Clothing/ uniform/shoes	School fees	Crèche fees	Lunch box or money/food	Transport to school	General school needs
Gauteng	Urban	5	5	0	0	1	3
	Peri-urban	2	5	4	4	0	5
Limpopo	Peri-urban	4	4	0	2	0	5
	Rural	5	3	0	1	2	7
KwaZulu-Natal	Urban	0	0	1	0	1	0
	Peri-urban	5	2	0	1	6	1
	Rural	2	3	0	1	1	4
Eastern Cape	Urban	0	0	1	0	0	0
	Peri-urban	1	6	0	0	1	2
	Rural	4	1	2	4	0	0
	TOTAL	28	29	8	13	12	27

Overall there was no consensus on exactly what the money is supposed to be for. This was well illustrated in one focus group discussion with adolescent girls in Umlazi, KwaZulu-Natal [KZN-U/FG-5]:

- ≈ “Yes. It helps to pay for our school fees.”
- ≈ “According to my knowledge the purpose of the CSG is not to pay for the child’s fees but instead it is money for food for the child.”
- ≈ “According to my knowledge I know that the grant is for maintenance of the child so that he gets everything that he wants.”
- ≈ “The use of the grant is to assist those parents who are unemployed and so this money helps so that the child stays healthy.”

Similarly a focus group discussion with boys in Umtata, Eastern Cape produced the following answers to the question [EC-P/FG-6]: What do you think that the CSG is for?

- ≈ “To support us with school needs.”
- ≈ “To buy food to eat at home.”
- ≈ “It is to help children to go to school.”
- ≈ “It assists parents if they are not working.”

≈ “It is for us to buy everything we need at school.”

The views of the majority of adolescents concerning the grant’s use by caregivers corroborated the general views of the caregivers. Many of the teenagers believed that their caregivers had their interests at heart and understood that the grant would be spent on what was needed at home, and where possible it would support the purchase of child-specific costs – school items, clothes, hair and pocket money. More children than caregivers mentioned that caregivers spend the grant on debt and bills such as electricity and water; however, this was not a large amount.

Again, some references were made to the fact that if the household is struggling to meet its food needs, the grant will be used first of all to supply food. Once the basic needs are met, then the children are likely to get some specific attention, according to two female caregivers of adolescent children in KwaZulu-Natal.

“For me, since I got the grant from the pay-point, I buy what is needed at home at that time. It depends. If we do not have groceries, I use it for groceries. If children need something for school I buy that, so it depends on what we need at home.” [KZN-P/FG-1]

*"It depends on the family situation at the time. If a child is a bit grown up you may give them money to buy cosmetics like colognes and roll-on, but that is dependent on the household's financial situation at the time."* [KZN-R/FG-7]

Many respondents pointed out that the value of the grant is small, but nonetheless it makes a difference:

*"The availability of the grant helps one get at least some of the basic needs, even though it's not much but at least you are able to get things. If the mother is unemployed and the father is not around, if you receive this money there is a difference, especially at times when I am really broke."* [KZN-U/FG-1]

An adult male living in a grant-receiving household explained the benefits of receiving the CSG.

*"There is not much change but we no longer sleep on empty stomachs and that is what I can say. Actually to emphasise this point – at home we can see when there's been a pay day; we do not go to sleep hungry. I can assure you that as much as my job is not paying me well, my children have clothes, attend school and do not suffer from hunger. So there is change."* [KZN-U/FG-4]

Many respondents echoed the view that the grant is small in value but makes a big difference to poor households.

*"I think it does help a lot especially for school, you are able to pay the school fees with it, kids get money for lunch at break, you can buy food at home with it. Even though it is too small but when it arrives you see a difference in the house than the ones who don't receive it."* [Gau-U/FG-4]

*"It is too small but for those who receive it is something – better than having nothing because when they come back from the pay-point they can manage to eat better than us who don't receive."* [Gau-U/FG-4]

*"Even if too small but we do need it. Half a loaf is better than nothing."* [Gau-U/FG-4]

## 5.2 MISUSE OF THE CHILD SUPPORT GRANT

On the perceptions of respondents concerning the ways that recipients may misuse the grant, the main activities and items highlighted in this regard (see Table 11) were: purchase of

Table 11 Misuses of grant

Province	Locality	Hairdressing for caregiver	Alcohol	Gambling	Cell phones/airtime	Caregivers needs	General misuse	Loan sharks/other
Gauteng	Urban	1	6	3	0	3	2	1
	Peri-urban	1	0	3	0	2	1	2
Limpopo	Peri-urban	2	0	1	0	3	2	1
	Rural	4	3	4	1	3	0	1
KwaZulu-Natal	Urban	5	6	1	1	4	0	1
	Peri-urban	1	3	0	1	4	0	0
	Rural	0	4	0	3	5	0	1
Eastern Cape	Urban	0	4	0	1	0	1	1
	Peri-urban	3	2	0	1	2	0	1
	Rural	0	1	0	0	1	2	0
TOTAL		17	29	12	8	27	8	9

alcohol (cited most often), visits to hairdressers by caregivers (particularly on the grant payment day), spending on boy-friends, luxury foods (such as KFC), gambling, cell phones and clothes for caregivers.

Respondents identified misuse of grants both in relation to the items purchased (as highlighted above), and also to the visible child-specific situation and certain intra-household dynamics. For instance, on the visible child situations, respondents pointed to the fact that certain children in the communities were not at school, or not wearing uniforms, or were without shoes, as indicative of improper use of the grant.

However, it is worth noting that a significant finding emerging from the analysis of 'who the grant is for' (and derived from the same set of respondents) is that grinding poverty in many communities and households means that households use the grant as a general household budget top-up, rather than for child-specific needs. In this context, some observations that the grant was not spent on children and therefore represented 'misuse' are not necessarily reflective of 'misuse' of the grant – simply that the family needs to spread the cash transfer across multiple members. Interestingly, two respondents from a focus group discussion in KwaZulu-Natal correctly identified this problem of attributing 'negative' outcomes as causally related to grant receipt:

*"Some do not even use it for the intended beneficiary, they just drink alcohol with it. This does not mean they only started drinking after receiving the CSG. So what we use it for and how varies, depending on our family needs."* [KZN-P/FG-1]

*"Yes. You have nailed it, my sister. We cannot say I buy something [because of the CSG] but I could not afford it before"* [KZN-P/FG-1]

A number of focus groups agreed that there are cases where the grant causes intra-household problems because of the way it is being used, in particular inter-generational tension and conflict. There were two frequently cited examples of this. The first is a perception that teenage mothers are not responsible enough to use the grant wisely, and rely on grandparents and other relatives to care for their child while

## Box 2 Mothers who relinquish care of child but not control and benefits of grant

*"In our community, I know of a teenage mother who left her child with the grandmother, she did not leave the bank card so she withdraws the money and uses it for other things and the child is not benefiting from the grant."* (Female caregiver, Engcobo, Eastern Cape)

*"I know a lot of people who receive the grant but they are not staying with the child – the child is with the grandmother. So they take the money and use it for their own good and the grand-mother has to take her pension to help the child."* (Grandmother caring for adolescent grandchild, Merrivale, KwaZulu-Natal)

*"I woke up one morning and I found my grandson left at my gate by his mother. When I tried to find her she no longer lived where she stayed and the child had not even one document that I could use to register him. So what I did was that I went to SASSA offices and reported my story about this child and they said they will try to find where will she collect the next payment. They checked her details on their computer and told me I must come back after the next payment when they would have all information about her and the child. When I came back they had everything about her and they even stopped the grant on her name and helped me get all the documents I needed (birth certificate and also a protection order from the police if it happens that she returns some day), and so the SASSA offices were very helpful in helping me get the grant."* (Female primary caregiver, Umlazi, KwaZulu-Natal)

mispending the money on themselves. The second occurs when mothers either ask their relatives to care of their children or even 'abandon' their children with relatives (such as grandparents), but do not relinquish control of the grant to the new carers. These examples are illustrated in Box 2.

While a range of possible misuses of the CSG was identified, the general feeling of most respondents was that most households used the grant responsibly and in the best interests of the children. A female caregiver in Merrivale, KwaZulu-Natal stated: *"I'd say, yes, there are those people who use it for alcohol, do their hair and buy expensive clothes while their children are struggling. They are just irresponsible."* [KZN-R/FG-2] Another group of primary female caregivers agreed that most people use the grant responsibly.

*"There are other people who use the grant inappropriately. There are those who go to the hair salon to get their hair done and others actually use it to buy alcohol and at times even use the money to*

### Box 3 One woman's perceptions about of CSG money

"There are also parents who go directly to Emapulangweni [the closest tavern] and you know that their children are struggling and are hungry but she just goes to drink alcohol, eat KFC and braai [barbeque] when they feel like it. Sometimes I even say these are the people who are giving a bad image for CSG recipients. Those who do not drink do hairdressing and buy their own things first. There is one I know who was owing me – I had sold her a chain and when I got there they showed me her child. She had nothing at all – no nappies or Pampers – but she gets paid every month. She thinks only of herself. I spoke to her mother and she told me: 'As you can see, she knows herself, not her child.' I told her mother to go to EmaWeleni and report her, because she's doing nothing and sometimes the child comes back from school hungry. When her mother talks to her she does not respond.

This money should be received only by grannies, because they are the ones who look after these children. The teenage mothers should not be given this money. Mine, who passed away last year, was turned back at the SASSA office and told to let me apply for the CSG. I went there but she was not happy about it. If this money can be stopped they can stop getting pregnant.

One woman who came to buy from me told me that her daughter asked her what to mix with sweet potatoes, and the mother said: 'Where did you put your money, because you have just received your CSG – I can see it bulging from your breasts!'

However, there are also those grannies who drink alcohol and they are only staying with their grand-children. There are clever grannies and foolish grannies that take care of their grand-children. One granny from my street does not come home when she gets her pension grant, she goes and drinks alcohol at Emapulangweni.

This is up to each individual, because there are also teenage mothers who are responsible for their children and families. Some can even buy groceries for their families. My son impregnated a girl but every month when he gets paid he buys groceries for his child and he always tells me: 'I don't want my child to bother you.'" [KZN-UIFG-7]

*drink alcohol with the father of the child, actually spending the child's money on themselves without considering the child's needs; but most of the recipients use the money correctly, whereby the child's needs are first priority because the most important thing is the child's needs."*

No major differences were recorded between misuse of grant as perceived between children and adults, men and women. However, the information from the adolescent children usefully confirms the significant problem with alcoholism within communities, and this was often related to the grant. Whether the consumption of alcohol increases due to accessing the grant in some households is not entirely clear, but there appears to be a strong association between teenage mothers who receive the grant and access to alcohol. In cases where teenagers with children are living at home, access to the grant money provides hard cash for alcohol and other consumables to people who otherwise would have access to no money at all. The irresponsible behaviour of this group is frequently pointed out across all categories of respondents, and should therefore be taken seriously. An adult male respondent from Izingolweni in KwaZulu-Natal said: "Sometimes other people use it for alcohol, particularly the teenage mothers and fathers; they use it for their own needs rather than the intended beneficiary." Another man from Umlazi

in KwaZulu-Natal agreed: "Some are using it unreasonably because there are grannies in their house and they know that they [the 'grannies'] are going to support their children, even if they use it recklessly." [KZN-P/FG-4]

Someone suggested that people who misuse the CSG should be 'educated' about how to use the money properly and for the intended purpose. ("Some people also need to be informed about the uses of the grant, because there are those who misuse it instead of supporting their children.")

Of particular interest was the case of a primary school teacher from Izingolweni in KwaZulu-Natal who explained how he had intervened to change the designated recipient of the CSG, when the mother who was receiving the grant persistently misused the money.

*"Another case that I had was this boy who is 18 years of age and the father had passed away, who came and reported to me that her mother is getting money for three other children, but every month end she goes to her boyfriend in Port Shepstone where they spend this money together and she returns days later without a cent. So what I did is invite this parent and talk to her and tell her ways in which she should use this money. I gave her three months probation and she was very promising, but the following months*

*she went and did the same thing that her boy was complaining about. So what we did, since this boy was old enough to be a caregiver, we changed the caregiver from mother to son. Since then the children have not even once come to me about anything.” [KZN-P/KI-1]*

### 5.3 DIFFERENCES IN THE USE OF CSG MONEY AND OTHER MONEY

A driving hypothesis behind the provision of Child Support Grants to poor households is that the extra resources will enable the household to consume or purchase items that otherwise they would have been unable to buy. In other words, it is a regular stipend to relieve income constraints at the margin, ideally with beneficial outcomes for the child, or for other children within the household. In the absence of a sophisticated quantitative model that allows us to test for causal relationships between grant provision and spending and consumption patterns, we are able to ask households and children for their perceptions of: (i) who the grant is for, and; (ii) the added value to them, in real terms, of the additional money that the grant provides. Furthermore, we asked non-beneficiaries for their views on what they would do with the grant money if they were able to receive it. This provides some interesting insights into the specific value of the grant to the household.

Many households believe the grant should be used for the whole family, not just the child it was earmarked for. In some cases caregivers believe that the grant should be used for all the children, but not for one in particular. Many times the grant is seen as an income top-up that does not enable accumulation in terms of investment, but is an additional small amount to help with the purchase of basic necessities – food, clothing, shoes, transport and school equipment.

Comments from some men’s groups indicated that men generally believe the grant to be for the ‘specified’ child only. (“It is spent on the child only. We buy food, we have to add our money to that money.” [EC-U/FG-4] “This money is for the child as the name states – ‘Child Support Grant’, not ‘Adult Support Grant!’” [Lim-R/FG-4]) On the other hand, many female primary caregivers indicate that they see it as a general income

supplement that contributes to the household budget. A range of divergent responses on who the grant is for came from a focus group in Lenasia, Gauteng [Gau-U/FG-1].

- ≈ “For me it is special because I know every month the CSG is there. If I lay-by shoes for my child I know next month I can pay up because I receive the CSG.”
- ≈ “Yes, it is for kids, only for kids, so they can have food.”
- ≈ “For me, I can use it for everyone, because if I buy sugar we share it – all of us.”

A dominant theme emerging from the interviews is the view that poverty (or low levels of income and high basic needs requirements) means that the grant is necessarily diluted across the family in the name of basic needs provision. (“The money has to be spent on the child, but as I have said we are poor so it ends up being used in the household.” “The household has to share it unless you have everything at home, then you can spend it on the child.” “It should be spent on the child but we cannot, because hunger is relative.” [KZN-R/FG-1] “Since most people are not working this money cannot be used on the child alone, but has to be used on the whole family because no one is working at home.” [EC-P/FG-4]) A large number of adolescents hold a similar view. An adolescent girl made a comment in relation to the income constraints of unemployment: “It should be spent on the whole family – it can be used for buying groceries for everyone if there is no one employed in that household.” [KZN-R/FG-5]

Other girls from a focus group discussion in Seshego, Limpopo discussed this issue:

- ≈ “The CSG money is supposed to support everyone in the family because sometimes at home there is no food, so it means I should buy food with my money.”
- ≈ “I think it has to be spent on anyone at home, I won’t just say this because I’m the one who has it, maybe at home if there is no bread, I won’t say they must not buy because the money is mine.”
- ≈ “I think those who don’t receive it maybe their parents can afford themselves or they work at the government department



*and they get good salary advice but some people can't afford whatever they want."* [Lim-P/FG-5]

One adolescent girl made the observation that higher income and jobs enable relinquishing of the grant to the child. *"Some have mothers who have good jobs but are still getting the social grant, so they are able to give it to their children."* One adult female caregiver from Limpopo even went so far as to state that: *"It should be used for everyone at home because most people don't work. And this money has eliminated poverty in our society."* [Lim-R/FG-1]

In terms of the value of the grant, a primary caregiver receiving the grant said that: *"We can have enough food because [CSG] supplements our other income."* [KZN-U/FG-5]

Many caregivers used the term 'special' to refer to the additional value of the transfers, but did not usually explain why the transfer was special. In cases that this was explained, the CSG was referred to as a 'salary'. In other words, in the face of high poverty and high unemployment beneficiaries saw it as a substitute for a salary.

In relation to the poverty facing households, beneficiaries commented: *"Basically it is for the child, but because of poverty this money is used to assist in the household food requirements."* [EC-U/FG-2]

One respondent pointed out that it is impossible to make a statement on the value of the grant in relation to other income because they do not have any other income. *"You can't compare this money to anything because there are people who work to get money whereas we are not working and are dependent on this grant to get money."* [EC-P/FG-1]

A community elder in Umlazi, KwaZulu-Natal, summed up the situation:

*"The number one problem that people are faced with in this community is poverty, instead of this grant supporting the children in this community this money ends up having to support the whole family. Because of poverty, most people in this area are not employed so this money has to be used on a family budget for everyone in the home. Even for those who are working, this money is of great assistance*

*to them because most jobs are paying a small amount of money, it helps most also to those young and old single parents who have to feed a large number of family members."* [KZN-U/KI-4]

Another key informant interview with a community elder in Umtata in the Eastern Cape revealed the same perception:

*"It will definitely become a part of family [budget] because of the rural-ness of our areas which is signified by unemployment."* [EC-P/KI-4]

One respondent highlighted the relationship between wealth and grant use in the following way:

*"The truth is if you have someone who helps you financially, you can manage to take this money and invest it for the child. Although the money is not enough, we must always consider these things and remember the children's future, because when the child is 1 year to 18 years you can save R40 and knowing that every year they keep increasing the grant by R10 it means you can use the R50 and save the other money. By 18 years it will be more money that can help the child."* [Lim-P/FG-2]

There are some activities that people said without the grant they would be unable to afford. These include: crèche fees (*"If we were not receiving the CSG money our child would not be attending crèche"* [Gau-P/FG-1]), school expenses, shoes and meat. (*At least you can buy book covers and some shoes at the PEP store, and you can buy some meat"* [Lim-R/KI-4])

Of the benefits of the grant, a group of caregiver recipients in Umlazi, KwaZulu-Natal said the following:

*"With other people [non-recipients], if they do not receive the CSG money and no one in the household is employed, they are unable to afford quite a number of things. For instance, one would find that a child does not attend school because you can't afford money to send the child to school, or else the child does attend school but does not have the correct uniform to wear like any other child. You find that sometimes the child does not even have shoes and the shirt that the child is wearing is different from that of other children because there is nothing right within that particular household. At least you are also able to get healthy food so that the child is wide awake at school so that she is able to learn*



*like other children. You are also able to buy clothes for the child so that the child looks presentable like any other normal school child.*" [KZN-U/FG-2]

#### 5.4 DECISION MAKING REGARDING USE OF CSG WITHIN THE HOUSEHOLD

Responses to the section of the questionnaire on decision making were low relative to other sections. In terms of decision making concerning the use of the transfer, the majority of respondents indicated that the primary caregiver (usually a woman) decided alone, or took the controlling decision on transfer use. Many primary caregivers justified responses on their sole control of the transfer on the basis of their superior knowledge of the child's and household needs. (*"I am the one who takes decisions because I know what my child needs."* *"From the pay-point I go straight to the shop to buy porridge for the child, because I am aware that my child at home does not have porridge."* [EC/FG-1]) Other women stated it is on account of their status as 'mother' that they have the sole decision-making power. (*"I make decisions because I am the mother."*)

Many men from male focus groups agreed that the woman is the primary controller of the CSG transfer:

- ≈ *"A woman giving a man money? I have never heard of such a thing. I don't even get a cent from her especially the CSG money."* [KZN-P/FG-4]
- ≈ *"For me there is nothing to discuss, because this money is for the kids and she has to spend it on them. It is compulsory."* [Gau-P/FG-4]
- ≈ *"It is our wives who take decisions with regards to this money. She can ask for advice but this money is for them to make decisions. I do not think there is a man who decides on what should be done with the CSG."* [KZN-R/FG-4]
- ≈ *"I do not even know when she collects the CSG because there is another part-time job she does. It is her who takes all the decisions about it. I have nothing to do with it. I do not take even R2 from that money."* [KZN-U/FG-4]

A significant number of the women described situations where, while they take the ultimate decision, given that the grant is part of the overall household income, they make

an effort to consult with their children and also tell their husband of the planned decisions. It seems likely that the older the child, the higher the level of consultation. There is some evidence that teenagers at times negotiate with their mothers over grant use. A few women also indicate that they consult with their mothers regarding use.

#### Box 4 Inter-generational dynamics concerning use and control of grant

##### Responses from adolescent girls whose caregiver received grant [KZN-P/FG-5]

- *"If it happens that your granny receives the money on your behalf and she does not know anything, you need to tell her what we are going to buy, or maybe go to the shops and tell her that we are going to order food and also pay for other things."*
- *"If she tells me that we do not have food and I am the only child at home or I stay with my mother, if there is no food she would ask if I want her to buy food with my money so that we have food to eat and I take the rest of it and thank her."*

##### Responses from adolescent boys whose caregiver received grant [KZN-P/FG-6]

- *"Sometimes if you need something, particularly things which are school related."*
- *"I ask her for what I'm short of, like shirts or pair of sneakers to use at home if I need them."*
- *"I ask her to buy me anything."*
- *"I go with her during the pay day and when I notice something that I like I ask her."*

##### Responses from adolescent boys whose caregiver received grant [KZN-U/FG-5]

- *"If I need something I tell my mom, then she gives me an exact amount which I have asked for."*
- *"I do have some influence, because my mom tells me when the date is close and I say what I want."*
- *"I do not have any influence because I only know when my mother has already used it."*
- *"I also know after it has been used, but they always use it reasonably at home."*
- *"My mother asks me what do I want and I tell her, and in that way I can say I do have influence even though it is not that big."*

Again, this is likely due to two reasons: (i) the grandparent may in fact be the primary caregiver, or (ii) the mother is a teenager and still lives with her mother who has control over the total household income and therefore has seniority. These inter-generational dynamics around decision making are very interesting but require further investigation. Some responses to the question: *‘Do you have any influence on the decisions that your caregiver gets in terms of how to spend the CSG?’* were suggestive of the patterns described above (see Box 4).

Some men mentioned buying airtime – including airtime for children, because they ask for it. (*“You can buy airtime if you go to town and you also buy shoes, the shoes are R190. The child asks you to buy airtime in order to call her mother to add money to buy shoes for the child. You don’t buy cigarettes with the CSG money because it is not enough.”* [EC-R/FG-4])

Spending and decision making regarding the Child Support Grant appear to depend largely on the demography of the household. If children are young, then caregivers take decisions. A female adult caregiver from Lenasia, Gauteng said: *“We don’t make decisions with our children because they are still young – I will look at what my child needs.”* However, of her older son, another mother from the same group said: *“My son also makes the decisions with me, because this money also helps him at university.”* [Gau-U/FG-1]

When extended families live together, decisions over grant use can be more complicated. *“I do consult with my two sisters, because they also have children receiving the grant so in most cases we consult about how are we going to use it. If my child needs something at school, I have to buy it so we compromise as a family about how much we are going to put together for groceries and how much to spend on our children, because we also have to buy them clothes.”* [KZN-P/FG-1]

Moreover, when there are more than two generations living under the same roof, decisions are not necessarily straightforward. *“I also decide for the household since the children are mine. It happens that you cannot decide on your own if you are still under your parental guidance.”* [KZN-U/FG-1])

If caregivers are not the mothers, but they have access to the grant, then they take primary responsibility for how it will

be spent and used, as one mother from Merrivale, KwaZulu-Natal, explained: *“I have said that my mother used to stay with my daughter so I decide together with her, as it was when I was at school.”*

## 5.5 ACCESS TO CSG AND GRANT-SHARING WITHIN THE HOUSEHOLD

As with grant use, when asked about ‘sharing’ and division of the physical grant money within the household, in the main, female caregivers retain the majority of the cash and make decisions how often they will provide some part of the grant and to whom.

Men have very little access to the grant money in the form of cash. This is confirmed by group interviews with both female caregivers as well as men. Some men report ‘borrowing’ small amounts of the grant (from R20 to R50) to pay for expenses such as transport. (*“Sometimes if my husband wants to go look for a job I give him R50 or R70 for transport.”* [EC-P/FG-2] *“She gives me maybe R50, but when you come back and ask for more she will tell you: ‘You must go and look for a job because this is not for me but for the kids.’”* [Gau-U/FG-4])

The few men who indicated that they use some of the CSG money, also report that they repay this money. Women corroborate this, saying that men can borrow but they must repay. (*“My wife or my daughter gives me if I ask for it, but I pay it back. I don’t want them to have an impression that I’m misusing their money. I only ask for it if I am totally broke. Like yesterday I asked for R20 from my daughter since she had been paid the day before and she gave it to me.”* [KZN-R/FG-4]) A few female caregivers said that they bought their spouses or boyfriends a packet of cigarettes or a few beers on pay day.

While women, in most cases, control use and access to the grant, they do often distribute the grant within the household, as indicated in Table 12. This does not represent the whole sample, but is indicative of intra-household sharing patterns that are described in detail by a number of the focus group participants.

Table 12 Sharing patterns of Child Support Grant money

Sharing pattern	Number of different FGD where 'use type' was mentioned	Number of times mentioned in total
Gives some money to young children	9	11
Gives some money to man	15	18
Gives some money to teen children	29	35
Spends all money herself	10	11

While men usually have little to no physical control over the grant, children and adolescents have more access and power to 'demand' or negotiate.

Many times caregivers and children reported that their children receive regular pocket money, which is linked to grant access. Amounts reported range from 50 cents or between R1 and R2 a week, and between R50 and R70 a month.

This intra-household transfer is not provided with a specified use, although often times it is used for food at school (in addition to lunch boxes). However, other amounts of cash are given to children for specific needs and payments, such as to pay for school fees, items of clothing, or haircuts.

Many teenagers interviewed appeared acutely aware of their status in relation to CSG access, and claimed they were able to make demands on caregivers based on this. In other words, while not expressed explicitly, they invoked arguments based on their right to 'their' money:

- ≈ *"My child is 14 years old, he sometimes asks for it, and if he sees something at the shop he will say: 'Mom, don't forget that the 1<sup>st</sup> is pay day, there is something at the shops and I need it, so put me on the budget.' If I say: 'I don't have money', he will tell me: 'You will use my CSG money'." [Gau-P/FG-7]*
- ≈ *"The problem is some children demand CSG money to buy useless things, because they say they have got the right, even though their parents are receiving it on their behalf."*
- ≈ *"If she wants to extend the house she can, as long as she buys me a soccer kit!"*

Many children ask their caregivers to pay for specific school costs (excerpt from [EC-U/FG-6]):

- ≈ *"Sometimes my mother gives me the money to buy food at school during lunchtime."*
- ≈ *"I ask for money from my mother if we have a trip at school."*
- ≈ *"If I need something I ask my mother to give me money."*
- ≈ *"My mother gives me money to buy sweets and chips."*
- ≈ *"Sometimes if they need money at school I ask my mother to give."*

While these quotes indicate that many teenage beneficiaries feel that they are able to make financial demands on the grant recipient, it is not obvious from the responses of caregivers that these demands are frequently, if ever, met. Some caregivers described how their children would ask for specific items, but very few reported meeting these demands.

This was reflected in comments made by a focus group of female caregivers in Engcobo, Eastern Cape:

- ≈ *"I don't want to give my children money directly because they buy unnecessary things."*
- ≈ *"I don't give my children more money except pocket money, and at times I give him so that he can buy shoes, for instance I gave my boy R200."*
- ≈ *"Except money for buying school things, I only give my children pocket money, maybe R2 or R3 during the first few weeks after pay."*

## 5.6 CONCLUSION

Four general points emerge from our analysis in this chapter.

First, whatever the intended and perceived purpose of the CSG, it is used primarily as a basic household income top-up, and as such is used to buy basic food and consumption needs for the whole household. The reasons most frequently given for this (as opposed to child-specific usage) were widespread poverty, unemployment and limited income at home. The transfer is – understandably – diluted across all

household members. A number of comments indicated that this may be causally related to poverty and unemployment, and that less poor households are more able to target the grant on children, or even to a specific child.

This is an interesting observation as it may imply that as households move into higher income quintiles, they are better able to target spending and the programme will more likely achieve its child-specific objectives.

Second, the female caregiver who receives the grant is usually the person who has most control of the grant in terms of decision making on use and distribution within the family. This general finding is modified within families of more than two generations, in particular where the grant recipient is

a teenager and is living with her mother who has ultimate control over the entire household budget. Tensions can exist in these cases and grant use may not be beneficial to either household consumption or child-specific needs.

Third, men have very limited access and control over the CSG. They benefit from it in as much as it is used as a general household budget top-up, and sometimes they borrow against the CSG for expenses such as transport. There are a few cases where men are able to access it for alcohol or cigarettes – however, this is the exception rather than the rule.

Lastly, children are often recipients of pocket money from the CSG. Many teenagers are aware of their 'rights' to the grant, but very few control grant use and decision making.

# CHAPTER 6 EDUCATION

One of the main human capital impacts of the CSG that the evaluation seeks to measure is educational attainment. The quantitative survey will look at enrolment, attendance, grade repetition and grade-for-age impacts of children who were enrolled early and late in the CSG, and will also look at schooling impacts for adolescents. The qualitative research is able to contribute to this process by exploring a number of issues that address hypothesised pathways through which the CSG could affect schooling outcomes. This study focused intensively on the full range of reasons why children are absent from school or drop out of school, and what would be needed to increase their attendance and keep them in school, especially as they get older.

We explored the many different types of economic factors that explain schooling constraints, from school expenses through to the need to work, to family situations at home, social pressures at school to wear nice clothing, and others. The purpose of this focus was to investigate the potential pathways through which the CSG could directly or indirectly influence outcomes. We also explored non-economic factors that would indicate where

the CSG is unlikely to have an impact, and suggest policy alternatives or complements. We recognise, however, that it is very hard to disentangle economic and social factors since these are intertwined, with poverty underlying many social ills and social ills often exacerbating poverty. Nevertheless, we categorise them in our analysis for the purpose of understanding the relevance of the CSG.

Another line of inquiry was school-related expenses, capturing all different types in order to ensure that these will not be missed in the survey. Interviews with education workers expanded on these general themes to include questions on CSG outreach efforts, access to services and the ways in which social behaviour affects school attendance.

## 6.1 WHY CHILDREN MISS DAYS OF SCHOOL – ECONOMIC CAUSES

Table 13 shows the factors that influence school absences across the study communities, and the communities in which

Table 13 Why children miss days of school

Province	Locality U = Urban P = Peri-urban R = Rural	Lack of money and material things	Dislike school or laziness	Work outside of school	Take care of family members	Crime	Drug or alcohol use	Prostitution	To be with boyfriends/girlfriends	Pregnancy	Peer pressure	Gangs	Home situation	Problems with teachers	No money for food	No money for uniforms	No money for school fees	Lack of transportation or money for transportation
Gauteng	Shoshanguve (U)	•	•			•	•	•							•	•		•
	Lenasia (U)	•			•	•					•		•		•	•		•
	Meyerton (P)	•	•			•	•				•		•		•	•		
Limpopo	Seshego (P)	•	•			•	•				•		•					•
	Groothoek (R)	•				•					•				•	•		•
	Moletjje (R)	•		•			•				•	•	•	•	•	•		•
KwaZulu-Natal	Umlazi (U)	•	•				•				•	•			•	•		
	Izingolweni (P)	•	•	•	•		•											
	Merrivale (R)	•	•		•		•		•		•	•			•	•		•
Eastern Cape	Port Elizabeth (U)	•		•	•					•		•	•	•	•		•	
	Engcobo (R)	•	•	•			•		•		•		•	•	•			
	Umtata (P)	•					•				•		•	•	•		•	•
TOTAL		12	7	4	4	5	9	1	2	1	9	4	7	4	10	7	2	7



each factor was raised. No patterns emerged from this data with respect to urban or rural differences, nor were there any provincial differences to note (the only possible exception might be the fact that crime came up almost entirely in Gauteng, though it also came up in Limpopo, and children dropping out of school due to crime came up in all provinces). Note that this table does not indicate the frequencies with which these issues were raised in the focus groups, and the fact that an issue did not come up does not mean that the issue does not exist in that community, only that no one raised it during the focus group discussion or key informant interview. Any generalisable conclusions cannot be drawn from this a sample of 12 communities. Rather, this table primarily conveys the range of factors identified (though there are further sub-categories that will be elaborated on later). However, this table is suggestive of the extent to which a particular issue comes up in every (or almost every) community, versus just a few.

