

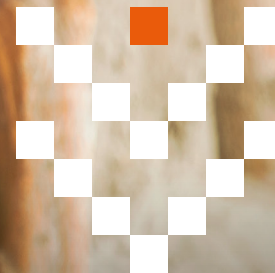
# Centre for Social Development in Africa

# 2022 ANNUAL REPORT



UNIVERSITY  
OF  
JOHANNESBURG

CENTRE FOR  
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT  
IN AFRICA

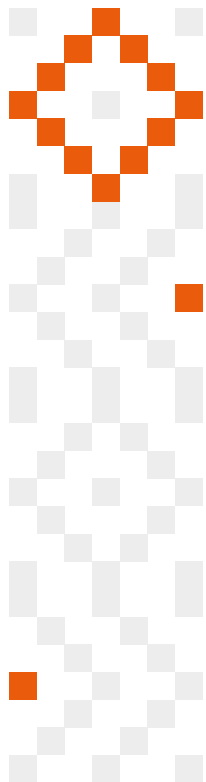


**PROMOTING RESILIENCE AND SUPPORTING SOCIAL POLICIES THAT TACKLE POVERTY**

CSDA – HOME OF THE DSI/NRF SOUTH AFRICAN RESEARCH CHAIR IN WELFARE AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

**The Future  
Reimagined**

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## 1. Director's Report: Promoting social policies that tackle poverty and inequality, whilst fostering resilience

During the early parts of the COVID-19 pandemic a social media movement emerged. The hashtag #buildbackbetter was intended to prompt us all to think about how COVID-19 deepened existing inequalities and to use this moment of global disruption to envision and build societies that promoted greater equality and care for all. The social media movement borrowed the hashtag from a well-known principle of disaster management and risk reduction, which focuses on how disasters offer opportunities to identify systemic problems in our environment, infrastructure and social relations, and proposes approaches to addressing these challenges to avoid or reduce the impact of future disasters. While many governments did put in place policies and packages to promote economic growth, prompt growth in jobs, and expand social protection floors; the ongoing effects of the pandemic, particularly in developing countries where economic recovery has been muted, has meant that already deep inequalities remain. In this context, we have witnessed the resilience of individuals and communities.

At the CSDA, our research has continued to try and understand how to build and promote social policies that foster greater equity and



prosperity for all, alongside assessing interventions that promote the resilience of individuals and communities. With our research partners, collaborators and students working in the field of social protection we have been fortunate to witness the rapid expansion of cash transfers in South Africa through the Social Relief of Distress (SRD) Grant. Many of our students have sought to understand the effects of grants on livelihoods and more recently, the CSDA and Women in Informal Work Globalising and Organising (WIEGO) collaborated to assess how the Covid SRD grant was being used by informal traders and what effects it might have had on forward and backward economic linkages, from the perspective of these traders. Taken alongside the work of our students these qualitative studies offer unique insights into the nuances and complexities of how grants work in the lives of some of the most marginalised groups in our country. These findings offer important insights for the Basic Income Grant debate, which to date has been relatively polarised.

In addition to this important research on social policy interventions, we have also worked to understand how we promote and support resilience in communities. Dr Sadiyya Haffjee's research on promoting teacher resilience, which forms part of the Communities of Practice for Child Well-being project, has particular reference here. Teachers play a potentially important role in the lives of children who

might not have other supportive adults in their lives. But teachers are often overworked and stressed themselves. Dr Haffjee's study investigates how we can promote the well-being of teachers so they are better able to foster the resilience of the children they interact with.

These and the myriad of other important projects we have engaged in this year are reflected on in this report and demonstrate how the CSDA continues to engage in applied research at the cutting edge of social development issues. Importantly, our work continues to make an impact, not only academically but also in the communities in which we work. The applied nature of our research ensures that beneficiaries are being reached through our research while we build knowledge. This is evidenced in the fact that many of the children participating in the CoP for Child Well-being study have shown improvements in food security, health indicators, and reported behaviour at school. Teachers have been supported through workshops. And young people are receiving coaching through the Basic Package of Support initiative, currently running in four pilot sites in Gauteng and the Western Cape.

