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# INVESTIGATING THE IMPLICATIONS OF TEN YEARS OF DEMOCRACY FOR WOMEN:

## The Role of the Department of Social Development<sup>1</sup>

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### 1. Introduction

The overarching aim of the department of Social Development (DSD)<sup>3</sup>, formally the department of Welfare, is to provide, “...*comprehensive social protection services against vulnerability and poverty...*” (National Treasury, 2004a:493). In the first analysis that the Women’s Budget Initiative conducted on this department, the authors recognized that “*welfare as a sector is doubly gendered*” as not only are the primary recipients of these services women and children, but women are also the primary care-givers (Lund et al, 1996:97). Recognition was also given to the fact that this department employs predominantly women. The department of Social Development undoubtedly has a critical role to play in addressing gender inequalities. This paper sets out to explore the extent to which the department of Social Development has fulfilled this role.

The 1997 White Paper for Social Welfare dedicates an entire section to women-the obstacles they face and a strategy to guide the department’s response to gender inequity. The response recognizes the special needs of women in relation to poverty, marriage, ownership, access, violence, reproduction, care giving responsibilities and developmental programmes. In trying to reform the department in line with principles of equity and, more importantly, in trying to establish initiatives that are relevant to the needs of the people of South Africa, the new concept that was introduced was ‘*developmental*’ social welfare. This represents a departure from the policy and practice of previous years when people were heavily reliant on welfare pay-outs, and approaches welfare as a mechanism that assists people in helping themselves. (Budlender, 2000: 34).

Access to social security is a right that is constitutionally enshrined in Section 28 of the South African Constitution, “*Everyone has the right to have access to social security, including if they are unable to support themselves and their dependants, appropriate social assistance* (Republic of South Africa, 1996:13). In terms of policy developments within the Social Development arena, the department has undergone a number of changes, some of which reflect the conceptual shift. Some of the key developments include, for example, the 1997 White Paper for Social Welfare, which spelt out the new paradigm and strategic focus of the department. One of the main reforms by the

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<sup>3</sup> In July 2000 the Department of Welfare changed its name to the Department of Social Development in keeping with the conceptual shift to ‘developmental’ social welfare.

department has been the introduction of the Child Support grant. Introduced as a result of the Lund Committee investigation, this grant was implemented in 1998. Although the Child Support grant is smaller, in monetary terms than the State Maintenance Grant, which it replaced, it has since become the biggest grant in terms of the number of beneficiaries it reaches. Another development was the adoption of the Ten Point Plan in 2000. The strategic vision of the department is now informed by this Plan, which outlines the main priorities to be tackled between 2000 and 2005. It identifies the priority areas, for example, HIV/AIDS, poverty, and a range of other social ills. Some of the more gender-sensitive programmes which target women are the Poverty Relief and Victim Empowerment programmes, implemented in 1996 and 1997 respectively. There have also been reforms that have been difficult to implement, a prime example of which is the commonly referred to 80:20 Policy. According to this policy, the public welfare sector committed itself to allocating 80 per cent of total Social Development resources towards social security grant payments and the balance to the other programmes it is responsible for (Department of Social Development, 2003a, b). Over time, however, the proportion of resources consumed by the social security grant component of the Social Development budget has consistently crowded out expenditure on the rest of the department's programmes.

Ten years into democracy, how has the department fared in bringing about an improvement in the lives of the majority of people and women in particular? While there has been significant progress in terms of policy development, implementation has been uneven. Poverty and unemployment remain the major challenges facing government. Even though the social security net has been expanded to provide 7.4 million beneficiaries with assistance, unemployment as a percentage of the economically active population, currently stands at about 42 per cent<sup>4</sup>, and poverty affects roughly 40 per cent<sup>5</sup> of the population (Gelb, 2003:8 and Landman et al, 2003:7).

Budget allocations are one of the most direct indications of the stance of government regarding important issues such as poverty, gender discrimination and other aspects of governance demanding attention and their share of available but limited resources. Not only is the implementation of a policy contingent upon available funds, but shifts in budgetary allocations can be indicative of changing Government priorities. In this paper, we focus on the pace of change by drawing on an analysis of the Social Development budget and the expenditure trends for the fiscal years 2002/03 to 2005/06. In addition we also examine how effectively services are delivered, highlighting possible pitfalls that hinder the more efficient workings of the department.

Budget analysis provides an insightful tool in assessing how close Government is in achieving particular goals. In assessing how far the department has come in addressing gender inequalities, we concentrate on those programmes that respond more directly to the realities facing women in particular:

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<sup>4</sup> This percentage is based on the broad definition of unemployment.

<sup>5</sup> The poverty rate is based on the use of the Minimum Living Level (MLL) of R1 489 per month, per household of 4.7 people (Landman et al, 2003:4).

- Violence – Family and Victim Empowerment and Shelters for Women sub-programmes,
- Poverty alleviation – Social Assistance Programme focusing on five grants, and
- Poverty alleviation – Development and Support Services Programme focusing on programmes for HIV/Aids and poverty relief

This paper is divided into the following sections:

- Section 2 delineates the social and economic context within which women and children in South Africa live,
- Section 3 assesses certain aspects of change intended to promote gender equity that have occurred within the Department’s organizational structure
- Section 4 examines the budget by looking at consolidated, national and provincial social development expenditure.
- Section 5 focuses on service delivery which occurs mainly at the provincial level. However, some attention is given to programmes for which the national department is responsible for financing and overseeing implementation.
- Section 6 consists of concluding remarks that highlights critical questions that need further consideration

## 2. Placing women in context

### *Box 1. Some Statistics regarding the status of women and children:*

- Women experience higher unemployment rates than men, who also receive a higher hourly wage
- Employed women spent more time than employed men engaging in unpaid tasks, e.g. collecting water
- Between the age groups of 25 years and older, 18% of African women have no form of formal education
- 80% of female headed households have no wage earners
- 2 out of 5 African households are headed by women
- 3 out of 5 female-headed households are poor
- 70% of South African children under 6 years of age live below the poverty line
- 93% of all children living in poverty are African, 6% Coloured, 0.5% Indian and 0.5% white
- the majority of children living in poor conditions are denied their right to basic nutrition, shelter, basic health care and welfare;
- the majority of these children are living in households with only one parent, in most cases the parent is a woman

*(Budlender, 2002 and Gender Advocacy Programme, 2001)*

Women the world over encounter oppressive social practices and prejudices. The degree to which each woman experiences this differs because of a number of factors. Within the South African context, core factors that shape women’s experiences of oppression and vulnerability to oppression are race as well as geographical location. Black female-headed households within rural areas are seen as among the most vulnerable groups within South Africa today. Moreover, because women usually assume the role of primary care-giver to their children, the well-being of women is inextricably linked to the well-being of children.

In addition to the realities outlined in Box 1, a number of additional factors also shape the context in which the department of Social Development provides services. Lund (1995:98), in a previous analysis of the Welfare budget identified a list of important characteristics relating to the context within which welfare services operate:

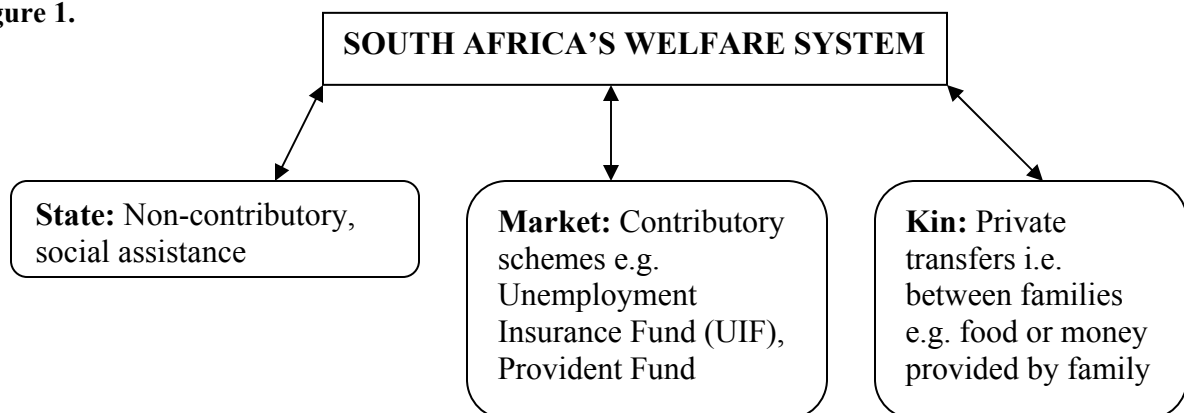
- While there is a very young population, there is also an older population that is living longer;
- There are millions of children who do not receive continuous care from either of their parents;
- More children are being orphaned through HIV/AIDS;
- More older people will need to be cared for and will more likely become caregivers as a result of HIV/AIDS;
- Increasing unemployment leads to more people requiring assistance from government;
- Increasing numbers of people for whom the distinction between work and home is fuzzy - production and reproduction takes place at home or near home

*(Lund et al, 1995:98)*

### 3. The Department of Social Development

Prior to 1994, 14 different departments, divided along racial lines, administered unequal social service delivery in South Africa and distributed resources inefficiently. After 1994, South Africa has adopted a Social Welfare policy that is based on principles of equity and non-discrimination. The South African welfare system should be viewed in terms of an overall framework that consists of the following components: the **state**, the **market** and what is referred to as **kin** (Seekings, 2002:7).

**Figure 1.**



In this paper, we concentrate on the welfare scheme controlled by the state i.e. non-contributory social assistance. Through the Social Development directorate, the state-controlled welfare system provides social protection for very specific groups of people, namely, the young, the old and the disabled. Within the current state system, therefore, if one is not disabled, a pensioner or child (and this does not refer to the legal definition of a child being 18 years old but rather the upper limit of the eligible age for the Child Support grant) then coverage from the various DSD mechanisms is not available. Given South Africa's high unemployment level, the fact that no concessions are made to counter the socio-economic effects of short<sup>6</sup> or long-term unemployment represents a very visible gap in the system. This means that many women and children receive no social protection from the state.