Table 14 presents a rough picture of prevalence, showing the frequency with which factors explaining school absences were raised across all communities in the research. The first column indicates the number of sources – focus groups (FG) and key informants (KI) – in which the issue was raised (out of a total of 132). The second column indicates the number of times the issue was raised. As explained in section 2.5 of the Methods chapter of this report, the numbers in this and other frequency tables in this chapter should be taken as very rough indications of the relative importance of these drivers and other responses. Nevertheless, bearing all of these cautions in mind, this table is useful in showing an approximation of the relative importance of different factors that explain school absences. This array of possible drivers of absences here, and school drop-outs in Table 15 and Table 16, have been incorporated into the quantitative survey, where relative importance can be determined more definitively.

In Table 14, the issues raised most often include illness (mentioned most, by 32 sources and in 38 instances), laziness/not feeling like going to school, drugs and alcohol, and a lack of sufficient food. Peer pressure and influence, spending time with men or boys, and a general lack of material things were also mentioned frequently.

**Table 14 Why children miss school**

Why children miss school	Number of sources (FGs and KIs) where issue was raised	Number of instances of issue being raised
Adolescence	10	10
Caring for family members	11	11
Crime	6	7
Did not do school work	3	3
Drugs and alcohol	30	47
Food	25	36
Gangs	1	1
Home situation	21	24
Lack of money or material things	18	21
Lazy/don't feel like it	29	31
Orphaned	2	2
Pay day	3	3
Peer pressure and influence	18	24
Pregnancy	5	5
Problems with teachers	6	6
Prostitution	2	2
School clothing	12	15
School fees	5	5
Sick	32	38
Social: Other	7	7
To be with men or boys	17	23
Transport expense and issues	13	16
Work	11	13

### 6.1.1 Lack of money and material things

As seen in Table 14, lack of money and material things was mentioned in all 12 communities. In fact, financial constraints and poverty underlie many of the factors that cause children to miss school.

According to beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries alike, school materials are expensive, although they range greatly



across both communities and schools, with the cost of uniforms mentioned as between R40 and R2 000; transport up to R380 per month; and school fees up to R250 a year. Both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries explained the link between a general lack of resources and social conditions permeated by poverty. One mother explained the relationship between poverty and school attendance in this way: *"In my house I don't have electricity, and when it is cold and I have no money to buy paraffin my children will miss school because they cannot bath with cold water."* [EC-U/FG-2] Beneficiaries, non-beneficiaries and key informants also noted a lack of money for food, uniforms and school fees. It was emphasised that embarrassment over not having new uniforms causes some children to miss school.

According to beneficiaries, non-beneficiaries and key informants, children miss school when they either do not have a lunch box or money for lunch. This is because hunger causes an inability to concentrate, affecting children's learning capacity while at school. Children may even associate school attendance with hunger, which will de-motivate them. In the words of a CSG recipient from Limpopo: *"I*

*think starving is the other reason that makes them miss days of school, because you cannot concentrate when you are hungry."*

Money for lunch is a significant problem for secondary school students, since they do not have feeding scheme programmes that provide food, as many of the primary schools do. One CSG beneficiary from Port Elizabeth explained that her daughter misses school because she cannot stand hunger, whereas her son will go to school even when he does not have pocket money to buy lunch. The experience of children without sufficient food was discussed by a non-beneficiary woman from Umlazi, revealing that parents sometimes prefer that their hungry child not go to school:

*"The child gets discouraged at school due to that other children come with healthy lunch boxes. The child complains about having to eat bread and peanut butter everyday and you find that you don't even have peanut butter as well as mielie-meal and rice for the children to eat at home and so the child decides that he is not going to school at all. You as the parent would also agree, because you do not want your child fainting at school, rather she dies of hunger in your presence. You even resort to telling the child to*

### Box 5 Access to education: Transport problems in Limpopo province

In Groothoek, children miss school when their caregivers cannot afford the transport costs. This varies by the month or week, depending on the paid work that parents can get. CSG beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries in Groothoek both described this same situation:

*"Another thing is that you find a child is using the transport to go to school and the parents don't have money to pay that month, and the transport owner will tell you that he won't transport your kids because he does not do credit so it makes a child to miss days at school."* [Lim-R/FG 2]

*"In most cases it's lack of transport money, because you will find that the mother sells sweets and other stuff and that particular weekend you don't manage to make enough money for every household need."* [Lim-R/FG-3]

This lack of access to transport means that children miss school because the distance is too long to walk, or they risk arriving late and being locked out of school for the day after they have made the journey. Transportation thus plays an important role in access to education – both in terms of attendance rates and the quality of education that children can receive.

The CSG, which pays for transportation for many families, has a significant effect on education in the community of Groothoek. CSG beneficiaries, non-beneficiaries, men, women and teenagers in Groothoek all explained the importance of money for transport to school in the community. CSG beneficiaries, women and men, said that CSG has helped to provide regular transport to families from this community:

*"We do use it for the transport, we buy food and host our children's birthdays."* [Lim-R/FG-2]

*"It can help a child to get food at home before leaving for school and it helps to pay transport to school."* [Lim-R/FG-1]

*"Yes it does, because it ends up paying for school transport every month. And there is pocket money for the child as the child won't go to school hungry, they will lack concentration. And it also contributes to school uniform."* [Lim-R/FG-4]

One beneficiary also explained that the CSG may allow parents to access transportation to take their children to better schools, which are further from their homes. *"The good thing about the CSG is that we can take our kids to better schools, because we are able to pay for transport."*

Table 15 Why children drop out of school

Province	Locality U = Urban P = Peri-urban R = Rural	Lack of money and material things	Dislike school or laziness	Work outside of school	Take care of family members	Crime	Drug or alcohol use	Older men	Prostitution	To be with boyfriends or girlfriends	Held back or failed	Pregnancy	Peer pressure	Gangs	Abuse	Home situation	Problems with teachers	No money for food	No money for uniforms	No money for school fees	Orphaned
Gauteng	Shoshanguve (U)	•		•		•	•	•		•	•	•	•			•	•	•			
	Lenasia (U)	•	•		•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•			•			•		
	Meyerton (P)	•	•	•	•	•	•			•		•	•			•	•	•			•
Limpopo	Seshego (P)	•		•			•	•		•	•	•	•			•		•	•	•	
	Groothoek (R)	•				•	•			•	•	•	•			•		•	•		
	Moletjie (R)	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•		•		•	•	•	
KwaZulu-Natal	Umlazi (U)	•			•	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•			•
	Izingolweni (P)	•		•		•	•	•				•	•		•	•			•		
	Merrivale (R)	•	•	•		•	•			•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•
Eastern Cape	Port Elizabeth (U)	•	•	•		•	•			•	•	•	•	•		•		•	•		
	Engcobo (R)	•		•	•		•			•	•	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	
	Umtata (P)	•	•	•			•		•	•	•	•	•		•	•	•		•	•	
TOTAL		12	6	9	5	9	12	5	1	11	9	12	12	4	4	12	6	9	9	4	3

*visit the neighbours so that she gets something to eat.” [KZN-U/FG-3]*

Another financial constraint on school attendance relates to clothing. In seven study communities it was mentioned that children are embarrassed by old clothing and uniforms and this can cause them to miss school. Some children cannot afford uniforms or proper shoes.

One caregiver explained that children cannot go to school with holes in their shoes when it rains. Children can be asked to leave school for not having the right clothing, as discussed by non-beneficiaries in Merrivale. Moreover, new school uniforms are very expensive. Teenagers’ desire for extravagant clothing, focused on specific designer labels, also affects school attendance. This is explored further in section

6.3 under social issues below, as it reflects not only the economic limitations of the communities but also significant social pressures (peer pressure) surrounding clothing.

An additional monetary constraint relates to a lack of money for transportation to schools that are difficult or too far to walk to. Lack of transport money can lead to a day of missed school or prevent children from attending regularly. Some children do not have access to systems of transport at all, as explained by a teenage girl in Umtata who said that children miss school because it is far from home and there are no school buses provided. But even those who do have access to transport may miss their buses. As noted by men in Moletjie and women in Shoshanguve and Umtata, if children miss their regular daily transport, they are unable to walk to schools because of the long distances.

In Koloti and Izingolweni, rain and resulting flooding causes children to miss school:

*"Schools are situated far from where we live so the young kids don't go to school if at times the river is flooded and full. Girls and boys leave home and say they are going to school but don't even get there because it's far, and they get late or bunk school to take a rest from the long walk."* [KZN-P/FG-4]

### 6.1.2 Work instead of school

Children work outside of school in 'piece jobs' that cause them to miss school, as mentioned in three rural communities and one peri-urban community. This depends on the home situation and also on available work opportunities. Parents or caretakers often facilitate children's non-attendance by requiring their children to help or cover for them in their work.

According to a teenage boy from Engcobo: *"Their parents ask them to look after stock, that is why they miss the school."* School staff also noted that boys miss school to help their parents or grandparents look after livestock or to carry groceries. One teenage girl from Merrivale explained that she had missed school to cover for her sister at work: *"I missed school when my father had a court case, so every time when it was the trial day my sister had to go to court and I had to work for her at KwaThami tuck shop so that's when I missed school."* [KZN-R/FG-5]

Particularly disturbing were reports from Shoshanguve that girls miss school in order to prostitute themselves. They leave for school in the morning in their uniforms, but either do not go to school or leave, and then return home saying they were in school. This behaviour only came up in Shoshanguve and was mentioned by just a few people, although we cannot deduce from this how prevalent it is.

## 6.2 WHY CHILDREN DROP OUT OF SCHOOL – ECONOMIC CAUSES

The reasons why children drop out of school are mostly similar to the reasons why they miss school (see Table 15),

though there are also some differences. These include several factors that mainly affect drop-outs: failing the school year and pregnancy.

Table 16 shows the rough relative frequencies of factors said to explain why children drop out of school. Drugs and alcohol were mentioned the most (by 66 sources and in 123 instances), followed by pregnancy, peer pressure/influence and school clothing. Many other issues were also raised with relative frequency, although to a lesser extent: failure/being held back, lack of money or material things, lack of food, home situation, school clothing and in order to be with men or boys.

Table 16 Why children drop out of school (frequencies)

Reasons	Number of sources (FGs and KIs) where issue was raised	Number of instances of issue being raised
Caring for family members	5	6
Crime	15	17
Don't like school	8	8
Drugs and alcohol	66	123
Failed or held back	21	24
Food	21	23
Gangs	5	5
Home situation	23	29
Lack of money and material things	24	25
Lazy/don't feel like it	12	12
Orphaned	8	9
Abuse	6	9
Peer pressure and influence	41	46
Pregnancy	63	82
Problems with teachers	17	21
School clothing	27	32
School fees	10	11
School expenses	19	21
To be with men or boys	22	25
Transport expense and issues	1	1
Work	18	20

### 6.2.1 Lack of money and material things

The inability to pay for basic expenses – and basic livelihood needs – was noted across all 12 study communities. As explained by a teacher from Shoshanguve: *“The reason that the children drop out of school, again is a question of poverty, because most of our learners where I am come from the provided families, whereby basic needs are not satisfied.”* Children are said to be motivated to drop out of school by the need to work in order to meet their basic needs, or to assist their parents with work when there is insufficient food at home. CSG beneficiaries in the focus groups said that children may drop out of school if their parents cannot buy them clothes or pay their school fees.

A primary caregiver of a teenager explained the difficulty of attending school without all of the required materials, emphasising that this is the principal reason why they decide to drop out:

*“It is the lack of required instruments for school, clothes and food. When going they have to eat and when coming back so if there is nothing, they will drop out. They need uniforms and are like any other pupils at school. If she does not have warm clothes, socks to wear and is always laughed at by other pupils she feels isolated and then decides not to go to school. Children want to go to school fully prepared with all the necessary requirements.” [KZN-U/FG-7]*

While many parents simply cannot afford school materials, another problem cited was that some people who have the CSG may not use it for these needed school expenses. A CSG beneficiary from Lenasia explained: *“Some children they drop out of school because of not having school materials, like you find the child he is receiving grant and the parents use that money not for school things like shoes, and the child doesn’t have shoes so he decides to drop school – mostly boys.” [Gau-U/FG-2]*

Even if they do use the CSG for school expenses, competing expenses include food, uniforms, transportation and in some cases school fees. According to a CSG beneficiary in Lebowa kgomo, the CSG is too little to buy both a uniform and food. In nine of the study communities, CSG beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries alike mentioned that a lack of

money for food, specifically for lunch, leads children to drop out of school. As in the case of absences, people also said that hunger results in some children dropping out of school because they cannot concentrate if they attend school hungry. This experience was explained by a teenage girl from Umlazi:

*“With others it could be that she did not have anything to eat the previous day and there is no feeding scheme at school, and this affects her learning capacity. If this continues and she also witnesses other children having their lunch boxes in front of her and she doesn’t have money, she then will decide to stop coming to school altogether because she doesn’t like seeing other children eating in her presence when she is hungry.” [KZN-U/FG-5]*

A CSG recipient with a teenaged beneficiary in Meyerton suggested that a feeding scheme at high school level, similar to that at the primary level, could improve the retention of children in school. In Moletjje, another CSG recipient with a teen beneficiary mentioned that lack of money for school fees and stationery used to lead children to drop out, but now both fees and stationery are free.

Insufficient money for uniforms also influences children’s decisions to drop out of school. Situations were described of children who are made fun of because they do not have a uniform or they have an old uniform (this is explored further in the section 6.3 on social issues below), not only by their peers but even by school staff. As described by a non-beneficiary woman from Port Elizabeth: *“I need more than the CSG because my child has no jersey to go to school, he is also not allowed to wear ‘takkies’, must wear school shoes ... the principal embarrasses them in front of others and hence they drop out of school. For example when my child was in Standard 9 he was embarrassed by the principal and he dropped.” [EC-U/FG-3]*

Children also require multiple shirts or uniforms and this is very expensive for CSG beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries alike, costing up to R1 000. Moreover, a teenage girl in Lenasia explained how some parents encourage their daughters to date older men who can provide them with uniforms and shoes when the parents cannot, and these girls can become disheartened and prefer to drop out. Parents

also sometimes pull children out of school who have failed, because of the high costs.

Adults and teenagers mentioned that some children are forced to leave school if they have not paid their school fees. The CSG was discussed in a number of contexts: that it is insufficient to pay for school fees and that not having the CSG, or having it but not spending it on their children, leads to children dropping out.

Some children even commit crimes because their family has no money, as explained by a school staff member from Moletije: *“Financial constraints in fact are important, because if there is no money there is no food, which means children starve and then they think of committing crime to make money.”* However, for teenagers crime is often related to peer pressure (as also explored further below).

### 6.2.2 Relationships with older men for money

Teenagers also decide to drop out of school because they are dating older men who provide them with both basic necessities and desired ‘luxury’ goods, such as designer or brand label clothing. This was noted in five study communities. Many explained how poverty leads teenagers to date older men who can meet their basic needs, as in this example from a non-beneficiary in Moletije: *“Some is because of poverty that they are facing at home as there is nothing they can survive on, so they drop out of school and they decide to go out with older men so they can get money to survive.”* One man in Shoshanguve also described this consequence of poverty:

*“Yes they are the ones who are older to them, the taxi drivers mostly. Some you find this man they bring them to school and during lunch break you will find the girls at the car wash and they don’t go back to school. And at the end of the day you find them quitting school, because at school the break is around 12 and when her man is around she eats at any time. So they end up quitting.”* [Gau-U/FG-4]

Teenage girls also noted that girls may be encouraged by their parents to find older men who can support their basic needs, but that this may become an alternative activity to

attending school. This scenario was explained by a non-beneficiary from Port Elizabeth:

*“Yes money is a contributing factor; because I don’t give my child what she needs at school and if there is no money, and again if the neighbour’s child dresses well then your child would like to dress as well for sure she wants to emulate them, but I can’t afford and she finally goes for the sugar daddy.”* [EC-U/FG-3]

### 6.2.3 Working instead of going to school

In nine of the study communities (all but the urban communities and one rural), CSG beneficiaries, non-beneficiaries and men all described how children drop out of school in order to work or look for work.

Some children work outside of school regularly, either by helping their parents (for example, selling fruits and vegetables) or by starting their own ventures. For example, girls may work plaiting hair and boys may work as taxi drivers, taxi assistants or washing cars. Some boys have to work full time after getting a girl pregnant and/or when the child is born, which could consist of legal work or ‘hustling’.

Orphans are said to be another vulnerable group who drop out of school because they have no one to support them. A non-beneficiary from Merrivale noted that once they had started working and ‘tasted money,’ children are unable to concentrate at school. According to teenage girls in Engcobo and Port Elizabeth, children drop out of school in order to go to urban areas (mostly Johannesburg) to look for jobs.

Children may be motivated to participate in criminal activities to make money, such as in a drug business, and eventually they drop out. A non-beneficiary from Shoshanguve noted the prevalence of this situation in her community:

*“There are older people who send this kid to sell drugs. You will see your child no longer wants to stay at home but is always on the street. Most of them you find at the corner market – at those markets they act as if they are selling fruits but they are running a drug business. These kids they go for it because they want money.”* [Gau-U/FG-3]



### 6.3 WHY CHILDREN MISS DAYS OF SCHOOL – SOCIAL CAUSES

#### 6.3.1 Peer pressure and influence

As seen in Table 15, peer pressure was cited in all 12 study communities as a reason for dropping out of school, and in most as a cause for missing school days. (It is most likely a greater cause for missing school days but was not offered as an explanation for this in three communities).

Peer pressure may lead to bullying or jealousy. Focus group participants described how teenagers were laughed at or felt uncomfortable wearing old uniforms. Children also feel jealous of those who have enough money to buy or bring lunch. This was explained by a woman from Umlazi:

*"I have two children that I am taking care of, one is mine and the other is my next door child. My next door child was not going to school because he was not being given pocket money. My child told me that this little boy is in the same school as him but has been missing a lot of school days for the past few weeks. One day I called this boy and asked why he doesn't go to school and he sadly told me that he doesn't go because he no more likes to eat the food that is cooked at school, because other children tease him about it. So I give him pocket money every day so he can buy something to eat at school. Every morning he comes to me in full uniform and gets his 50c or R2."*

Children are driven by a desire to have the same or similar things as their peers, including designer label clothing. Some miss school if their parents cannot provide them with the correct labels. One such experience was described by a beneficiary mother of a teenager in Merrivale: *"Sometimes when you buy them Toughes shoes they will say: 'I am no longer going to school because my friends wear Grasshopper shoes.' They forget that this is their future."* [KZN-R/FG-7]

School staff highlighted that children's desire to be independent when they enter adolescence, and to make their own decisions and be autonomous can lead them to miss days of school.

#### 6.3.2 Drug or alcohol use

Women, men and teenagers in nine communities (rural, urban and peri-urban) said that both girls and boys miss school because they use drugs or drink alcohol. Drinking activities sometimes extend into school hours, or the previous night's activities may prevent teenagers from attending school. As explained by a non-beneficiary from Engcobo: *"Some children in our village drink a lot of beer on weekends and especially on Sunday, and then miss school on Monday because of hangovers."* [EC-R/FG-3] Children may also miss school because they become 'lazy' from drug or alcohol use.

Some children claim that they are attending school when, in fact, they are skipping school to do drugs or drink alcohol, either in 'the bush' or at a local tavern – some of which are located very close to schools. This relates to issues of responsibility and discipline (discussed in further detail in relation to what is needed to keep children in school, below).

According to a man from Umtata: *"Some children leave home and say they are going to school, you find them sitting under trees and smoking dagga [marijuana], but it all depends on the discipline of the parents on their children."* [EC-P/FG-4] School staff also talked about drugs and alcohol as a problem, and that their use is greatly influenced by the behaviour or pressure of their peers. Reasons for drug use may also include difficult home situations and resulting stress. Furthermore, drug use may not always prevent school attendance, but can interfere with learning. According to teenage boys from Lebowakgomo and Seshego, teenagers smoke drugs in the bathrooms at school.

#### 6.3.3 Crime

Crime was noted in five of the study communities as another reason why children miss school, either because they are engaging in criminal activities instead of showing up for school, or because they get arrested. Peer pressure is a major cause of crime. This was reported by adult and teenage focus group participants and school staff. One teenage boy also reported that children may miss school because they fear

gangsters. School staff noted that children miss school because of crime. In Gauteng, the teacher explained that being caught or convicted of a crime may cause children to miss school.

#### 6.3.4 Relationships with girls/boys

Romantic relationships with girls or boys also can lead teens to miss school. Some stay over at the house of a boyfriend or are affected by having stayed out late the night before with their romantic partner. As part of the adolescent stage, teenagers may simply want to spend time with their girlfriends or boyfriends instead of attending school. When dating older men, the reasons may be the same, or they may miss school because they need or want money and have a date with their boyfriend. *“They usually have appointments with their boyfriends who are working. Especially on the boyfriend’s pay day she will miss the day to school, because she needs money from the boyfriend.”* [Lim-R/FG-3]

#### 6.3.5 Laziness or lack of interest

Many teenagers were said to be lazy and not interested in education. This was raised in seven of the 12 communities, where men, women and teens expressed the belief that laziness can lead children to miss school. As beneficiary and non-beneficiary women noted, children do not always have a reason to miss school and sometimes do not attend simply because they do not feel like it, and because there is little supervision when their parents are at work. *“Some miss school because parents leave for work early in the morning and the children don’t go to school because there is no one to force them to go. Some just tell them: ‘I just don’t feel like going to school’.”* [EC-P/FG-3]

The combination of laziness or lack of interest in school and working parents who cannot (or choose not to) monitor attendance leads children to miss days of school. A difference noted across the communities between primary and secondary school children is that primary school children usually only miss school when ill, whereas adolescence makes secondary school students both ‘lazier’ and harder to control.

#### 6.3.6 Problems and responsibilities at home

Problems and responsibilities at home may be monetary in nature, as discussed above, causing children to miss school in order to work for money. Additionally, teenagers may have to take care of younger or sick family members when no one else is available, causing them to miss school.

This was mentioned in four communities and was indicated in cases where children’s parents worked full time and could not take care of their younger children, as well as cases of child-headed households and teenage mothers. This can have a financial dimension, where a family with the resources could hire someone else to perform this care, although more often this is thought of as the responsibility of family members. The CSG could have some impact in this regard, though it was not mentioned in the focus groups.

Teenage parents may have to take care of their own children, especially when they are ill, as mentioned by adults and teenagers in focus groups in several communities. A primary caregiver of a teenager in Seshego explained that this occurs *“because they make babies while they are still kids, so you find that the child is sick and she has to take the child to the hospital, that’s why she misses days at school.”* [Lim-P/KI-2]

Other problems point to the school children’s parents. School staff noted that parents may go to work early and thus cannot help their children get ready for going to school. In the words of one teacher from Umlazi:

*“I think it is the carelessness of the parents, as I have said that some parents do not take care of their children. Sometimes you will find that most of the family members go to work as early as 6 a.m. and then no one will assist the child in getting ready or preparing for school in the morning. That particular child will wake up at 7:30 or 8 a.m. and no one is there, then the child will decide just not to go to school and stay at home.”* [KZN-U/KI-2]

This lack of motivation from parents was also mentioned by school staff from Moletje, Izengolweni, Encobo and Umtata.

### 6.3.7 Problems with teachers

Problems with teachers were raised in four communities as reasons for children missing school. While some students are simply afraid of taking a test, others dislike going to school because of problems they have with a specific subject or teacher. However, more serious problems with teachers also arise, such as fear of teachers who administer corporal punishment. While this was mentioned by students, one school staff member from Umlazi said that his school has succeeded in having little absenteeism because they do not use corporal punishment. Another issue raised was that children may not be getting sufficient support from – or may even be discouraged by – teachers at school. In Umlazi, a non-beneficiary noted that children may drop out when they are discouraged by teachers, specifically when they favour high-achieving children.

*“Teachers also discourage them. When this system of separating higher and standard grade began at my school if you came and you did your subjects on standard grade they would not admit you. You find that in class when you are doing your subjects on higher grade you sit in the front of the class and if you are doing them on standard grade they would make you sit at the back. The teacher would teach the higher grade pupils first than he would come back to the standard grade to write corrections for homework he had given them, without even explaining a single thing. Some children are slow learners but teachers do not give them an opportunity to learn, he just tells the child straight in the face that he knows nothing.” [KZN-U/FG-3]*

## 6.4 WHY CHILDREN DROP OUT OF SCHOOL – SOCIAL CAUSES

### 6.4.1 Peer pressure and influence

Peer pressure and competition at school can have very harmful effects on children. This was mentioned as a cause of school drop-outs in all 12 study communities. Sources of pressure and embarrassment range from being made fun of for not having a school uniform or having an old uniform and shoes, to refusing to go to school without designer label clothing. A teenage girl from Engcobo emphasised that

children may drop out of school if others have nice clothes and they do not, or if they do not have the money to get their hair done like other girls. One non-beneficiary woman explained the effects of not having what other children have:

*“Some you find that as they don’t receive the CSG, you find that child going to school with dirty clothes or they don’t have shoes and other children are well dressed. That makes a child not to like school and that child ends up hating school, and that makes the child to end up leaving school and go looking for a boyfriend so that she can look good like other kids, but the result will end up in a bad way.” [Gau-U/FG-3]*

This feeling of shame or embarrassment arises from a variety of factors. As explained in more detail below, pregnancy during the teen years causes girls to drop out of school because they feel ashamed. Not feeling ‘the same as others’ was mentioned as a reason to drop out across the communities, as teenagers seek to fit in. This even extends to not having money for lunch or snacks during the school day. One non-beneficiary from Lenasia described the experience of being laughed at for not having a birth certificate or other identification, and the shame that this produced. Furthermore, children may mimic the behaviour of others, by dating older men or working in jobs outside of school to fit in. This was noted by a teenage boy from Izingolweni: *“Some drop out of [school] because of peer pressure. They see their friends who wash taxis having money and think it is enough to sustain them, then they decide to drop out to go and work at the taxi rank.” [KZN-P/FG-6]*

According to teen girls in Engcobo and teen boys in Izingolweni, children who are held back and/or have failed multiple times may not want to attend school because they have to attend class with younger children. Bullying may also cause children to drop out of school, especially when coupled with scarce economic resources.

### 6.4.2 Drugs and alcohol

Children also drop out of school because of drug and/or alcohol use; this was noted in all 12 of the study communities. Children who are regularly using drugs may not attend

school because of usage and eventual addiction. Drug-addicted children end up spending school money on drugs and seek out money-making activities instead of attending school. Drug use may either link or lead to other negative behaviours, such as peer pressure and crime. Peer pressure, from children the same age or older children, influences the decision to use drugs. According to school staff, it is more common for boys to drop out of school because of drug use than it is for girls. Key informants in urban areas, in particular, noted that boys use *dagga* and *nyaope*, and this was echoed by a teenage boy in Umlazi:

*“Drugs lead to us to drop out because if our cohorts and friends are using them, they are going to influence us to try. For instance, if you start smoking a cigarette, you are then going to smoke weed and from the weed you start taking ‘woonga’ [nyaope] and it makes people very lazy because once you have taken it, you cannot move or scratch or feel your body and some even shit on themselves. And those who are taking ‘woonga’, when they crave for it their body gets swollen and they shake which forces them into crime, because they have become addicted and start robbing people in school and out of school, and then they drop out.” [KZN-U/FG-6]*

Drugs were not a problem only limited to urban areas; they were found in peri-urban and rural communities as well. In all these areas it was noted that children, especially boys, drop out of school to work or steal to buy drugs.

#### 6.4.3 Crime

Crime in general, and crime related to gang activity in particular, is driven by peer pressure and economic circumstances. In nine communities, it was mentioned that children drop out of school because of crime and in four because of gang activity. In the words of a beneficiary woman from Umlazi: *“One can notice that there is drop in the number of learners; you find them standing at street corners mugging people. The reason why they leave school is due to peer pressure and gangster groups, this kind of behaviour is mostly displayed amongst boys.” [KZN-U/FG-1]* Crime is sometimes organised through gang membership. The decision to join gangs usually arises from fear of the gangs, or from the financial promises made

by gang members to children. As in their relationships with older men or women, children may be motivated by poverty to take part in risky or criminal activities, which eventually leads them to drop out of school or to be arrested.

#### 6.4.4 Relationships with girls/boys

In 11 of the 12 communities, the influence of boyfriends or girlfriends was said to lead children to drop out of school. This most often relates to dating older men, although not in all cases. One teen girl from Lebowakgomo explained how this works in her community, revealing how these relationships combined with financial insecurity results in girls dropping out of school.

*“This other friend of mine dropped out and when I asked why she is dropping out when she is about to finish, she told me that her boyfriend said that she should because he said he will support her. I then asked her if she believes that and she said she does, because he gives her everything that she needs.” [Lim-R/FG-5]*

#### 6.4.5 Pregnancy

Pregnancy is among the top reasons that girls drop out of school; this was mentioned in all 12 communities. Although less often, this issue can also result in boys dropping out in order to work to support a child. Recipients, non-recipients, men, women, teenage girls, teenage boys and education workers all mentioned the connection between pregnancy and school drop-outs. While pregnancy (and then having a child) is the direct cause of dropping out, many related underlying factors lead to this happening. The social repercussions at home, at school and in the wider community may make the pregnant girl or the father of the child feel that she or he should drop out of school. According to women beneficiaries, girls drop out because they are embarrassed about being pregnant and/or because of the conflict that it produces at home. As a woman in a beneficiary focus group from Umlazi explained:

*“I think girls are more likely to drop out of school due to pregnancy, because you would find that as from Standard 7, a*

*learner is afraid of going to school while pregnant. This is mostly the reason why they drop out, because she becomes embarrassed. Some are chased from their homes due to this and so she will not be able to go to school, because she does not have a place to stay, uniform and clothes to change. The girl will then stay with this boy [the father of the child] and they both have nothing.” [KZN-U/FG-1]*

This theme of shame was echoed in many communities. In other cases, however, children can be expelled from school if they become pregnant (girls) or get another child pregnant (boys). One woman in a non-beneficiary focus group who experienced this described her experience:

*“I was expelled from school because I was pregnant and they did not want a pregnant girl at school. You are expelled when it is clear that you are pregnant but maybe in the eighth month. For example, if you are likely to deliver in November you may be expelled in September, and you won’t be able to write your exams.” [KZN-R/FG-3]*

However, expulsion due to pregnancy was not found in all of the communities. In Seshego, a woman explained that children could continue to attend school if they became pregnant, at least for the first seven months of pregnancy. A teacher from Shoshanguve said that early pregnancy leads girls to drop out, even though they are not ‘chased away’ from school.