This social impact does not come at the cost of knowledge impact. We have had an incredibly successful year regarding publications with 65 published articles and 10 book chapters published. The majority of these are in leading international journals in their field. Honorary



Professor James Midgley and Research Associate Prof David Androff both had important books published this year. Visiting Professor Trudie Knijn and Visiting Associate Professor Sophie Plageron (with Dr Laura Alfes) both had edited volumes published. I am immensely proud of the number of students who had their first articles published this year. These are highlighted in the publications section (see page 34) of this report and point to our continued commitment to building the capacity of the next generation of social development scholars and practitioners.

On that note, we have had several student successes this year. A total of 19 MPhil students graduated in 2022. Prof Leila Patel had three Doctoral students graduate in 2022. And three of our research assistants – Anita Mwanda, Thandi Simelane and Tunusha Naidoo – who graduated with their Masters degrees this year were also awarded for being amongst the top achieving postgraduate students in the Faculty of Humanities. We congratulate all these students and their supervisors.

In 2022 the CSDA went through an external review process. This is a quality assurance mechanism that all centres at the university undertake every five years. The process was immensely beneficial, allowing us to highlight areas where we need to re-strategise (particularly regarding how we attract and retain senior capacity). It

was also affirming, with the external panel congratulating the team on its remarkable achievements in knowledge production, student support and social impact. I am grateful to the CSDA team that supported the review process, the external panel that reviewed us, and the University Research Committee for facilitating the process.

None of our achievements would be possible without the ongoing commitment of a very passionate and talented team of researchers and support staff. Our ongoing relationships with our research associates, Visiting and Honorary Professors, and collaborators enriches our research. Grateful thanks go to our funders, our Advisory Board, the Faculty of Humanities and Dean, and the university for its ongoing support.

Finally, on the 31st of December 2022 Prof Leila Patel, the founding Director of the CSDA, stepped down as the DSI/NRF South African Research Chair in Social Welfare and Development, which has been housed within the CSDA since its inception. Although she will remain connected with the CSDA as a Distinguished Professor, this shift does see her stepping away from more active engagements in the centre to focus more on mentorship and focused time on writing up her research. Without Leila, the CSDA would not exist and would not be the vibrant centre that so many students and collaborators seek to relate to. The successes of the centre are in large



part due to her leadership and vision. Her role in my own career as a supervisor and mentor cannot be put into words, suffice to say that I feel very privileged to take her work forward. Leila, thank you for everything you have built, for the impact you have had on so many of our lives and careers, and for the work you continue to inspire. We wish you well in this next phase of your career and look forward to continued collaborations albeit in a different form. We are also excited to welcome Prof Tanusha Raniga into the role of Interim DSI/NRF Research Chair in Social Welfare and Development and trust that we will have a fruitful partnership.

**Associate Professor Lauren Graham**

**CSDA: Director**



## 2. DSI/NRF South African Research Chair in Welfare and Social Development Report: Advancing welfare and social development research

2022 was a successful and productive year for the South African Research Chair in Welfare and Social Development. The Chair, held since 2016 by Professor Leila Patel, is housed at the Centre for Social Development in Africa at the University of Johannesburg (UJ). Its research focuses on poverty, inequality and vulnerability, with a focus on women, children and youth, and in social protection, the design and testing of social development innovation and in the monitoring and evaluation of social policies.

### **Communities of Practice for Social Systems Strengthening to Improve Child Well-being Outcomes**

The Communities of Practice project moved into its second phase in June 2022, with some ongoing publications from phase one also being concluded. In 2022 I authored and co-authored four journal articles and three book chapters focusing on hunger and the Chair's ongoing work around child well-being, particularly research related to cash transfers plus care such as the Sihleng'imizi Family Strengthening project and the interlinked Communities of Practice



For Social Systems Strengthening to Improve Child Well-being Outcomes (CoP) programme. The CoP project tracks child and family well-being outcomes among Child Support Grant (CSG) children and their caregivers. This programme is a partnership with, among other stakeholders, two other Chairs at UJ: the SARChI in Integrated Studies of Learning Language, Science and Mathematics in the Primary School, Prof Elizabeth Henning, and the SARChI in Education and Care in Childhood, Prof Jace Pillay.