Despite the positive changes that have occurred within the department, the extent to which it responds to the needs of women and children is questionable. Concerns are raised whether the department is able to address gender inequities adequately within its own structures and in society. In a bid to advance issues relating to gender equity, three years ago the department established a Gender Focal Point (GFP). The location of the GFP has been reshuffled a couple of times- currently, the unit is situated within the Director-General's office- a move aimed at adding more 'muscle' to this unit. The main challenges facing the GFP can be summarized as follows:

- lack of commitment to implement recommendations made by the GFP: these recommendations are not viewed as areas of primary concern,
- recommendations to mainstream gender issues within various Social Development programmes are often viewed as personal attacks on managers,
- personnel shortages: at present this unit has one permanent member, that of the Deputy-Director,
- a consequence of the personnel shortage has meant that provincial Social Development departments are unable to establish similar GFP's due to the inability of the National Department to both facilitate and support the process at provincial level,
- budgetary challenges: whilst this unit makes proposals regarding its budgetary requirements, for certain of its activities it is dependant on contributions from other Directorates, a process that is not very effective, particularly if the manager of the programme is not gender sensitive,
- lack of technical support<sup>7</sup>

It seems therefore that while the issue of gender equality and the promotion thereof *is* formally recognized, in terms of the extent to which it substantively informs policy-making and budgetary allocations within the Department itself, more vigorous involvement is very limited.

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<sup>6</sup> Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) which forms part of the Market based contributory scheme, provides for short-terms unemployment.

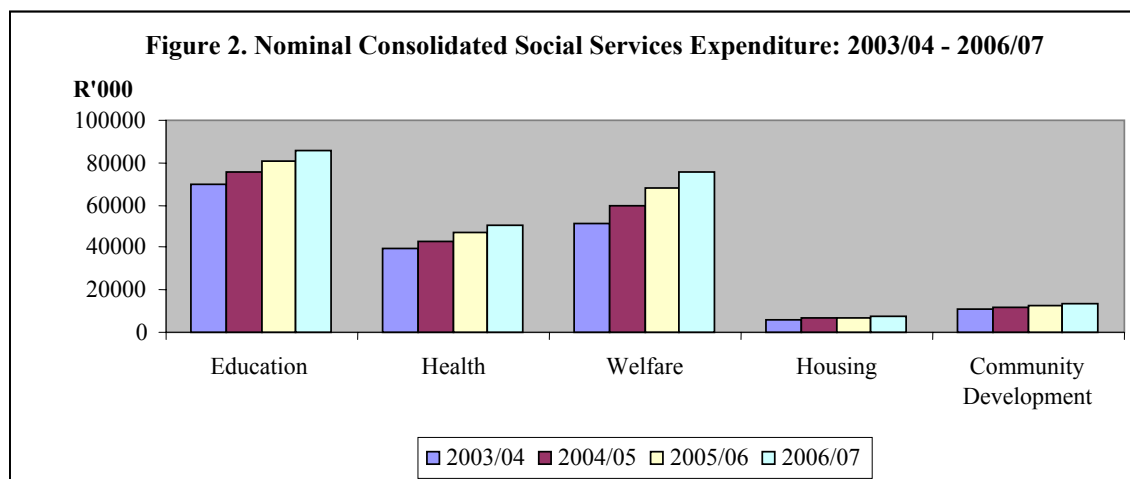
<sup>7</sup> Communication with Department of Social Development, 2004

## 4. Overview of the budget

This section analyses the Social Development budget by examining firstly the consolidated budget, secondly the National Department's budget and thirdly the provincial budgets. The importance of Social Development as a tool to alleviate poverty is increasingly evident, particularly at the provincial level, where service delivery takes place. The Social Development function is a concurrent fiscal responsibility, whereby the national sphere is responsible for policy-making and monitoring and the provinces are responsible for delivering services in accordance with national guidelines.

As noted by Lund et al (1995:99), during the period 1991 to 1994, the welfare budget was one of the fastest growing expenditure items on the national budget. This was mainly due to the attainment of parity in pensions by 1993. Since then, the Social Development<sup>8</sup> budget has been experiencing strong growth rates in both nominal and real terms and grew from R 12,1 billion in 1992/93 to R 42 billion in 2002/03<sup>9</sup>. This reflects an average annual real growth rate of approximately 5.0 per cent over the period 1992/93 to 2002/03. As a proportion of the total national budget, Social Development grew from 12.0 per cent in 1992/93 to 16.0 per cent of the total budget in 2002/03 (National Treasury, 2003a).

Relative to Education, Health and Housing - the other main Social Service votes - Social Development reflects a strong real annual average growth rate of 5 per cent compared to 3 per cent for Education and 2 per cent for Health over the period 1992/93 to 2002/03. This is largely due to the introduction of the CSG in 1998 and the consequent age extension.



Source: National Treasury, 2004b:144. Own calculations.

Figure 2 above illustrates the trend of strong growth in the social services and is a reflection of the reprioritization of spending.

<sup>8</sup> In the Budget Review, the social development budget vote is called welfare.

<sup>9</sup> The 2002/03 includes social insurance such as UIF.

#### 4.1. Consolidated Social Development Expenditure

In the 2003/04 financial year, projected consolidated<sup>10</sup> welfare expenditure, as shown in Table 1, is R48.6 billion. This translates into 16.4 per cent of government expenditure after interest payments. Welfare expenditure is the third largest spending category after education and debt repayments. The National Department is allocated 4 per cent of the consolidated welfare budget with 96 per cent going to the provinces.

Table 1 introduces consolidated welfare spending for the 2003/04 Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF).

<b>Table 1. Consolidated Welfare spending over the MTEF, 2002/03 to 2005/06 (R'000)</b>						
	<b>2002/03 Revised Est.</b>	<b>2003/04 Voted</b>	<b>2004/05 MTEF</b>	<b>2005/06 MTEF</b>	<b>Nominal growth 2002/03- 2003/04</b>	<b>Real growth 2002/03- 2003/04</b>
Welfare	41966	48652	55314	63004	15.9	10.0

*National Treasury, 2003a:155.*

Consolidated Social Development expenditure grows by 15.9 per cent in nominal terms. The Social Development allocation reflects a significant increase in 2003/04 which is due mainly to the extension of the age range of the Child Support grant. Over the MTEF period, the Social Development budget continues to grow in nominal terms. However, when one makes provision for inflation we see that growth decreases from the nominal 15.9 per cent to 10 per cent for 2003/04 in real terms. The nominal growth rate declines towards the end of the MTEF and this could be attributed to the completion of the progressive phase-in of the extension of the CSG in 2006/07.

#### 4.2. National Social Development Expenditure

The National Department of Social Development's projected budget for 2003/04 is R1,9 billion. This budget has grown significantly over the last few years due in large part to a range of special allocations such as the conditional grants for implementing the Child Support Grant, poverty relief allocations and the special appropriation of R2 billion in 2001/02 for social grant arrears (National Treasury, 2003b).

The national department's budget is organized into six programmes<sup>11</sup>. Of the six programmes, we focus on programme 4: Welfare Services Transformation, specifically its Families and Victim Empowerment sub-programme<sup>12</sup>. We also give attention to

<sup>10</sup> Combined national and provincial expenditure.

<sup>11</sup> In the Estimates of National Expenditure 2004, the department of Social Development's budget is organized into nine programmes.

<sup>12</sup> In the department of Social Development's budget for 2004 MTEF, this sub-programme falls within programme 6 Children, Families and Youth Development.

programme 5: Development Implementation Support as it here that the sub-programme Poverty Eradication is located<sup>13</sup>.

*Families and Victim Empowerment*

Table 2 illustrates that the Families and Victim Empowerment sub-programme is R2 million for 2003/04, this translates into 12.2 per cent of the Welfare Services Transformation budget. The specific purpose of this sub-programme is to develop and monitor policies in the area of Families and Victim Empowerment. While there is a significant increase of 25% from R 1,5 million in 2002/03 to R 2 million in 2003/04, with marginal increases over the MTEF, the overall allocation is indicative of the low priority of this sub-programme. It should be noted that the allocations towards Victim Empowerment forms only one aspect of the Families and Victim Empowerment sub-programme, hence the amount shown in Table 2 is not indicative of the funding solely for the purposes of Victim Empowerment initiatives.

<b>Table 2. National Department of Social Development expenditure on women, 2002/03 to 2005/06</b>				
	<b>2002/03</b>	<b>2003/04</b>	<b>2004/05</b>	<b>2005/06</b>
	<b>R'000</b>	<b>R'000</b>	<b>R'000</b>	<b>R'000</b>
Sub-programme: Families and Victim Empowerment	1592	2050	2080	2100
Total: Welfare Services Transformation	13061	16681	17978	18446
Families and Victim Empowerment as a proportion of total Welfare Services Transformation (%)	12.2	12.3	11.6	11.4

*National Treasury, 2003b:427.*

*Poverty Alleviation Fund*

In 1997 the government introduced the Poverty Relief Allocation Fund (PRF) housed in the National Treasury, with the key objective of job creation. The national Department of Social Development has been allocated R640 million in total over the seven years of the Funds existence. Women, youth and people with disabilities are prioritized in the poverty alleviation programme (National Treasury 2000).

<sup>13</sup> In the 2004 budget for this department, Poverty Eradication sub-programme is found within programme 7: Poverty Alleviation.



	1997/98	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04
	R'000	R'000	R'000	R'000	R'000	R'000	R'000
Poverty Alleviation Allocations	50	203	40	120	50	100	71

*National Treasury 1997/98 – 2002a, b:147.*

Initially there was under-spending in this programme, however systems have been put in place to manage this allocation subsequently. The PRF was reviewed in 2003 and there are no further allocations for this programme beyond the 2003/04 financial year. Some programmes that were developed within this programme will become part of the Expanded Public Works Programme.