In Merrivale and Lenasia, women explained that girls often get pregnant by older men, and then drop out of school. This has a financial dimension since the reason they date older men is often because of the monetary advantages.

Another problem found in the school context is where teachers get girls pregnant, which gives the girls even more persuasive reasons to drop out of school. This situation was described by women in Merrivale and Umlazi:

*“Some girls are being impregnated by their teachers and they end up dropping out. Last year, my uncle’s daughter was impregnated by the teacher and she ended up dropping out because they chased her out of school and the teacher was sent to Howick because the parents wanted him out of the school.” [KZN-R/FG-2]*

*“Teachers themselves date children and they sleep with some of them, there are children who are not as talkative as us, a child who is scared to such an extent that she ends up not wanting to go to school. When the teacher realises that you do not want him, he starts to have an attitude towards you and he fails you or else if you are given a hiding the rest of the people will get five strokes and you get ten because you no longer want him.” [KZN-U/FG-3]*

The economic pressures of having a baby and providing economic support and child care, presents challenges to male and female students alike. Both beneficiary and non-beneficiary women, as well as teenagers themselves, described girls as leaving school because their boyfriends promised to support them. Others may not drop out until after they have given birth, as they have no one else to provide daily care for the child and they cannot afford a crèche.

#### 6.4.6 Laziness or lack of interest

In half of the communities it was also noted that dislike of school or lack of interest in school, leads children to drop out. Men and women attributed this lack of interest to the ‘adolescent stage’, which makes children rebel and want to be completely independent. The parents’ inability to control children when they become teenagers was also blamed. There is a link to drugs; a teenage boy from Umlazi explained how regular drug use may lead them to feel ‘lazy’.

#### 6.4.7 Care of family members

In five communities, men and women noted that children drop out of school because they have to take care of family members. In Umtata and Engcobo, a beneficiary mother explained the circumstance of a child who has to look after her ailing mother:

*“Sometimes if her mother is sick, nobody looks after her mother, she is not recovered, so she decides to drop out to take her mother to hospital all the time, to cook for her or to help her with treatment. If the parents have passed away the girl drops out to go and find a job in order to help her younger sisters and brothers.” [EC-P/FG-2]*



Teenagers also drop out to look after their own children, since they do not have the resources for someone else to care for them on a regular basis. This issue was most often noted by non-beneficiaries, which could suggest that it is a problem more prominent among non-CSG beneficiaries. Though the issue was raised by CSG beneficiaries, this possibility cannot be determined through qualitative research, but is worth exploring further in the future. Nonetheless, this is an area where the CSG could make a difference (e.g. by paying for a crèche).

## 6.5 PERCEPTIONS OF THE EFFECTS OF THE CSG ON EDUCATION

We explored people's own perceptions about the impact the getting the CSG has on children's access to schooling. The survey will look into the impact on education that differences

in years of exposure to the CSG have, but it is also informative to listen to people's own perspectives on how the CSG does or does not help them with schooling their children. Since the lack of money was identified as the major constraint on children's schooling, we would expect the CSG to be helpful, but this depends on how people use and prioritise the grant (see also Chapter 5 on the use of grants), as well as how significant their expenses are in relation to the amount of the grant.

Beneficiaries and school staff all talked about school expenses to which the CSG contributes. In nine of the twelve study communities, it was mentioned that the CSG helps to provide food for school children (Table 17) – in particular, a lunch box or lunch money, as well as money for a snack during the day and for food prior to attending school. The ability to go to school having eaten and/or with food also aids concentration, which was highlighted by beneficiaries

Table 17 How the CSG helps with schooling

Province	Locality U = Urban P = Peri-urban R = Rural	Provide lunch	Provide food in general	Buy clothing	Concentration	Pay for transport	Pay school fees	Pay other school costs	Exempt from school fees	Discourage work outside of school	Amount is too little to help
Gauteng	Shoshanguve (U)	•	•				•	•		•	•
	Lenasia (U)	•	•	•		•	•		•	•	•
	Meyerton (P)	•	•		•		•	•	•		
Limpopo	Seshego (P)		•	•				•	•		
	Groothoek (R)	•	•	•	•	•		•			
	Moletje (R)			•		•	•	•			•
KwaZulu-Natal	Umlazi (U)			•			•				
	Izingolweni (P)		•	•		•	•	•		•	
	Merrivale (R)	•		•		•	•	•			
Eastern Cape	Port Elizabeth (U)	•	•	•				•			•
	Engcobo (R)		•	•		•		•			
	Umtata (P)	•	•	•			•	•			
TOTAL		7	9	10	2	6	8	10	3	3	4

as well as education workers. In ten communities, it was mentioned that the CSG could help to pay for uniforms and other school costs. One man from Engcobo pointed to the importance of the grant in making children look the same as other children, i.e. providing the same clothing and thus alleviating some social stigma. A teacher from Lenasia explained that he could tell when children receive the CSG as they wear better uniforms.

In six communities, it was similarly noted that the CSG can help to cover transport costs, and in eight communities that it can help to cover school fees. In Lenasia, Meyerton and Seshego, beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries explained that having the CSG exempted children from paying school fees. Additional costs that the CSG can be used to cover are stationery, books, school trips and shoes. Another perceived monetary benefit, mentioned by a beneficiary from Engcobo, was the ability to borrow money and later pay it back with CSG funds. This can be risky, however, if debts end up being higher than what the CSG can pay back, once current expenses are covered.

Table 18 looks at relative frequencies, highlighting the importance of the CSG in providing for food and school expenses. The most frequently mentioned ways in which the CSG helps is by improving diet (mentioned by 40 sources, in 46 instances), paying for school expenses (including school fees, transportation and other expenses mentioned by over 40 sources, in 70 instances), and for clothing. (See Chapter 5 which reports responses on more direct questions about how

the CSG is spent; the current chapter discusses the broader relationship between the CSG and education.)

One way how the CSG can help to overcome barriers to education is through helping to prevent child labour, so children do not have to work to pay for school fees or other basic necessities. Another, as suggested by school staff in Izingolweni, is the CSG money can help girls who have babies return to school. Further ways mentioned by a few respondents included helping children to fit in, and 'encouraging' schooling. According to a teenage girl from Lenasia, the CSG helps the morale of school children and gives them hope:

*"My point is that many teenagers they came back to school, those who drop out from school came back. I think this CSG money made them to realise that their future is still there. The message is: 'Go back to school because there are free things.' Even though it is little it encourages you to be strong."* [Gau-U/FG-5]

While most respondents cited reasons why the CSG can have a positive impact on schooling, some believe that the amount is not enough to have a significant effect. Teenage girls in Engcobo said the grant is insufficient to buy all their school necessities. Similarly, a woman recipient in Lenasia said that the grant was simply too small to make a difference in education: *"It doesn't help when coming to take a child to school – maybe a crèche but not school, it is too little to take a child to school."* The uniform, in particular, is a major problem. *"Since the uniform is too expensive and the grant is too little, it allows you to buy only on lay-by."* [Gau-U/FG-2]

**Table 18 Main ways in which the CSG helps with schooling (frequencies)**

How CSG helps with schooling	Number of sources (FGs and KIs) where issue was raised	Number of instances of issue being raised
Amount is too little to help	3	3
Clothing	16	19
Improves diet	40	46
Pays school expenses (fees, transport, other expenses)	43	70

## 6.6 WHAT IS NEEDED TO KEEP CHILDREN IN SCHOOL

In addition to asking about constraints on schooling, we asked people their opinions on what they needed to help keep their children in school. Responses can be seen in Table 19; these largely correspond to the tables listing constraints.

### 6.6.1 Material needs

Many responses relate to money for fees, uniforms, supplies, transport and food, but others address social responses such

Table 19 What is needed to keep children in school

Province	Locality U = Urban P = Peri-urban R = Rural	Discipline	Support of parents	Support of teachers	Support of government	Uniforms	Money	Jobs	Food	Other school supplies	Transport	More recreational activities	Increased CSG
Gauteng	Shoshanguve (U)	•	•		•	•	•	•	•				
	Lenasia (U)	•							•				
	Meyerton (P)	•							•	•			
Limpopo	Seshego (P)												•
	Groothoek (R)		•	•	•		•					•	•
	Moletije (R)		•	•		•	•		•				
KwaZulu-Natal	Umlazi (U)	•	•		•		•		•			•	•
	Izingolweni (P)									•	•		
	Merrivale (R)	•	•	•					•		•		
Eastern Cape	Port Elizabeth (U)			•	•	•	•			•			
	Engcobo (R)	•	•				•		•				
	Umtata (P)				•	•	•		•		•		
TOTAL		6	6	4	5	4	7	1	8	3	3	2	3

as parental support, rules and discipline, teacher support and the availability of jobs for their parents. Financial needs come across the strongest, though rules and discipline are a close second. Most of those who said that the CSG does help also said that it was not enough. School staff and some beneficiaries suggested expanding the feeding schemes to secondary schools. Speaking of children in primary school with feeding schemes, a teacher in Merrivale said: *“A lot of children leave home hungry, but they are encouraged to come to school because they know they are going to eat.”* [KZN-R/KI-2] Many secondary school students do not have enough food and this affects their ability to concentrate. Although the long-term nutritional impacts are less significant at that age, older kids get just as hungry and having a school-based lunch programme would serve as an incentive to come to school and for parents to send their children to school daily.

One beneficiary from Lenasia suggested a school garden in order to feed children a greater variety of foods. According to school staff at Moletije, teachers each contribute R100 per month to feed children who come without a lunch box.

Children also require more money to buy uniforms, one of the highest school-related costs. A beneficiary from Eastern Cape believed that children would not miss school if they had the proper attire. Furthermore, it was suggested by a man in Seshego whose household gets the CSG that ‘casual Fridays’, where children can wear their own clothes, should be eliminated because some children cannot afford nice clothes, causing competition, envy or embarrassment among students. Beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries said that free and regular transportation (such as a government-provided school bus) could have a positive impact on school

attendance. More work opportunities for parents, thus increasing household income, was also seen as a way of improving school attendance.

### 6.6.2 Parental and teacher involvement

Parental and teacher involvement were also seen by beneficiaries, non-beneficiaries and school staff as important for keeping children in school. Beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries in six communities emphasised the need for rules and discipline. Many parents believe that the child protection laws have had a negative impact on school attendance, as parents can no longer punish their children with corporal punishment. According to a man from Umtata:

*“Those days when I used to go to school I knew that if I wasn’t at school I was going to get punished for not coming to school, so if children could be punished for not coming to school maybe they would attend more regularly, since they would know that if they don’t come they will be punished. Maybe it would be punishments like cleaning the school garden, washing windows or just simply get a hiding.” [EC-P/FG-3]*

People explained that children need firm rules to stay in school. Also, as noted by a woman from Merrivale, parents and teachers need to work together to discipline children, and also to bring them back to school if they are caught wandering around during school hours. She emphasised that more focus is needed on ensuring that children attend school each day. School staff also cited the importance of the attendance monitoring system. While most are unaware of the new requirement to monitor the attendance of CSG beneficiaries, key informants explained the benefits of monitoring the attendance of all students. Across the communities, school staff noted the importance of having a better attendance monitoring system.

Parents and teachers additionally need to provide more support for children, including both encouragement and monitoring. (*“As parents we need to monitor our children’s progress at school. And the best way is to have working relationships with the teachers so that we cannot blame them when our children have failed.” [KZN-R/FG-2]*) The importance

of communication between parents and teachers to facilitate attendance was mentioned in five communities, by beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries alike. Key informants also noted that parents should visit schools regularly.

### 6.6.3 Government involvement

Beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries also expressed the need for government involvement in keeping children in school; this came up in five of the study communities. They suggested that the government could provide specific services, such as free transportation, ‘patrollers’ to take children back to school if they are found wandering around during school hours, personnel to visit schools and motivate children (this would likely be social workers), increasing the CSG, and addressing issues related to poverty more broadly. School staff from Merrivale suggested that the government should make sure that children have proper facilities for playing, and should provide more financial support to schools. Beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries also mentioned the importance of recreational facilities and playing materials for children, as well as encouraging children to attend school and reduce their participation in high risk behaviours. A school staff member in Seshego explained that the government is currently providing stationery in schools but that it could also research what else is needed in the school.

### 6.6.4 Social worker support

School staff from Izingolweni, Seshego and Port Elizabeth explained that the support of social workers could also help to keep children in school. Social workers could provide advice, listen to children’s problems and try to address some of their problems. The benefit of having a social worker was described in detail by school staff from Izingolweni:

*“I do not really know, but I think social workers should avail themselves at schools at least once a term and talk to the children. Children have a tendency of not taking information from people they meet on a day-to-day basis (like teachers and principals), but are very interested to hear from outside people like social workers. We would be very happy if that would happen, just*

*for them to encourage the children to attend school and also to tell them the importance of education, this will help guide them career-wise because some students know that being a teacher you don't study in universities after Matric, you can apply to be a teacher and just get a job. Children in this community tend to ignore the importance of education and being educated. It would be a privilege to have people from different departments at least once every three months to motivate our children to make them aware of opportunities that one can get through education."* [KZN-P/KI-2]

Beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries from Shoshanguve and Umlazi similarly noted that social workers could help to keep children in school, in particular by monitoring their progress.

### 6.6.5 The new conditionality policy

In light of the new policy on required school attendance for CSG beneficiaries, we wanted to know whether people had begun to hear about it, and what they thought of the concept of linking the CSG with required school attendance. While most school staff and community leaders are unaware of the new requirement to monitor the attendance of CSG beneficiaries, some had heard of this policy.

The majority of key informants interviewed believed in the benefits of monitoring the attendance of students generally and CSG students in particular. In most communities school staff said that it would be easy to monitor the attendance of CSG beneficiaries since teachers take attendance every day at school. Views on this conditionality varied across the communities, with most school staff arguing that this would have positive effects, as it would encourage more children to attend school and discourage absences:

*"I think this CSG policy is a good one. It will be a good one if it is implemented in the sense that it will assist the school children first of all to attend regularly. It will help us because there has been a critical absenteeism of learners, although we were not aware that actually this is a new policy which will be implemented, that if the child does not attend the school regularly this CSG will be taken away."* [EC-R/KI-2]

(Note that we are aware that the CSG will not be taken away for non-attendance, but this was not necessarily clear to all respondents.)

However, some school staff and community leaders also believed that CSG beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries should not be distinguished when monitoring attendance, and that it is important to monitor the attendance of all school children. According to some key informants, monitoring the attendance of CSG beneficiaries should not be the priority when trying to improve school attendance and retention. This point was highlighted by a community leader from Lenasia:

*"I don't see a difference – the dropping out of school or encouragement – that is not the issue of CSG that relates to the families that are encouraging the children themselves, but if it focuses on the CSG then it will be wrong. For my understanding I don't think that is an issue, because the families of the children or the person who is responsible for the children need to understand that children need to go to school regardless of CSG, I don't think we need to focus much on CSG – it helps, but on schooling I don't think so."* [Gau-U/KI-4]

A few school staff members and other community leaders expressed concern over, rather than support for, conditionality, believing that the CSG should not be taken away because of poor school attendance. They noted that this would be harmful to children in need of the grant for basic necessities, even if they are missing school.

## 6.7 CONCLUSION

Children miss days of school or drop out altogether, due to many economic and social drivers. The main reasons are economic and related to money, resources and poverty. Those that are directly related to access to cash are: money for school fees, uniforms, shoes, transportation, the need to work for income, food at home so they can concentrate and food that they can bring to school. Those factors that are often indirectly related to cash constraints and poverty are involvement with boyfriends/girlfriends, dating older men and women, drugs, alcohol, gangs, crime and pregnancy, to



the extent that these social factors have economic causes; the latter set of factors of course explain absences and drop-outs among adolescents, not younger students. Peer pressure is another major factor identified throughout the study that leads to these behaviours that affect schooling, including children missing school or dropping out because they are ashamed to attend school in old uniforms or not dressed in 'label clothing'.

Other factors affecting schooling outcomes were the need to take care of children or ill adults in the household, which also has an economic dimension to the extent that cash could provide child-care opportunities (and possibly someone who could look after the ill, although this is more normally provided by family members among poorer households). Other social causes that were found to affect school attendance and drop-outs relate to adolescent rebellion, disciplinary problems, lack of interest and social problems within households (i.e. abuse, whether parents are supportive and encourage schooling, and discipline). Teachers also play a role: how much they encourage students on a daily basis, as well as more serious problems such as whether they have sexual relationships with students that cause them to miss school or drop out, either because they get pregnant or have problems with the teacher later.

Social and economic causes are normally so extensively articulated that they cannot be easily categorised. Nevertheless, the meaningful difference between these different types of factors with respect to this CSG evaluation – and the reason this qualitative study delved into them – is that some

of these causes of absences or drop-outs (e.g. lack of cash for school fees, uniforms, food and transportation, and child labour) can be to some extent mitigated by the CSG according to the beneficiaries. Other causes (e.g. dating older men, substance abuse and crime) are far more complex, and it is unlikely that the CSG can tackle these alone, although it may be able to play a role. The extent to which the CSG does or does not address these direct and indirect influences on children's schooling can be explored through the survey, and the qualitative research thus identified a wider and richer set of factors to be investigated in the quantitative survey. This will be particularly valuable in the context of the evaluation of the impact of the CSG extension to older teenagers.

Furthermore, the research provided insights into types of complementary interventions that are needed to address school attendance and retention, alongside cash. Suggestions from adults, teenagers, school teachers and administrators include involving social workers and psychologists in the schools; more parent-teacher interaction; better systems for monitoring attendance; improving school-based recreation activities; school lunches in secondary schools; increasing old uniform donation programmes; free transportation through school buses; and eliminating 'casual Fridays'. The qualitative team endorses these proposals.

## Recommendations

- ≈ An evaluation is needed of the new 'soft conditionality' on education, to see whether it has an impact on school attendance and enrolment.

# CHAPTER 7 HEALTH

Social grants impact on human capital by facilitating access to education (as discussed in Chapter 6), and by facilitating access to health care services, which is explored in this chapter. Mothers can also access the CSG through registering their child's birth at hospitals or clinics, and this issue is also examined here.

## 7.1 BIRTH CERTIFICATES

Birth certificates are needed to apply for the Child Support Grant. Until recently, the standard procedure involved up to four separate steps and four institutions: (1) mothers who give birth at a hospital are referred to (2) a clinic where they get an immunisation card for the child, then (3) they apply for the child's birth certificate at Home Affairs. Finally, (4) they use the birth certificate to apply for the CSG at SASSA. Many respondents followed this route. (*"They do not do a birth certificate for you at the hospital; you do it yourself after birth at Home Affairs."* [Lim-R/FG-3] *"I gave birth at the clinic but they only gave me the immunisation card."* [EC-U/FG-2] *"You get the clinic card and then apply at Home Affairs for birth certificate, and if you get the birth certificate you then apply at SASSA."* [EC-R/FG-1])

Recently, a change in procedures has enabled birth certificates to be issued in hospitals immediately after birth. (*"In the past years it was not possible to get a birth certificate when you give birth, but now it is possible to get it straight from the hospital."* [EC-R/FG-3]) The process is said to be quick and simple. (*"They told me after giving birth that I can get the birth certificate and it was very quick."* [KZN-R/FG-2]) Importantly, it saves parents time going to Home Affairs and mothers only need their ID documents. (*"If you have your ID they can make a birth certificate at the same time."* [Gau-P/FG-2]) In some cases nurses complete the forms for the child. (*"The nurses came and registered my baby for the birth certificate, but they don't register for the CSG."* [Lim-P/FG-2]) In other places, a Home Affairs representative has to be present. (*"You are told when you are giving birth that you can get the child's birth certificate if the representatives of Home Affairs are there, but if you give birth on weekends they tell you to come back on Monday or just go straight to Home Affairs."* [KZN-R/FG-3]) Several mothers we spoke to in all four provinces

got birth certificates for their newborns in hospital, and then applied for the CSG at a local SASSA office. (*"In my case I got the birth certificate and I was told that SASSA will come to our village, so I waited for the date and then applied."* [EC-R/FG-1])

## 7.2 ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

A common finding across almost all cash transfer programmes is that recipients spend some of their transfer income on health care for themselves and their families. Asked if the CSG enables people to access and pay for health care, many respondents confirmed that it does. (*"When I am sick I take part of the grant to pay the doctor."* [EC-R/FG-7] *"If the child is sick, it is easy to take her to the doctor – you can afford to pay because she is receiving the grant."* [EC-U/FG-2]) Several specific cases were mentioned where CSG money was used to pay for treatment for a health problem – for instance, three teenage boys from KwaZulu-Natal reported: *"It helped when I had a tooth problem."* [KZN-R/FG-5] *"It helped when I had a broken arm."* [KZN-R/FG-5] *"I was once injured on my neck and had to go to hospital and it helped a lot."* [KZN-P/FG-6] Adolescent boys and girls also use CSG money for reproductive health visits to health centres, according to these teenagers from Limpopo. (*"We go for testing of STIs and HIV in the clinic."* [Lim-P/FG-6] *"Girls go and check pregnancy at hospital or clinics."* [Lim-P/FG-6] *"Boys go to collect condoms."* [Lim-P/FG-6])

Some recipients, when faced with an unexpected medical expense, use the Child Support Grant to borrow against, paying back the loan when they receive their next CSG payment. (*"Because I have the CSG, I can borrow money for health services and pay back when I get the grant. It is common in our village."* [EC-R/FG-2] *"You pay for hospital and transport even if you do not have money at that time, because if you ask somebody to lend you money you know that on a certain date you will get the grant."* [EC-U/FG-2] *"When the child is sick if you receive the CSG you can borrow money from your neighbour and pay it when you have got the CSG money."* [KZN-R/FG-7])

Other health-related costs that the CSG is used to pay for include buying medicines (*"You can buy medication from*

the pharmacy" [EC-R/FG-2]) and transport. Much of the expenditure associated with health care is the cost of transport to and from the clinic or hospital which often requires several return trips involving the sick person, as well as their primary caregiver and other concerned family members. ("We only pay for transport actually." [KZN-R/FG-1] "It helps when I'm going to clinic to check my asthma – I can pay for transport because my medication is for free." [KZN-R/FG-5] "You find that already you have spent the whole R240 on transport for my child." [Lim-P/FG-7]) Transport costs often exceed the costs of health care, even at low-cost government facilities. ("You pay R20 at Port Shepstone hospital and transport is R24." [KZN-P/FG-3])

Health fees vary by types of service provider, with government clinics being cheapest – either no charge ("At the clinic it's for free" [Lim-R/FG-1]) or nominal charges ("At the clinic we pay R2" [EC-R/FG-7]). Government hospitals are slightly more costly, and private doctors the most expensive. Reported charges at public hospitals range from R20 in the Eastern Cape ("At the hospital in town we pay R20 – this covers observations and medication" [EC-R/FG-7]), to R25 in KwaZulu-Natal ("In public hospital you need to have R25, if you don't have it you will not be assisted" [KZN-U/FG-3]), to R40 in Gauteng ("At Baragwanath hospital we pay R40" [Gau-U/FG-3]), and R80 in Limpopo ("At the hospital they charge you R80" [Lim-P/FG-7]). Sometimes in-patients pay more than out-patients. ("At the hospital we pay R20 for a child and if that child sleeps at the hospital you pay R40." [KZN-P/FG-2])

There is also some variation in charges levied at government facilities between children and adults, with children under seven years of age being treated free of charge. ("Clinics are free, you do not pay and hospitals also but once the child is above seven years old, you pay." [KZN-U/FG-7]) This implies that CSG money for young children is used more to contribute to the health costs of older children and adults, than for the designated CSG beneficiaries themselves. ("Children older than six do pay at government hospitals, so this money helps when you are sick." [Lim-R/FG-7])

Most respondents told us that there are no discounts in health charges for CSG recipients. ("No, there is no discount – whether

you are a CSG recipient or not you have to pay." [EC-U/FG-1]) But a few respondents disagreed. ("Sometimes they ask you if the child receives the CSG and if you are lucky you may not pay. It happens sometimes." [EC-P/FG-1]) According to some teenagers, they also get free treatment at government health centres if they demonstrate that they are attending school. ("We don't pay at the clinic and hospital when we are wearing uniforms." [EC-R/FG-5])

Discounted fees are available for some poor citizens, but these are related to unemployment and not to receipt of the Child Support Grant. ("We get a discount because of not working, not because you receive CSG, and they require an affidavit to exempt you." [Gau-U/FG-1] "We pay R75 and if you don't work you make an affidavit to pay half of R75." [Lim-P/FG-1]) However, beneficiaries of other social grants are exempt from charges at government health facilities, as are expectant mothers. ("Only those people who get the pension and the disability grant don't pay, but they need to have their cards to prove that they are recipients of the grant." [KZN-U/FG-1] "The ones that don't pay are the pensioners and pregnant women." [Lim-R/FG-1] "The disabled do not pay but the CSG recipients do pay." [KZN-P/FG-3])

Although government facilities are heavily subsidised they have their problems, including long waiting times. ("The problem we face at the clinic and hospital is the long queues." [EC-R/FG-2] "One must be in the queue at 5 o'clock." [EC-U/FG-3]), shortages of medicines ("Even if you don't pay at times there is no medication, no tablets, no ointment." [EC-U/FG-3]), and occasional complaints about rude staff. ("The clinics are free but the workers are rude" [KZN-U/FG-1])

For these reasons, parents sometimes go to private doctors instead. ("I sometimes pay for private doctor fees from the CSG money for my teenagers. It is around R150 because at times there is no medication at the clinic and hospital. When I pay this much little is left for food and other school needs." [EC-R/FG-7])

Private doctors are considerably more expensive than government health services. ("Doctors in private practice charge minimum consultation fee of R150 to R200." [KZN-P/FG-1] "At the doctor you have to pay R180." [EC-U/FG-7]) These fees mean that private medical care is unaffordable for

most people who receive social grants. (*“We cannot afford private doctors with the CSG.” [KZN-R/FG-1] “The money is not enough, especially when the child needs to see a private doctor.” [EC-R/FG-2] “You can go to the public hospital with CSG money but not to the doctor. If you go to the doctor it means you are going to spend it all.” [Gau-U/FG-2]*) Occasionally, individuals can negotiate discounts with private doctors, but this experience – reported from a peri-urban community in KwaZulu-Natal – is rare. (*“I go to the doctor and explain that I don’t have R150, I only have R100 and the doctor will treat my child with only R100.” [KZN-P/FG-2]*)

Finally, one respondent mentioned that the Child Support Grant is not sufficient to pay for medical aid, which wealthier South Africans purchase in order to access private health care. (*“There is this thing of medical aid, but you cannot cover it with CSG because it is expensive.” [G-U/FG6]*)

### 7.3 CONCLUSION

There is an important and reciprocal relationship between the Child Support Grant and health care services. On the one hand, health services facilitate access to the CSG. On the other hand, CSG cash is used to access health care.

Previously, mothers who gave birth at a hospital would later take their infants to a health clinic for immunisations, where they would be given an immunisation card for the child, which they would take to Home Affairs to apply for the birth certificate that they need in order to register for the CSG. Recently this process has been streamlined. Birth certificates are now issued in hospitals immediately after birth, with the support of nurses and/or Home Affairs staff who visit these

health facilities, so the mother no longer has to collect vital documents from either the clinic or Home Affairs (which was identified by many respondents as the slowest part of the process). This makes it much easier and quicker for eligible mothers to apply for the CSG. A four-step process involving visits to a hospital, a clinic, Home Affairs and SASSA has become a two-step process – from the hospital direct to the SASSA office, often within a few days of birth.

CSG cash is spent on many basic needs, including health care. As an income transfer made to a family, the CSG is used to pay for health care for any household member who needs it, not only the beneficiary child. However, since children are prone to childhood illnesses and to injuries, the CSG plays an important role in protecting the health of poor children. Costs of public health services in South Africa are subsidised so that charges are zero or nominal, especially for poor citizens. However, many public health facilities do levy charges (consultation fees or in-patient charges reportedly range from a nominal R2 to as much as R80) and there are always indirect costs (notably transport of patients and caregivers, which can be expensive for rural families far from health facilities, especially if multiple visits are required).

Sometimes recipients use CSG cash to pay for private health care which has the disadvantage of being more expensive than government health services but the advantages of avoiding long queues and (according to several respondents) providing better quality health care. Finally, because illness is unpredictable, families might need a significant amount of cash for health care at short notice, and recipients can borrow against the CSG cash they will be paid in future. In this sense the CSG also performs an informal health insurance role.

# CHAPTER 8 CHILD WORK AND CHILD LABOUR

Children's work and child labour are complex concepts, and the boundaries between these categories are difficult to define. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child defines child labour as "work that is harmful to the child because it is economically exploitative, hazardous, interferes with the child's education, or is harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development". Many elements of this definition are difficult to measure or observe, but the ILO has a similar definition which is useful because it elaborates on the impact of work on education: child labour is work that "interferes with their schooling by: i) depriving them of the opportunity to attend school; ii) obliging them to leave school prematurely; or iii) requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work".<sup>10</sup>

The ILO defines child work as "non-hazardous work done by children", which recognises that not all work is harmful to children: some work can even be beneficial because it contributes to the household (e.g. caring for younger siblings) and prepares children for adult life (e.g. working on the family farm). Child work can include economic activities (such as farming or retailing) as well as non-economic activities (such as household chores). Work in economic activities can be either paid or unpaid, including working in family enterprises (e.g. livestock herding). The key distinction between 'child work' and 'child labour' is not, therefore, the nature of the activities, but the extent to which the child engages in them, usually quantified in terms of hours per week. For instance, "reasonable household chores" would be classified as "child work", but "onerous household chores" (say, more than 20 hours a week, or chores that interfere with home-work) would be classified as "child labour".

Poverty and family problems often impel children to work for money, either after school or instead of going to school. Our qualitative research investigated the range of income-earning activities that children in South Africa are pursuing – including 'illicit' activities such as sex work and criminality – highlighting the differences between boys and girls, as well as the reasons why they work. Apart from working outside the home, domestic chores absorb children's time and energy to varying degrees, and these duties are also found

to be heavily gendered. A major concern is whether there is a trade-off between work and education, so the impact of children's paid and unpaid work on school attendance and decisions to drop out of school is also explored, and whether the Child Support Grant has any impact on these decisions.

## 8.1 CHILDREN'S ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

Children's participation in the labour force seems to be very prevalent in poor South African households, with large numbers of boys and girls engaging in a range of income-generating activities to earn cash. Common income-earning activities for boys include: washing cars and taxis, gardening, construction (making bricks, building and painting houses), agricultural labour (ploughing, herding livestock, shearing sheep), retailing (fruit and vegetables, cigarettes, water), taxi conductor, selling scrap metal, motor mechanic, barbering, shoe-shining and pushing shopping trolleys for cash (see Box 6).

Some teenage boys who have problems finding work locally, migrate in search of work. (*"Most boys are not working in this area, even those who went to Gauteng [from the Eastern Cape] in order to get jobs are not working because they didn't get them."* [EC-R/FG-4] *"There are no job opportunities here, so those who drop out go to Port Shepstone to look for jobs, but you find them there pushing trolleys."* [KZN-P/FG-1]) Youth unemployment was mentioned as a problem in the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal. (*"We do have children who are unemployed."* [KZN-R/FG-7])

Girls have fewer income-earning options than boys, especially in rural areas. (*"There are no jobs for girls in the villages."* [EC-R/FG-3]) They also do different types of work; most of the paid jobs that boys do are not done by girls, who tend to provide services for others. Common income-earning activities for girls include: hairdressing, domestic work, shop assistant (stacking shelves, cashier), childcare ('babysitting'), petty trading, cooking and selling food (see Box 7).