A further eight articles emerging from the CoP programme are in different phases of being concluded, of which six have either been published or accepted for publication. Two research reports and two associated infographics related to the CoP programme were also published in 2022, these can be found [here](#). All of this work goes a long way in making the research and learnings from the CoP more accessible to a broader audience, and supports the CSDA's strategic objective of developing, incubating and testing innovative evidence-based social development interventions that in turn inform policy and practice on the ground.

I also presented a keynote address based on the findings from the NRF-funded CoP study at the Community of Practice Symposium at the University of Johannesburg in July 2022. This online symposium attracted wide interest from over three hundred delegates concerned with strengthening social systems across health, welfare and education to improve child well-being outcomes.

We are excited that the National Research Foundation has renewed funding for the CoP for a further two years. This is a major endorsement of the value of the research work we are doing and will also allow us to pilot the project in a rural area. We are excited by the prospect of continuing to unpack how systems can be strengthened to support child well-being and the new learnings that will emerge from the rural pilot site. We are also pleased that new collaborating partners have been recruited including SAVE the Children, Ndlovu Care Group and the Department of Social Development and the Gauteng Department of Social Development. These partnerships will bring extensive expertise and experience to the table and will enhance the work we are doing with children, caregivers, teachers, nurses, social workers and other practitioners.

### **COVID-19: the aftermath**

As the world slowly emerged from the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic, researchers continued to grapple with how the previous two years had exacerbated South Africa's existing inequalities and exposed previously ignored fissures.

In May, I presented to the University of the Free State's Department of Social Work Symposium on Social Development on the topic "Social work and social development responses and challenges to the COVID-19 pandemic".

I also published a book chapter titled “[Social Work and Social Development Challenges to the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)”. The book *Remaking Social Work for the New Global Era* was co-edited by Ngoh Tiong Tan and P.K. Shajahan and published by Springer on behalf of the International Association of Schools of Social Work.

I also collaborated on a journal article that was published in *Development Southern Africa* on “[Food insecurity in South Africa: Evidence from NIDS-CRAM Wave 5](#)”. This article, co-authored with Servaas Van der Berg and Grace Bridgeman, brings together five waves of data on the impact of the pandemic on food insecurity and the effectiveness of social protection responses.

### **Media engagements**

Though the Chair’s academic successes are, of course, a key part of its work, external engagement is also hugely important. Much of our work, research and policy proposals were widely disseminated via print, broadcast and social media. These ranged from radio and television interviews to opinion pieces in a number of local publications, some of which were republished in Ghana, the United Kingdom and the United States.

### **An international presence**

The Chair was honoured to host a number of international visitors during 2022. I hosted Martha Melesse, Senior

Programme Specialist at the International Development Research Centre, Canada; Sharon Opara-Ndudu, an intern from the MIT Center for International Studies and Marianne Sandvad Ulriksen, Associate Professor of Welfare at the University of Southern Denmark. These visits were valuable opportunities to engage with researchers and specialists and share the work of the SARChI. I also hosted Adrian Talbott Associate Dean for Civic Engagement at the Crown Family School of Social Work, University of Chicago. This visit was an opportunity to share knowledge on civic engagement initiatives in the Global South and was a fruitful knowledge-sharing opportunity.

During 2022 I was also able to engage with colleagues and stakeholders outside the country. On 15 March 2022 I presented on “Cash transfers, families and public policies in South Africa” during a seminar on Families and Public Policies in Brazil at the School of Public Policy and Government of Fundação Getúlio Vargas (FGV/EPPG). Then in November I produced a podcast on Social Security and Social Development in South Africa which will be featured with other global cases as teaching material for an interdisciplinary master’s course led by Marianne Ulriksen at the Centre for Welfare Studies, University of Southern Denmark.