### 4.3. Provincial Social Development Budgets

At the provincial level, Social Development often has the third largest budget vote after the Education and Health votes.

Province	2002/03 Est. Act	2003/04 Voted	2004/05 MTEF	2005/06 MTEF
	%	%	%	%
Eastern Cape	27.8	27.7	27.8	29.6
Free State	20.9	22.1	23.3	24.7
Gauteng	16.4	16.9	18.8	21.0
Kwazulu- Natal	25.0	24.1	26.0	27.7
Limpopo	23.0	23.3	25.2	26.9
Mpumalanga	20.2	21.6	22.7	23.7
North West	22.2	23.8	25.2	26.5
Northern Cape	25.4	23.5	23.9	24.1
Western Cape	22.7	23.6	24.9	25.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>22.6</b>	<b>23.0</b>	<b>24.4</b>	<b>25.9</b>

*Source: Provincial budget statements 2003/04. Own calculations.*

Table 4 illustrates the percentage of total provincial expenditure that each of the nine provinces allocates to their respective Social Development budgets. On average, the provincial share allocated to Social Development is projected to increase from 23 per cent in 2002/03 to 26 per cent by the end of the medium term. The main reason for this projected increase is the progressive extension of the age range of the Child Support Grant, to fund children up until the age of 14. The table also shows that the province which allocates the largest share to Social Development over the MTEF is the Eastern Cape Province, whose share for 2003/04 is 27.7 per cent and increases to 29.6 per cent in the outer year of the MTEF. Their share allocated to Social Development is consistently higher relative to all the other provinces up to 2005/06. The provincial shares allocated to Social Development correlates with the findings of Streak (2002:1) with regard to the provinces with the highest concentration of the country's income poor children, namely KwaZulu-Natal, the Eastern Cape, Limpopo and the North-West Province.

*Provincial Social Development Budgets over the medium term*

Table 5 reflects the provincial Social Development budgets over the medium term 2003/04 to 2006/07.

<b>Table 5: Provincial Social Development Expenditure and Growth Rates, 2002/03 – 2005/06</b>							
	<b>2002/03 Est. Actual</b>	<b>2003/04 Voted</b>	<b>2004/05 MTEF</b>	<b>2005/06 MTEF</b>	<b>Nominal growth 2002/03- 2003/04</b>	<b>Real growth 2002/03- 2003/04</b>	<b>Annual average growth rate 2002/03- 2005/06</b>
<b>Provinces</b>	<b>R'000</b>	<b>R'000</b>	<b>R'000</b>	<b>R'000</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Eastern Cape	6425476	8250626	9146029	10117678	28.4	21.8	26.8
Free State	2099937	2907978	3163077	3635572	38.5	31.4	32.3
Gauteng	3974838	5441434	5733768	6943032	36.9	29.9	35.0
KwaZulu Natal	6872462	9058106	10354882	12252438	31.8	25.1	33.2
Limpopo	4289554	5514253	6249446	7480241	28.6	22.0	32.8
Mpumalanga	2040079	2663143	3139403	3625375	30.5	23.9	31.6
North west	2615643	3479114	4046007	4838964	33.0	26.2	34.7
Northern Cape	910810	1155776	1114561	1242257	26.9	20.4	24.5
Western Cape	3138474	3826090	4493426	4987443	21.9	15.7	26.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>32367273</b>	<b>42296520</b>	<b>47440599</b>	<b>55123000</b>	<b>30.7</b>	<b>24.0</b>	<b>31.2</b>

Source: Provincial budget statements, 2003/04. Own calculations.

Table 5 shows that, on average, provincial allocations to Social Development have grown by 30.7 per cent and 24 per cent in nominal and real terms respectively from 2002/03 to 2003/04. This reflects strong growth over the medium term. It is projected that provincial Social Development departments will have an annual average real growth rate of 31.2 per cent. Provinces demonstrating the strongest real growth between 2002/03 and 2003/04 are the Free State at 31.4 per cent and Gauteng at 29.9 per cent and are projected to remain strong until 2005/06. The poorer provinces reflect growth in real terms over the medium term - the Eastern Cape grows by 26.8 per cent, Kwazulu/Natal by 33.2 per cent and Limpopo by 22.0 per cent. This is a positive sign as these provinces have more pensioners, disabled persons and young children.

*Provincial Allocations to Programmes*

Within provincial Social Development budgets the core service delivery programmes are Social Assistance, Social Welfare Services and Development and Support Services. Table 6 provides information on the expenditure allocated to these three programmes.

<b>Table 6: Total Provincial Allocations to the Core Social Development Programmes: 2003/04 to 2006/07</b>						
<b>Programmes</b>	<b>2003/04</b>	<b>2004/05</b>	<b>2005/06</b>	<b>2006/07</b>	<b>Real average annual change between 2003/04 and 2006/07</b>	<b>2003/04 allocation as % of total provincial Social Development allocations<sup>14</sup></b>
	<b>R'000</b>	<b>R'000</b>	<b>R'000</b>	<b>R'000</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Social Assistance	38805344	43441821	50834190	57027888	7.9	91.7
Social Welfare Services	1855604	2198481	2372563	2642899	6.9	4.4
Development & Support Services	616725	662398	693160	736452	0.7	1.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>41277673</b>	<b>46302700</b>	<b>53899913</b>	<b>60407239</b>	<b>7.8</b>	<b>97.6</b>

Source: Provincial Budget Statements, 2003/04. Own calculations.

Of the total provincial Social Development budgets for 2003/04, 91.7 per cent is allocated to the social assistance programme, which is responsible for social grant payments and clearly dominates the budgets. The development and support services programme which is responsible for creating an environment that enables community and civil society organisations to participate in social development processes receives the smallest proportion of the total provincial social development allocations, 1.5 per cent and is projected to grow marginally over the medium term. The social welfare services programme, which is responsible for providing funding, guidance and support to social welfare service providers (including Non-profit organisations) is allocated 4.4 per cent for 2003/04 and reflects real growth of 6.9 per cent over the medium term. Continued growth in beneficiary numbers due to the age extension of the CSG together with increasing numbers of disability and foster grants will continue to exert upward pressure on the Social Development budget. However, once this function is taken up by the proposed National Social Security Agency it is not clear how this will affect social welfare services and development and support services allocations and whether greater fiscal space will be created.

#### *The Social Assistance Programme*

It is important to give attention to the social assistance programme as it is responsible for social grant payments and is the largest programme within provincial Social Development budgets. We look at social assistance allocations as a percentage of the total Social Development budget across all provinces. Table 7 below illustrates the dominance of these provincial allocations.

<sup>14</sup> This calculation uses the aggregate total of provincial Social Development allocations for 2003 in Table 5 above.

Province	2002/03 Est. Act	2003/04 Voted	2004/05 MTEF	2005/06 MTEF
	%	%	%	%
Eastern Cape	94.2	93.8	94.2	94.9
Free State	90.0	88.2	89.2	90.4
Gauteng	84.8	83.4	85.1	86.7
KwaZulu-Natal	93.2	93.1	93.7	94.3
Limpopo	95.6	94.6	95.4	95.9
Mpumalanga	92.8	92.2	92.8	93.3
North West	91.6	91.0	91.9	91.8
Northern Cape	88.4	85.5	85.5	85.8
Western Cape	85.1	85.3	86.8	87.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>91.4</b>	<b>90.7</b>	<b>91.6</b>	<b>92.3</b>

Source: Provincial budget statements 2003/04 (own calculations)

All nine provinces allocate over 80 per cent of their Social Development budgets to the social assistance programme. The poorest provinces, Limpopo (94.6 per cent), Eastern Cape (93.8 per cent), KwaZulu-Natal (93.1 per cent), allocate substantially larger proportions of their budgets to the social assistance programme. The better resourced provinces such as the Western Cape (85.5 per cent) and Gauteng (83.4 per cent) allocate the least to the social security programme. This reflects that these provinces have lower numbers of people that need support.

Also of importance when looking at social assistance is the value of the grants. The Old Age Pension, Disability and Care Dependency grants have the highest value of R700, while the Child Support grant at R160 has the second lowest value after the Grant in Aid which is R150. In order to appreciate the current real purchasing power of these amounts, inflation must be taken into consideration.

Grant Type	Monetary Value of individual grants deflated <sup>16</sup> using 2003/04 as the base year						
	Jul-97	Jul-98	Jul-99	Jul-00	Jul-01	Apr-02	Apr-03
Grant for the aged, disabled & Care dependency	R716	R697	R692	R666	R660	R653	R700
Child support grant	n/a <sup>17</sup>	R142	R133	R123	R127	R137	R160
Foster child grant	R518	R498	R497	R481	R474	R474	R500
Grant-in-aid	R122	R128	R125	R123	R127	R126	R150
War Veterans	R744	R722	R715	R688	R680	R672	R718

Source: Communication with National Department of Social Development, 2003.

<sup>15</sup> As of 2002, the information provided by the Department is cited according to the value of the grant as at April of that particular financial year.

<sup>16</sup> The deflators used were as follows: 1997=0.656158, 1998=0.7034016, 1999=0.751936, 2000=0.810587, 2001=0.864086, 2002=0.948767, 2003=1.

<sup>17</sup> The Child Support grant only became available in 1998.