Girls are more likely than boys to be criticised for earning income from engaging in illicit (illegal or 'immoral') activities. Boys are occasionally accused of getting involved

10. ILO, "About child labour", <http://www.ilo.org/ipcc/facts/lang--en/index.htm>.



## Box 6 Income-earning activities by boys

**Boys**

- **Washing cars** ("They wash cars at the taxi rank and get money." [KZN-P/FG-5] "My son washes taxis during the weekend and he makes something like R20 to R40." [K-P/FG-4])
- **Gardening** ("My child fixes people's gardens and he brings the money to me." [EC-U/FG-3] "My boys do gardening for neighbours to earn money." [EC-U/FG-2])
- **Cleaning yards** ("Some boys clean yards for neighbours and get paid." [EC-R/FG-3] "They clean the yard if somebody ask them in order to get money." [EC-P/FG-2])
- **Cutting grass** ("Some boys do grass cutting in the neighbourhood to earn a little cash to provide for the household." [EC-U/FG-2])
- **Construction** ("Some children do work, for example, they join building contractors." [EC-R/FG-7] "Boys work in construction to earn money." [EC-U/FG-7] "Others work in construction companies which are paving roads." [KZN-P/FG-4])
- **Brick-making** ("Work done by boys to earn money includes making bricks." [EC-R/FG-7] "From the community that I stay in I see most of the older boys helping the brick-layers to get themselves some money." [EC-P/FG-4] "Some themselves are brick layers but this is work done during weekends and holidays." [EC-P/FG-4])
- **House-building** ("They are hired by builders to assist in building houses." [EC-R/FG-2] "They assist builders in plastering houses." [EC-R/FG-3] "Sometimes boys help to build someone's house and they give them R120." [EC-U/FG-7])
- **Farm labour** ("Some drive tractors that are ploughing people's fields and gardens." [EC-R/FG-2] "They herd cattle in farms or here." [KZN-R/FG-2])
- **Sheep-shearing** ("When it is time to shear sheep, they work for those with many sheep to shear wool. Five of them can do the job and they get R200 to share among themselves." [EC-R/FG-3])
- **Water collection** ("Some boys collect and sell water (120 litres costs R30), especially during winter." [EC-R/FG-2])
- **Selling water** ("They put water in bottle and wait at the four-ways crossing, to sell it to the public for the price of R1." [Gau-U/FG-2])
- **Barbering** ("Some boys do shaving as a means of contributing something to their poor families." [EC-U/FG-2])
- **Retailing** ("Some of the boys are selling fruits and vegetables in town." [EC-P/FG-2] "Others sell cigarettes." [EC-P/FG-2])
- **Taxi conductor** ("Some boys are taxi conductors to get money." [EC-U/FG-6] "Boys work with taxi drivers as a sliding door operator during weekend." [EC-P/FG-2] "They help people who look for the taxi to get a taxi and the driver gives them R1 for every passenger." [Gau-U/FG-2])
- **Selling scrap metal** ("They collect old metal and sell it to get money for food." [EC-U/FG-6])
- **Motor mechanic** ("Some are also mechanics for cars." [EC-P/FG-3] "They are a car machinist." [EC-P/FG-6])
- **Shopping trolley helpers** ("They are carrying groceries with trolleys at shops in town." [EC-P/FG-6])
- **Shoe-shining** ("Boys can polish people's shoes." [Lim-R/FG-2])

## Box 7 Income-earning activities by girls

- **Hairdressing** ("Some girls are doing hair to get R20." [EC-R/FG-4] "Girls do hairdressing after school and on weekends." [EC-R/FG-7] "Girls work at the salon." [EC-U/FG-7] "The girls can plait hair." [Lim-R/FG-2] "They are the hairdressers." [EC-P/FG-2])
- **Beautician** ("As for girls, they can do people's hair and nails." [Lim-R/FG-3] "Girls do manicure and pedicure." [Lim-P/FG-3])
- **Domestic work** ("Some go to the neighbours to wash the dishes." [KZN-P/FG-5] "Others wash clothes and clean for their neighbours so that they get money." [KZN-P/FG-5] "They work in the suburbs as maids doing washing or cleaning yards." [KZN-U/FG-5])
- **Child care** ("Some baby-sit for their neighbours." [KZN-U/FG-5])
- **Fetching water** ("Others fetch water for the neighbour to get money." [KZN-P/FG-5])
- **Shop assistant** ("Some go to shops to assist." [KZN-P/FG-5] "Girls get a job at the shops to do packing." [EC-P/FG-7] "They work at the shops as cashiers." [KZN-R/FG-3] "Some are packing at Spar in Howick." [KZN-R/FG-5] "Some are cashiers at the stores." [KZN-R/FG-5] "Mine was working at KwaThami Tuck Shop on weekends." [KZN-R/FG-7])
- **Petty trading** ("They sell chips and sweets at school." [EC-R/FG-2] "Others sell some goods by the streets." [KZN-R/FG-3])
- **Cooking and selling food** ("The girls bake cakes and sell them." [Lim-P/FG-2])
- **Cleaning hospitals** ("Cleaning the hospitals during the weekends." [Lim-R/FG-5])

in gangs and criminality (e.g. selling drugs) or of begging ('pleading') on the streets. Girls are frequently condemned for engaging in transactional sex ('sugar daddies' or prostitution). (See Box 8.)

Not all 'work' that children do is paid in cash:

*"Those children our age who smoke, go to places where alcohol is sold and they help with fetching water and wood, because they know that they are going to get a reimbursement of a loose cigarette." [KZN-P/FG-5]*

*"Most children who work while they are still at school work to earn money to buy beer, cigarettes and drugs." [EC-R/FG-7]*

*"If somebody asks them to cut grass in the yard and wants to give them money, they refuse to take it and say they want beer not money." [EC-R/FG-4]*

## 8.2 HOUSEHOLD CHORES

Children mentioned various domestic chores that they do at home, including washing dishes (*"You know that you should wash the dishes"* [KZN-P/FG-5]) and cleaning the house, cooking (*"If you are staying with your granny you should also cook if you can cook"* [KZN-P/FG-5]), washing and ironing clothes (including school uniforms), collecting water and firewood, farming, herding animals and child care. Domestic tasks are gendered, and girls are generally expected to do more than boys. Housework is universally seen as 'women's work', and South Africa is no exception. (*"For a girl they have to do their job at home, like cooking and cleaning the house."* *"Boys may also do household chores, if there are no girls in the house."* [KZN-R/FG-2]) However, one mother in urban KwaZulu-Natal resists such gender stereotyping in her home. (*"I do not say which jobs are for boys or girls because I don't want my children to grow up with a sexist mentality."* [KZN-U/FG-2])

### Box 8 Illicit income-earning activities by boys and girls

#### Boys

- **Criminality** (*"In our community some boys have joined gangsters and are robbing people to earn money."* [EC-U/FG-2] *"Others sell dagga, but not here at school."* [EC-U/FG-2])
- **Prostitution** (*"Other boys do prostitution, but you will never find them in certain spots known for prostitution, instead they go to places like night clubs or they date older ladies who are working so they can get money from them."* [KZN-R/FG-3])
- **Begging** (*"Work that children do to get money is pleading with people so that they get money for transport to go to school."* [KZN-U/FG-5])

#### Girls

- *"Teenage girls hook up with sugar daddies to earn money. And to me it is not a good thing. It's painful to see a teenage girl doing these things."* [EC-U/FG-2]
- *"Some parents because of poverty allow their teenage girls to do these bad things. It really depends on the parents themselves to teach their children good things like not engaging in prostitution."* [EC-U/FG-2]
- *"I remember a few girls in our community who have gone to prostitution because of the state of poverty in their families."* [EC-U/FG-2]
- *"They prostitute in town and do domestic work."* [Gau-U/FG-2]
- *"They only do one job – prostitute – even with neighbours."* [Gau-U/FG-2]
- *"Others are prostituting in Johannesburg, Durban and other big cities – there's a lot of them that we know."* [KZN-R/FG-5]
- *"Girls they only use their body."* [Gau-U/FG-2]
- *"There is a girl we were with at the hospital, she survives from prostituting in the club, because the patrons buy her alcohol and they give her pocket money in exchange for sex. Right now she has two children who have been born in that manner."* [KZN-R/FG-3]

Collecting firewood is usually done by girls with their mother. (*"My wife also takes my little girls to the bush to help her get firewood to cook."* [KZN-P/FG-4]) Usually girls fetch water, unless long distances are involved, as in the rural Eastern Cape. (*"My boys fetch water for household use. We have a serious problem of water shortage in our village and it is quite a distance to get water."* [EC-R/FG-3])

Domestic duties for boys are more likely to be outside the house than inside – cleaning the yard, gardening and tending animals. (*"As for boys they clean the yard, do the gardening."* [Lim-P/FG-7]) Livestock herding is mostly done by boys. (*"Boys collect livestock from pastures during the week."* [EC-R/FG-7] *"On weekends they herd livestock."* [EC-R/FG-7])

Child care, especially looking after younger brothers and sisters when parents are absent, is the responsibility of older girls. (*"It is important that children, especially girls, learn how to become good mothers in future."* [EC-R/FG-3] *"Sometimes the older ones have to wash and clean the young ones."* [KZN-R/FG-1])

Domestic responsibilities do not usually interfere with schooling. (*"Girls do help in cleaning, cooking and all the household chores, but they don't miss school because they do this on weekends and after school."* [Lim-P/FG-4] *"My children have a small garden so every day at six in the morning they wake up to water their garden before they go to school. While the one is watering the garden the other one is cleaning the house, so they go to school with all their work done."* [KZN-P/FG-2]) However, some parents are accused of taking their children out of school to do child care. (*"You find that the child was not able to go to school due to that she is the oldest in the family at the age of 15 maybe, so she has to baby-sit her siblings while the mother has gone out to look for a job."* [KZN-U/FG-3] *"We do have parents who stop their kids to go to school so that they can look after their siblings."* [Gau-P/FG-4]) Notably, other participants in one focus group where this issue was discussed expressed their indignation about this practice. (*"That parent is bad because you cannot let your child do that. And if you see that as a community you must take action."* [Gau-P/FG-4])

Children, especially boys, are sometimes accused of being lazy and not doing their share of domestic duties. (*"Boys don't help*

*anything at home."* [Lim-P/FG-4] *"My boy when he comes from school he does his school work and after that he goes out to play, he doesn't want to do anything at home. He always says he is from school and is tired but he goes out to play. These days children do not want to work at home."* [EC-U/FG-4] *"My children watch TV and eat food only, nothing else."* [EC-P/FG-7])

Interestingly, some parents and carers complained that children in their care are demanding payment for doing domestic chores. (*"Oh, these days children don't want to do anything for free, they need at least R5."* [EC-U/FG-3] *"Nowadays children need payment for washing clothes and plates, for instance my grandchild always asks for R5 whenever I ask her to wash plates."* [EC-U/FG-3] *"My brother tells my mother to buy him Daniel Hechter [a designer label], then he will clean the yard."* [KZN-U/FG-3]) This attitude might be related to a perception by children that the CSG cash belongs to them, so demanding payment for housework is a reflection of inter-generational struggles within households over control of CSG cash.

### 8.3 REASONS WHY CHILDREN WORK

According to some adults, children 'choose' to work for money because of poverty in order to support their family. (*"If a child works it is because they want to help at home."* [Gau-U/FG-4] *"If the children think we are suffering at home, the child decides to get a job to help the family."* [EC-R/FG-4]) These adults tolerate children working on the grounds that this is the choice of the child and is unavoidable because of poverty, while others actively approve of children bringing in money. (*"It is good; they must help."* [Gau-U/FG-4]) Interestingly, all these statements were made by men. Women generally tend to be less comfortable with their children working. (*"It is not right for children to work."* [EC-U/FG-3] *"I feel it is not a good idea for girls and boys to work while they are still at school, but because of poverty they are forced to work."* [EC-R/FG-3] *"In some homes the income made by children helps out a lot, although it is wrong for children to work."* [E-P/FG3])

Sometimes children have to drop out of school in order to work, and such cases are also explained by economic imperatives. (*"It is not right for you to find a child leaving school, but*

*you find that they don't have enough money to survive."* [Gau-U/FG-3]) Adults who allow children in their care to work are criticised by some others as irresponsible. ("Parents have to provide for their children, rather than let them work for money." [EC-U/FG-3])

Children who work confirmed that they are forced to earn income because of poverty at home. ("It is important for girls to work because the child will help if there is anything needed, like my sister who works and helps my mother to buy food." [KZN-P/FG-5]) "It is very important, especially in cases where your parents are unemployed – with that money you can help by buying food and other stuff that is needed." [KZN-U/FG-5])

In the case of child-headed households, it is inevitable that the oldest child finds money from somewhere, including by working. ("It is important in a case where children are orphans, when the older one has to look after them – she needs to go find a job." [KZN-U/FG-5])

In some cases, parents are accused by their neighbours of sending their children out to work.

*"Around here you find that a parent asks a child to go and look for a job, so that he or she can help at home."* [Gau-U/FG-7]

*"There is a lady who was unemployed and has a problem of getting the CSG; she ended up telling the children to go collect metal rubble and so the children would wake up early to go look for metal and then they would have to go to Isipingo to sell the metal and they would come back and bath so that they go to school, you find that some end up not going to school due to that they are tired."* [KZN-U/FG-3]

Some adults argue that girls are more likely to work to support their families; when they earn money they give most of it to their parents. Conversely, "boys think of themselves." [Gau-U/FG-4] They work for pocket money, and if a boy takes his earnings home, his friends tell him: "You are dumb!" [Gau-U/FG-4] One mother whose two sons wash taxis at a taxi rank is relieved that this takes some financial pressure off her. ("I had a problem at first but now I gave them the go-ahead, since they also buy their own things with their money they no more ask for money from me." [KZN-P/FG-2])

Often the money that children earn is used partly to finance their own education. ("Where I am staying there is a boy who works in taxis, but only on weekends. This is his third year doing this. He is doing Matric now and the money he gets there he uses for school." [KZN-U/FG-4]) "Some children like school but there is no money, so they go to find jobs and save money and then use that money to go back to school." [KZN-P/FG-7]) "Girls work in shops during the weekend to earn money to use for school." [EC-P/FG-2] "I have a friend who, when she does not have stuff that she sells, she will not have money to go to school." [KZN-U/FG-5] "You can pay school fees, and school uniform because it is so expensive." [Lim-R/FG-7])

One boy in Gauteng is saving money to pay for university fees. ("I'm in Grade 10 and I asked my mother if she could pay for me to go to the university because the cost of university courses start at R15 000. There are some part-time jobs I can do on weekends and I can save money, and I can budget it for my university studies." [Gau-U/FG-5]) Another schoolboy from Gauteng worked to support himself after completing school, until he found a job. ("There is a child who I know around here who had a piece job while attending school. He used to wash cars to make pocket money, he was saving for himself until he finished Matric." [Gau-U/FG-7])

A few adults argued that some children, especially teenage boys, earn money for illegitimate purposes, such as drinking ("I see them helping out building houses, and after that they go straight to the taverns to drink and get drunk." [EC-P/FG-4]) and taking drugs like marijuana. ("Some they need money to buy 'dagga'; that is the main reason that some of them work." [Gau-U/FG-4]) "Boys go to wash taxis to earn money for 'dagga'." [KZN-P/FG-4])

## 8.4 CHILDREN'S WORK AND EDUCATION

Education is highly valued in South Africa by both children ("For me education is important." [KZN-P/FG-5]) and adults ("Education here is valued because most of our fathers and brothers did not have a chance to go to school, and that is why back then most government officials were taking advantage of us." [KZN-P/FG-1]). For this reason, parents and caregivers generally express disapproval about children working,



especially if it interferes with schooling. (*"We are not happy. A child must finish school first before going to find a job."* [EC-R/FG-4]) Children working is seen as undermining their education in various ways.

1. Children skip classes or miss school days because of their jobs.
  - ≈ *"In some cases it makes teenagers not to attend school – they skip days to go do this job to earn money."* [Lim-P/FG-6]
  - ≈ *"Some do miss school when their potential customers are around, like those who specialise in fixing cars, so they decide to abscond from the school to go to work, because their clients pay them well."* [KZN-R/FG-4]
  - ≈ *"Those who work do miss school because they may leave home as if they are going to school, knowing very well that they will go to work instead, and we cannot blame their parents for that because they hide it from their parents."* [Lim-R/FG-2]
2. Children drop out of school to earn money.
  - ≈ *"They do this work to such an extent that they end up leaving school for the money they get from doing this job."* [EC-R/FG-4]
  - ≈ *"If they are working I don't think they will go to school anymore, because they are now used to money."* [Gau-U/FG-7]
  - ≈ *"If you look at the whole taxi industry, there is huge number of young teenagers who are supposed to be at school."* [KZN-U/FG-4]
3. Children who work after school cannot do their homework or concentrate in class.
  - ≈ *"You can't afford to work because you have to do homework after school, you have studying so you can't do both."* [EC-P/FG-5]
  - ≈ *"It is not right for children to work when they are still at school, they can't concentrate on school work."* [EC-U/FG-3]
  - ≈ *"Let's say you have a test to write the following day. If you have a shift it will not be easy for you, because you will not get the time to study."* [Lim-R/FG-5]
4. Once children start earning money, they no longer see the value of education.
  - ≈ *"It is not a good thing, because they won't concentrate at their school work. They will start concentrating on the money and forgetting about the school."* [Gau-U/FG-3]

- ≈ *"They work at the tavern to collect empty bottles where they get paid, but they do this after school and the problem is once he starts getting the money that's where he starts not to go to school."* [Lim-P/FG-4]
- ≈ *"It affects you to attend the school because if you see that you are getting money you don't go back to school."* [EC-R/FG-6]

Many children insisted that they decided not to work because they prioritise their education (*"You have to focus more on your studies, not work to earn money."* [EC-P/FG-5]), or because their parents are prioritising their education. (*"For us to work is not that important, because our parents are still looking after us and they want us to finish our education."* [KZN-U/FG-2])

But other children insist that they work only at weekends, so as not to interfere with schooling. (*"It is important only if you work on weekends, like my sister who works on Saturdays."* [KZN-P/FG-5] *"I do not think it is necessary to work during school hours."* [Lim-R/FG-5]) Some adults agree with the argument that children can do both. (*"Some do this work but are able to balance school and their job."* [EC-P/FG-4] *"In most cases they work on weekends and they don't miss school."* [EC-R/FG-7] *"They don't sell during school hours, they sell after school."* [Lim-P/FG-7]) Other adults argue that working keeps children out of trouble. (*"It is a good thing because he will be keeping himself busy instead of roaming the streets."* [Lim-R/FG-3] *"It is better for the children to work during their spare time rather than to leave school. This also will discourage them from joining gangsters."* [EC-R/FG-2])

Finally, there is no evidence from this qualitative research of a correlation between receiving the CSG and a tendency to go to work and neglect education; this relationship needs to be quantified empirically. It could be hypothesised that the CSG retains children in school because it alleviates the financial constraint that compels children to earn income.

On the other hand, the CSG is not large enough to lift very poor people out of poverty altogether, so it is quite likely that poor children will be found dropping out of school and/or working for income, whether or not they are CSG beneficiaries. One man from the Eastern Cape argued that the CSG discourages both education and employment. (*"There are those girls, I don't see them working anywhere – the only thing*



*I see them doing is just going to get the CSG money.” [EC-P/FG-4])*

## 8.5 CONCLUSION

Child work and child labour are very prevalent in poor South African communities. Boys in our fieldwork localities engage in a range of income-earning economic activities, including: petty trading, gardening, agricultural labour, taxi conductor, house construction and personal services (barbering, shoe-shining). Girls have fewer options for paid work than boys, and are more likely to provide personal services (domestic work, hairdressing, child care) or to work in the retail sector (shop assistants). According to our respondents, girls are more likely to engage in illicit or ‘immoral’ activities such as transactional sex, but some boys do join gangs and rob people or sell drugs for money.

Children also perform household chores which are usually not onerous, but some parents and carers are accused by their neighbours of taking older children (usually girls) out of school to look after younger siblings while the parent or carer works or looks for a job. Children’s work becomes child labour when it interferes with education, which can occur in several ways:

1. Children skip classes or miss school days because of their jobs.
2. Children drop out of school to earn money.
3. Children who work after school cannot do their homework or concentrate in class.
4. Once children start earning money they no longer see the value of education.

Other parents or carers send their children out to work for income; again, there is disapproval of this practice if the child skips school or drops out. But if children work in the afternoons and weekends this is generally considered acceptable, especially if it contributes to household income in poor families. Often children who are working are doing this partly to finance their own education, so there is a positive synergy rather than a negative trade-off between school and work.

To the extent that child labour is driven by economic imperatives, social grants that are well targeted at poor households can make a positive difference. There is no evidence from our fieldwork that the CSG is reducing the extent of children’s participation in economic activities. If there is such an effect it can only be assessed by a quantitative survey.

# CHAPTER 9 ADOLESCENT RISK

One question asked in the evaluation design matrix is:

*≈ How are critical life-course events of adolescents affected by the extension of the CSG?*

A key part of this question involves the potential role of the CSG in reducing adolescent risk, or more specifically:

*≈ How are risky behaviours affected? and: What are the pathways/mechanisms by which the CSG can affect these critical life course events?*

Qualitative research methods are particularly well suited to exploring adolescent risks, such as sexual behaviour and substance abuse, and serve three purposes:

1. Because these are sensitive and complex topics, they are better understood through open-ended responses rather than short categorical survey responses.
2. People may not feel comfortable answering questions about sexual behaviour, drugs, crime, etc., one-on-one with a survey enumerator. However, once in a focus group environment, they begin to speak more openly about these issues.
3. The survey will ask questions on these topics (using an anonymous method that should increase truthful responses), and the qualitative research has identified the full range of risks and their sources that have been incorporated into the survey questions.

The qualitative research provided the opportunity to engage in substantive discussions with adolescents and their caregivers about the nature of these risks, the factors behind them, and what is needed to reduce them.

In this chapter, we give a particularly strong focus to economic factors that underlie risk, because these are the main pathways that we hypothesised to explain the potential relevance of the CSG. To the extent that economic factors affect risk, directly or indirectly, access to the CSG could reduce risk. We also examined non-economic factors, because it is important to understand these in order to know where the CSG may not be relevant.

## 9.1 WHAT ARE THE MAIN RISKS THAT ADOLESCENTS FACE?

Adolescents in South Africa face a disturbing array of risks to their physical and emotional health. The purpose of this section is to explore the nature of these risks and the extent to which they are related, directly or indirectly, to lack of income, in order to understand whether a household's access to the CSG has any potential impact on these risks. This is a difficult question to answer because the economic and sociological roots of these risks are deep, complex and intertwined, and a small cash grant is not able to tackle many of them. Nevertheless, the evaluation survey hopes to determine whether extension of the CSG to older teenagers will have an impact on their exposure to these risks. The qualitative research thus set out to understand the broad array of risks faced by different groups of adolescents (boys and girls, rural and urban) and what is driving them (economic and social).

Table 20 shows the main risks that adolescents face, as reported by key informants and focus group participants, and how common these risks are across communities.

Pregnancy, STIs and HIV, substance abuse (drugs and alcohol), girls dating older men specifically for money, crime and peer pressure, were cited in 11 or 12 of the 12 study communities, regardless of urban, peri-urban or rural location. Additional risks noted in between five and eight of the 12 communities include: boys dating older women, sexual abuse, gangs, lack of discipline and guidance (from adults), and involvement with teachers. Many of these risks parallel the reasons that children miss or drop out of school, as discussed in Chapter 6.

One striking finding from this research is the similarity of risks faced by adolescents across all communities. As seen in Table 20, there was little variation between risks identified across provinces and communities, and more surprisingly, across urban and rural locations. It should be noted, however, that this table refers to whether that risk is perceived as a problem in that community, not how prevalent that risk is. Table 21 presents a rough picture of prevalence of risks, showing the frequency with which these issues were raised across all communities in the research. The first column

Table 20 Adolescent risks

Province	Locality U = Urban P = Peri-urban R = Rural	Pregnancy	HIV/AIDS and STIs	Drugs and alcohol	Dating older men	Dating older women	Sexual abuse	Crime	Gangs	Lack of guidance/ discipline	Peer pressure	Prostitution	Date older men or women for money (W/M)	Power determined by money	Involved with teachers
Gauteng	Shoshanguve (U)	•	•	•	•		•	•		•	•		•	•	•
	Lenasia (U)	•	•	•	•			•		•	•		•	•	•
	Meyerton (P)	•	•	•	•			•		•	•		•	•	
Limpopo	Seshego (P)	•	•	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
	Groothoek (R)	•		•	•	•		•	•	•	•		•	•	•
	Moletjje (R)	•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
KwaZulu-Natal	Umlazi (U)	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•	•	•	• (W)	•	•
	Izingolweni (P)	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•	•		•	•	
	Merrivale (R)	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•	•	•	• (W)	•	•
Eastern Cape	Port Elizabeth (U)	•	•	•	•		•	•	•			•	•	•	
	Engcobo (R)	•	•	•	•		•	•	•		•		•	•	
	Umtata (P)	•	•	•	•	•	•	•			•		•	•	
TOTAL		12	11	12	12	5	8	12	5	9	11	5	12	12	7

Table 21 Risks faced by adolescents

Adolescent risks	Number of sources (FGs and KIs) where issue was raised	Number of instances of issue being raised
Crime	29	39
Dating older men	40	71
Dating older men for money	38	60
Drugs and alcohol	68	125
Gangs	11	11
HIV	21	29
Lack of support from parents	8	9
Peer pressure	11	14
Pregnancy	55	73
Prostitution	5	6
Sexual abuse/harassment	14	22
STIs	8	8

indicates the number of sources – focus groups (FG) and key informants (KI) – in which the issue was raised (out of a total of 132). The second column indicates the number of times the issue was raised. As explained in the Methods chapter and subsequently, these numbers, as those in the other frequency tables in this report, should be taken as only rough indications of the relative importance of these risk factors due to the several factors explained in section 2.5. With these cautions in mind, Table 21 is useful in roughly showing the relative importance of different types of risks with economic and non-economic causes.

Table 21 shows the high perception of the prevalence of drugs and alcohol (mentioned by 68 sources and in 125 instances), dating older men for money (this can be combined with the ‘dating older men’ category, since money is the main reason for these relationships for a total of 131 instances), and pregnancy (73 instances) as presenting significant risks for teens

across the communities. The role of money in motivating teens to date older men was also mentioned by a significant number of sources. Others issues also noted by many sources include crime, HIV and sexual abuse.

## 9.2 THE ROLE OF INCOME POVERTY IN ADOLESCENT RISK

Despite the limits of the qualitative research in quantifying risk sources, there is no question that income poverty stands out as the main source of adolescent risk. Apart from what we know sociologically about the relationships between poverty and substance abuse, crime and transactional sex, these relationships were expressed directly and often vividly by focus group members.

Noting again all the caveats associated with quantifying focus group material, Table 23 shows that there were at least 200 exchanges (across 12 focus groups) in which the point was made, directly or indirectly, that income poverty drives risky practices among adolescents.

This point was made by CSG recipients and non-recipients, indicating that both groups are vulnerable to this risk. The qualitative research could not determine the relative prevalence of this type of income poverty-driven risk between these two groups; survey methods are designed for this purpose and the quantitative evaluation will investigate this question.

### 9.2.1 Girls' relationships with older men

Among the 200 exchanges about the role of income poverty in risky behaviour, the vast majority related to girls transactional sexual relationships with older men. In a focus group discussion with non-beneficiaries in Port Elizabeth (Eastern Cape) women explained why girls engage in sexual practices that put them at risk of HIV:

≈ “Yes, yes, most girls turn to these practices for the love of money.”

≈ “Some girls engage in these risky practices because they are from poor families who are failing to provide even basic needs

*such as food. It is not good. Government should do something otherwise our children will die of AIDS.” (EC-U/FG-3]*

The girls risk not only contracting HIV from these sexual relationships but also other STIs, as well as teenage pregnancy, and failure to finish school if they fall pregnant (see Chapter 6).

The main link that we found between income poverty and adolescent risk is where girls have relationships with older men, or less frequently older boys,<sup>11</sup> because of the material benefit that they receive from these relationships. These benefits take the form of cash, food, clothing or other gifts, or transportation where men have cars or taxis. There are non-economic benefits as well (discussed later) where social status and approval from peers, experimentation or experience, and emotional attachment play a significant role in these relationships. But financial or material gain is clearly the most consistent driver of these relationships. The reasons cited in the focus groups for why girls date older men are seen in Table 22.

Girls' relationships with older partners presents a dual risk: first, because older men are more likely to be HIV positive than younger boys; and second, because there is a direct

Table 22 Why girls date older men

• Expensive things
• Expensive clothing
• Brand name clothing
• To be driven around in a car
• Money to do their hair
• Cell phones
• Toiletries
• Basic needs to be met
• Money for alcohol or drugs
• Transport expenses to go to school
• Food on the table at home

11. Boys are generally said to not have money, and for this reason girls tend not to date them, preferring older men who have money.

relationship between age difference with sex partners and school drop-out rates among girls aged 15–19 years in South Africa (see Figure 1). The prospect of dating older men with money makes dating boys undesirable in comparison.

In Umtata, a non-beneficiary explained: *“As a young girl I also didn’t like boys with no money, they just couldn’t satisfy my needs for money.”* [EC-P/FG-3]

This relationship between the age difference of partners and school drop-out rates presents two risks to girls: first, it undermines their education which brings many current and future benefits; and second, because data from sub-Saharan Africa since 1996 shows that higher education has a protective effect against HIV (Hargreaves, et al. 2008; Pettifor, et al. 2008). Girls who drop out of high school are thus at higher risk of HIV infection.

In our research, we found these relationships between girls and older men described in all 12 communities and referred to repeatedly as a major source of adolescent risk.