### **Books**

Together with Professor Shireen Hassim I co-edited the late Professor Tessa Hochfeld’s book, *Granting Justice* –

*Cash, care and the child support grant* (HSRC Press). The book's launch, though a poignant occasion given that it was published posthumously, was also a chance to celebrate Professor Hochfeld's invaluable contributions to this important area of study – and to honour both the author and the participants who shared their stories.

In addition, myself, along with Sophie Plageron, Visiting Associate Professor to the CSDA and a former Post-Doctoral Fellow at the CSDA, Dr Isaac Chinyoka, edited the *Handbook on Social Protection and Social Development in the Global South* (Edward Elgar), which will be published in 2023. Prof Armando Barrientos, myself and several other international colleagues have also signed a contract with Oxford University Press to produce its 2025 *Handbook of Social Policies in the Global South*.

### **The next generation**

I am passionate and committed to teaching and mentoring the next generation of social development scholars, which is why it is particularly gratifying to reflect on the achievements of the current cohort of masters, doctoral and post-doctoral candidates.

In the first semester of 2022, I offered the Social Policy and Development theory course which is part of the MPhil in Social Policy and Development offered by the Centre. Eleven students were enrolled for this degree. In addition,

I successfully supervised (with Dr Isaac Chinyoka and Lauren Stuart) five Masters students. Three doctoral students completed their PhDs in 2022 and another successfully submitted her thesis at the end of October 2022.

I am also pleased to have hosted three post-doctoral students, all of whom were renewed until 21 August 2023.

### **Professor Leila Patel**

DSI/NRF South African Research Chair  
in Welfare and Social Development

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**Please note** that throughout the report the DSI/NRF South African Research Chair in Welfare and Social Development will be referred to as SARCHI.

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*Prof Leila Patel and CSDA  
Honorary Professor, James  
Midgley at the conversation  
hosted at the CSDA in  
December 2022.*

### 3. A tribute to the CSDA's founding Director, Prof Leila Patel

Professor Leila Patel, the founder of the Centre for Social Development in Africa (CSDA) at the University of Johannesburg, has stepped down from her role as South African Research Chair (SARChI) in Welfare and Social Development.

Leila has held the Chair since 2016 and has, in the past seven years, used the position to build on the role she envisioned for the CSDA when it was established in 2004: as a site for innovative social development research from and about the African continent, and one from which to build the capacity of future generations of social development scholars.

Leila will remain connected with the work of the CSDA and the SARChI as she remains a Professor of Social Development. She will also continue to lead our flagship Communities of Practice for Child Well-being study until its completion in 2024.

As South Africa's first Director General of Social Welfare in President Nelson Mandela's government, Leila played a leading role in developing South Africa's welfare policy after apartheid and was among those who spearheaded the creation of the country's social grants architecture – a system which is recognised and hailed globally for the support it offers to tens of millions of South Africans.

Her work has spanned academia, government, non-profit organisations and private sector social development initiatives. She holds a B1 rating from the National Research Foundation. As such, she enjoys considerable international recognition for the quality and impact of her research and is recognised by many as a leading global scholar in her field. Her research interests include social welfare policy, social protection, socio-economic rights and democracy, gender, care, the social services and children and youth.

Leila has supervised 47 masters, doctoral students and postdoctoral research fellows. She spearheaded the introduction of one of UJ's first interdisciplinary masters programmes, the MPhil in Social Policy and Development, to grow a new generation of scholars, practitioners and leaders in the field. Over and above that, she has mentored many social development scholars who have gone on to careers in the field locally, in Southern Africa and internationally.

As 2022 drew to a close, the CSDA hosted a conversation between Prof Leila Patel and CSDA Honorary Professor, James Midgley. Their conversation covered a wide range of topics including their careers in the field of social development, how their respective contributions have complemented and critiqued one another and what that has meant for the development of the field of social development. It was an exciting engagement that served as inspiration for many of our emerging scholars and students.