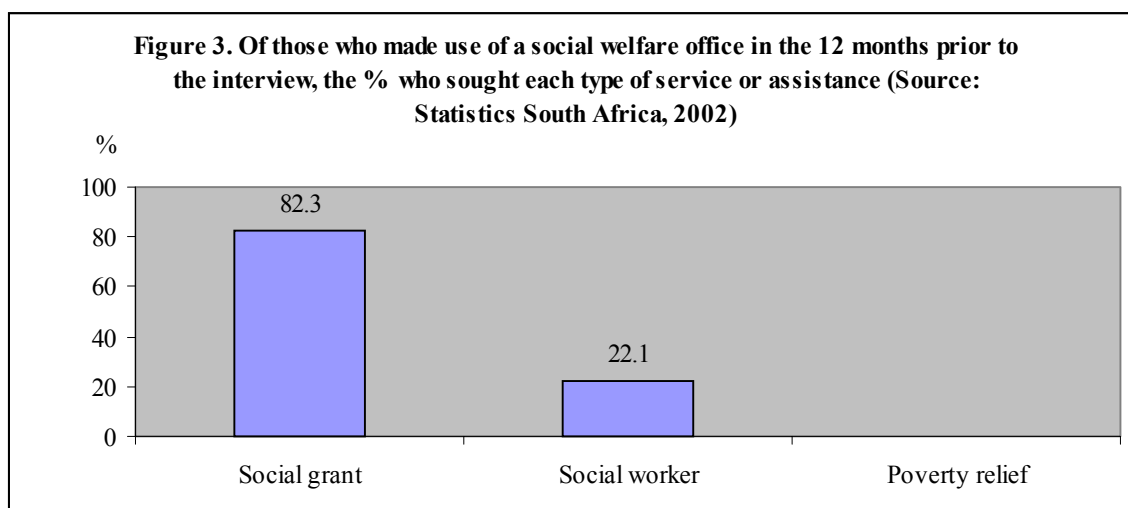
Table 8 illustrates how the real values of the grants have declined since 1997. For example the Old Age Pension, Care Dependency and Disability grants have declined from a real value of R716 in 1997 to R700 in 2003. This raises fears concerning the competitiveness of grants in relation to increases in the standard of living, which was a particular concern in 2002 when the value of the Rand declined and food prices increased (Manuel, 2003). Both these factors contributed significantly to higher inflation, thereby reducing the purchasing power of social grants. For these reasons, government responded by linking grant increases to the rate of inflation (National Treasury, 2002b).

The importance of social security grants in alleviating poverty has been confirmed in the findings of the recent Committee of Inquiry into a Comprehensive System of Social Security for South Africa. The Committee found that in the absence of the social security programme, 58 per cent of South African households would fall below the R401 per adult subsistence line – indicating that many more people (thus more women), over and above current poverty levels would experience poverty (Taylor Report, 2002:59).

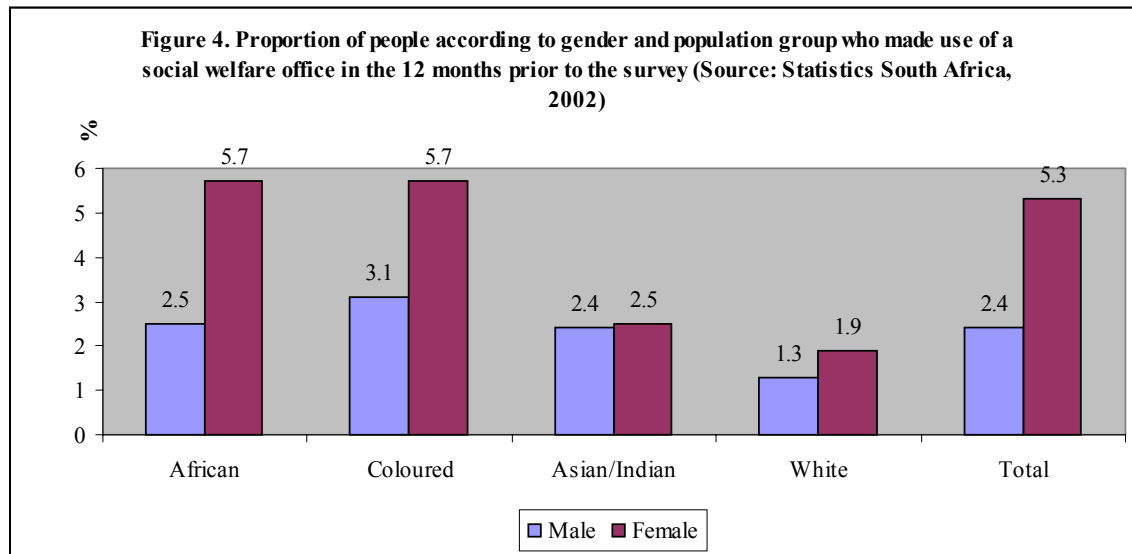
## 5. Service Delivery

Equally important to understanding the structure and allocation of the departmental budget, is to know whether the money allocated is effectively spent. It is therefore necessary to include an analysis of service delivery.

Analysis by the Department itself suggests that the bulk of Social Development ‘consumers’ seek either access or information or advice regarding social security grants as opposed to the other services provided by the Department. The figure below therefore confirms the status of the grant as being a poverty-alleviating tool that more people are aware of. However, a concern stemming from the statistics illustrated in Figure 3 below is that only 2.4 per cent of the sampled population is accessing actual poverty relief programmes. In light of the Department’s vision for welfare services of a more developmental approach, this statistic is cause for concern.



Women in particular, can be described as having three broad statuses with regard to social policy, namely that of service user, service provider and political process participant (Hallet, 1996:11). When it comes to service users, within the Department of Social Development, women are the dominant group as illustrated in Figure 4 below.



We thus see that:

- In total, the percentage of women users exceeded those of male users
- For all population groups this domination of female users was observed
- According to the graph, the percentage of African and Coloured women who made use of a Social Development facility was identical. Given that the African female proportion of the South African population is higher relative to the Coloured female proportion, this trend seems to imply that Coloured women either have greater access to or awareness of services offered by the DSD.
- The difference in the proportions of men and women users for both the Asian/Indian and White population groups was much smaller than those observed for the Black and Coloured groups. That the percentage of African and Coloured women using DSD is higher than both the percentages of White and Asian females may also reflect that the financial position of the former group is more desperate than for White/Asian groups.

The national department of Social Development is mainly responsible for policy development and monitoring of implementation. The actual implementation/ service delivery is the responsibility of the provincial departments. However, there are a few programmes for which the national department is responsible for financing and overseeing the implementation. In this paper, while our primary examination of service delivery is at provincial level, we first provide a brief analysis of the Victim

Empowerment and Shelters for Women sub-programmes, as these are examples of programmes that are financed and overseen by the national department.

## 5.1. Nationally

### 5.1(a). Victim Empowerment Project (VEP)

The goal of this programme is to provide support, protection and empowerment to victims of crime and violence especially women and children. The Department has taken active steps to bring this goal into effect. This includes:

- establishment of one stop centres that address the needs of the victim,
- production of best practice models,
- establishment of a resource directory for victims of domestic abuse and
- facilitation and training of personnel in gender-related issues and prevention of domestic violence (Department of Social Development, 2003f).

Currently there are 212 Victim Empowerment Projects in South Africa.

<b>Table 17: VEP projects according to province</b>	
<b>Province</b>	<b>No. of Projects</b>
Eastern Cape	25
Free State	36
Gauteng	29
KwaZulu-Natal	n/a
Limpopo	27
Mpumalanga	30
Northern Cape	14
North West	16
Western Cape	35
<b>Total</b>	<b>212</b>

*Communication with National Department of Social Development, 2003.*

The provinces with the highest number of VEP's in South Africa are the Free State, Western Cape and Gauteng Provinces. The Northern Cape and North-West Provinces have registered the lowest number of Victim Empowerment Projects, whilst KZN is still in the process of an audit. Various challenges confront this programme. Firstly, lack of financial as well as human resources are the two biggest challenges. Lack of financial resources, in particular, hampers the sustainability and possible improvement of service delivery. Departmental transfers to non-government organisations also put pressure on DSD resources, which seems to be stretched to the limit already. The concern with less/lack of funding to the NGO-sector is that often these organisations are better equipped to reach the poorest of the poor and if funding to them dries up, the potential to alleviate poverty will be lessened.

### 5.1(b). Shelters for women and children

As part of the Department's strategy to empower women and provide them with some form of protection against violence and abuse, a number of shelters have been established to accommodate these women and their children for periods lasting up to 6 months (Social Development, 2001/02: 74).

<b>Province</b>	<b>Subsidised</b>	<b>Unsubsidised</b>
Eastern Cape	2	0
Gauteng	7	13
KwaZulu-Natal	3	6
Mpumalanga	2	0
Northern Cape	1	0
Western Cape	6	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>25</b>

*Source: Department of Social Development, 2001/02:74.*

As is evident from Table 18, the number of shelters is unevenly distributed across the provinces. Some of the poorer provinces, notably Limpopo are not even registered as having this type of facility. In total, the number of unsubsidised shelters is greater than the number of those (partly) funded by the Department. Given projections that allocations available to welfare are going to decline further, inevitably means that there will be added demands on departmental funding and the likely consequence is that the number of shelters could decline.

## 5.2. Provincially

The provincial Social Assistance and the Development and Support Services programme is examined in more detail. The Social Assistance programme is responsible for the provision of the seven social security grants administered by the department, while the Development and Support Services Programme also has the HIV/AIDS and Poverty Relief subprogrammes located there.

### 5.2.1. Social Assistance Programme

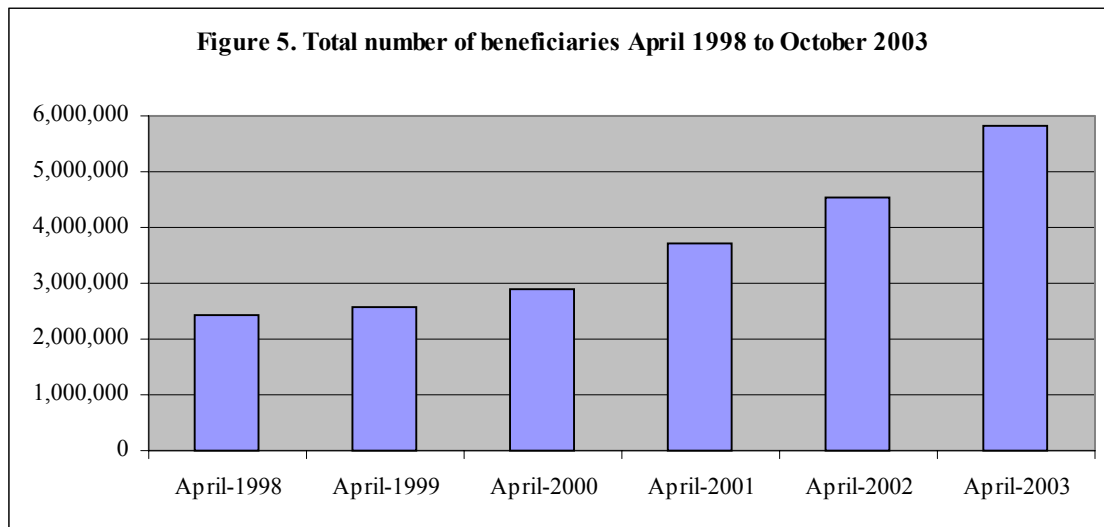
According to a Financial and Fiscal Commission (FFC) definition, social security can be described as direct non-contributory social grants to eligible individuals (FFC, 2000:35). This component of the DSD budget is a right that is constitutionally enshrined and is a consideration in the government's funding formulae used in determining the equitable share allocated to each of the nine provinces.