As noted earlier, the vast majority of the over 200 comments linking poverty to adolescent risk described transactional sexual relationships between young girls and older men for material gain. In peri-urban Izingolweni in KZN, teenage girls in the focus group described how this works:

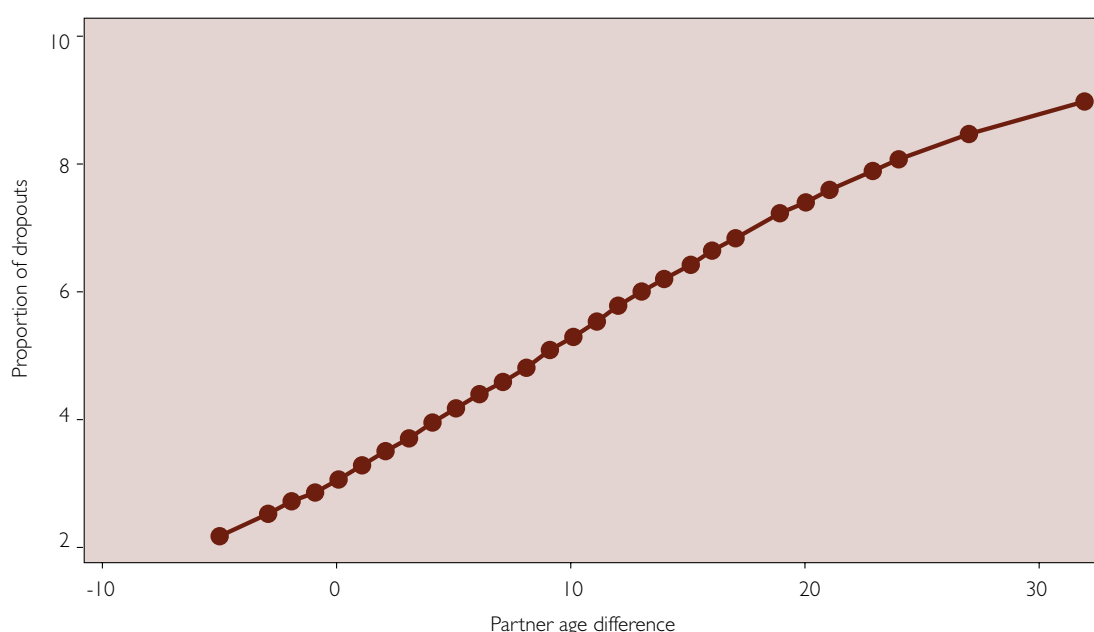
*“Yes this other girl was dating a taxi driver way older than her.”*

*“This happens because these people have money and cars, so these people buy everything for them and they also bring them to school with the cars. They give the children money, give them pocket money, buy them clothes and even buy stuff for the child’s home.”*

*“There is this other one who dates an old man, every time we would see him giving her money and plastics when the child is going home.”* [KZN/Izingolweni, teenage girls]

The nature of the relationships where transactional sex is involved and the interaction between poverty and peer pressure in driving these relationships is shown in peri-urban Meyerton, Gauteng (see Box 9). These relationships were

**Figure 1** Proportion of young South African women ages 15–19 years who dropped out of high school, by current sex partner age difference



Source: MacPhail and Pettifor (2009)  
(n=1,750)



found in the rural study communities as well. In a focus group of teenage girls in rural Groothoek in Limpopo, older men were said to be preferred because:

*“Some would tell you that they do not want to date boys their age.”*

*“They date people who [are] around 50 years but not all of them because some do date boys their own age, they tell you they do not want a person who does not have a car or who is in the same class as they are; they want someone who has a car.”*

*“Some of the children in the township date teachers.”*

*“They do not care who is watching them as long as they know what girls need.”*

*“Men have money and they are after this money.” [Lim-R/FG-5]*

This is a particularly high-risk practice in light of the belief that sleeping with a virgin cures AIDS, as explained in a focus group of mothers of adolescents. (*“Older men even sleep with younger girls just because they think they will get better and he promises to give this child money if they have sex without a condom.” [Lim-R/FG-7]*)

Dating teachers presents girls with additional risks to their well-being because apart from HIV risk, there is also a risk factor of girls dropping out of school. As seen in Table 20, sexual involvement with teachers was raised as a risk in 7 of the 12 communities.

Relationships between older men and younger girls do not just occur with teenagers. We found cases of children much younger in these relationships, who are bound to them because they provide the child with food. They keep this from their parents because they fear the parents’ reaction; they also know the relationship might end if it is found out, and the child will then lose this source of access to food. In a focus group of non-beneficiaries in Umlazi in KwaZulu-Natal, women discussed this:

*“It has become difficult for these kids to report if they are being abused, due to that the perpetrator offers the child money. For*

*example, you find that there is a man who always abuses a 10-year-old child and gives her money to buy [lunch] with at school. It’s not even easy for the child to tell you as a parent because she knows that you will fight with that guy and she will starve because she gets money from him, because she knows that there is no food in the household.” [KZN-U/FG-3]*

Sometimes this money goes to the household itself, not just to the girls. In the focus group above, a woman added: *“It can even happen that with that R50 she gets she even assists with buying stuff for the household.” [KZN-U/FG-3]* In peri-urban Izingolweni, teenage girls in a focus group explained how these boyfriends regularly buy food for the household:

*“There is this girl who dated an older guy, we would see them going to the girl’s house because the girl stays with her granny who is very old and every time we would see him bringing groceries for the granny; the girl ended up having a baby and we heard that the baby died but the guy still continues to buy groceries for this family.” [KZN-P/FG-5]*

This statement could come from a household that does or does not receive the CSG. The CSG is usually spread thin across a household’s needs, so it might not ‘replace’ this boyfriend but rather supplement; many of these stories about girls and older men are likely to include CSG-receiving households as well. Nevertheless, if older boyfriends are buying groceries for the family, this suggests that the CSG could potentially serve as a substitute for the resources that this relationship brings into the household, and a pathway by which the CSG can lead to reduced adolescent risk.

In urban and rural communities in KwaZulu-Natal (see Table 20 above), people said that boys also date older women for money. This could put boys at risk if these women are HIV positive. (*“The boy can also date older women to get money and then go back to dating young girls, knowing very well that he is sick.”*)

Decisions to have sexual relations with older men are not always the girls’ decisions alone. An even more problematic situation found in urban Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal, was where children’s guardians or older relatives were supporting, or even promoting, children’s sexual relations with

### Box 9 Dating older men for money in Meyerton: Poverty and peer influence

In the peri-urban community of Meyerton in Gauteng province, men, women and teenagers all focused on the phenomenon of girls dating older men for money. This situation was said to arise out of a situation of general poverty, as a means to obtain both basic necessities – food, school uniforms, household good and transportation to school – as well as higher-end goods that make teenagers popular or appear 'cool' to their peers, such as brand name clothing, beauty supplies, airtime for cell phones, or being driven in fancy cars. While poverty influences the occurrence of such relationships, peer pressure also facilitates this behaviour. These relationships can have significant implications on schooling, well-being and future opportunities for girls.

Older men provide these girls with money and gifts directly, and in some cases buy groceries or other goods for her entire household. ("Sometimes the thing that pushes them there is poverty and they say: 'If I can meet that guy he can provide for me.' And this older man attracts these kids with money, and they fall for it.") Men, women and teenagers all emphasise the role that peer pressure and competition play in facilitating these types of relationships: the desire to have what their friends have and fit in. Explaining this trend, they also emphasised the serious implications that these relationships can have on schooling and their future – getting pregnant, contracting HIV, missing school days or dropping out. Or sometimes they stay in school, with increased status. Here are accounts from men, caregivers of teenagers and teenage girls, respectively:

*"It is all about money, it is not anything else. Because he will take her to expensive places and he will give her money. And even at school they don't drop out because they always have money and things are easy for them. And when they go to school they are there for fashion and at the end of the year they don't pass."* [Gau-PIFG-4]

*"Because of peer pressure, they look at the girl next door and find that she wears expensive clothes, and she ends up falling in love with taxi drivers so that he can buy her clothes. When they date taxi drivers they give them R5 or maybe R20 to buy things. And they date sugar daddies who give them R200 to buy clothes. So they can look as good as their friends but kids end up being pregnant, and HIV positive."* [Gau-PIFG-7]

*"They compare themselves with other people and they end up dating older men so they can fit the standard. And the older man he will want something in return which leads to sex and they end up being pregnant and at the end of the day that man is not there to look after you."* [Gau-PIFG-5]

Teenage girls in Meyerton further noted the way that this affects adolescence, juxtaposing their age with their activities:

*"You find a girl of our age being collected by a BMW at night. During the day she's a child, but at night she is a woman."* [Gau-PIFG-5]

older men in order to obtain money for themselves or the household. While this was not widely reported, it was described by adults and children alike and warrants attention. A similar situation is described by men in Umlazi:

*"For example, last year in the newspapers there was a story about children who were staying with a grandma who were used for sex by older men. These children were as young as ten years old. These people will give these children food and rape them, but the child will say nothing because if she reports she will not get something to eat. So poverty also plays a very huge role."* [KZN-U/FG-4]

In an earlier draft of this report, it was suggested that this issue might be worth exploring in the quantitative survey, but that it would be difficult to get honest answers. Certainly no adult is going to report on this issue occurring in their own households. Questions could be asked about whether they are aware of this happening in other households which would give us an idea of prevalence at the community level, but not at a household level (which would provide an opportunity

to correlate it against CSG receipt). A more effective option would be to ask this of girls in an anonymous ACASI survey, though this would create ethical obligations to report cases of abuse. It is also likely that caregivers who are supporting prostitution of children have other social problems that are not limited to poverty, and thus the CSG may have limited impact. On the other hand, if this is an expression of desperate levels of poverty, it might have impact. In conclusion, we have addressed this issue to some extent through the questionnaire for adolescents, asking them whether any household members were aware of and supported their relationships with sexual partners.

#### 9.2.2 Sharing the CSG with children

One implication of these findings on girls' relationships with older men for money is that in order for the CSG to play a protective role in reducing risks to girls, some of the grant must be made available directly to girls. Furthermore, the

amount shared with them would need to be high enough to undermine their perceived need to associate with men for money. This is not a simple proposition because parents are unlikely to want to share much of it, either because they do not find the amount sufficient to cover their household needs (since we know that they do distribute it across the household; see Chapter 5), or because they believe that the money should be spent on food and household necessities and not less important expenditures that children would choose, or because they are concerned that children will spend the money on drugs or alcohol.<sup>12</sup>

Nevertheless, it is important to note that in an experimental conditional cash transfer study in Malawi that tested the impact of providing varied splits in the transfer between girls and their caregivers, the protective effect of cash transfers on HIV risk increased as the proportion given to girls increased (Baird, MacIntosh and Ozler; 2009). We know from Chapter 5 that some caregivers do give a portion of the CSG to their children as spending money, though these transfers appear to be mostly small.

One question then is how much money for girls would be enough to undermine the incentive to participate in this behaviour. There is a wide variation in the amount of money that girls receive from men. In the case above, the woman mentions R50.

In Meyerton in Gauteng, the mother of a teenage girl mentioned that girls get between R5 and R20 from taxi drivers (see Box 9). In another case from rural Merrivale in KwaZulu-Natal, a non-recipient woman compared the amount that girls get from their parents for pocket money (R2) with the small amount they get from boyfriends (R10), but which is still higher. (*“There is a girl next to the Roman Catholic Church by the police station who said to me: ‘My mother is wasting my time by giving me R2 for carrying at school – my boyfriend is better because he gives me R10.’”* [KZN-R/FG-3])

When asked whether lack of money influences teen pregnancy, a non-beneficiary speculated that it does, indicating

that even a small amount of money (equivalent to what a CSG beneficiary might give her child) could make a difference to relationships with men:

*“Yes it does because sometimes you will find that your daughter will ask you for money and you’ll find that you do not have that kind of money; she gets disappointed and at times doesn’t want her friends to laugh, then she meets a guy she knows and she maybe asks for R5 then he gives her R20 and so on then he later realises that he can get sex in exchange for money and that increases that rate of teenage pregnancy.”* [Lim-R/FG-3]

If these small amounts of money are within the range of what girls normally receive in their sexual transactions, this suggests (if only hypothetically at this stage) that where caregivers share a small amount of the CSG with older children, it could potentially undermine girls’ incentives to date older men. It also suggests that the amount that they receive may matter. Quantitative evaluation can be used to investigate whether this matters and the amount children would need to receive to change their behaviour. The quantitative survey should therefore ask:

1. How much money grant recipients currently share with their girls and boys;
2. How much they would be willing to share when the grant is extended to these older children; and
3. How much money girls receive from their boyfriends, and what gifts they receive (to calculate the value).

Based on the findings of the qualitative research, questions reflecting these issues have been incorporated into the survey.

In some cases, the amount that girls were said to be receiving was much higher than what could be compensated for by the CSG; R1 000 was mentioned in focus groups in two different communities in Limpopo, Groothoek and Sheshego:

≈ *“If you are always asking for money from your boyfriend, it ends up at the point where he expects something in return even if he does not tell you, but you see for yourself that this guy wants this kind of thing.”*

≈ *“I take the risk otherwise he will leave me.”*

12. This concern arose during the pilot when we gave the same R50 to girls and boys for their focus group participation as we did to adults. The money was perceived as too high, and children’s drug use was a problem in this urban area.

- ≈ “But you sacrifice for him.”
- ≈ “You do not know what sickness this person might have, all that you care about is money. It is the main cause because if a person brings R 1000 and says: ‘Let’s have sex’, you would do it because it is too much, especially since it is for one day.”
- ≈ “You risk your life because you don’t know his status, what you are after is money. That is the main reason because that (money) fools girls immediately – when a man says ‘Here is R1 000, let’s have sex’, you won’t say no. You will notice that it’s a lot of money for one day, so obviously you will take the offer.” [Lim–R/FG–5]

### 9.3 OTHER RISK FACTORS: CRIME, SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND THE FAMILY ENVIRONMENT

Additional risk factors that came up in all 12 study communities were crime and substance abuse, i.e. drugs and alcohol. Dagga, cocaine, chalk, mandrax, woonga and naupe were among the drugs mentioned. Crimes mentioned include stealing, housebreaking, mugging, rape and murder. It is difficult to separate these risk factors, so they are discussed here together.

As described in Chapter 6, drugs, crime and truancy are intertwined: children steal to get money for drugs, skip school or drop out because of drugs, all of which is often related to peer pressure (discussed in all study communities), as well as to poverty.

A mother of a teenager from Lenasia described the direct relationship between peer pressure and stealing. (“Some they get influenced by friends, if they see that their friends are stealing and they are getting some of the things that they were not having before then they start stealing.” [Gau–U/FG–7]) A woman in Meyerton highlighted that lack of other means at home leads children to commit crimes. (“Even if you are poor you have to try to bring something home so kids can eat. Because of the neglect of the parents most of the kids end up doing crime so that they can survive.” [Gau–P/FG–7]) The relationship between crime and drugs was described in a non-beneficiary focus group in Port Elizabeth. (“Boys from 13 years and above, some smoke dagga, rocks, cocaine, chalk – they steal money for drugs.” [EC–U/FG–3])

Risky sexual practices are also related to drugs, as explained by school staff in Shoshanguve:

*“We really have a serious problem with risky behaviours from our learners in connection with sexual promiscuity, in connection with drug abuse, and the major problem that drives this is the fact that the basic needs of the children are not met in a dysfunctional family. And other children they like to experiment, but unfortunately they experiment with these dangerous drugs that they are using.” [Gau–U/KI–2]*

In five communities where gangs were said to be a problem, children are used to commit crimes because they will not go to jail, and because they are lured by the offer of money or clothing. Men in a focus group in Port Elizabeth explained this:

*“Most boys are members of gangs, they are hired by big gang leaders and drug lords. They can kill you and they are not afraid to do that. They wear expensive clothes and this influences the younger ones to join the gangs so as to also buy expensive clothes.” [EC–U/FG–4]*

Like relationships with older men or women, children may be motivated by poverty to take part in risky or criminal activities which eventually lead them to drop out of school or be arrested. This was described by an education worker from Shoshanguve:

*“Alcohol, drugs, gangsters – the gang leaders promise the boys that they are going to buy them nice clothes and these boys then become fronts to sell guns, they then buy them leather jackets and give them R5 000 and ask them to go kill someone, and these boys do that.” [Gau–U/KI–2]*

The family environment is often blamed for the risks that adolescents face and the activities they engage in. Lack of discipline and guidance from their families was cited in nine of the study communities.

As discussed above, parents sometimes look the other way, or in some cases even promote their children’s engagement in prostitution when the family needs money. This behaviour can be seen as driven by poverty, but it also involves other pathologies which take the form of sexual abuse within families.

Other risk factors cited are conflict within the home and adult unemployment. (See Chapter 6 for further discussion on the risks to children posed by drugs, alcohol, criminal activity, sexual activity and peer pressure, which result in their missing days of school or dropping out, threatening their human capital accumulation and leaving them trapped in poverty.)

#### 9.4 DOES THE CSG REDUCE ADOLESCENT RISK?

There were two approaches used to explore this question. The first was to look at the sources of adolescent risk to determine the extent to which the CSG could potentially address those sources. In analysing the data on adolescent risk, we found four major categories of risk sources or drivers (see Table 23). These included, above all, lack of money and poverty – 203 instances – a vast number, followed by peer pressure, ignorance and the media. If income poverty is such a major driver of risk, then the CSG has the potential to reduce this risk.

This finding is consistent with those presented in Table 24 which shows people's responses to the question of whether and how the CSG could affect adolescent risk. In the research, we asked participants in focus groups and key informant interviews whether they thought the CSG helps to reduce the type of risk factors that they identified, primarily: sexual practices, substance abuse and crime. Here a positive impact (reducing risky behaviour) was perceived more often (in 47 instances) than neutral or negative impacts.

Note that despite often heard rumours that the CSG transfer causes teenagers to get pregnant in order to receive the grant, we only recorded 11 instances in which this issue was

**Table 23 Driving factors of risky sexual behaviour**

Driving factors	Number of sources (FGs and KIs) where issue was raised	Number of instances of issue being raised
Ignorance	12	13
Media	8	9
Peer pressure	21	26
Lack of money and poverty	66	203

**Table 24 How the CSG affects risky behaviour**

How the CSG affects risky behaviour	Number of sources (FGs and KIs) where issue was raised	Number of instances of issue being raised
Positive	32	47
Helps but not enough	7	7
Neutral	17	22
Negative	3	3
Encourages pregnancy	10	11

raised. This is a relatively small number in the context of such a huge quantity of data, suggesting that this problem is less of a perception in communities than might be assumed.

The quantitative survey will attempt to answer this question about the impact of the CSG (and its extension to older children) by looking at differences in practices between adolescents before and after they get the grant. This is a more reliable way to determine whether this protective effect is taking place, and how strong it is. However, the qualitative research provided important insights into the pathways through which the CSG could be having this protective effect, as well as people's accounts of their experiences, observations and perceptions that shed light on whether and how this protective effect takes place. The picture is mixed. Overall, the qualitative research shows that there is likely to be some degree of protective effect taking place. However, the complexity of the social drivers of risk, combined with the magnitude of poverty in relation to the monthly amount of the CSG, does limit this protective effect. Looking at this question across communities in Table 25, in all 12 communities money and poverty are seen as major sources of risk, and in nine communities some people said that adolescents with the CSG were less at risk, or better off, when it came to these kinds of risks. In ten communities others said that those with and without the CSG were in the same position in relation to these risks.

With respect to sexual vulnerability and transactional sex as sources of risk, this is where the greatest link was made between the potentially protective effect of the CSG. For example, a health care worker in Port Elizabeth commented:



Table 25 Relationship between CSG and risk

Province	Locality U = Urban P = Peri-urban R = Rural	Money plays role in risky behaviour	Poverty plays role in risky behaviour	Those with CSG are better off	CSG and non-CSG same condition
Gauteng	Shoshanguve (U)	•	•	•	•
	Lenasia (U)	•	•	•	•
	Meyerton (P)	•	•		•
Limpopo	Seshego (P)	•	•	•	•
	Groothoek (R)	•	•	•	•
	Moletje (R)	•	•	•	•
KwaZulu-Natal	Umlazi (U)	•	•	•	
	Izingolweni (P)	•		•	
	Merrivale (R)	•	•		•
Eastern Cape	Port Elizabeth (U)	•	•	•	•
	Engcobo (R)	•	•		•
	Umtata (P)	•	•	•	•
TOTAL		12	11	9	10

*"I think this CSG may have reduced these risky behaviours because if there is money, there is food, there is no need for them to go around and get food from friends because that is where they experience sexual abuse and use drugs."* [EC-U/KI-3]

Caregivers of teenagers in Port Elizabeth responded similarly:

- ≈ *"Yes, non-recipients are more vulnerable; they can use their body to get money."*
- ≈ *"Those who receive the grant can budget and buy something to eat."*
- ≈ *"CSG recipients can afford to buy the needs of the household, unlike non-CSG recipients who don't even know what to do they don't have money, there is no hope."* [EC-U/FG-7]

Speaking on sexual behaviours and crime in Encobo and Umtata, a teacher and community worker reflected on this relationship:

- ≈ *"I think if people had access to CSG these risky sexual behaviours would not be like these. Because these teenagers they do these out of frustration, they don't have anything to put on the table at home so they join peer groups. They decide to do*

*robbery. I think if everybody who qualifies for CSG would get the CSG this problem will be eliminated or reduced in some way."* [EC-R/KI-2]

- ≈ *"The CSG makes a minimal difference for those involved with violence, but it helps for those who need food at home. The CSG doesn't last for the month, it assists when the family itself relies on it. When there is food at home the child is not easily tempted to offers by those who want sex with them, the older people."* [EC-R/KI-4]

Similar responses were found across all 12 communities. A discussion in Shoshanguve on this issue is included in Box 10.

As noted above, in ten communities other people believed that it did not matter whether a household had the CSG or not. In the Umlazi focus groups with men and mothers of teenagers, respectively, respondents provided a different perspective on the ability of the CSG to make a difference, pointing to the social environment as the source of the problems:

- ≈ *"The CSG has nothing to do with children involving themselves risky behaviours, children will always misbehave if*

*they don't have a proper upbringing. Upbringing is the key to a well-behaved child."* [KZN-P/FG-4]

≈ *"There is no difference. It is the same. I am also of that view. The CSG recipients and non-recipients behave the same way because the CSG is for one day only and tomorrow it's all gone and they are the same with the non-recipients. And even the ones from wealthy families they do behave wildly."* [KZN-P/FG-7]

#### **Box 10 The CSG as an alternative source of money: Reducing the incentive for high-risk behaviour among adolescents in Shoshanguve**

In Shoshanguve, people in the community reflected on whether the CSG plays a role in reducing high-risk behaviour among adolescents. In the context of the discussion on girls who have sexual relationships with men due to the money and gifts they provide, adult and teenage focus group participants and key informants thought that having the CSG could undermine some of the incentives for that practice. From the perspective of a teacher, the CSG can reduce risky behaviour by attending to basic needs, such as food and uniforms for school:

*"Yes it's true. Family income can play a role, in the sense that if there is no income at home definitely the children and learners that are supposed to be provided by a particular family that doesn't have any income, what will they provide the learners with? Yes it is true, the CSG can really help a great deal to reduce the sum of risky behaviour because, if the child receives food at home, the child receives basic needs at home, the child receives uniform, the child receives money to come to school, probably it is definitely going to help a great deal. I think it will improve even the state of our community."* [Gau-UIKI-2]

The clinic manager from Shoshanguve had a similar view, seeing the CSG as potentially protective not only with respect to sexual behaviour, but also other high-risk practices such as crime:

*"The family income helps to support the children, but if the family income is not sufficient our child ends up looking for income outside. If my child wants this and I can't afford it he or she will go and look for it outside. CSG can help a lot, if this child has extended to 16 years. If that person has a grant that grant can help with what he or she needs or wants, every time. With CSG you can try to afford to avoid him to go looking for it in the street or stealing for other people, or getting hurt or getting involved with unprotected sex comes with disease."* [Gau-UIKI-3]

A teenage girl who does not receive the CSG believed that CSG beneficiaries would be less likely to participate in risky behaviour. Reflecting on the pressure upon teenagers in her community to have certain kinds of clothes and beauty products, she said that they took less risks because teenagers with the CSG can "get what they want." [Gau-UIFG-5]

But another mother of a teenager in this focus group who did not have the CSG had a different perspective on this question:

*"I have seen it from the neighbours because I fail to buy things [that] my children seen from them because their children receive CSG and mine does not, and my child sometimes even tells me: Ma look my friend has this – but I do not have and I tell him no boy I do not have money."* [KZN-P/FG-7]

In Umlazi, a community leader explained that children who do not have safe forms of transportation to school also face additional risks related to drugs.

The multiple influences on risk, which suggest different answers to the question of whether the CSG can influence adolescent risk, are seen in the following discussion among teenage girls in rural Moletije. More of the girls thought that the CSG could make a difference:

≈ *"The one who receives CSG won't run after sex. Because she knows she has money."*

≈ *"The one who do not have money will run after sex because she needs money."*

≈ *"Even those who receive CSG money they still have sex for fun."*

≈ *"You sometimes find those who don't receive CSG money starting to act like street kids."*

≈ *"You end up looking like a prostitute because you need money, so want to look like your friend who is receiving the CSG money."* [Lim-R/FG-5]

A mother of an adolescent in Moletije also felt that the CSG could make a difference:

*"There is big difference because for those who get the CSG they can put anything nice on the table for their children, and where they do not receive the money they are always thinking of doing the risky behaviours to get money. Boys they have to mug people to get money, which means these two families can never be the same."* [Lim-R/FG-7]

In Izingolweni in KwaZulu-Natal, a discussion between teenage girls (beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of the

CSG) illustrated the relationship between peer pressure, lack of money and risk, suggesting that adolescents without the CSG could be worse off. When asked if there was a difference between teenagers who do and do not receive the grant, one girl responded: *“Yes there is, because you find that a person who does not get it does not have things that the one who gets it has, they do not get food and they do not have clothes.”* [KZN-P/FG-5] Another agreed: *“The one who gets it does not do all these things because she has the money but the one who doesn’t does them because she does not have the money so she does this in order to get money and also wants to have things that her friends have.”* [KZN-P/FG-5]

## 9.5 CONCLUSION

This evaluation of the CSG looked closely at sources of adolescent risk, in order to understand whether the CSG can potentially have an impact, especially as it expands to cover older teenagers of 15–18 years. The evaluation set out to understand what these risks were, and then the extent to which underlying economic causes could be affected by the CSG. As in Chapter 6 on education, an attempt was made to disaggregate the risk factors with a more straightforward economic origin from those with more complex social dimensions. It was difficult if not impossible to do this.

However, there are economic factors with a more direct pathway, which also turn out to be the main sources of risk identified by informants, i.e. girls engaged in sexual relationships with older men for money or material things, e.g. groceries, transportation, clothing, etc. The size of these ‘transfers’ from men appears to be important – the amounts mentioned range from R5 to R1 000, and this has implications for whether a CSG for teenagers will be enough to undermine their incentive to date older men. Whether or not part of the CSG is given directly to adolescents to spend or is spent on their behalf may also affect the grant’s potential to undermine the incentive to have older boyfriends. There are also social-psychological drivers of these relationships: feeling cared for or loved, peer pressure to experience sex, wear nice clothes, or be seen in nice cars. But primarily adults (women and men) and adolescents (mostly teenage girls) describe these relationships in stark economic terms.

Sometimes the gifts extend to the family, where boyfriends buy groceries for the household. Occasionally the family role is stronger, where adults facilitate sexual relationships between children in their care and older men because of the financial benefit to the household or the carer.

Other risks include substance abuse, criminal activity and sexual abuse from teachers or family members. Some of these have economic drivers, but these are probably too tightly intertwined with social and psychological problems to be affected by the CSG. The exception might be certain types of crime (in particular theft) carried out in order to secure basic consumption, though there were far fewer examples of this than of theft committed to buy drugs. The purpose of the qualitative study was not to answer this question definitively, but rather to identify the risk factors that do and do not have the potential to be impacted by the CSG.

Furthermore, the qualitative study explored pathways through which the CSG could affect risk, as well as the perceptions of community members and key informants on this question. Responses are mixed, with some people believing that either the main sources of risk are primarily non-economic and thus cannot be affected by the CSG, or that the CSG is not enough money to overcome these problems. However, the majority of responses from the qualitative data suggested that since these risks mainly have economic drivers, the CSG could potentially have an impact. These risk factors and pathways identified in the qualitative research have been incorporated into the quantitative survey which will examine whether there are indeed impacts from the CSG on adolescent risk.

## Recommendations

- ≈ If the survey confirms that the CSG has a protective effect on adolescents in terms of reducing absenteeism, increasing school retention and reducing risky behaviour, then it is important to ensure that plans to extend the CSG to older age groups stay on schedule. Acceleration of this schedule might also be considered.
- ≈ Complementary interventions needed for adolescents include increasing the access of adolescents to social workers and psychologists.

# CHAPTER 10 SOCIAL WELFARE

Respondents' experiences with social welfare services are mixed. Social workers receive bad reports from many respondents: they are perceived as either overworked or lazy. On the other hand, there are many positive cases where social workers have helped with domestic problems and with social grants. They have helped caregivers to register for the CSG and also passed on educational messages about AIDS and other health and social issues. Respondents shared many experiences about their interactions with social workers, some positive and others negative, which are discussed in this chapter.