Collaboration and mentorship have been important to Leila throughout her career. During the conversation, she reflected on her long academic partnership – and friendship – with Professor James Midgley, one of the foremost global scholars in this field. The pair met by chance in 1990; in the ensuing three decades they have frequently collaborated. At the December event Leila reflected on the ways in which their lives and careers dovetailed, diverged and reconnected.

Leila remains a valued mentor and professional collaborator to many: she recently edited the Edward Elgar title, *Handbook on Social Protection and Social Development in the Global South* (due out in September 2023) alongside two of her former Post-Doctoral Research Fellows, Dr Isaac Chinyoka and Visiting Assoc. Prof Sophie Plagerson. It was Midgley who suggested that the prestigious scholarly publisher approach Leila for this work which she described at the December event as “one of the few global books on social policy and development that is wholly based at a southern research Centre and by three southern editors”. In this way the work of the CSDA is contributing to the growing knowledge and practice of southern social and welfare policies. Currently, she is co-editor of a new handbook commissioned by Oxford University Press on social policy trajectories in the global south with Armando Barrientos, Matthew Carnes, Huck-Ju Kwon, Herbert Obinger and Carina Schmitt.

## 4. 2022 Flagship Projects

Our flagship projects allow us the space to test research-led interventions to find innovative solutions that break down the barriers that make it hard for people to find pathways out of poverty. Here we unpack how this works aligns with our strategic approach to research.

### 4.1 Basic Package of Support

The CSDA, together with the Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit (SALDRU) at UCT and the DG Murray Trust, has been working for several years on the development of the Basic Package of Support – an evidence-based intervention intended to support young people to reconnect to learning and earning opportunities through individualised coaching and the promotion of youth-focused service delivery. 2022 marked the culmination of many years of research





and development as we launched four pilot sites in which this intervention is being tested.

The first pilot site, funded by UNICEF, opened in Atlantis in January. The second, funded by the Standard Bank Tutuwa Community Foundation, opened in Orange Farm in June. Two additional sites in Jabulani and Alexandra were opened in November in partnership with Amandla Edufootball. In these two sites, we aim to test how the intervention is rolled out through a partner NGO.

Aside from the opening of these pilot sites a major win for the project was securing an R11 million grant through the Innovation Fund to do the research necessary to understand how to scale up the programme, which is recognised as a key partner in the Presidential Youth Employment Intervention.

This is a crucial intervention project – it was developed based on years of evidence that had been collated – and is a long-term project through which we will be able to better understand how to break the barriers that so many young people face in their transition to learning and earning.

#### Research excellence



**Research excellence:** The BPS programme design draws on an in-depth and evidence-based understanding of the nature of youth unemployment as multidimensional; as well as a systematic assessment of

existing programmes which demonstrates that while there is a great deal of investment in solutions to address youth unemployment, these are not well coordinated, nor do they address the multiple barriers that youth face. The programme design was also influenced by extensive youth engagements conducted in 2019 and policy analysis. The programme is thus truly evidence-based.

#### Public engagement



**Public and policy engagement:** The BPS is now officially recognised as a key partner in the National Pathway Management Network (NPMN) of the Presidential Youth Employment Intervention. The NPMN brings together a range of public, private and not-for-profit partners working

together to better coordinate services and opportunities for young people. Prof Lauren Graham currently sits on the NPMN pilot project steering committee. The BPS also works with a range of partners, including the Department of Employment and Labour, the Department of Higher Education and Training and the National Youth Development Agency amongst others.

#### Innovation in application



**Innovation in application:** 2022 was the year in which we saw the application aspect of this project come to life as we trained young people and Child and Youth Care Workers to become our site teams. As

of the end of 2022 we had reached over 300 young people in the pilot sites who all now have the opportunity to be supported by fully trained youth coaches and mobilisers. In addition, the site managers are working hard to create strong partnerships with local service providers in their respective communities. The programme is underpinned by a rigorous monitoring and evaluation process that will inform whether and how the programme will be scaled up.