Historically the trend within the department has been to allocate the bulk of its resources to the Social Assistance programme (this is the programme responsible for social security grant payments). This pattern has continued, and as shown above during 2003/04 the majority of provinces allocated over 90 per cent of their provincial Social Development budgets to this particular programme. Nationally, social assistance remains the largest



direct-intervention programme aimed at alleviating poverty and is responsible for the payment of grants to, amongst others, the aged (1.99 million), children (1.93 million) and people with disabilities (895 000) (Department of Social Development, 2003)<sup>18</sup>. The seven grants that form the sub-programmes within the Social Assistance programme are: the Child Support grant, Old Age Pension grant, the Foster Care and Care Dependency grants, the Disability grant, the War Veterans grant and the Grant in Aid.

Figure 5 below provides a graphical representation of the growth of total grant beneficiaries for the period April 1998 to October 2003. It is clear that the Department has made considerable progress, since 1998, in the amount of people it reaches through its social grants programme. Currently grants reach close on 6 million people and this figure is projected to grow for a number of reasons which include the extension of the CSG age range, anticipated and current effects of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and possible policy changes that will affect children and the aged.



*Source: Communication with Department of Social Development, 2003.*

Table 9 below provides a numerical translation of the progress achieved during this period, disaggregated according to each grant type. From this table it is possible to assess the development of each individual grant.

<sup>18</sup> These figures refer to actual grant beneficiary numbers. National Department of Social Development: Social Welfare System (SOCPEN), Grant Statistics as at 26 February 2003.

<b>Table 9: Number of beneficiaries by grant type for the period April 1998 to October 2003</b>							
<b>Grant Type</b>	<b>April-1998</b>	<b>April-1999</b>	<b>April-2000</b>	<b>April-2001</b>	<b>April-2002</b>	<b>April-2003</b>	<b>Oct-2003</b>
Old Age	1702647	1812695	1848726	1882185	1903085	2009419	2032887
Disability	660198	633778	607537	631758	707920	953965	1125289
Care dependency	10126	16835	22789	30269	36065	58140	71547
Foster care	43906	46496	49843	61268	69423	138763	179771
Child support		34471	348532	1078884	1810977	2630826	3771876
War veterans	10441	9197	7908	6062	5284	4594	4175
Grant-in-aid	9118	8496	10000	9715	10442	12787	16743
<b>Total</b>	<b>2436436</b>	<b>2561968</b>	<b>2895335</b>	<b>3700141</b>	<b>4543196</b>	<b>5808494</b>	<b>7202288</b>

*Source: Communication with Department of Social Development, November 2003.*

Over the period April 1998 to October 2003, there has been an increase of 195.61 per cent in the total number of grant recipients. In terms of the highest number of beneficiaries, the Old Age Pension has had the highest take-up rate. However, as shown in the Table 9 above, as of April 2003, the beneficiary figures for the Child Support grant exceeded that of the Old Age Pension by over 600 000 recipients. This is a direct result of the progressive extension of the age range for the Child Support grant. In addition, take-up rates have demonstrated substantial growth as a result of departmental initiatives such as national media campaigns, partnerships with businesses and stakeholders and monitoring/feedback of grant take-up rates (Department of Social Development, 2002/03:40).

What follows is a brief look at some of the difficulties experienced in terms of the administration of the social security grant system and an analysis of the Child Support grant subprogramme, the Old Age Pension subprogramme, the Foster Care and Care Dependency subprogrammes and the Disability subprogramme.

### **5.2.1(a). Grant Administration**

Transforming the social security system in terms of making grants more accessible has proven an arduous task for the Department. Whilst some progress has been made via the Department's registration campaign, problems have been experienced with regard to requirements necessary to access grants, specifically as far as identification documents are concerned. There seems to be a lack of intersectoral cooperation between the Department of Social Development and the Department of Home Affairs (the department responsible for issuing ID documents). Until the Department of Home Affairs issues a potential grant recipient with an ID document, the DSD cannot process a grant application. According to the Social Development annual report for 2002/03, methods of

expediting the processing of birth certificates and ID documents are an issue that the Department is looking into (Social Development, 2002/03: 7). While this problem has been addressed to some extent, challenges remain.

Besides this problem there is also the issue of inefficiency regarding the actual payment of grants. In 1999, the Department sought to establish a new welfare payment service to improve the delivery of social grants. Via a tendering process, each province was allowed to select two private contractors to pay out monthly social security grants. This process of service delivery has not been particularly successful.

Does the Government's proposed Agency for Social Security present a possible solution? According to the *South African Social Security Agency Bill*, the logic behind the establishment of the agency is that it will assume the responsibility associated with social security grants - from administrative duties associated with the grants' system to payments thereof (Social Development, 2003). According to Budget 2003/04, R20 million has been allocated in respect of improvements to the social grant information and payment system. Similar allocations have been made for 2004/05 (R40 million) and 2005/06 (R60 million) (National Treasury, 2003b: 420).

Possible benefits of such an Agency established at national level include better and more equal access to grants (i.e. overcoming provincial disparities relating to accessibility), and the opportunity for the provincial Social Development Departments to focus on the provision of 'developmental' social services (currently provinces devote most of their resources to grant administration and payment processes).

However, we need to recognize that the establishment of new structures does not simply mean that the problems of the previous structure are automatically solved. Therefore, it is unrealistic to expect that the National Agency for Social Security will solve the key shortcomings that currently exist with the administration of social security grants. For example, a 2002 study carried out by IDASA on the obstacles hampering the delivery of grants, found that the main obstacle was lack of staff and staff training (van der Westhuizen and van Zyl, 2002). According to these findings, there is a need for more employees and better skilled employees. The establishment of a brand new body to disburse grants will not address this problem, more especially when employees working at the provincial level are to be the same employees in the national Agency. The scenario sketched is that this Agency will merely inherit the same shortcomings of the past, and in no way overcome the issues of inefficiency. This does not bode well for poor women in particular as their access to grants and the speed of delivery for these grants is not likely to improve.

The following section provides a detailed analysis of the Child Support, Old Age Pension, Foster Care, Care Dependency and Disability grants. These grants are of primary importance to the well-being of women and children in particular.

## **5.2.1(b). Analysis of five Social Development grants: Child Support grant, Old Age Pension grant, the Care Dependency and Foster Care grants and the Disability grant**

### *(i). Child Support Grant*

The Child Support grant has been one of the single most effective mechanisms catering for vulnerable groups of women and children. The Child Support Grant (CSG) replaced the State Maintenance Grant (SMG) in 1998. Some of the negative consequences of the phasing out of the SMG included:

For women:

- insufficient notice of the phasing out of the grant
- family structures were placed under severe strain
- time and finances in accessing the grant often resulted in losing a day's wages
- increasing incidences of starvation (Zain, 2000:18-20).

For children:

- time and finances in accessing the grant often resulted in losing a day's wages
- many children had to drop out of school and extra-mural activities because of the costs associated with these.
- children were starving, as parents were unable to provide for all.
- the suicide rate increased because of the stress associated with suddenly not being able to access and enjoy their basic rights (Zain, 2000:20-21).

Upon the implementation of the CSG, the department targeted 3 million poor children. The performance of the department and current grant beneficiary data indicate that this goal has been achieved (see Table 9 above).

Other important aspects of change include:

- the age eligibility criteria have been extended from 7 to 14 years of age-this is expected to benefit an additional 3.2 million children.
- the amount allocated per child has also increased from R100 per month upon implementation to the current R160 per month (Department of Social Development, 2003b).

Table 10 below provides a gendered breakdown of recipients accessing the grant. The proportion of female recipients *accessing* this grant is higher than the male proportion across all nine provinces. This confirms the notion that caring is perceived as a natural extension of the role of the woman. Differences in the number of girl and boy children benefiting from this grant are marginal in all provinces. It seems that whilst the number of females accessing the CSG is lowest in the Eastern Cape and KZN (which are two of the four provinces which have been identified as containing the bulk of the country's income poor children (Streak, 2002)), these provinces contain the highest rates of girls and boys actually benefiting from the grant.

Initially, for beneficiaries to access the grant, the following criteria were established:

- primary caregiver must have made an effort to secure maintenance from the child's parent/s
- household income applies in the means test

- primary caregiver must agree to take up employment or enter developmental programmes where applicable
- as proof of South African citizenship, identity cards and birth certificates must be presented
- the child must show proof of immunization where the service is available

**Table 10: Proportion of beneficiaries according to province and gender as at October 2003<sup>19</sup>**

Province	Female	Male	Girls	Boys	Total
	%	%	%	%	%
Eastern Cape	39.8	1.1	29.5	29.7	100.0
Free State	43.9	0.7	27.8	27.6	100.0
Gauteng	43.8	0.3	28.0	27.9	100.0
Kwazulu-Natal	39.0	0.6	30.5	30.0	100.0
Limpopo	41.9	0.2	28.9	28.9	100.0
Mpumalanga	42.0	0.3	29.0	28.7	100.0
North-West	42.7	0.3	28.5	28.5	100.0
Northern Cape	42.8	0.6	28.2	28.5	100.0
Western Cape	43.6	0.4	28.0	28.1	100.0

Source: Communication with National Department of Social Development (2003). Own calculations.