## 10.1 INTERACTIONS WITH SOCIAL WORKERS

Some people claim to have no interactions with social workers, either because they never encounter social workers or – less commonly – because they don't need social welfare services. (*"There is nobody I know who needs a social worker in this community."* [EC-P/FG-2])

These responses were recorded in all four provinces, and in rural, peri-urban and urban communities. (*"We never meet social workers."* [Gau-U/FG-6] *"I have never met them."* [KZN-R/FG-3] *"No, I have never seen the social worker."* [EC-P/FG-5] *"We do not interact with social workers."* [Lim-R/FG-1])

Social workers are based and consulted at their offices or at hospitals and clinics. (*"We meet them at the welfare offices."* [KZN-P/FG-2] *"We have the social worker's place next to the SASSA offices."* [Lim-R/FG-2] *"We meet them at the hospitals."* [Gau-U/FG-5] *"We have seen them going to Mphomeni clinic."* [KZN-R/FG-5] *"They are based in the hospital."* [Lim-P/FG-5])

Some people complain about the costs of travelling to see social workers. (*"You must go to their offices in town if you have problems – this is bad because we are unemployed and have no money to visit them in their offices."* [EC-U/FG-3])

Some social workers also make visits to schools. (*"Social workers visit schools and they give orphans clothes and other necessary help."* [KZN-R/FG-6] *"Some of us even meet social workers at school."* [Lim-R/FG-5])

Asked if social workers attend community outreach programmes for government services, one woman from KwaZulu-Natal replied sarcastically in the negative: *"No, we have never seen them there, or maybe they leave at 4 a.m. before we arrive."* [KZN-R/FG-3] But many other respondents disagreed, not only in KwaZulu-Natal. (*"They also come when there are Izimbizo and they are given time to explain their role in the community; they come even to government functions."* [KZN-R/FG-1]) Respondents in Limpopo and Gauteng also had similar experiences. (*"They come on community events."* [Gau-U/FG-5] *"They do come to our community outreach programmes."* [Lim-P/FG-1] *"They even come to our community when there is a programme for government services."* [Lim-P/FG-3])

There are differences across communities in terms of the visibility of social workers at CSG pay-points. (*"Social workers don't come to pay-points, only the SASSA officials come to the different pay-points."* [KZN-P/FG-2] *"I have been collecting my CSG money for more than seven years, but I have never ever seen a social worker at any pay-point. My suggestion is that it is just too hot for them outside their air-conditioned office."* [KZN-U/FG-1]) A respondent in another community in the same province stated that social workers come to pay-points only for specific purposes. (*"They are never available at pay-points unless they have an announcement to make."* [KZN-R/FG-2]) In a different province, social workers were observed at pay-points, though their role was unclear. (*"Some social workers only come to the pay-points just to watch people, you do not know what they've come to do."* [Lim-R/FG-1])

## 10.2 ATTITUDES AND ACCESSIBILITY OF SOCIAL WORKERS

Perceptions of the attitudes of social workers are coloured by personal encounters with specific social welfare staff. Some respondents are very positive and complimentary about social workers. (*"They are very welcoming."* [KZN-P/FG-3] *"They do encourage us and they make us feel better."* [Lim-P/FG-5]) Other respondents whose interactions have been less than satisfactory have more negative opinions. (*"I don't like social workers because they are not helpful."* [EC-U/FG-3] *"Sometimes when you ask they are not polite in answering."*



[KZN-P/FG-3] *"One person just shoves you to another person."*  
[KZN-P/FG-3])

A particular problem mentioned repeatedly is the inaccessibility of social workers, which is usually explained by the fact that they are understaffed and overworked, as reflected in this exchange from a focus group discussion with women CSG recipients in urban KwaZulu-Natal [KZN-U/FG-1]:

- ≈ *"When you need to see them they are always not there, so you need to go to their offices and book an appointment, and I am telling you those lists are always full to such an extent that it takes a very long time for them to get to you while your problem is still fresh."*
- ≈ *"Even if you find them they will never attend to you at the same time; they give you a date when they will attend to your problem. They make you wait even if it is an emergency. They sometimes tell you that their days are fully booked for that week – come back next week to see if there is an open space in their appointments."*
- ≈ *"You were one of the lucky ones that they even got to you, although it was later. I booked an appointment, now I am going for the fourth month with no reply from them."*
- ≈ *"Here in our community each and every section has one social worker. There are sections from A to almost Z that are very huge. That is why they can never help people because if you look at it like this, it is one social worker against maybe more 10 000 individuals per section and where do you fall in that 10 000."*

### 10.3 THE ROLE OF SOCIAL WORKERS

Social workers are generally perceived as assisting people with a range of personal problems. (*"We interact with the social workers to discuss our problems."* [Lim-R/FG-3]) Social workers are said to focus especially on domestic and family issues. (*"We talk to them about non-behaving children."* [Lim-R/FG-2] *"We also talk to them about marriage problems."* [Lim-R/FG-2]) Some social workers advise teenagers on how to deal with domestic difficulties. (*"We do talk with them if we have problems at home."* [Lim-R/FG-6] *"Social workers give us tips if you are facing problems at home."* [Lim-R/FG-6])

They also provide advice about health issues, including AIDS and TB. (*"They told us that we mustn't have sex because we will get STIs and HIV. They told us to use a condom when you have sex."* [E-R/FG6] *"I once went to a social worker with a problem of TB."* [Gau-U/FG-1])

Social workers are recognised as having a particular role in protecting children. Examples mentioned include ensuring that orphans are well treated, intervening in alleged cases of child abuse, and offering support to children who have been raped. (*"We meet social workers when there is a child in the area who needs help."* [KZN-R/FG-2] *"They also visit homes with orphans to see if they are treated well and have all their needs met."* [KZN-R/FG-6] *"The social workers that I know are those who do home visits to those children who receive the CSG, to check on the orphans' living conditions."* [KZN-U/FG-3] *"The child that I was telling you about earlier that was raped does have an interaction with the social workers at Prince Mshiyeni."* [KZN-U/FG-3])

Social workers are seen as providing advice and support on the CSG, i.e. who is eligible, how to access it and how to use it. Often they advise teenage beneficiaries directly. (*"We talk about Child Support Grant and teenage issues."* [Gau-U/FG-5] *"They are the ones who help us with issues concerning CSG, they tell us who receives the CSG money and what is the money for."* [Lim-R/FG-5]) They also intervene when CSG money is allegedly misused. (*"Some they've reported that some of their parents do not use the money on their children so that's where the social workers come."* [Lim-P/FG-1]) Social workers also offer advice on other social grants. (*"Sometimes they come when there is a family that needs help, for example when the parents have died and the children need to get Foster Care Grant."* [KZN-P/FG-1] *"We meet them when they are checking on the children who are orphaned who should be receiving the Foster Care Grant but are not."* [KZN-R/FG-1])

### 10.4 POSITIVE EXPERIENCES WITH SOCIAL WORKERS

Social workers have assisted many respondents with various domestic problems. These range from relatively minor issues, like sick children to more serious concerns, including child



Table 26 Support provided by social workers

Location	Social grants including CSG	Domestic issues or family problems	Reproductive health (e.g. AIDS)	Child abuse, violence, rape
E. Cape			G	
Gauteng	B B W/ER W/ER W/ER W/ER W/LR	B	W/ER	G
KZN	B B G W/ER W/NB	B W/ER W/LR W/LR		W/NB W/NB
Limpopo	G G W/ER	B W/LR W/LR W/NB	G	
Urban	B B W/ER W/ER W/LR W/NB	B	W/ER	W/NB
Peri-urban	G G W/ER W/ER W/ER W/ER	W/LR	G	G
Rural	B B G	B B W/ER W/LR W/LR W/LR W/NB	G	W/NB

Note: Each occurrence is referenced twice: by province and by locality (urban, peri-urban or rural)

Key: B=Boy; G=Girl; M=Man; W=Woman; ER=Early Recipient; LR=Late Recipient; NB=Non Beneficiary

abuse. (*"Social workers are of great help to us, especially when one's child is sick in school, the principal will call them and they bring your child back home."* [KZN-P/FG-2], *"They came at home because there is a child who is being abused and the child was there also. They wanted the child to speak for herself since she was the one being abused."* [KZN-R/FG-3] *"When I was still young I was abused by someone at school. So they really helped me a lot."* [Gau-P/FG-5])

Some cases were also reported where social workers assisted people to apply for social grants. (*"They helped me to apply for a grant for my daughter's child. This child's mother passed away. They took me to court in Pretoria, where I got a letter to bring to SASSA."* [Gau-U/FG-1] *"Yes, I went with my grandmother to NAFCOC to apply for the grant, because my mother passed away."* [Gau-U/FG-6]) Social workers also advise parents and caregivers when custody of children – and access to social grants – is contested. (*"My boyfriend took my child and I had to go to the social workers to contest for my child. My boyfriend wanted to get the grant money, and he said they must cut it from me and he must be the one to receive it."* [Gau-P/FG-1])

One teenage girl in KwaZulu-Natal explained how a social worker discussed the CSG with her:

*"I have been in contact with a social worker. When I received the social grant for the first time she would come and talk to me. She*

*was telling me that if I have any problem I should tell the teacher, and she asked what has been bought for me ever since I received the CSG and I told her that they bought me clothes, and she was telling me to be respectful so that I get everything I want."* [K-P/FG5]

Table 26 summarises the positive feedback received about social workers during our fieldwork. Most of this feedback related to support provided by social workers in terms of social grants, including the CSG, i.e. eligibility criteria, how to apply and resolving problems of access or use of grants.

Many respondents also described how social workers had advised or intervened in family problems. In both categories, teenage boys and girls are well represented. Feedback on social grants is concentrated in urban and peri-urban Gauteng and KZN, while feedback on domestic issues comes mainly from rural KZN and Limpopo.

## 10.5 NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES WITH SOCIAL WORKERS

The most common complaint about social workers is that they do not respond to requests for assistance. (*"I've gone to social workers many times but I never get helped."*) This relates to the issue of social workers being overworked, referred to

Table 27 Complaints about social workers

Location	Inaccessible	No follow up	Rude and unhelpful
E. Cape	G G W/NB		W/NB
Gauteng	B	W/LR W/LR W/LR W/LR W/LR W/ NB	W/LR
KZN	W/ER W/ER W/LR W/LR W/LR W/LR W/NB W/NB W/NB		W/NB
Limpopo	B W/ER		
Urban	B W/ER W/ER W/LR W/LR W/LR W/ NB	W/LR W/LR W/LR W/LR W/LR W/ NB	W/NB
Peri-urban	G G W/LR W/NB		W/LR W/NB
Rural	B W/ER W/NB W/NB		

Note: Each occurrence is referenced twice: by province and by locality (urban, peri-urban or rural)

Key: B=Boy; G=Girl; M=Man; W=Woman; ER=Early Recipient; LR=Late Recipient; NB=Non Beneficiary

earlier in this chapter. Most of these complaints came from discussions with communities in Gauteng.<sup>13</sup>

≈ “We did go to the social workers; they told me I have to go and get an ID for my younger brother. But I didn’t manage to get it because he didn’t have a birth certificate. We went back to the social worker and explained the situation. She told me she will call me and until now I’m still waiting for her. It is hard because this year they didn’t go to school. They don’t have uniforms and school fees are high, which means they cannot go to school.” [Gau-U/FG-7]

≈ “I’m a person who usually wants to help people. I once tried to talk with the social worker about a child who was homeless, but they never helped me. Even now I’m still trying, but I can’t get help.” [Gau-U/FG-2]

≈ “I went to the social worker when my aunt passed away, so that I could get her child. They told me they would come, but until now they never came.” [Gau-U/FG-2]

≈ “For me they did come, but they never got out of the car. They just stayed at their car and looked at my child, then they left. They never came back.” [Gau-U/FG-2]

≈ “I went to the social worker because I realised that I’m not working and my husband doesn’t work, so I wanted help. They gave me a letter to go and collect food parcels at NAFCOC SASSA offices. But now I don’t get the parcel anymore, they just cut it and I don’t know why.” [Gau-U/FG-2]

≈ “I did meet with the social worker. They did help but the service was not good. They send you to Rissik Street in Johannesburg and you will stay there until they close without getting help. They play with you just to move you on.” [Gau-P/FG-2]

One woman from Umlazi in KwaZulu-Natal told how she had tried to intervene on behalf of some children next door by drawing the attention of social workers to a potential problem, but without success.

“I was not going for the help of my child but for my neighbour’s children. I wanted the social worker to help get these children to school and also come and see the conditions that these children are living under. They are staying with their father and grandmother, since their mother passed away. I just wanted the social worker to help them get an education and a safe place to stay. The social worker told me to come back next week. Up until today the social worker never ever gave any help – when I went there she wasn’t there, so I tried to call but no answer. These kids are now living on the streets of Umlazi. It goes without saying that

13. Note that a concentration of responses on a particular topic in one community or province does not necessarily mean the issue is confined only to that locality. In focus group discussions, a remark by one participant can trigger a series of observations or experiences from others in the group.

*social workers are of no help, they help only those people who they know. Instead of social workers, in the area where I stay it is a group of mothers who have to do with home-based care who visit the most needy people in our community, for example children with no parents, and the old people. They give them food and sometimes relocate them to better places to stay, but social workers are of no help to us. The home-based carers are our 'social workers'.*" [KZN-U/FG-1]

Table 27 summarises the sources and nature of complaints made about social workers during our fieldwork. Notably, the issue of inaccessibility, i.e. difficulties in seeing social workers, is concentrated in KwaZulu-Natal, but Table 26 revealed that many respondents from KwaZulu-Natal value the support of social workers with social grants and family problems. This suggests that social workers are especially overstretched in this province. Complaints about social workers not following up on problems lodged with them came mainly from a single focus group discussion in Shoshanguve, Gauteng. Only three (mild) comments were made about social workers being rude or not helpful, one each from Eastern Cape, Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal.

## 10.6 CONCLUSION

Social workers play important and positive roles in the lives of many South Africans, including children. But in many communities they are perceived as inaccessible, mainly

because they are over-stretched: there are too few social workers in each locality and heavy demands on their time. The most common complaint reported is that social workers failed to follow up on issues raised with them, so that personal and social problems that fall within the mandate of social work are avoided or resolved.

Social workers are visited at their offices and at hospitals. They often participate in community outreach programmes and visit schools to advise children, but they are rarely seen at social grant pay-points.

They are valued by many for the advice and support they provide on domestic problems (including child abuse and rape), reproductive health (including AIDS), and social grants. Many people have been assisted in applying for the Child Support Grant, and social workers sometimes intervene to ensure that grants are correctly used to meet the needs of the intended beneficiaries.

## Recommendation

≈ Since difficulties in accessing social workers were mentioned frequently and in almost all our fieldwork localities, an obvious implication for policy is that more social workers are urgently needed. The need seems greatest in poor urban and peri-urban communities where social problems and risky behaviours are most heavily concentrated.

# CHAPTER 11 EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Early Childhood Development (ECD) services include crèches, pre-schools and day-care centres for young children. This chapter reviews the range and cost of ECD facilities available in South Africa, and the contribution that the CSG makes towards enhancing access to these services.

Almost all parents and carers interviewed for this study use them if they can afford the fees. (*“Every pre-school going child in our village attends pre-school.”* [EC-R/FG-3])

There is a strong sense that children should go to pre-school not only to learn – although education is valued highly by parents and carers – but also for social interaction, for security and for children to be looked after if parents are working (see Box 11). (*“It is very important for our children to attend crèche.”* [EC-R/FG-1])

## 11.1 ATTITUDES TO ECD SERVICES

A range of formal and informal pre-schools, crèches and day-care facilities are found in most South African communities.

### Box 11 Reasons why ECD services are valued by parents and carers

#### Education

- “We do use the pre-schools because we want our children to be educated.” [Lim-R/FG-2]
- “Sending children to crèche or pre-school is very important – this makes children to learn faster.” [EC-U/FG-3]
- “The school principals nowadays do not want to enrol children in Grade one if they didn’t attend crèche or pre-school. I think it is a government policy.” [EC-U/FG-3]
- “It is helping our children to learn many things they don’t learn at home.” [EC-P/FG-3]
- “Attending crèche helps children to do many things such as name writing.” [EC-U/FG-3]
- “We use it because children get wiser and by the time they get to school they know what is happening at school.” [Lim-R/FG-3]
- “I think it’s important for a child to attend a day care because it helps kids to be bright when he goes to school.” [Lim-R/FG-3]

#### Social interaction

- “In my opinion even though it is costly to send a child to crèche or pre-school it is very important for the child so that she can mingle with other children and learn new things.” [EC-U/FG-3]
- “A child that is at crèche is not the same as a child that stays at home. A child that attends a crèche is much more active mentally because he or she is always interacting and playing with different children and getting to understand different personalities. Children grow by singing, counting, saying the alphabet, learning and playing.” [KZN-U/FG-1]

#### Security

- “Crèches are very important – if you stay with your child at home you might think he is still playing outside, when you find that he is gone or somebody took your child.” [EC-U/FG-1]
- “If your children are at crèche they are secured.” [EC-U/FG-1]
- “If your child is in pre-school she is secured rather than to be at home, sometimes you are busy then you forget that you are with a child so the child disappears.” [EC-P/FG-2]

#### Child care

- “We use the crèche because we are job hunting; we cannot stay at home.” [Lim-R/FG-1]
- “We use them because we get part-time jobs and there is no one who is going to look after the children.” [Lim-R/FG-3]
- “If I got a job I can prefer to leave the child there, and when I come back I know that my child is safe.” [Gau-U/FG-3]
- “I sell things so I won’t take the child with me, I will prefer to leave the child at crèche and come back later to collect him.” [Gau-U/FG-3]

## 11.2 COSTS OF ECD SERVICES

Pre-school fees vary by the type and quality of the service. Facilities can be divided into three cost categories: cheap (<R50 per month), mid-range (R50–140 per month) and expensive (>R150 per month). The cheapest crèches and pre-schools charge monthly fees starting at R12.50 (R150 per year) [EC-U/FG-3], R20 (with free food provided) [EC-R/FG-1], R33 (R400 per year) [EC-U/FG-3], or R40 [KZN-P/FG-1]. *“We pay R20 for the crèche per month and they get free food at the crèche. They also have toys and the money we pay helps the pre-school teacher to attend meetings in town and to buy other things needed for the children to play with while at crèche.”* [EC-R/FG-1]

Mid-range facilities charge R80–120 [EC-U/FG-2] to R130 [Gau-U/FG-2] or R140 [Gau-P/FG-3]. *“We pay R140 and admission fee is R100.”* [Gau-P/FG-3] The most expensive facilities range from R150 *“and you must bring a packet of tissue and soap”* [EC-P/FG-3], R180 [KZN-P/FG-1] or even R200 [EC-U/FG-1], or R250 [Gau-U/FG-3] per child per month. *“The problem is that they are very expensive. Some are R250.”* [Gau-P/FG-3] There are no systematic differences in fee structures between provinces, or between urban, peri-urban and rural communities within provinces.

There are different types of child-care and ECD facilities, which translate into differences in fees. *“We only have day-care mamas in our community.”* [EC-P/FG-3] *“Most of those crèches are not really built for children; people turn their rondavels into crèches. There are those who can afford better crèches where they ask R180 per month, while the rondavel crèches cost R30 to R50 a month.”* [KZN-P/FG-1] These informal facilities are popular because they are cheap. *“People turn their houses into crèches and we are using them because they do take care of our young children and they are not expensive.”* [KZN-R/FG-2]

Parents and carers realise that there are differences in quality, i.e. in terms of the quality of food, cleanliness, sanitation and security, and these factors inform the choice they make about which facility to send their children to. Cheaper informal facilities are criticised for providing inadequate child care. *“In crèches that are in the back yards children are not well taken care of.”* [KZN-U/FG-2] *“There is not enough care for the children.”*

[Gau-U/FG-2] They often have inadequate sanitation and poor quality food. *“The cheaper ones are not good; they don’t have sanitation for the children.”* [Gau-U/FG-2] *“Those free crèche children are not eating healthily; they get sick every time.”* [Gau-U/FG-2] Conversely, the more expensive crèches are recognised as providing better quality child care, food and sanitation. *“Those for R200 are clean and they take good care of kids.”* [Lim-R/FG-3] *“At the R200 one the food is clean and they have sanitation facilities.”* [Lim-R/FG-3]

One mother from urban KwaZulu-Natal summed up the dilemma of having to choose between affordable but low quality facilities, and better quality but more expensive facilities:

*“Besides the fees I have to pay, I look at how safe is the learning environment, how healthy is the food they are going to be eating and how clean is the crèche itself. The crèches around where I stay cost something like R100 and R180 monthly. My child went to a pre-school and I paid R200 for the whole year. In those crèches that are cheap you find that they don’t take good care of the children. In cheap crèches I fear that there is no attendance register, my child might get burnt or something may go wrong since the people that have crèches are not trained how to take care of small children.”* [KZN-U/FG-1]

Fees are also variable in many pre-schools, according to the age of the child. *“They have to pay a certain amount according to age.”* [KZN-P/FG-3] Young children cost the most because they require more attention from carers. *“The money we pay at crèches decreases as the child grows.”* [KZN-R/FG-2] *“If the child is using nappies, you have to change and feed that child – it is expensive. The children who are three to four years pay less because they help themselves.”* [EC-U/FG-1]

Actual charges vary from one facility to another, but the cost structure seems to be consistent across all communities and provinces. Two or three separate fees are charged by age cohort, i.e. the youngest children cost the most, slightly older children cost less, and sometimes there is a third cohort of older pre-school children for whom child care and pre-school costs least of all.



- ≈ *"If a child is still wearing Pampers you pay around R180."* [Gau-U/FG-1]
- ≈ *"For children younger than 12 months we pay R90, but from one year to 18 months we pay R60 and for 2 years up it is R30."* (a cheap ECD facility in rural KwaZulu-Natal) [KZN-R/FG-1]
- ≈ *"A child younger than 12 months pays between R100 and R200 and when the child is 12–18 months you pay R150 and older than that you pay R80."* (an expensive facility in rural KwaZulu-Natal) [KZN-R/FG-3]
- ≈ *"From 0–1 year it's R200. From 3–5 years it's R100."* [Lim-R/FG-1]
- ≈ *"A child who walks can pay R80, a child who is 0–3 months pays R150."* [Lim-R/FG-1]
- ≈ *"It depends on the ages – the one who is four years can pay R70 but the one you are potty training is R150."* [Gau-U/FG-2]

Food is often provided at pre-schools. (*"Government is providing food to children at the pre-school."* [EC-R/FG-2] *"Crèche is R150 and they do give kids food."* [Gau-U/FG-2]) If food is not provided for free, fees include the cost of providing food. (*"When the government has not provided food, they take part of the fees to buy food."* [EC-R/FG-3]) Sometimes no fees are charged at all, but a contribution is asked to pay for food. (*"At pre-school I only paid R20, and it was not fees but money to support the feeding scheme."* [EC-P/FG-3])

The cost of sending children to child care or pre-school facilities is more than just fees. There are various other expenses, including food (where meals are not provided), transport, toiletries (e.g. nappies), buying clothes and washing clothes. Sometimes the pre-school also adds ad hoc requests for additional money. These expenses obviously vary greatly, but can add substantially to the household's spending on ECD services.

- ≈ **Food:** *"We spend R80 and a lunch box, because you have to send your child with a lunch box to crèche."* [Gau-U/FG-2]
- ≈ **Transport:** *"When you pay for transport it may cost R80 per month."* [KZN-R/FG-1]
- ≈ **Clothes:** *"R1 000 a month is needed because pre-school children's clothes are expensive."* [EC-R/FG-3]
- ≈ **Laundry:** *"Unlike the teenagers these little ones get dirty and you need to have more clothes to change and also to buy soap to wash the dirty clothes."*

- ≈ **Additional contributions:** *"As we pay they also ask for extra stuff that we do not normally budget for, like paying for a chair and the desk at the pre-school."* [EC-P/FG-1]
- ≈ **Total cost:** *"You need R800 for your child per month to go to the crèche after if you add up all the expenses that the child needs when going there."* [EC-P/FG-1]

People who don't use pre-schools – both CSG recipients and non-recipients – blame the high costs. (*"It costs R150 a month and it is too expensive, I don't have that much money to send my child."* [EC-P/FG-3]) Some non-beneficiaries argued that they cannot afford to send their children because they do not receive the CSG. (*"If we were to get grant we would be able to pay for crèche."* [Gau-P/FG-3]) One mother from Limpopo whose child is registered for the CSG claimed that she cannot afford ECD services anyway, because she is unemployed and needs to prioritise other basic needs with this money.

*"I don't take my child to the crèche because I don't have money. Yes I know that I receive the grant but I find that the money is not enough for me to send the child to the crèche, because if you don't work you buy food with that money, then you stay with the child at home."* [Lim-R/FG-2]

### 11.3 CONTRIBUTION OF CSG TO ECD

The CSG is used to pay for fees and other costs of ECD services, and it is generally recognised as being explicitly intended to pay for these costs. (*"Those young girls who get the grant, they used to come and ask me, what we must do with our grant money? I told them to pay for crèche!"* [Gau-U/FG-2] *"If the father of the child gives you money, you must keep the CSG grant to pay for crèche."* [EC-U/FG-1]) Most recipients are grateful for the contribution that the CSG makes to the costs of child-rearing. (*"This money helps a lot for us poor people."* [KZN-R/FG-1] *"It contributes a lot."* [KZN-R/FG-3])

Specifically, many parents and caregivers pay for pre-school fees using CSG cash. (*"People who are receiving the CSG don't have a problem to pay for crèche because we pay every month."* [EC-P/FG-2] *"Yes, it is possible to pay for crèche fees from CSG money."* [EC-R/FG-3] *"We pay with CSG money."* [Lim-R/FG-1]) A few parents even said that they would not be able to send their children to pre-school at all without the CSG.

*(“Yes, we use them, since I get CSG for this child.” “Yes the CSG does help pay for the crèche fees – if I didn’t have it my child wouldn’t be attending crèche.” [Gau-U/FG-1])*

The CSG also contributes to non-fee expenses. *(“The grant is helping us a lot to buy nappies, toiletries and to pay for crèche.” [EC-P/FG-2] “You can make a lunch box or pay for transport, and with the rest you buy clothes.” [KZN-R/FG-1] “We buy toiletries for our children when they go to crèche and also prepare a lunch box, and we use the CSG to do that.” [EC-U/FG-2])*

Other respondents complained that the CSG is too little, or that the value of the grant is only sufficient to pay for cheap, low-quality facilities. *(“It is not enough.” [EC-P/FG-1]), “The grant does help us to pay for pre-schools, but only the cheap affordable ones which cost R30 to R50.” [KZN-P/FG-1] “Where my child is I don’t like it, but I don’t have a choice.” [Gau-P/FG-2])* Some parents and caregivers point out that the CSG cannot pay for all the costs of ECD services, which as noted above can be extensive. *(“The CSG is not enough, you have to add your money to pay for the needs of the child.” [EC-U/FG-1] “You end up not being able to cover the crèche expenses.” [EC-P/FG-1] “I have to split the money of one child who gets the grant so that I can also pay for the other one who doesn’t receive the grant. It is difficult because the R240 is too little.” [EC-U/FG-3])*

On the other hand, the CSG allows recipients to borrow money for ECD expenses and other basic needs. *(“You can borrow money and pay back when you receive the grant.” [EC-R/FG-1])* Others use the CSG to negotiate deferred payment or payment in instalments at pre-schools. *(“This helps me to send my child to school and even ask for permission to pay the fees bit by bit until I finish paying the fees for the year.” [KZN-U/FG-1] “If you don’t have money and the principal of the crèche is a understanding person, if you speak to her to inform her that you don’t have money and give her date of your payment, she will accept.” [EC-U/FG-1])*

No differences were reported in fees charged between children who receive the CSG and those who do not. *(“In our crèche children receiving and not receiving CSG pay R150 per year, the same with those who have parents who are not working.” [EC-U/FG-3])* However, sometimes higher fees are levied for children whose parents are working. *(“Those working pay according to their salary.” [EC-U/FG-3])*

## 11.4 CONCLUSION

ECD services, i.e. crèches, pre-schools and day-care centres, are highly valued by parents and caregivers in South Africa. ECD services are seen as important for several reasons:

1. Pre-school learning gives children a head start when they start at primary school.
2. Children need to interact with others to acquire social skills.
3. Crèches and day-care centres provide a secure environment for children.
4. ECD services provide child care during the day, which is especially important for working mothers.

ECD services vary greatly in terms of quality and cost, and fees are higher for younger children than for older children. The cheapest facilities charge only R20 or R30 per month, but some of these ‘day-care mamas’ and ‘backyard crèches’ provide low-quality services: poor food, no sanitation and neglect of children. The most expensive facilities cost R150 and R200, or even R250 per month, equivalent to the full value of the CSG. However, they do provide a better service: safe, clean, with good food. Recipients who send their children to these facilities are effectively allocating all of their CSG money to ECD services.

Apart from fees, ECD services are associated with many other expenses, such as food (if this is not provided), transport, clothes and toiletries. Because of these costs, many non-recipients and even some recipients are discouraged from sending their children to pre-school, arguing that the cost is unaffordable. On the other hand, the majority of respondents reported that the CSG is used to pay for ECD services, that the CSG is specifically intended to contribute to these costs, and that without the CSG they might struggle to send their children to pre-school. It is clear from this evidence that the Child Support Grant is playing a vital role in securing access to ECD services for young children from low-income households.

# CHAPTER 12 CONCLUSION

This qualitative research study on South Africa's Child Support Grant has shed light on a wide range of relevant issues, from the administration of the grant (eligibility criteria, registration procedures, delivery systems and pay-point issues) to various outcomes (use and misuse of grant money, access to education, ECD and health services). It also explored several contextual issues, such as child work and child labour, adolescent risk behaviours, and the role of social workers. This concluding chapter summarises the main findings of this preparatory qualitative study and offers recommendations for improved CSG policy design, delivery and impact.

## 12.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

### 12.1.1 Grant access

Awareness of the eligibility criteria for the CSG is good, and the recent extension of the age threshold to 18 years has been well communicated and is widely understood. However, many respondents are confused about crucial details such as the income threshold for the means test, and there is a common misapprehension that people who are employed are ineligible.

Although access and uptake of the CSG has improved dramatically in recent years, many people who might be eligible were late to apply when the CSG was launched, or have never applied. The most frequently mentioned reasons for this include: problems in getting the necessary documents (ID for the applicant caregiver and birth certificate for the beneficiary child); lack of information about application procedures or misinformation about eligibility; complex and slow bureaucracy; prohibitive costs (e.g. transport); and disputes within families about whether to apply and who should register as the primary caregiver.

There have been important changes in CSG application procedures in recent years, which have made applying for the grant easier than before, and have contributed to rising uptake rates. Five main improvements were mentioned: fewer documents are needed; information on how to apply is widely communicated; the application process is faster; there is more flexibility and choice in collecting grant money; and

corruption has been reduced. Computerisation is recognised by CSG recipients, as well as SASSA staff, as contributing to most of these positive developments.

### 12.1.2 Pay-point issues

There are now several options for collecting CSG cash, ranging from fixed pay-points to stores and ATMs. This proliferation of delivery mechanisms is appreciated by recipients, and a number of advantages of each option were identified. For instance, mobile pay-points reduce travel time and transport costs, but bank accounts allow money to be collected at any time and they also promote access to financial services, while using stores enables recipients to purchase food and groceries as well as collect the balance of the grant at the same time and location. Recipients also appreciate being able to switch between collection mechanisms on request. On the other hand, some stores require recipients to spend a portion of the CSG cash before paying out the balance.

### 12.1.3 Use of grant

Although every Child Support Grant is nominally assigned to a specific beneficiary child, in practice it is an income transfer to the household and is used in most cases to purchase food and other basic needs for the entire household. This 'dilution' of the grant is due to poverty and limited alternative income in recipient households, and is therefore unavoidable, but it does imply that the impacts on beneficiary children might be less than optimal.

CSG money is almost always controlled by women, i.e. the mother or another primary caregiver, often the grandmother (in three-generation households, or where the mother is absent). In cases where the mother is not spending the money in the best interests of the beneficiary child, recipient status is sometimes reassigned to a more responsible caregiver.

Men have very little direct access to grant money. However, older children are increasingly aware of their 'rights' to the CSG. In some cases this can create intra-household tensions over who decides on how the money should be spent.

#### 12.1.4 Education

Low income is a severe constraint to accessing education in South Africa, not only because of school fees but because of various schooling-related costs, including uniforms and shoes (exacerbated by peer pressure to wear designer label clothing), food and transport. These costs and pressures can cause children to miss days of school or even drop out, and are also related to risky behaviours among older children, such as transactional sex, begging and petty crime.

To the extent that access to education is driven by economic stresses, it follows that the CSG could alleviate this constraint and reverse children's tendencies to skip school or drop out, and engage in illicit activities to raise money. Several respondents confirmed that this is indeed the case, and facilitating access to education is an important positive impact of the CSG.

Many social factors also affect school attendance, including the need to provide child care or care for chronically ill relatives at home, ill-discipline, and neglect or abuse of children. These factors are often symptoms of 'poverty syndrome' which is complex but can also be mitigated indirectly by social grants. A third set of factors relates to education directly, and includes poor quality schooling and teachers who sexually harass learners. These issues are unlikely to be resolved or even alleviated by the CSG unless receiving the grant allows caregivers to send children to better schools; these issues require complementary interventions to improve the quality of education services.

#### 12.1.5 Health

The CSG facilitates access to health care for children and ill members of beneficiary households. Although public health services are heavily subsidised for low-income South Africans, some fees for consultations or in-patients are usually levied, and indirect costs such as transport fares can be high, especially for poor families living far from health facilities. CSG money contributes to these direct and indirect costs, and therefore protects the health of poor South African children and their families.

In some cases CSG money is used to access private health care, which is more expensive but often believed to be better quality. Without the CSG, several recipients insisted that this private health care would be inaccessible to them. Some recipients also borrow for unpredictable health costs against the guarantee of future CSG receipts so the transfer acts as an informal form of health insurance.

Reciprocally, health services also facilitate access to the CSG. Until recently, mothers had to go through a complex, costly and time-consuming four-step process to register for the CSG. They had to take their newborns from the hospital to a clinic to collect an immunisation card which they took to Home Affairs to apply for a birth certificate. They then took the certificate to SASSA to register for the CSG. Due to recent innovations, birth certificates can now be issued in hospital immediately after birth, allowing the mother to go directly to SASSA and register her newborn for the CSG.

#### 12.1.6 Child work and child labour

South African children, especially those living in low-income communities, engage in a variety of income-earning activities. Boys have more diversified employment options than girls, mostly in the service sectors but also in farming, construction and trading. Girls typically work in personal services and in the retail sector, but sometimes engage in transactional sex for money or gifts. Girls also tend to take on more responsibility for domestic chores (cooking and cleaning) than boys.