Table 11 below provides an analysis of the barriers experienced by women as a result of these criteria:

<sup>19</sup> The category Female and Male refer to the actual beneficiary or recipient of the grant money, whilst the categories girl and boy refer to the actual percentage of children benefiting from the grant (Communication with National Department of Social Development, 2003).

<b>Table 11: Established criteria for the primary care giver to access the Child Support Grant</b>	
<b>Initial criteria</b>	<b>Access barrier</b>
The primary care giver must have made an effort to secure maintenance from the child's parent/s	Inconsideration towards the position of women in violent relationships with the child's father as well as time/monetary costs associated with accessing private maintenance
Household income applies in the means test	When two household members access a pension grant the household income results in the child not being able to access the grant. This is detrimental to the child since two pensioners are often insufficient to meet the needs of an entire household
The primary care giver must agree to take up employment or enter developmental programmes where applicable	There are allegations that fees are charged to join these programmes and in some provinces this joining fee was estimated at R250
As proof of South African citizenship, identity cards and birth certificates must be presented	Discrimination against people from rural areas where the Department of Home Affairs is not accessible
The child must show proof of immunization where the service is available	New regulation: The primary caregiver does not have to prove that the child has been immunized where this service is available

*Zain, 2000:28-30.*

Through lobbying and protest, these access barriers were recognized. The present criteria for the CSG is reflective of a departmental attempt to address these access barriers, and in so doing, place the needs of women and children as a core policy concern. However, two areas of essential redress have still not been fully considered by the department. These are:

- the current amount of the grant: there is no information linking the amount of the grant with what children need. Therefore it is not clear whether or not the amount is sufficient to address the basic needs of children.
- the age limit of 14: Section 28 of the Constitution defines 'child' as a person under the age of 18. In light of this, it can be argued that the department does not adequately respond to the basic needs of all poor children. The children who 'fall through the gaps' as a result of this include HIV/AIDS orphans and street children. Furthermore, children who are currently 12 and 14 years of age will never benefit from the grant. Children who turn 14 years in 2005 will be unable to access the grant when it is phased in, in that year. This translates to approximately 7 million children

between the ages of 14 and 18 not being able to access social security through the CSG (Cassiem and Kgamphe, 2002: 10, 16).

### *Basic Income Grant (BIG)*

A discussion on the Child Support grant would not be complete if one neglected to mention the proposed alternative – the Basic Income Grant (BIG). The debate surrounding the potential impact of this grant began when the Committee of Inquiry into a Comprehensive System of Social Security for South Africa was compiling its report. The Taylor Committee recommended a phased introduction of BIG, guaranteeing every South African citizen R100 per month. There are a number of positions for and against the introduction of the BIG. We look at reasons for each:

Providing a convincing case against the implementation of a transfer to all South Africans (which is the form a BIG would follow), van der Berg and Bredenkamp (2002) provide an explanation of why targeted transfers to very specific groups would be a more suitable option. Using poverty analysis<sup>20</sup>, van der Berg and Bredenkamp show that there are four specific groups of people for whom poverty is more severe, relative to the total population of South Africa:

1. Young children (0-6 years old),
2. Older children (7-14 years old),
3. Discouraged work seekers,
4. Female-headed households

Based on these findings, van der Berg and Bredenkamp conclude that any transfer of funds to these groups would be better targeted than a transfer of funds to the entire population (van der Berg and Bredenkamp, 2002:57). Groups 1 and 2 conform to coverage by the Child Support grant (eligibility has been increased up until the ages of 14). Even though provision to the age range has been made, as noted in the discussion above, gaps in coverage remain. Currently DSD provides no direct coverage for categories 3<sup>21</sup> and 4 above.

Arguing in favour of the implementation of a BIG, Samson<sup>22</sup> finds that based on the current social security system, a 100 per cent take-up rate would only reduce the poverty gap from 23 per cent to 37 per cent. However there are reasons why within the current system a 100 per cent take-up rate cannot be realised: the means test and eligibility criteria make it difficult for poor people to succeed in accessing a grant. Indeed only 43 per cent of eligible beneficiaries actually receive the grants for which they qualify. It is estimated that a BIG will reduce the poverty gap by 74 per cent (as opposed to the 23 per cent with the current system). This translates to 6.3 million people moved out of poverty. Samson also provides an argument to address fears about income transfers as a disincentive to work. Analysis carried out show that poor households that received a Child Support grant actually showed an improvement in employment whilst those not receiving the grant illustrated a decline in labour force participation. All this suggests that

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<sup>20</sup> van der Berg and Bredenkamp make specific use of cumulative density functions.

<sup>21</sup> UIF provides short-term assistance for temporary unemployment.

<sup>22</sup> Samson's findings are based on the use of micro-simulations.

an effective social security system can actually lead to an improvement in labour market participation (Samson, 2002). Makino agrees with this noting that R100 would not be enough to discourage labour force participation since this amount of money is still below the poverty line. Furthermore the money would, if nothing else, enable people to take risks (such as paying for transport to go to a job interview) (Makino, 2003: 6-7). The Government's stance on the matter of BIG is that it is fiscally unfeasible and has rather opted to maintain its existing set of social security grants and promote initiatives that provide employment opportunities, an example of which is the massive public works programme currently underway (National Treasury, 2004b:18, 21).

*(ii). State Old Age Pension*

The State Old Age pension is a non-contributory<sup>23</sup> social grant. Seekings (2002:28) notes that the trend in most developing countries is to place the responsibility of caring for the elderly on their families. South Africa has gone the other route, and the state has taken on much of the responsibility for ensuring that pensioners are guaranteed an income. This grant was introduced in 1928 and in 1944 was extended to all races. In 1993, parity in the amount received by all OAP recipients was reached (Makino, 2003:1).

The eligible age to qualify for an Old Age grant differs on the basis of gender - men qualify at 65 whilst women are eligible at 60 years of age. At the time when parity was reached in OAP transfers, the typical OAP recipient was an African woman living in a rural area (Makino, 2003:1). This has not changed much: African woman, particularly those living in rural areas are more likely to be living in conditions of poverty, relative to other groups. Furthermore, it is also generally accepted that women<sup>24</sup> suffer from higher unemployment rates than men. In 1995, the poverty rate amongst female-headed households was 60 per cent, double the poverty rate experienced by men. It was found that this big difference in the experience of poverty was linked to the concentration of female-headed households in rural areas and their fewer working age adults (Gelb, 2003:10). Since women are likely to face higher levels of unemployment, they will be less likely to be receiving income/pension from a private retirement fund. Furthermore, private pension is so small that they are still eligible for pension from the non-contributory state-led scheme (Seekings, 2002:10). Based on this, we would argue that this differential in eligibility allows the poorer sections of society to benefit at an earlier stage and as such is an important mechanism in alleviating poverty.

This particular grant has historically enjoyed the status of being the largest, in terms of monetary allocations, beneficiary numbers and take-up rates. State Old Age pensions are an important source of assistance for women and this is visible in the higher number of women beneficiaries for this grant. The grant is widely distributed and brings relief to more than just the recipient. Samson confirms this, noting that 84 per cent of pensioners live in households with non-pensioners, thereby implying that benefits are accrued to those beyond the immediate beneficiary (Samson, 2002:71). Despite this, the Report of

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<sup>23</sup> This means that it is not necessary for elderly people to have previously contributed to an insurance fund in order to receive a pension.

<sup>24</sup> The national broad unemployment rate for women is 46.1% whilst the unemployment rate for women in rural areas was 53.6% (See Gelb, 2003:10).



the Committee of Inquiry into a Comprehensive System of Social Security for South Africa found that 81 per cent of adults and 76 per cent of children live in households with *no* pensioners, driving home the fact that whilst Old Age Pension grants are an integral part of the total grant package, by themselves they are unable to reach a large proportion of the poor population (Taylor Report, 2002:58).

Table 12 provides information regarding provincial Old Age Pension beneficiaries according to gender.

<b>Table 12: SOAP take up rates according to gender and province as at October 2003</b>				
<b>Province</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% Female recipients</b>
Eastern Cape	300775	108599	409374	73.5
Free State	92953	30514	123467	75.3
Gauteng	184369	61900	246269	74.9
Kwazulu-Natal	333588	86117	419705	79.5
Limpopo	212294	68368	280662	75.6
Mpumalanga	106226	37153	143379	74.1
North-West	126270	50748	177018	71.3
Northern Cape	30418	13215	43633	69.7
Western Cape	113226	44107	157333	72.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1500119</b>	<b>500721</b>	<b>2000840</b>	<b>75.0</b>

*Source: Communication with National Department of Social Development (2003). Own calculations.*

Table 12 shows that in total, the percentage of female recipients for this grant was 75.0 per cent. The majority of provinces show over 70 per cent of recipients for the Old Age grant as being female. The provinces with the highest and lowest proportion of female recipients for the Pension grant are Kwazulu-Natal (79.48 per cent) and Northern Cape respectively (69.71 per cent). According to departmental figures as at March 2003, the state had paid out a total of over R1.3 billion in transfers for this grant (Social Development, 2003e).

### *(iii). Care Dependency and Foster Care Grants*

Assessing the trends in these grants from Table 13 and Figure 6 below as well as Table 9 (shown earlier), one can deduce that

- Over the period April 1998 to October 2003, both these grants have demonstrated considerable growth. In the case of the Care Dependency grant, the beneficiary growth rate over the stipulated period is roughly 606 per cent. Applying the same calculation to the Foster Care grant, the growth rate amounts to 309 per cent for the period April 1998 to October 2003.
- The proportion of females accessing these grants is higher than the proportion of men accessing them. However, the percentage of girls and boys actually benefiting from the grant is similar. This seems to corroborate departmental findings stated earlier in this paper, regarding the higher number of females relative to males that make use of welfare services. It also confirms the role of the women as the ones usually assuming the care-giving role. The difference in the

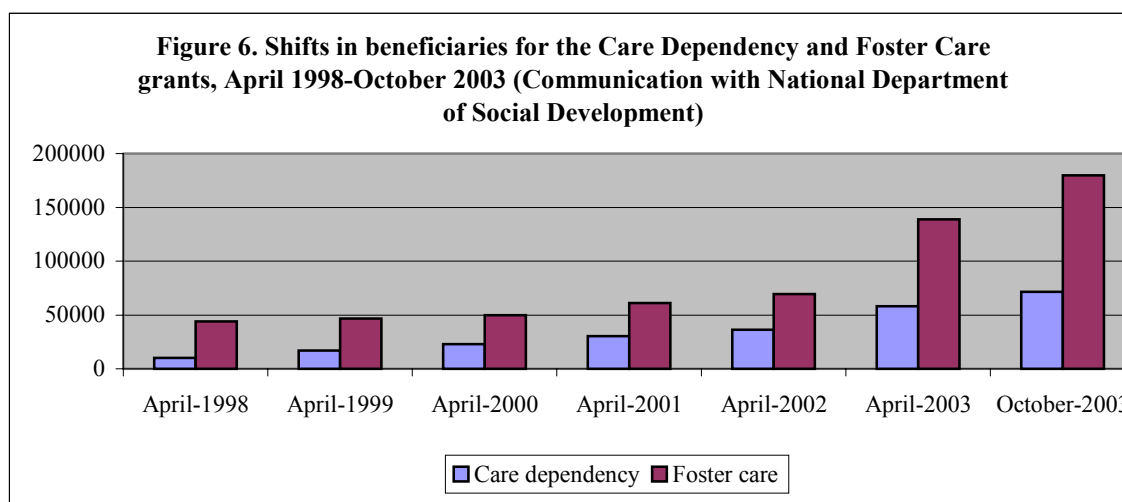
number of girl and boy children receiving the Care Dependency grant is more substantial than the marginal differences observed for these same groups receiving the Foster Care grant.

- The growth in the number of beneficiaries for the Foster Care grant has outstripped that of the Care Dependency grant. Much of the growth in this grant can be attributed to the increasing number of HIV/AIDS orphans who, in accordance with the law, have lost their biological parents and are, “...*thus eligible for foster placement and the accompanying grant*” (Meintjies et al, 2003:1, 6).

**Table 13: Proportion of grant beneficiaries according to province and gender as at October 2003**

Province	Care Dependency Grant					Foster Care Grant				
	Female %	Male %	Girls %	Boys %	Total %	Female %	Male %	Girls %	Boys %	Total %
Eastern Cape	49.2	2.1	21.5	27.2	100.0	41.2	2.0	28.8	28.1	100.0
Free State	49.6	2.5	20.3	27.6	100.0	39.7	4.0	28.6	27.7	100.0
Gauteng	50.2	2.1	20.6	27.0	100.0	40.2	3.4	28.6	27.7	100.0
Kwazulu-Natal	53.1	1.9	19.7	25.3	100.0	37.9	1.9	31.2	29.1	100.0
Limpopo	50.5	1.6	21.2	26.8	100.0	34.9	2.7	31.2	31.2	100.0
Mpumalanga	50.0	1.6	21.8	26.6	100.0	37.6	4.0	29.3	29.2	100.0
North-West	48.8	1.9	21.5	27.9	100.0	37.0	2.4	30.8	29.8	100.0
Northern Cape	52.9	2.3	20.0	24.8	100.0	46.9	2.7	25.7	24.8	100.0
Western Cape	55.0	1.7	19.2	24.2	100.0	51.7	2.6	23.8	21.8	100.0

Source: Communication with Department of Social Development (2003). Own calculations.



The sizable change in beneficiary numbers for these two grants have resulted in an increase in the provincial equitable share allocated to the nine provinces, largely in order to assist the provinces in coping with the higher demand (Idasa, 2003:12). These grants are becoming increasingly important in the South African context, due to the alarming

prevalence of HIV/AIDS and the effects that this has on children. There are two main reasons for this concern:

- On the one hand, in an economic sense, people caring for children with AIDS incur greater expenses.
- On the other hand, the children of those with AIDS will eventually have to be cared for by someone who is/may not be their biological parents<sup>25</sup> (Seekings, 2002:26).

*Care Dependency grants*<sup>26</sup>: The primary caregiver of severely disabled children younger than 18 years old, who need special care, is able to access this grant. Other requirements include:

- the child requiring full time care and,
- the family's combined income ( i.e. this is composed of the applicant's and his/her spouse's income) must not exceed the current amount set at R48 000 per annum (Department of Social Development, 2003).

Problems that hamper greater efficiency for the disbursement of this grant are the lack of a clear definition regarding those eligible to receive the grant. One of the most obvious examples of this problem is the ambiguity surrounding the term *disability/severe disability*, a prerequisite for eligibility. The information made publicly (the departmental web-site, information pamphlets) available by the Department does not define this term. Whilst the requirement of 'severe disability' helps to focus assistance on the group in greatest need, it also effectively excludes children suffering from minor disabilities, HIV/AIDS or opportunistic diseases associated with HIV/AIDS. Cassiem and Streak (2001:100-101), note that because the means test threshold for this grant is roughly double that of the Child Support grant, the Care Dependency grant does not target the poorest of the poor.

In the 1996 *Women's Budget Initiative* publication, Lund et al (1996:108) questioned whether the R410 per month value of the grant (an amount decidedly lower than the costs that would be incurred in an institution equipped to deal with sever disability) was sufficient to provide the necessary care. Today that question remains; in light of current inflationary levels, is the current monthly amount of R700 sufficient to fulfill the special needs of one who is severely disabled?

Furthermore, in woman-headed households where income levels are more likely to be lower than for male-headed households, the ability of the caregiver to supplement inadequate grant payments with other income is severely limited.

*Foster Care grant*: This grant is paid in respect of a child temporarily placed in the care of a person other than her/his biological parents.

Of the problems that surround access to this grant, the fact that the eligibility requirements overlook the role of extended family members informally caring for a child represents an obstacle. Another problem is the temporary status of this grant. The fact that the grant lapses once the foster child is (permanently) adopted, raises concerns for poor families wanting to adopt a child but who cannot afford to loose the grant. This type

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<sup>25</sup> In Southern Africa, the number of AIDS orphans amounts to more than 3 million (Seekings, 2002:27).

<sup>26</sup> Formerly this grant was referred to as the Single Care grant.

of disincentive can lower the chances of a child being fully and officially incorporated back into a family unit. This again may pose a particular tension for women who, as mentioned before, are more likely to rely on the income provided by these grants as a result of the poverty they face.

*(iv). The Disability Grant*

The disability grant is available to South Africans who are 18 years or older. The grant is available for two forms of disability:

- Permanent disability grant: the grant is payable to a person who is permanently disabled i.e. the disability will continue for more than 12 months;
- Temporary disability grant: the grant is paid to a person whose temporary disability will continue for a continuous period of not less than 6 months or for a continuous period of not more than 12 months.

Table 14 provides a breakdown of Disability grant beneficiaries in terms of gender and province. The difference in take-up rates for women and men is marginal. In Lund’s review of welfare in 1996, recipients of disability grants were skewed in favour of men (Lund et al, 1996:103). Table 12, however, illustrates that parity in terms of the former differential between female and male take-up rates is being achieved, if not reversed, to a certain degree.

<b>Table 14: Proportion of Disability grant beneficiaries according to province and gender</b>			
<b>Province</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Total</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Eastern Cape	51.6	48.5	100.0
Free State	52.0	48.0	100.0
Gauteng	52.2	47.9	100.0
Kwazulu-Natal	51.8	48.2	100.0
Limpopo	46.1	48.2	100.0
Mpumalanga	49.7	50.3	100.0
North-West	48.8	51.2	100.0
Northern Cape	47.4	52.6	100.0
Western Cape	45.9	54.1	100.0

*Source: Communication with the National Department of Social Development (2003). Own calculations.*

In the Limpopo, Mpumalanga, North-West, Northern Cape and Western Cape provinces, the proportion of female take-up rates were lower than the male take-up rates. The take-up rate of males suffering from a disability in the Western Cape (54.1 per cent) was the overall highest take-up rate for both men and women across the nine provinces.

The form of disablement must conform to the departmental definition of disability, contained in the Social Assistance Act of 1992 (Act No. 59 of 1992). However, this definition has come under criticism, largely because it is based on the medical understanding of what constitutes a ‘disability’. This understanding is not sensitive to the

context that disabled people function in and should be broadened to consider other relevant aspects such as:

- age: the older people become, the greater their risk of disabling injuries and health problems
- children: even though children constitute the smallest proportion of the total disabled population, it has been found that 30 per cent of disabled children do not attend school (as opposed to the 10 per cent of children not suffering from any form of disability)
- poverty: the disabled are more susceptible to becoming or remaining poor (for example, the October Household Survey found that households with a monthly income of R1 200 has a disability rate twice as high as households with a R10 000 monthly income) (Taylor Report, 2002).
- gender: women who are disabled are more vulnerable than women who do not have a disability (approximately 3 million women are disabled and have been found to be more vulnerable to physical, emotional and sexual abuse) (Thabo Mbeki Development Trust, 2001).

In essence there needs to be a move away from the focus on what disabled people *cannot* do and more emphasis placed on what can be done to more fully incorporate the active participation of the disabled into the workforce and other activities - the fact that roughly 30 per cent of disabled persons do not attend school is of concern. The motivation for the above mentioned variables to be incorporated into the understanding of disablement is based on the need to consider that disability cannot be solely judged on the person's inability to work.