Poverty is the main reason why children work outside the home, but raising money for the household can have damaging long-run consequences, especially if it interferes with the child's education. Children who work skip classes, miss school days or even drop out of school, so their participation in education is reduced. Alternatively, if they work at nights and weekends they have diminished capacity to study, do homework and concentrate in class, so their educational performance is impaired. On the other hand, some children earn money to finance their own education, so there can be a positive synergy rather than a negative trade-off.

Although South African parents tend to value education highly, some are accused by their neighbours of withdrawing their children from school, either for domestic reasons (to care for younger siblings or ill family members, or to do farm work) or to earn money for the family. The CSG can be hypothesised to reduce the economic pressure on children to work, but there was no evidence of a positive effect on child labour from this qualitative research, perhaps because the income transferred by the CSG is too little for poor households to escape poverty.

#### 12.1.7 Adolescent risk

Qualitative research methods are more appropriate than quantitative methods for investigating social issues, and since the CSG is rolling out to children up to 18 years old, this study explored risky behaviours among adolescents in some depth. These risks include transactional sex, substance abuse, criminality and sexual abuse.

Among teenage girls, sexual relationships with older men are instigated for both material gain and social or psychological reasons. Where gifts of money or goods are sizeable – sometimes extending to groceries and gifts to the family as well as clothes, jewellery and ‘pocket money’ for the girl – the CSG is unlikely to provide a sufficient incentive to discourage such relationships.

On the other hand, the primary driver of most risky behaviours is reportedly economic – either a need for cash or a by-product of ‘poverty syndrome’. This suggests that the prevalence of these behaviours will tend to fall as household income rises, and since receiving the CSG raises household income it can be hypothesised that there is a positive effect on risky behaviours. The significance and magnitude of this effect can only be determined in the quantitative survey.

#### 12.1.8 Social welfare

Social workers are important for many South Africans, including children. Social workers offer useful advice on domestic problems, reproductive health, HIV and AIDS, and social grants, i.e. how to apply, how grant money should be spent and what to do if grant money is misused. Children consult social workers about problems at home and at school, and social workers often follow up on cases of child abuse, rape and reports of social grants being used irresponsibly.

The main complaint about social workers is that they are overworked and often inaccessible, with long delays for appointments. According to many respondents, there are too few social workers in most localities, and social workers often fail to follow up on problems raised with them.

#### 12.1.9 ECD services

ECD services are valued by parents and carers, for several reasons: they provide initial learning that facilitates the transition to primary school; they allow children to interact with others and acquire social skills; they provide a safe and secure environment; and they provide child care for children whose mothers are working or looking for work.

There is great diversity in the quality and cost of ECD services. Informal ‘backyard crèches’ cost as little as R20 per month, but provide low quality care for the child. More expensive pre-schools can cost up to R250 per month, equivalent to all the CSG cash, but they are safe, clean, and offer good food and quality learning for the child.

There are other costs associated with ECD services, including transport, clothes, toiletries and (often) food. These costs can be prohibitive, especially for non-recipients. But CSG recipients report that the grant enables them to send their children to pre-school or crèches, and many argue that without the grant they would not be able to afford this vital service.



## 12.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Clearer communication and regular updates are needed to address three specific areas of confusion about application procedures for the CSG: (i) income thresholds for the means test; (ii) eligibility of caregivers who are formally employed; and (iii) eligibility by nationality, citizenship and residence status.
2. SASSA staff should wear name tags allowing them to be clearly identified.
3. The CSG payment amount should be automatically adjusted by the inflation rate every year, and regularly reviewed to assess whether it needs to be raised in real terms.
4. DSD or SASSA should monitor participating stores to stop the practice of recipients being compelled to spend some CSG money at the store before collecting the balance.
5. To promote financial inclusion of people on low incomes, participating banks should be incentivised to allow recipients to save some CSG money, rather than suspending their accounts if the money is not withdrawn within three months.
6. Instead of imposing an education condition on the CSG, complementary interventions are needed to improve school attendance, such as integrating social workers into schools, free transport on school buses and eliminating 'casual Fridays'.
7. More social workers are urgently needed, especially in poor urban and peri-urban communities, where social problems and risky behaviours are concentrated.

## 12.3 PLANNING FOR THE PHASE 4 QUALITATIVE EVALUATION

This section provides some initial ideas on how to move forward into a second round (Phase 4) of qualitative work on the CSG evaluation.

### 12.3.1 Timing

A critical question remains regarding the timing of the next round of qualitative work in relation to the quantitative survey. There are advantages to conducting the second round of qualitative fieldwork after the baseline survey, but there could also be benefits to waiting until after the evaluation survey. On balance, the former option – after the baseline but before the evaluation survey – seems preferable, because it will enable closer 'qualitative-quantitative integration', in the sense that findings from the different methods can complement each other in an iterative process.

### 12.3.2 Process of identification of key issues for Phase 4 study

A three-stage process is proposed for identifying which issues should be investigated in more depth in the Phase 4 study.

**Stage 1:** Review of this *preparatory qualitative report* for issues requiring in-depth research. In preparation for Phase 4 we will review the findings presented in this report to identify and prioritise the critical areas of research that require further investigation. We will also ask key stakeholders to provide reflections on this report in relation to further follow-up work.

**Stage 2:** *Stakeholder consultation* on key policy priorities for Phase 4. We will consult a number of key stakeholders to map out policy priorities and concerns for the future roll-out, administration and take-up of the CSG. In addition, we will host a workshop with a range of stakeholders as part of the review of qualitative and quantitative instruments.

**Stage 3:** Review of *survey findings* to identify issues and impact pathways that need to be better understood, through qualitative research. This will be a critical part of the qualitative-quantitative integration process. We anticipate that a range of interesting findings will emerge from the quantitative baseline survey that cannot be fully explained by analysis

of the survey data. These ‘gaps’, requiring contextual information and interpretation that is better obtained through specific qualitative methods (e.g. participatory techniques, institutional biographies, household and individual case studies), will be the focus of our considerations and review of the survey findings.

### 12.3.3 Proposed research methods for Phase 4

Apart from focus group discussions and key informant interviews, the main methods deployed for this preparatory qualitative research, additional methods will be selected for the Phase 4 study, including case studies and relevant participatory techniques. The range of research methods will therefore be as follows:

1. *Key informant interviews* and *focus group discussions* (more limited and strategic)
2. In-depth household *case studies* (not used in this preparatory study)
3. *Participatory techniques* (selected to investigate specific issues)

### 12.3.4 Lessons from the qualitative field report to inform future work

In terms of logistics and fieldwork there are a number of useful lessons from the first round of qualitative work that would be incorporated in any further qualitative work. For instance:

≈ *Access*: SASSA officials and ward councillors need to be contacted by phone well in advance of the start of the fieldwork to prepare them for the arrival of the teams. A good way to achieve this will be to use the training workshop as well as the transcribing periods as times to make contacts for future trips.

≈ *Interviews with officials*: In future work we would expect that official key informants are made aware of our work by their seniors and are given explicit authority from their respective departments to allow interviews to proceed.

≈ *Beneficiary lists*: Due to the large number of individuals on lists, as well as inaccuracy of data and wide geographic coverage, we were unable to use the lists appropriately. In further work we will recruit respondents in relation to the quantitative sample as well as via a snowballing technique in the field.

≈ *Awareness raising*: There is a great need for adequate information to be made available to field teams about the CSG, SASSA and DSD that can be provided to community members during fieldwork. There was often misunderstanding around social grants, not just the Child Support Grant, as well as the roles of SASSA and DSD. While the teams were instructed on certain matters of protocol regarding the application of the grant, and always sought to refer respondents to SASSA officials, this could have been aided by information materials in the form of pamphlets or brochures that community members could refer to. In future work we aim to provide training to field teams on this issue and provide leaflets or information sheets that can be distributed in the field. In addition, the research team’s partnership with SASSA in terms of the access issues noted above should allow field teams to refer respondents more readily to local SASSA offices regarding detailed application or procedural issues of the Child Support Grant.

Many of these points, especially those concerning fieldwork access, have been noted after the qualitative research and integrated into the planning of the quantitative fieldwork survey. The implementation of these lessons during the quantitative survey will provide further lessons that will be integrated into planning for the Phase 4 qualitative study.

# ANNEXURES

## ANNEXURE I STRATEGIC OVERVIEW OF THE CSG EVALUATION

The overarching hypothesis that motivates and drives the design of this evaluation of the Child Support Grant is as follows:

“South Africa’s Child Support Grant reduces poverty and vulnerability by diminishing people’s exposure to risk and increasing their capacity to protect themselves against life cycle hazards and shocks that threaten their livelihood, particularly with respect to the early-versus-late enrolment effect on the well-being and cognitive development of children, the extension of the CSG to adolescents, the grant’s impact on recipient house-holds and the conditions and factors determining or influencing access to the CSG.”

This hypothesis will be explored using quantitative and qualitative methods in several phases involving repeated rounds of qualitative and quantitative research (the first round of qualitative research is represented in this report). The quantitative evaluation will answer the following questions and sub-questions, as elaborated in the Evaluation Design Matrix.

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### QUESTION 1. HOW HAS EARLY VERSUS LATE ENROLMENT AFFECTED THE WELL-BEING AND COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN?

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- 1.1. *How has this affected cognitive ability?* Measures: literacy and numeracy test scores.
- 1.2. *How has this affected educational attainment?* Measures: enrolment, attendance, repetition, grade-for-age.
- 1.3. *How has this affected health?* Measures: utilisation of health care services, spending on health care, infectious disease, chronic illness, morbidity, child immunisation.
- 1.4. *How has this affected nutrition?* Measures: food diversity, food consumption, weight-for-height, height-for-age.
- 1.5. *How has this affected involvement in detrimental forms of child labour?* Measures: domestic tasks, child labour.
- 1.6. *What are the pathways or mechanisms by which the CSG can affect these critical life course events?* Measures: increased income and resources, time allocation, use of public services. (Qualitative methods include semi-structured interviews with key informants.)
- 1.7. *What are the unexpected impacts of the CSG?* (Qualitative methods will be used.)

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## QUESTION 2. HOW ARE CRITICAL LIFE COURSE EVENTS OF ADOLESCENTS AFFECTED BY THE EXTENSION OF THE CSG?

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- 2.1. *How is schooling affected?* Measures: enrolment, attendance, repetition, progression, grade-for-age; drop-out rates.
- 2.2. *How is labour force participation affected?* Measure: child labour.
- 2.3. *How are risky behaviours affected?* Measures: alcohol use, substance abuse, unprotected sex, contraceptives use, number of partners, age of partners, age of sexual debut.
- 2.4. *What are the pathways or mechanisms by which the CSG can affect these critical life course events?* Measures: peer effects, attitudinal changes, public service, continued schooling. (Qualitative methods include focus groups and semi-structured interviews with older children.)
- 2.5. *What are the unexpected impacts of the CSG?* (Qualitative methods will be used.)

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## QUESTION 3. WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF THE CSG ON RECIPIENT HOUSEHOLDS?

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- 3.1. *How has this affected asset accumulation?* Measures: asset acquisition, household expenditure.
- 3.2. *How has this affected labour supply?* Measures: labour participation, hours of work, earnings, search for work.
- 3.3. *How has this affected remittances and private transfers?* Measures: receiving remittances, sending remittances.
- 3.4. *How has this affected intra-household decision making?* Measures: intra-household control and allocation of resources (particularly food), decision making, including spending (gender and generations), control of grant (men vs women; mother vs grandmother). (Qualitative methods include focus groups and semi-structured interviews with household members and caregivers – note that the latter method will be reserved for the Phase 4 research.)
- 3.5. *What are the pathways or mechanisms that led to these effects?* Measures: resource pooling, impacts of illness, including HIV/AIDS. (Qualitative methods include focus groups and semi-structured interviews with household members – which will be conducted in Phase 4.)
- 3.6. *What are the unexpected impacts of the CSG?* (Qualitative methods will be used.)

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## QUESTION 4. WHAT CONDITIONS AND FACTORS DETERMINE OR INFLUENCE ACCESS TO THE CSG?

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- 4.1. *What are the enabling conditions that permit households to successfully access the CSG?* Measures: financial circumstances, available information, documentation access, attitudes of household members, accessibility. (Qualitative methods include focus groups and key informant interviews.)
- 4.2. *What factors limit access to the CSG?* Measures: administrative barriers, time allocation, social relationships. (Qualitative methods include focus groups and key informant interviews.)

4.3. *What changes in design could complement the enabling factors or ameliorate these limiting factors?* Measures include: facilitation of the application process, means test. (Qualitative methods include semi-structured interviews with key informants.)

4.4. *What are the unexpected impacts of the CSG?* (Qualitative methods will be used.)

This preparatory qualitative study collected and analysed data primarily to inform the design of the quantitative baseline survey, but also to contribute to our understanding of a range of social and institutional issues for the baseline report. The Stage 2 qualitative study (Phase 4 of the overall CSG evaluation) will use a range of qualitative research methods to:

- (i) Provide greater depth of understanding of some of the issues explored in Stage 1 (one year later);
- (ii) Investigate additional issues important to the impact evaluation, e.g. intra-household and gender relations, household structure, social behaviours (such as risky behaviour, pregnancy decisions, labour issues, remittances, child labour, and social networks); and
- (iii) Explore and generate explanations of CSG impact pathways.

Methods to be used in Phase 4 of the study will include in-depth household case studies, key informant interviews, participatory methods at community and household levels, and social network analysis. The number of communities and households included will depend on the time and funding available for Phase 4.



## ANNEXURE 2 RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

### FOCUS GROUP (1)

CSG recipients: Primary caregivers with 8 or 9 year-old children who received the grant early in the child's life (0–2 years)

### FOCUS GROUP (2)

CSG recipients: Primary caregivers with 8 or 9 year-old children who received the grant later in the child's life (5–6 years)

### FOCUS GROUP (3)

Women with eligible children (young children and teenagers) who do not receive the CSG

### FOCUS GROUP (4)

Male partners of CSG recipients and non-recipients (may also include some male direct CSG recipients)

### FOCUS GROUP (5)

14–16 year-old girls who receive and do not receive the CSG

### FOCUS GROUP (6)

14–16 year-old boys who receive and do not receive the CSG

### FOCUS GROUP (7)

Women CSG recipients and non-recipients: Primary caregivers with 14–16 year-old children

### KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW GUIDE (1)

SASSA Staff

### KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW GUIDE (2)

Health Care Worker

### KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW GUIDE (3)

Education Workers

### KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW GUIDE (4)

Community level or other knowledgeable person

## FOCUS GROUP (I)

### CSG RECIPIENTS: PRIMARY CAREGIVERS WITH 8- OR 9-YEAR OLD CHILDREN WHO RECEIVED THE GRANT EARLY IN THE CHILD'S LIFE (0–2 YEARS)

Topic (I) Decisions and processes surrounding CSG applications, and the role of different factors in explaining grant knowledge, application decisions and follow-up, and CSG participation

1. How did you first learn about the CSG grant? *[Probes: Government campaign? Social worker? NGO? Radio/Media? Family or friends? Doctor or nurse?]*
2. When you first heard about it, what did you understand about what it was for? Did you think that you were eligible to receive it?
3. Think back to the time when you applied for the grant. After learning about the grant, did you apply for the grant straight away?
4. What were the reasons that you didn't you apply sooner? *[Let people discuss this at length, probing these options: Lack of understanding of what CSG was, or misunderstandings; inadequate documentation (which documents? birth registration?); time or funds for travel; family mobility; objections from father of child or other family members; not motivated; did not believe people should get grants; other. Give respondents time to explain each factor that they raise.]*
5. How did you eventually overcome these obstacles to applying?
6. Did anyone assist you with information or other assistance (e.g. NGO, pension committee, social welfare worker, friends)? Explain who and how they helped you.
7. Some people waited much longer than you to apply for their children, e.g. until they were 4 or 5 years. Why do you think that you applied sooner than them? *[Probe for both why they applied sooner and others later].*
8. What documents were you required to have in order to apply? Was it easy or difficult to get them? Tell us about how you got them.
9. Before/when you applied for the grant was the child living with you or with a relative or someone else? Did this cause tension within the family to apply for the grant for this child? What happened?
10. Once you got to the welfare office to apply, what happened there and what was that experience like for you? *[Probes: Easy or hard? Was there someone to assist you? Were officials helpful or rude?]*
11. Were you able to complete your application on the first visit? If not, why not? Did any of you have your application rejected and you had to re-apply? Tell us why you were rejected and what you then had to do to re-apply. *[Probes for rejections: documentation; wrong info; means test; etc.]*
12. If you did not re-apply, why not?
13. After you applied for the grant, how did you find out where to pick it up? Was this clear?

### NOW WE ARE GOING TO TALK ABOUT YOUR RECENT EXPERIENCES WITH THE GRANT

14. How have things changed with the CSG application process since the time when you applied? Has it got harder or easier to get the grant? Explain why.

#### Topic (3) Use of the grant

##### Spending issues:

15. What extra things are you able to do or buy because you have this grant every month?  
*[Probes: More food; transportation to look for jobs; school fees; hairdressing; treats for kids; social events]*
16. When you leave the pay-point, what do you do? *[Follow up]:* How much of it do you spend that day? *[Probe for a lot or a little]* What things do you buy that day? *[Probe for who they buy these things for, e.g. children, the family or herself]*
17. Do you see CSG money as special in some way, or just like any other money that you or your family members earn? Do you spend it in a special way, or does it become part of the family budget like any other money?
18. Who do you think the CSG should be spent on, just the one child or should everyone in the household share it? Explain.
19. Do you consult anyone else about how you will spend this? (Who?)
20. Do you think that, in general, recipients in your community are using the grant for the purpose for which it was intended? If not, why not?
21. What have been the positive effects of the grant on households who receive it? Have there been any negative effects? Explain your answers.

##### Gender/intra-household issues:

22. Who makes decisions in your household about how to spend money? Tell us about that process of decision making on how to spend money.
23. Women are mostly primary caregivers who pick up the CSG. Do you make the decisions on how to spend this money? How does this affect you? *[Follow up]:* Who else makes these decisions? *[Male partners, sons, mothers]* *[Reassure women that their answers are confidential]*
24. Do you sometimes give any of the CSG away to your husband? Do you sometimes give some of the CSG away to your teenage children? Tell us who you give the money to, and how much, and why.

#### Topic (5 and 6) Social welfare services and ECD

25. Tell us about your interaction with social workers. Tell us all the places that you might meet them. Do you meet them at the pay-points? *[Follow up]:* What do you talk to them about? *[Follow up]:* At community outreach programmes for government services, do social workers attend?
26. When you gave birth to your children, did anyone at the clinic or hospital give you the opportunity to get a birth certificate? Did they register your child for CSG?

27. Tell us about any crèches or pre-schools in your community? If yes, do you use them? Why or why not?  
[Probe: How important is cost in your decision?]
28. How much do you have to pay for sending your child to the crèche or pre-school?
29. Does having the CSG help you to pay for these services?

**ASK THIS SECTION BELOW IF THE FOCUS GROUP HAS RUN FOR LESS THAN 2 HOURS:**

1. Is there anything about the CSG that you can tell us, good and bad, that you have not told us yet?

**Access to Education**

2. Do children here miss days of school? What would you need in order for your children to attend school more regularly?
3. What are the reasons that children drop out of school? What is needed in order to keep them in school?
4. Does the CSG help you to send your child to school? Explain why or why not.

**Health**

5. What fees do you have to pay at the clinic or hospital?
6. Do you get free or discounted services because you have the CSG? Do you get these discounts from public and private services? [If yes]: Are you required to show proof that you get the grant in order to get these exemptions? Do people without the CSG get the same exemptions?

## FOCUS GROUP (2)

### CSG RECIPIENTS: PRIMARY CAREGIVERS WITH 8 OR 9 YEAR OLD CHILDREN WHO RECEIVED THE GRANT LATER IN THE CHILD'S LIFE (5-6 YEARS)

Topic (1) Decisions and processes surrounding CSG applications, and the role of different factors in explaining grant knowledge, application decisions and follow-up, and CSG participation

1. How did you first learn about the CSG grant? [*Probes: Government campaign? Social worker? NGO? Radio/media? Family or friends? Doctor or nurse?*]
2. When you first heard about it, what did you understand about what it was for? Did you think that you were eligible to receive it?
3. Children are eligible for the CSG from birth, and many people applied when the child was one or two years old. You did not start receiving it until your children were four or five years old. What were the reasons that you didn't you apply sooner? [*Let people discuss this at length, probing these options: lack of understanding of what CSG was, or misunderstandings; inadequate documentation (which documents? birth registration?); time or funds for travel; family mobility; objections from father of child or other family members; not motivated; did not believe people should get grants; other. Give respondents time to explain each factor that they raise.*]
4. How did you eventually overcome these obstacles to applying?
5. Did anyone assist you with information or other assistance (e.g. NGO, pension committee, social welfare worker, friends)? Explain who and how they helped you.
6. What documents were you required to have in order to apply? Was it easy or difficult to get them? Tell us about how you got them.
7. Before/when you applied for the grant, was the child living with you or with a relative or someone else? Did this cause tension within the family to apply for the grant for this child? What happened?
8. Once you got to the welfare office to apply, what happened there and what was that experience like for you? [*Probes: Easy or hard? Was there someone to assist you? Were officials helpful or rude?*]
9. Were you able to complete your application on the first visit? If not, why not? Did any of you have your application rejected and did you have to re-apply? Tell us why you were rejected and what you then had to do to re-apply. [*Probes for rejections: documentation; wrong info; means test; etc.*]
10. If you did not re-apply, why not?
11. After you applied for the grant, how did you find out where to pick it up? Was this clear?

#### NOW WE ARE GOING TO TALK ABOUT YOUR RECENT EXPERIENCES WITH THE GRANT:

12. If you have applied for the grant for other children since the first one, was anything different about the process for the most recent application? If so, what changes have taken place in accessing the grant? [*Probes: information campaigns; turnaround time; documentation required; means test – have these changed?*]



13. How did you learn about where you pick up the grant? Even if you have not applied for another CSG, what changes have you observed in the community with respect to learning about the grant and accessing it? Has it become easier or more difficult?
14. What improvements to this system of applying for grants would you suggest? *[Brainstorm a list of improvements, write up on a piece of paper, then ask the participants to indicate the three most important improvements.]* Are there people in this area who are eligible to apply for the CSG for their children but still do not? If yes, why don't they apply?
15. What is the easiest way to accommodate the community in having easier access to the CSG?

#### Topic (2) Experiences around receipt of the grant at pay-points, including accessibility and service delivery standards – CURRENT EXPERIENCES

16. Where do you go to pick up your grant? For those of you who go to the pay-point/bank/supermarket/post office, tell us about your experiences when you go to pick up the grants. How well do things go? What problems do you face? *[Important: have separate discussion per institution]*
17. If you pick up the grant at a shop, does the shopkeeper require you to buy at that shop? What does he/she say?

#### Topic (3) Influence of the grant on accessing services

##### Education

18. Tell us the reasons that girls drop out of school. What are the main reasons that boys drop out of school? *[Probe for the importance of money vs other factors]*
19. What costs do you have to send your children to school, for example, school fees, uniforms, stationary, shoes, after-school activities, transport, etc?
20. What are the reasons that children miss days of school? How does this differ between boys and girls? How does this differ between primary and secondary school children?
21. What would you need in order for your children to attend school more regularly?
22. What kind of work do children do to earn money? *[Ask them first to discuss boys' work, then girls' work. Ask them to talk about how they feel about their children working, why it is necessary, etc.]*
23. What kind of work do children do to help at home? *[Ask them first to discuss work of boys; then work of girls. Ask them to talk about how they feel about this work that their children do at home.]*
24. Do they sometimes miss school to do this work? Explain why or why not.
25. Does anyone here have a CSG beneficiary child who is not in school? If so, please explain why.
26. Does the CSG help you to send your child to school? Explain why or why not.

##### Health

27. Tell us about your experience when you go to the clinic or hospital. What fees do you have to pay?

28. Do you get free or discounted services because you have the CSG? Do you get these discounts from public and private services? *[If yes]* Are you required to show proof that you get the grant in order to get these exemptions? Do people without the CSG get the same exemptions?
29. Does the CSG enable people to access and pay for health treatment in a more timely way? If so, can you give specific examples of how the grant has helped you or a family member pay for health care?

#### Topic (5 and 6) Social welfare services and ECD

30. Tell us about your interaction with social workers. Tell us all the places that you might meet them. Do you meet them at the pay-points? *[Follow up]* What do you talk to them about? *[Follow up]* At community outreach programmes for government services, do social workers attend?
31. When you gave birth to your children, did anyone at the clinic or hospital give you the opportunity to get a birth certificate? Did they register your child for CSG?
32. Tell us about any crèches or pre-schools in your community? If yes, do you use them? Why or why not? *[Probe: how important is cost in your decision?]*
33. How much do you have to pay for sending your child to the crèche or pre-school?
34. Does having the CSG help you to pay for these services?

#### ASK THIS SECTION BELOW IF THE GROUP HAS RUN FOR LESS THAN TWO HOURS:

35. Is there anything about the CSG that you can tell us, good and bad, that you have not told us yet?

#### Spending issues

36. What extra things are you able to do or buy because you have this grant every month? *[Probes: More food; transportation to look for jobs; school fees; hairdressing; treats for kids; social events]*
37. When you leave the pay-point, what do you do? *[Follow up]:* How much of it do you spend that day? *[Probe for a lot or a little]* What things do you buy that day? *[Probe for who they buy these things for, e.g. children, the family or herself].*
38. Do you see CSG money as special in some way, or just like any other money that you earn or your family members earn? Do you spend it in a special way, or does it become part of the family budget like any other money?
39. Who do you think the CSG should be spent on, just the one child or should everyone in the household share it? Explain.
40. Do you consult anyone else about how you will spend this? (Who?)
41. Do you think that in general recipients in your community are using the grant for the purpose for which it was intended? If not, why not?
42. What have been the positive effects of the grant on households who receive it? Have there been any negative effects? Explain your answers.

**Gender/intra-household issues**

43. Who makes decisions in your household about how to spend money? Tell us about that process of decision making on how to spend money.
44. Women are mostly primary caregivers who pick up the CSG. Do you make the decisions on how to spend this money? How does this affect you? *[Follow up]:* Who else makes these decisions? *[Male partners, sons, mothers]* *[Reassure women that their answers are confidential]*
45. Do you sometimes give any of the CSG away to your husband? Do you sometimes give some of the CSG away to your teenage children? Tell us who you give the money to, and how much, and why.

## FOCUS GROUP (3)

### WOMEN WITH ELIGIBLE CHILDREN (WITH YOUNG CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS) WHO DO NOT RECEIVE THE CSG

Topic (1) Decisions and processes surrounding CSG applications, and the role of different factors in explaining grant knowledge, application decisions and follow-up, and CSG participation

1. Many people in your community receive the Child Support Grant. Can you tell us why you do not receive it? *[Probe for: did not know they or children were eligible? did not understand grant? lack of documentation (which documents? birth registration?); time or funds for travel; family mobility; perception that grant is too difficult to get; objections from father or child or other family members; not motivated; don't believe in it; etc.]*
2. *[If some people mention documents]* Which documents were difficult to get? Tell us the stories involved with trying to get these documents.
3. Do any of you have the CSG for one child but not for another who is eligible to receive it? If yes, explain why one child has it and the other one does not.
4. If you applied for CSG and were rejected, what were the reasons for the rejection? *[Follow up]* If you did not re-apply, why not?
5. Are you considering applying in the future? Why or why not? *[Follow up]* What would you need to change in order for you to decide to apply?
6. Are you aware that government has made it easier to get the grant by changing some of the rules? What are these? Have you had any problems recently where an official was not aware of these changes?
7. What do you think about the CSG generally? Is it a programme that should be continued?
8. What is the easiest way to accommodate the community in having easier access to the CSG?

Topic (3) Spending and service access

Spending and gender/intra-household issues:

9. If you had the CSG, what would you do or buy that you cannot afford without it?
10. Who makes decisions in your household about how to spend money? Tell us about that process of decision making on how to spend money.

Education

11. What are the reasons that girls drop out of school? What are the reasons that boys drop out of school? *[Probe for the importance of money vs other factors]*
12. What costs do you have to send your children to school, for example, school fees, uniforms, stationary, shoes, after-school activities, transport, etc?

13. What are the reasons that children miss days of school? How does this differ between boys and girls? How does this differ between primary and secondary school children?
14. What would you need in order for your children to miss fewer days of school? *[If financial assistance is not raised, ask them]* Would financial assistance help?
15. What kind of work do children do to earn money? *[Ask them first to discuss work of boys; then work of girls. Ask them to talk about how they feel about their children working, why this is necessary, etc.]*
16. What kind of work do children do to help at home? *[Ask them first to discuss work of boys; then work of girls. Ask them to talk about how they feel about their children doing this work at home.]*
17. Do they sometimes miss school to do this work? Explain why or why not.

#### Health

18. Tell us about your experience when you go to the clinic or hospital. What fees do you have to pay? *[Follow up]* Do people who get the CSG pay less than you?
19. Do costs of health care stop you from going to these services? Explain why or why not.

#### Topic (4) Life circumstances of and issues concerning girls and boys ages 13-16

20. What are the main problems that girls in your community face? Are these different to the problems that boys face? Explain. *[Probes: Drug use; glue addiction; alcoholism; STIs; HIV; gangs; crime; pregnancy]*
21. What are the influences that you think lead to these problems for girls? *[Follow up]* What is the role of poverty and income in contributing to these problems?
22. What are the influences that you think lead to these problems for boys? *[Follow up]* What is the role of poverty, and income in contributing to these problems?
23. Do girls in your community date boys their own age, or older boys or men? What are the reasons that girls date older boys or men?
24. Describe the power dynamics in relationships between boys and girls? Does the money that girls vs boys have affect these?
25. What do you understand by risky sexual practices? Why do teenagers take these risks, even if they know they are dangerous?
26. As caregivers are you able to talk with your children about these risky behaviours? What other kinds of support do they receive to help protect them?
27. Do you think there is any relationship between these risky sexual practices and access to money?

#### Topic (5) Social welfare services and early childhood development

##### Social welfare services

28. Tell us about your interaction with social workers. *[Follow up]* What do you talk to them about? *[Follow up]* Do social workers attend community outreach programmes for government services?



29. When you gave birth to your children, did anyone at the clinic or hospital give you the opportunity to get a birth certificate?
30. Do you know if other people are registering their births when the child is first born?

**Early childhood development**

31. Tell us about any crèches or pre-schools in your community? If yes, do you use them? Why or why not?  
*[Probe: How important is cost in your decision?]*
32. How much do you have to pay for sending your child to the crèche or pre-school?
33. Does having the CSG help you to pay for these services?

## FOCUS GROUP (4)

### MALE PARTNERS OF CSG RECIPIENTS AND NON-RECIPIENTS (MAY ALSO INCLUDE SOME MALE DIRECT CSG RECIPIENTS)

Topic (1) Decisions and processes surrounding CSG applications, and the role of different factors in explaining grant knowledge, application decisions and follow-up, and CSG participation

[For men in households who receive the CSG]

Think back to the time when your household applied for the grant.

1. Did your partner inform you about applying for the grant? What was your role in that decision? What was your role in the application process?
2. Did you or your female partner apply for the grant as the child's primary caregiver?