It can be concluded that the Department needs to broaden its definition of disability, as it is influenced by these factors. In shifting away from the emphasis placed on a person's incapacity to work, the grant would then become more sensitive to the impact that a poor economic climate and societal prejudices has on the ability of a disabled person to access employment.

To a certain degree, the Department has acknowledged that access to this grant is inequitable. This is evident in the recent amendments to the Social Assistance Act (59 of 1992) which hopes to ensure, "...*equitable access to disability grants and set out proper procedures for reviewing entitlements to grants*" (National Treasury, 2003b:417).

### **5.2.2. Development and Support Services Programme**

Apart from its Social Assistance programme, the Department also provides a range of other social welfare services-services that can be termed *developmental* in their approach. Based on current budgetary trends, there is concern with regard to the ability of the Department to deliver these services, as the budget analysis reflected that, on average,

provincial Social Development departments allocate over 90 per cent of their resources to the Social Assistance programme and the payment of social security grants. The proportion of the budget allocated in respect of this programme is projected to increase, reaching 92 per cent by 2005/06. This effectively means that provincial departments will have less than 10 per cent to allocate to their other developmental welfare services. How the reconfiguration of provincial Social Development budgets, in line with the establishment of the Agency for Social Security, will affect resource allocation to these services remains to be seen.

Currently, in order to support and promote its developmental approach, the DSD has placed focus on the following areas:

- HIV/AIDS and youth development,
- a poverty eradication strategy that addresses the most vulnerable groups (women, youth persons with disabilities), particularly in rural areas and
- violence against women and children and people in vulnerable groups (Department of Social Development, 2003a).

#### **5.2.2(a). HIV/AIDS**

HIV/AIDS and its social and economic consequences has become an issue of national concern. HIV/AIDS has important consequences for women in particular, as they represent 51.1 per cent of those who are infected (Hickey et al, 2003: 9). The national prevalence rate is estimated to be around 11.4 per cent, with the impact on Africans (12.9 per cent) as well as females in general (12.8 per cent), to be relatively higher than for other groups (Gelb, 2003:13).

A national integrated response in conjunction with the departments of Health, Social Development, Education and National Treasury has been designed to combat HIV/AIDS (National Treasury, 2002a:141).

In 2002/03, the HIV/AIDS Directorate was established in the DSD. Since its inception, the directorate, has developed resource materials and poverty relief assistance programmes to identified vulnerable groups. Of these various initiatives, the concept of Home or Community-Based Care Centres has become central and indeed the most effective of DSD's responses to the pandemic. According to the Department's latest annual report, 314 of these centres were operational, assisting a total of 20 695 families. In addition, a number of other services are provided to children, including food parcels, clothing, counseling, support, day-care and foster care placement (Department of Social Development, 2002/03:19, 62).

Another part of the DSD's strategy to combat the effects of the Aids pandemic is via its social assistance grants targeting orphans, disabled persons (Hickey, et al, 2003:1, 2, 11). The Foster Care grant in particular has experienced a surge in the number of beneficiaries it currently provides assistance to. This increase is mainly attributed to the effects of HIV/AIDS and the high number of children orphaned as a result of loss of biological parents or primary care-givers.

### 5.2.2(b). Poverty Relief Programme:

The National Department of Social Development manages the Poverty Relief Programme (PRP). The PRP is funded through an allocation from the Poverty Relief, Infrastructure and Job Creation Fund of the National Treasury. The National department of Social Development administers these funds to the nine provinces based on the respective poverty status of each province. The provinces receiving the bulk of the funding (60 per cent) are the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo (Burger, 2003:507).

The table below shows the year on year poverty relief allocations of the DSD from 1997/98 to 2003/04.

R' million	1997/98	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04
Allocated	50	203	40 (+203)	120 (+38)	50	100	71
Spent	0	0	205	49?		?	?

Source: Parenzee, 2003:18.

The table clearly shows that the DSD has been unsuccessful in spending these funds appropriately - if at all. Where allocations have not been spent the DSD has not been forthcoming with details regarding the reasons. This is an issue of concern and is not unique to the DSD. It has been found that, in general, the various departments that received funds from the Poverty Relief Fund have been experiencing underspending. Parenzee (2003:1, 18, 19) attributes the cause to Furthermore this lack of spending has been blamed on, “...*lack of adequate (non-budget) resources and administrative systems*”. It seems that lack of capacity and effective administrative systems and processes are issues that DSD needs to pursue, especially since this project of the department is one of the few that focus explicitly on women.

In addition to the insights and condition of vulnerable groups derived from budget analysis, the experiences of female beneficiaries are influenced by their class, racial orientation and geographic location. The table 16 below decomposes the PRP beneficiaries according to the categories women, men, youth, disabled and HIV/AIDS.

The information in Table 16 is cause for concern on several levels. Firstly, categories for youth, disabled, and HIV/AIDS, provide no gender disaggregated information. We are therefore unable to determine how many women and how many men benefited from funds directed towards youth, disabled and HIV/AIDS categories. Secondly, Table 16 shows that whilst the number of female beneficiaries is significant in 2000/01(57 per cent), their proportion of the total number of beneficiaries has declined to a projected 36 per cent in 2002/03. This 21 per cent decline in the number of female recipients is of concern, especially when one considers that the overall number of recipients has more than doubled over the same period and that child poverty is intricately linked to the position of women. Furthermore, the number of HIV/AIDS beneficiaries- even though the figure has improved, is unacceptable when considering South Africa’s prevalence rate and the likely higher risk associated with women. Even though the information provided in Table 16 is a useful complement to budgetary data, providing information according to

some of the omitted categories mentioned above will most certainly aid better analysis and understanding of the impact that poverty alleviation programmes have on different target groups.

<b>Table 16: Poverty Relief Project Beneficiaries according to different categories</b>			
<b>Year</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Number of beneficiaries</b>	<b>Category total as a proportion of the total number of beneficiaries (%)</b>
<b>2000/01</b>	Women	6424	56.9
	Men	1609	14.3
	Youth	2900	25.7
	Disabled	308	2.7
	HIV/AIDS	40	0.4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>11281</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>2001/02</b>	Women	7820	35.8
	Men	5200	23.8
	Youth	2500	11.4
	Disabled	4160	19.0
	HIV/AIDS	2185	10.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>21865</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>2002/03 projections</b>	Women	10400	36.3
	Men	6500	22.7
	Youth	6000	20.9
	Disabled	5200	18.2
	HIV/AIDS	550+	2+
	<b>Total</b>	<b>28650</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Source: Department of Social Development, 2002.*

One of the Department's 'older' poverty relief projects, the Women's Flagship Programme (now grouped with the other PRP's) has listed the issues of project sustainability and market accessibility as key problem areas that hamper the success of their projects (Department of Social Development, 2001/02:80-84).

The decline in beneficiary numbers for these vulnerable categories as well as the challenges that these projects experience requires attention if the Department hopes to effectively align its services with the developmental needs of the people of South Africa.

## **6. Concluding remarks**

Poverty and unemployment rates in South Africa remain pervasively high and are further exacerbated by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The Department of Social Development is



faced with the twin task of having to alleviate poverty, on the one hand, whilst trying to fulfill its own mandate of providing welfare services that are developmental in approach. As the reality is that those most vulnerable to poverty, unemployment and thus HIV/AIDS are women, the department is in a position whereby any programme aimed at alleviating poverty will inevitably benefit women. However, this does not mean that the department should not carefully develop plans to address gender inequalities through targeted programmes, and within its own structures.

In analysing the role of the department in addressing gender inequalities, we conduct an analysis of the budget allocated to the national and provincial department of Social Development and also explore how implementation occurs. In examining service delivery, we briefly look at a few programmes for which the national department is responsible for financing and overseeing implementation. However, our primary focus is on the provincial departments, more especially the social assistance programme which provinces implement.

Through the analyses, this paper highlights some critical issues that face the department of Social Development and raises questions that need further consideration.

#### 1. How can poverty be alleviated?

While the department is committed to developmental approach to welfare, the reality dictates that the bulk of the increasing DSD budget is allocated to the Social Assistance Programme – the programme responsible for social security grants. Therefore we need to ask, is the developmental approach adopted by the department feasible in light of the dire need for direct interventions to alleviate poverty? Furthermore, we have to examine whether social assistance is the best way in which to assist in alleviating poverty, especially as it is estimated that the current grant system narrows the poverty gap by only 23 per cent.

#### 2. How can shortcomings in service delivery be addressed?

Even though we recognize that reducing the poverty gap by 23% is not ideal, in the absence of an alternative system, we do want the existing system to be as effective as possible. In examining the effectiveness of the administration of these grants, the key shortcomings highlighted are inefficiency, as grants are not speedily administered, and the lack of capacity both in terms of the number of staff and the number of skilled staff. How are these shortcomings going to be solved? The fact that a National Social Security Agency is to be established has raised concerns that this new structure will merely inherit the existing shortcomings and not solve them.

#### 3. What is the role of the department in addressing gender inequalities?

The department does recognize that it can play a proactive role in addressing gender inequalities. On the one hand, the department has established programmes that target women specifically, for example the victim support and shelters for women. However, we are alerted to the reality that the conceptual recognition (i.e. the creation of a targeted programme) is not translated into a practical commitment, for example these programmes are allocated very little money. This means that addressing gender inequalities through

targeted programmes is not prioritised. On the other hand, the department established a Gender Focal Point as a means to address gender inequalities within the department. However, we are made aware that even though the GFP was given a more powerful position as it was placed in the office of the Director-General, within the department, gender equity is not taken seriously. For example, the GFP is not established within provincial Social Development departments, faces budgetary constraints and recommendations which the GFP puts forward are not implemented.

These critical issues require that the department become more active in discussions regarding the role it can play to assist in alleviating poverty and how best to do so. The department also needs to more vigorously examine concrete ways of addressing service delivery shortcomings that extend beyond structural solutions. As the department has a key role to play in addressing gender inequalities, it should likely team up with other departments that have internal gender structures in order to exchange ideas on how gender equity can be prioritised within the department.

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