[NOTE! IF YOU HAVE ANY MALE CSG DIRECT RECIPIENTS, YOU WILL NEED TO ADAPT QUESTIONS BELOW TO SAY "you or your partner"]

3. Do you recall any problems that your partner encountered during the application process? *[Probes: Lack of understanding of what CSG was; inadequate documentation (which documents? birth registration?); time or funds for travel; family mobility; objections from other family members; not motivated; did not believe people should get grants; other. Give respondents time to explain each factor that they raise.]* How did you eventually resolve those problems?
4. Did your partner have any problems getting the documents that she needed? Tell us about this.
5. Does anyone here have a partner who has applied for the CSG in the last year or two, or have you applied yourself in this time? If yes, was anything different about the process for the most recent application? If so, what changes have taken place in accessing the grant?

[ASK THIS QUESTION ONLY IF THERE ARE MEN HERE WHO APPLIED FOR THE GRANT THEMSELVES]:

Why did you apply for this grant and not your female partner? Are many men applying for the grant these days? If yes, what are the reasons for this?

QUESTIONS FOR MEN WHOSE HOUSEHOLDS DO NOT RECEIVE THE CSG ONLY: NOTE! THIS SECTION REFERS TO ANY TIME (PAST OR CURRENT):

6. Did you and your partner discuss whether or not to apply for the grant? Tell us about that decision.
7. If you or your partner decided not to apply, what were the reasons?

*[Probe for: Did not know they or children were eligible? Did not understand grant or misunderstandings? Lack of documentation (Which documents? Birth registration?); time or funds for travel; family mobility; perception that grant is too difficult to get; objections from other family members; not motivated; don't believe in it; other]*

8. Did your partner ever try to apply? Please describe what happened when she tried.

**NOW WE ARE ASKING QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CSG PRESENTLY:**

9. What is the oldest age that children can be to get the grant? Why do you think that the government has raised the age limit?
10. What have been the positive effects of the grant on households who receive it? Have there been any negative effects? Tell us about your positive and your negative opinions now.

**Topic (3) Use of the grant and service access**

11. Are there some things that you are able to pay for because your household has the CSG, that you could not if you didn't have it?  
*[Probes: More food; transportation to look for jobs; airtime; social activities; organisational membership; alcohol; cigarettes]*
12. Do you see the CSG as money intended for special uses, or is it just part of the overall household budget? Who in your household is the money actually spent on?
13. Women are mostly primary caregivers who pick up the CSG. In your household, does she make all the decisions as to what to spend it on? Or does she discuss with you what to spend it on? Does anyone else participate? [Sons, daughters, mothers] Explain.
14. For those of you whose female partners receive the CSG, does she sometimes give you some of this money to spend yourself? *[For those who say yes]* How much does she give you and what do you spend it on?

**Education**

15. Do children in this community drop out of school? What are the reasons that girls drop out of school? What are the reasons that boys drop out of school? *[Probe for the importance of availability of money vs other factors]*
16. What are the reasons that children miss days of school? How does this differ between boys and girls? How do the reasons differ between primary and secondary school children?
17. What do you think is needed in order for your children to attend school more regularly? How about for children in the community generally?
18. Are there children in this community who work to earn money? What kind of work do children do? *[Ask them first to discuss work of boys; then work of girls. Ask them to talk about how they feel about their children working. (e.g. is it necessary?)]* Do children sometimes miss school to do this work? Explain.
19. What kind of work do children do to help at home? *[Ask them first to discuss work of boys; then work of girls.]* Do children sometimes miss school to do this work? Explain why or why not.
20. For those of you who receive the CSG, does it contribute to your ability to keep your child enrolled in school? Explain why or why not.

#### Topic (4) Life circumstances of and issues concerning teenage girls and boys

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21. What are the main problems that teenage boys face? Are these different to the problems that girls face? Explain. *[Probes: Drug use; glue addiction; alcoholism; STIs; HIV; gangs; crime, pregnancy]*
22. What do you think causes these problems for girls? *[Follow up]* What is the role of poverty in contributing to these problems?
23. What are the influences that you think lead to these problems for boys? *[Follow up]* What is the role of poverty in contributing to these problems?
24. Do you know of any men in your community who date teenage girls? What are the reasons that girls date older men?
25. Do you think there is any difference between CSG and non-CSG households in this community with regard to specific risky behaviours? Explain.

## FOCUS GROUP (5)

### 14-16 YEAR OLD GIRLS WHO RECEIVE AND DO NOT RECEIVE THE CSG

#### Topic (3) Use of the grant: education and health

##### Use of the grant

1. Are you aware of whether someone is receiving a Child Support Grant on your behalf? What do you think that the CSG is for?
2. For those of you whose caregivers get the CSG, do they give you any part of this to spend? Do you request some of this money? Tell us what happens when you discuss who should have this money.
3. If someone in your family gets the CSG on your behalf, do you think that money should be spent just on you, or should it be for the family?
4. What are the different explanations for why some teenagers get some of this CSG money from their caregivers and some do not? What are the different circumstances, relationships, etc?
5. If they give you money, what do you do with it? Describe the types of things/activities that you spend CSG money on.
6. Do you have an influence on the decisions that your caregiver takes in terms of how to spend the CSG?
7. What do your caregivers spend the CSG money on?

##### Education

8. Do some teenage girls drop out of school in your community? What are all the reasons? Is there a certain age or grade when teenagers are more likely to drop out? Describe the issues facing teenagers that might cause them to drop out. Tell us about someone you know who dropped out, and why.
9. Do some teenage girls miss some days of schools? What are the reasons that teenage girls in your community miss days of school?
10. How important is the lack of money as a reason that teenage girls miss school?
11. How important is the need to work, to earn money or to help out at home, to why girls of your age miss school? What kinds of work do girls your age do? Tell us about jobs for money and work you do in the home, and how this affects your school attendance (discuss both jobs and housework).
12. In your view, does the Child Support Grant help to keep girls your age in school? Why or why not?

##### Health

13. If you get some of the CSG to spend yourself, do you use any of it to access health services? [*Probe: What about if you need health service that you want to keep private (e.g. STIs, pregnancy)*]



#### Topic (4) Life circumstances of and issues concerning teenage girls

14. What are the main problems that girls your age face? Are these different to the problems that boys face? Explain. *[Probes: drug use; glue addiction; alcoholism; STIs; HIV; gangs; crime; pregnancy]*
15. What are the influences that you think lead to these problems for girls? *[Follow up]* What is the role of poverty and income in contributing to these problems?
16. Do girls in your community date boys their own age, or older boys or men? How common is this in your school or among your friends? What are the reasons that girls date older boys or men? *[Probe: role of money]*
17. Describe the power dynamics in relationships between boys and girls. Does the money that girls have vs boys have effect these?
18. What do you understand by risky sexual practices? Why do girls take these risks, even if they know they are dangerous?
19. Do you think there is any relationship between these risky sexual practices and access to money?
20. Do you think there is any difference between CSG and non-CSG households in this community with regard to specific risky behaviours? Explain.

#### Topic (5) Social welfare services

21. Have you ever interacted with social workers? Why? What do you talk about with them? Where do you meet them?

#### Final question

22. What do you think the main differences are for the lives of teenagers whose households receive the CSG and those who do not? *[Facilitate open discussion about this.]*

## FOCUS GROUP (6)

### 14-16 YEAR-OLD BOYS WHO RECEIVE AND DO NOT RECEIVE THE CSG

#### Topic (3) Use of the grant: education and health

##### Use of the grant

1. Are you aware of whether someone is receiving a Child Support Grant on your behalf? What do you think the CSG is for?
2. For those of you whose caregivers get the CSG, do they give you any part of this to spend? Do you request some of this money? Tell us what happens when you discuss who should have this money.
3. If someone in your family gets the CSG on your behalf, do you think that money should be spent just on you, or should it be for the family?
4. What are the different explanations for why some teenagers get some of this CSG money from their caregivers and some do not? What are the different circumstances, relationships, etc?
5. If they give you money, what do you do with it? Describe the types of things/activities that you spend CSG money on.
6. Do you have an influence on the decisions that your caregiver takes in terms of how to spend the CSG?
7. What do your caregivers spend the CSG money on?

##### Education

8. Do some teenage boys drop out of school in your community? What are all the reasons? Is there a certain age or grade when teenagers are more likely to drop out? Describe the issues facing teenagers that might cause them to drop out. Tell us about someone you know who dropped out, and why.
9. Do some teenage boys miss some days of schools? What are all the reasons that teenage boys in your community miss days of school?
10. How important is the lack of money as a reason that teenage boys miss school?
11. How important is the need to work, to earn money or help out at home, in why boys of your age miss school? What kinds of work do boys your age do? Tell us about jobs for money and work you do at home, and how this affects your school attendance.
12. In your view, does the Child Support Grant help to keep boys your age in school? Why or why not?

##### Health

13. If you get some of the CSG to spend yourself, do you use any of it to access health services? [*Probe: What about if you need health service that you want to keep private (e.g. STIs, pregnancy)*]

#### Topic (4) Life circumstances of and issues concerning teenage boys

14. What are the main problems that boys your age face? Are these different to the problems that girls face? Explain. *[Probes: drug use; glue addiction; alcoholism; STIs; HIV; gangs; crime; pregnancy]*
15. What are the influences that you think lead to these problems for boys? *[Follow up]* What is the role of poverty and income in contributing to these problems?
16. What do you understand by risky sexual practices? Why do boys take these risks, even if they know they are dangerous?
17. Do you think there is any relationship between these risky sexual practices and access to money?
18. Do you think there is any difference between CSG and non-CSG households in this community with regard to specific risky behaviours? Explain.
19. Describe the power dynamics in relationships between boys and girls. Does the money that boys and girls have affect the types of relationships between them? Explain.
20. Do girls in your community date boys their own age, or older boys or men? Why do you think they do this?

#### Topic (5) Social welfare services

21. Have you ever interacted with social workers? Why? What do you talk about with them? Where do you meet them?

#### Final question

22. What do you think the main differences are for the lives of teenagers whose households receive the CSG and those who do not? *[Facilitate open discussion about this.]*

## FOCUS GROUP (7)

### WOMEN CSG RECIPIENTS AND NON-RECIPIENTS: PRIMARY CAREGIVERS WITH 14- TO 16-YEAR-OLD CHILDREN

#### Topic (1) Processes surrounding CSG applications

1. What is the current oldest age that children can be to get the CSG?
2. Have you heard recently that they plan to increase the age limit? How did you learn this? For what ages and when? For those of you with 15-year-old children in your care, do you plan to enrol them in the CSG? Why or why not?
3. Have your teenage children ever encouraged you to apply for the CSG? What did they say?
4. Do any of you have teenage children of 15 or younger who are not enrolled in the CSG? Why have you not applied for the grant for these children? *[Probe for: lack of knowledge about eligibility, low motivation; they will age out of programme too soon; difficulty in locating birth certificates and other documentation, etc.]*

#### Topic (3) Use of the grant and service access

##### Use of the grant

5. For those of you who get the CSG, do you use all of the grant to support the needs of the entire family or do you allocate part or all of it to the needs of your teenage child? Why or why not? If so, how much do you spend on this child? What do you buy for him or her?
6. Do you sometimes give some of the grant directly to the teenager for him or her to spend her/himself? How much do you give them?

##### Education

7. Up to what level is education important for children, and why? Is there a difference between girls and boys, in terms of the necessary years of education? Why is this?
8. Do some teenagers drop out of school in your community? What are the all reasons? Is there a certain age or grade when teenagers are more likely to drop out? Describe the decisions facing teenagers that might cause them to drop out. Tell us about someone you know who dropped out, and why.
9. Do you think the reasons that girls drop out is different than for boys? Explain. Have these reasons changed over time? Why?
10. Do some teenagers miss some days of school? What are the reasons that teenagers in your community miss days of school? Is there a difference between boys and girls?
11. Does the lack of money cause teenagers to miss school?
12. What do you do in order to afford to send your child to school? Do you sometimes have to save money, eat less food, or sell anything to cover the costs of sending children to school? If so, how and what?

13. Do children in this community need to work, to earn money or help out at home? Does this cause them to miss school? What kinds of work do girls and boys do (jobs or housework)?
14. In your view, does the Child Support Grant help to keep teenagers in school? Why or why not? *[Probe: how helpful is the Child Support Grant towards the costs of sending children to school? Which costs in particular does it help with?]*
15. Do you think that your children who receive the CSG miss fewer days of school than children who do not? If so, why is this? Can you provide some examples?

#### Health

16. Do you spend some of the CSG money on health needs of your teenagers? What types of needs are these?

#### Topic (4) Life circumstances of and issues concerning teenage girls and boys ages

17. What are the main problems that teenagers face? Are these different to the problems that boys face? How are they the same or different? *[Probes: drug use; glue addiction; alcoholism; STIs; HIV; gangs; crime; pregnancy]*
18. What are the influences that you think lead to these problems for girls? *[Follow up]* What is the role of poverty in contributing to these problems?
19. What are the influences that you think lead to these problems for boys? *[Follow up]* What is the role of poverty in contributing to these problems?
20. Do girls in your community date boys their own age, or older boys or men? What are the reasons that girls date older boys or men?
21. Describe the power dynamics in relationships between boys and girls? Does the money that girls have vs boys have effect these?
22. What do you understand by risky sexual practices? Why do teenagers take these risks, even if they know they are dangerous?
23. Do you think there is any relationship between these risky sexual practices and access to money?
24. Do you think there is any difference between CSG and non-CSG households in this community with regard to specific risky behaviours? Does the CSG help with these problems? Explain, provide examples.

#### Final questions

25. What do you think the main differences are for the lives of teenagers whose households receive the CSG and those who do not? *[Facilitate open discussion about this]*
26. What are the really important things about the CSG that you can tell us, good and bad?
27. Do you think it should be continued?



## KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW GUIDE (I)

### SASSA STAFF

Topic (I) Decisions and processes surrounding CSG applications, and the role of different factors in explaining grant knowledge, application decisions and follow-up, and CSG participation

1. What is your job at SASSA, and how long have you been in this role? What were you doing previously? What kind of training have you had for this job?
2. We would like to know how things work in this office now, but also how the CSG grants were processed around eight or nine years ago. Were you working with the CSG in a welfare office eight or nine years ago? *[If no, continue with question 3. If yes, skip to question 1 in the Retrospective section at the end of Topic 1.]*
3. What have been the main changes that you have observed over the years with respect to how people learn about the grant and decide to apply? What are the current strategies for informing people about grant availability, particularly the CSG, in your area? What are the main methods used, and how often? How do you ensure that these take place as designed?
4. What are the support structures in place for assisting people with applications and answering questions?
5. Are there pension committees, or other local organisations that play a support role? Describe these.
6. What do you feel have been the most important innovations in information campaigns for increasing CSG grant access over the years since you have been involved?
7. Why do you think that some people who are eligible for the CSG do not apply for it? What do you think needs to occur to get them to apply?
8. What current actions are taken to try to get people to apply for the grant when they are still pregnant, or when their child is first born? What do you think needs to happen to increase applications as this early age?
9. What documents do you currently require people to have in order to apply for the CSG? What types of problems do people experience in getting these documents? What is the procedure they must follow if they do not have them? Where is the local Home Affairs office? How has this changed over the years? What further changes would you recommend?
10. What have been the main changes over the years that you have worked here, or that you are aware of in terms of handling grant applications at this office? Please describe the formal changes to rules, as well as informal changes in how people apply them. Which have been the most important?
11. Have there been changes over the years in how strictly you apply the means test? Please provide some examples of any cases in which a means test has been less or more strictly applied, and the reasons why.
12. What further changes would you recommend?
13. Do social workers play any role in helping you to identify families in need of the CSG but who do not have it?

14. What are the information technology systems that you rely on to do CSG activities? How well do they work?
15. Do you have sufficient personnel to deal with the number of grants processed in this office? What are the main challenges your staff face in carrying out their work?
16. Do you have peaks and slow months for processing applications? If yes, what are the reasons for these differences?
17. Are there particular ages at which people are most likely to apply for the CSG? What ages are these?
18. Tell us about the main categories of applications that you have been getting in the past year. How common are applications for newborn children or children under 18 months? How common are applications for children newly eligible (e.g. 14-year-olds in the past year) and 15-year-olds now? Have you had many applications for children who are too old to be eligible?
19. What is the current age limit for children, and when is it next going to change? *[If they know about the extension to age 15]* Have you started informing communities yet about this change? What methods do you use to inform them?
20. How do you manage applications for teenage children just older than the eligibility cut-off before the rule has changed? What happens when children get too old for the grant? Are they cut off right after their birthday? Do you make an effort to inform families that their child is about to reach the age limit, or do they only learn if they come to pick up their payment?
21. How about cases of fraud by applicants? Or bribery of officials? What do you do to detect and handle this?
22. What else do you need in order to be able to do your job more easily and efficiently? Is there anything else that you think is important that we have not discussed?
23. Is there anyone else in this area who you think could add any different perspectives whom you think we should speak with?

#### Retrospective questions on the welfare office eight to ten years ago

24. How were people informed of the grant?
25. What were the main reasons why more people did not learn about the grant sooner?
26. What in your view were the main reasons that people did not apply for the grant when their children were infants, or even when they got older?
27. What were the main obstacles you faced back then in processing applications?
28. Was the means test too strict or not strict enough back then?
29. What kind of training did staff receive?
30. If we wanted to collect information on your office at that time, could we find information on numbers of staff, application time, queues and number of application processed? How would we find this information?
31. Who else could we speak to, to collect this information?

### Topic (2) Payments

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32. How common is it that people do not show up to pick up the CSG?
33. What happens when they do not get it? Is it available to them the next time they show up?
34. How well do you think that things go at pay day? What are the main problems faced by your staff? By beneficiaries?

### Topic (5) Social welfare service

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35. Do social welfare officials or staff assist SASSA in any way, in relation to increasing people's access to the CSG, or otherwise helping in any way with respect to CSG beneficiaries? *[Follow up]* For example, do they ever help to identify families in need of the CSG but who have not applied? Does the CSG programme help in any way to identify households where there is a need for child protection?

## KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW GUIDE (2)

### HEALTH CARE WORKER

#### Topic (1) CSG applications and the role of different factors in explaining grant knowledge, applications and follow-up, and CSG participation

1. Do you participate in any outreach efforts, informal or through organised activities, to inform people about the CSG? Please describe these. Do you focus on any particular age group, or all children? Have you done anything to encourage parents to enrol their teenagers as the age eligibility limit gets raised?
2. In what year did you first start working in communities that were receiving the CSG? How have you observed changes over time with respect to people's access to the grant? How have outreach efforts changed over time in this area?
3. When people come in for health services, do you know what grants they get? If yes, how do you know? If not, is there any way in which knowing would be useful?
4. If they do not receive the CSG do you take any actions to facilitate their access? Under what circumstances do you decide to do this or not? What actions do you take?
5. When women come in for pre-natal care, or other care and you see they are pregnant, do you offer them applications? Do you give advice to them about getting the grant and how to get it?
6. Do any women give birth in this facility? If so, do they always register the births? Do you give them CSG applications at that time? Do they fill them out? Is anyone here to assist them with this process? (e.g. a social worker? Home Affairs staff? clinic staff here?)
7. What are the responses that you get from people when you suggest that they apply or offer applications? If they are hesitant, what are the reasons?
8. What are your perceptions with regard to whether it is easier or harder for people to get the grant now than it was in earlier years? *[Explore which years the key informant is referring to.]* What has changed?
9. Why do you think that some people do not apply for the grant, even when they are eligible?
10. Do you have any other ideas as to how to increase uptake of the grant, particularly for very young children? What about for teenagers, as the grant gets extended to older grades?
11. Are there any other issues concerning access to the CSG that you think are important?

#### Topic (3) Use of the grant and service access

12. Do you charge fees to anyone who uses this facility to access health services? If yes, do you ever grant fee exemptions for poor households? How do you identify who gets these exemptions? Do you use the CSG as a way of determining this?

13. Have you observed any other ways in which access to the CSG has increased people's access to health services?

#### Topic (4) Life circumstances of and issues concerning girls and boys ages 13-16

14. What kinds of problems do you observe with respect to risky behaviours among teenagers? What drives these problems, and what responses are needed?
15. Do you provide any services and counselling for teenagers with respect to these risks? Which ones? Who else in this area does this?
16. What do you see as the role of family income in these problems? We are interested in understanding ways in which access to the Child Support Grants may be helping to reduce risky social behaviour (such as sex, alcohol or drug abuse) among teens. Have you observed this or have any thoughts on this question?

#### Topic (5) Social welfare services

17. Are you aware of any contact that social welfare services have with CSG grant recipients? Does the CSG in any way provide access points for SWS to monitor families and reach people who need social welfare services, for example child protection? Is there a way in which you think that the grant could be used as a mechanism to reach people in need of social welfare services? Or social welfare services could help to reach people in need of the CSG? How could it do this?

## KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW GUIDE (3)

### EDUCATION WORKERS

#### Topic (1) CSG applications and the role of different factors in explaining grant knowledge, application decisions and follow-up, and CSG participation

1. Does the school participate in any outreach efforts, informal or through organised activities, to provide information about the CSG and encourage parents to apply? Can you describe these?
2. *[For high school teachers only]*. What is the current cut-off age for children receiving the CSG? What do you do to inform parents that the age eligibility criteria has been increased, so that they enrol their older children, or so that they continue to pick up their grant after their child turns 16?
3. In what year did you first start working in communities that were receiving the CSG? How have you observed changes over time with respect to outreach efforts to inform people about the grant, and the ease with which people get the grant?
4. Do you have any ideas for how outreach efforts to improve grant access could be improved?
5. Is there a way in which the school knows whether families are receiving the grants for particular children? Do you ask parents? Under what circumstances do you decide to ask them or not?
6. If they do not receive the CSG, do you take any actions to facilitate their access? Under what circumstances do you decide to do this or not? What actions do you take?
7. What are your perceptions with regard to whether it is easier or harder for people to get the grant now than it was in earlier years *[explore which years they are referring to]* and what has changed?
8. Why do you think that some people do not apply for the grant? Are these reasons different for families caring for young children vs teenagers?
9. Are there any other issues concerning the CSG that you think are important?

#### Topic (3) Use of the grant and service access

##### Education

10. What are the main reasons children miss days of school? How are these reasons different for girls and boys? Also comment on differences between primary school and secondary school children.
11. What are the main reasons children drop out of school? How are these reasons different for girls and boys?
12. How important do you think financial constraints are in affecting school enrolment and attendance, relative to other factors? Are there differences between boys and girls? Are there differences between primary and secondary school children?



13. Have you observed that the extension of the CSG to older children has made any difference with respect to children's years of schooling? Or days of school missed? In general, do you think that the CSG has an impact on children's schooling at any ages? Please explain your answers.
14. What are the main kinds of support that girls and boys need to stay in school?
15. Are you aware that children receiving the CSG are now required by law to attend school, and that the school is required to provide proof every six months to the Department of Social Development that the child is enrolled and has attended school?
16. What is your opinion of this recent change in the policy? Do you think that it will make any difference in children's school attendance?
17. Is it your understanding that children will lose the CSG if they are not attending school regularly?
18. Has this policy already been implemented at your school? If yes, how is it working? If no, how do you think it will be done?

#### Topic (4) Life circumstances of and issues concerning teenage girls and boys

##### *[For high school teachers only]*

19. What kinds of problems do you observe with respect to risky behaviours (sexual activity, drug or alcohol abuse) among teenagers? What drives these problems and what responses are needed?
20. Do you have a system for monitoring teenagers that are engaging in these behaviours, in terms of sexual activity, drug or alcohol abuse, or crime?
21. What do you see as the role of family income in these problems? We are interested in understanding ways in which access to the Child Support Grants may be helping to reduce risky social behaviour among teens. Have you observed this or have any thoughts on this question? What about increasing these behaviours?
22. Do you observe teenage girls going out with older men? What do you think that the role of money or gifts plays in these relationships?

## KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW GUIDE (4)

### COMMUNITY LEVEL OR OTHER KNOWLEDGEABLE PERSON (E.G. PENSION COMMITTEE MEMBER; LOCAL COUNCILLOR; LOCAL COMMUNITY LEADER; OR OTHER PERSON WITH STRONG KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE CSG IN THIS COMMUNITY)

Topic (1) CSG applications, and the role of different factors in explaining grant knowledge, applications and follow-up, and CSG participation

1. How long have you worked in this community or been part of this community?
2. Some people in this community enrolled their children in the CSG very young: when the child was less than two years old. Others waited until the child was between four and seven years old. What do you think explains why some people enrol children early and others enrol them late? *[Follow up]* Is this due to characteristics of the families themselves, or the government systems involved with outreach and application processes?
3. What have been more recent changes to the CSG with respect to outreach, application and administrative processes, i.e. helping to get people enrolled? What do you think of these changes?
4. What further changes do you think are needed?

Topic (2) Spending and access to services

5. What difference does the CSG make in people's lives?
6. Does the CSG become part of people's general budgets, or do you think that they see it or use it in different ways?
7. What difference do you think that the CSG makes in the empowerment of women?
8. What difference do you think that the CSG makes with respect to children's school enrolment vs drop-out, and the number of school days that they miss?
9. What difference do you think that the CSG makes with respect to people's health care?
10. What do you think of the new regulation requiring that the children of CSG are documented as attending school?
11. Is it your understanding that people will lose the grant if their children are not shown to be in school?
12. How easy or difficult do you think it will be for the school here to document children's school attendance?

Topic (4) Life circumstances of and issues concerning teenage girls and boys

13. What are the main risks that teenagers face in this community?

14. What difference do you think the CSG makes with respect to these risks?

**Topic (5) Social welfare services and early childhood development**

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15. Do social welfare officials or staff assist with the CSG process in any way? *[Follow up]* For example, do they ever help to identify families in need of the CSG but who have not applied? Does the CSG programme help in any way to identify households where there is a need for child protection? Can you think of any other way in which social welfare services could increase grant access or the CSG could facilitate access to social welfare services?
16. Is there a crèche in this area? What difference do you think having the CSG makes to people using this crèche?

# ANNEXURE 3 NVIVO CODE LIST FOR CSG QUALITATIVE STUDY

## TOPIC 1A. ACCESSING THE CSG IN THE PAST

Administrative data available  
 Applying for CSG  
     Documentation  
 Assistance with grants  
 CSG training received by welfare officials  
 Experience at welfare office  
     Administrative burdens  
     Positive experience  
     Treated badly  
 How heard about grant  
 Misinformation  
     Documentation  
     Family structure  
     Family tension  
     Other  
     Travel problems  
 Misunderstandings of CSG  
 Overcoming obstacles  
 Process of obtaining documents  
 Processing of CSG  
     Means test  
     Obstacles faced by welfare office  
 Re-applications  
 Reasons for application rejection  
     Child too old  
     Do not know  
     Do not meet means test  
     Inadequate documentation  
 Reasons for not applying sooner  
     Documentation  
     Family structure  
     Family tensions  
     Length of time to apply  
     Misinformation  
     Misunderstandings about CSG  
     Other  
     Travel problems  
 Reasons for not re-applying

Sources of grant information  
     Family or friend  
     Media  
     NGO or community meeting  
     Other  
     Social worker  
 Understanding of eligibility  
     Eligibility by age  
     Eligibility by poverty  
 Understanding of where to pick up grant

## TOPIC 1B. ACCESSING THE GRANT NOW

Assistance  
 Children and the CSG  
 Current processing of CSG grants  
     Applicants by age  
     Fluctuations in processing  
     Formal changes to rules  
     Fraudulent applicants or bribes  
     Informal changes in practice  
     Means test  
     Sufficiency of staff  
     Use of technology  
 Current sources of grant info  
     Family or friend  
     Grant jamboree  
     Health care workers  
     Ability to facilitate access  
     Knowledge of families with CSG  
     Information campaigns  
     Media  
     NGO or community meeting  
     Other  
     School  
     Ability to facilitate access  
     Knowledge of families with CSG  
     Social worker  
 Documentation required  
 Easier now  
 Grant access for teens

Aware of changing age limits  
 Communications re new age limits  
 Cut offs of aging children  
 Teen influence on application  
 Why not applied for teen  
 Lack of documents  
 Low motivation  
 Other  
 Unaware of eligibility  
 Improvement suggested  
 Info changes observed over time  
     Other  
 Information campaigns  
 Means test  
 Other  
 Re-applying  
 Reasons eligible do not apply  
     Documentation  
     Family structure  
     Family tensions  
     Misinformation  
     Other  
     Travel problems  
     Unaware of eligibility  
 Reasons for not receiving the CSG  
 Reasons for rejections  
 Still difficult  
 Suggestions for improvements  
 Support for application  
 Where to pick up grant

## TOPIC 2. PAY-POINT

Assistance with problems  
 Failure to pick up CSG  
 Long waits  
 Problems other  
 Required to spend money at distributor  
     For purchases  
     Repayment of credit  
 Suggestions  
 Where they pick up grant

## TOPIC 3A. USE OF GRANT

Differences between CSG and other money  
 Sharing money  
     Gives some to young children  
     Gives some money to man  
     Gives some to teen children  
     Spends all money herself  
     Misuse of CSG  
 Spending decisions  
     Empowering effects on women  
     Other joint decisions  
     Women consults male partner  
     Women decides alone  
 What grant enables  
     Beauty  
     Clothing  
     Food  
     Health care  
     Investments  
     Looking for job  
     School expenses  
     Transport  
 What NBs would spend grant on  
 Who the CSG is for

## TOPIC 3B. EDUCATION

Differences between boys and girls education  
     Importance of education for boys  
     Importance of education for girls  
 How CSG helps with schooling  
     Improves diet  
     New attendance requirement  
     Pays school expenses  
     Relieves need to work  
 Keeping children in school  
     Actions currently taken  
     What is needed  
 Level of education  
 Parental involvement  
 Pregnancy  
 School expenses  
 Why children drop out of school  
     Caring for family members

Don't like school  
 Drugs and alcohol  
 Other  
 Other social factors  
 Abuse  
 Pregnancy  
 School expenses  
 To be with men or boys  
 Work  
 Why children miss school days  
 Caring for family members  
 Drugs and alcohol  
 Other  
 Prostitution  
 School expenses  
 Social other  
 To be with men or boys  
 Work

### TOPIC 3C. CHILD LABOUR

Reasons for child labour  
   Household necessity  
   Preference of child  
 Type of work children do  
 Work after school hours  
 Work during school hours

### TOPIC 3D. HEALTH

Birth registration at childbirth  
 CSG Application at birth  
 CSG information during pre-natal visits  
 Experiences at clinic  
 Health centre role in accessing CSG  
 Health fees  
 How CSG help access health care  
   Discounted fees from CSG

### TOPIC 4. TEENAGE RISK

How CSG affects risky behaviour  
 Main problems of teens  
   Crime  
   Dating older men  
   Role of money

Drug and alcohol  
 Gangs  
 Girls' problems  
 HIV  
*Naope*  
 Other  
 Pregnancy  
 Prostitution  
 Arranged by guardian  
 Voluntary  
 STIs  
 Monitoring teen behaviour  
 Power dynamics between girls and boys  
   Role of money  
 Risky sexual practices  
   Reasons for risk taking  
   Role of money  
 Role of poverty in problems  
 Services for teens

### TOPIC 5A. SOCIAL WELFARE RESOURCES

Birth registration  
 CSG registration at birth  
 Interactions with social workers  
 Links between CSG and SWS  
 Problems experienced  
 What they talk about  
 Where they meet social workers

### TOPIC 5B. EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

ECD services in community  
 Fees for ECD services  
 How CSG helps access ECD

### TOPIC 6. MISCELLANEOUS

General view of CSG  
 Negative perceptions general  
 Other  
 Positive perceptions general  
 Questions asked by respondent  
 Reasons for wanting grant  
 Whether CSG should be continued  
 Work profile of key informant