**Human capability development:** The project continues to involve students who make up part of the research team. Two Masters students will be completing their research on the BPS in 2023.

### Alignment with Sustainable Development Goals



## 4.2 Communities of Practice for Social Systems Strengthening to Improve Child Well-being Outcomes (CoP)

The CoP project, initiated in 2020, was motivated by research that suggests that investing in children's early development yields positive future gains for the individual, the family and for society. To intervene successfully requires multi-system and inter-sectoral collaboration. In the first two years of the CoP project significant gains were made in establishing advisory and local level communities of practice, collecting data (over two time periods) of 162 children, and developing child-family level intervention plans.

Following approval by the NRF of funding for a further two years, CoP Phase 2 was launched in August 2022. This phase of the project will assess the feasibility of the CoP approach through further testing and evaluation of the CoP model over a period of time and in a rural environment, where resources may be more constrained, assessing the usefulness and effectiveness of the Child Well-being Tracking Tool (CWTT), and obtaining longitudinal data of children and family well-being. Extending the CoP project for another two years will provide an opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of CoP interventions and track child well-being over three key foundational years, from grade R to grade 3 and will

allow for the development of an institutionalisation implementation plan.

Despite several policies and programmes that recognise the importance of integrated support, as in many countries across the globe, the fragmentation of service provision and the lack of functional cooperation between health, welfare and education sectors serving children and families remains an ongoing challenge. The CoP tests an approach to promoting collaboration across different sectors that could lead to a better understanding of the needs of children and could aid the search for innovative solutions suited to the local context.

Research  
excellence



**Research Excellence:** The CoP project is an interdisciplinary project that brings together recognised experts across several disciplines. It includes three Department of Science and Innovation, National Research Foundation South African Research Chairs: Prof Leila Patel

(SARCHI Welfare and Social Development), Prof Elizabeth Henning (SARCHI Integrated Studies – Education), Prof Jace Pillay (SARCHI Education Psychology). In addition, the project is supported by leaders in their fields who bring specialised inter-disciplinary skills and insight to the CoP from a wide range of disciplines.





Prof Shane Norris, Director of the NRF Centre of Excellence in Human Development, specialises in pediatrics with a focus on Developmental Pathways for Health, Dr Wanga Zembe from the Medical Research Council provides input on social policy, Prof Arnesh Telukdarie, Professor in Engineering Management at UJ provides guidance on how best to manage the technical application design aspects of the project specifically the Child Well-being Tracking Tool, and Prof Nompumelelo Ntshingila from the UJ Department of Nursing and Dr Victoria Nesengani from Pretoria University Department of Nursing, supported the nursing interventions. The CSDA team includes Prof Lauren Graham who brings sociology expertise, Dr Sadiyya Haffejee and Sonia Mbowa provide psychology expertise. Tania Sani is a social work specialist and Matshidiso Sello brings demography expertise to the project. This team of researchers is committed to producing research of the highest quality and in 2022, the team produced three research articles, two research reports: the [CoP Intervention Report](#) and the [CoP Wave 2 Research Report](#) as well as two infographics for [wave 1](#) and [wave 2](#).



**Public & Policy engagement:** The CoP has demonstrated clear and distinct alignment with four Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) priorities that include poverty alleviation, hunger

elimination, the promotion of better physical and mental health, and quality basic education for children. The CoP addresses the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) Agenda 2063 aspirations and South Africa's National Development Plan (NDP). It is also aligned with South Africa's District Development Model and Integrated Development Plans.

The CoP team engaged with various government departments and development agencies that play a prominent role in policy research, locally and internationally. MOUs were signed with the Department of Social Development at national and provincial level (Gauteng) and the Ndlovu Care Group in Limpopo for the CoP rural pilot. Significant progress was made with formalising stakeholder partnerships with the Gauteng Department of Education and Department of Social Development in Gauteng and the City of Johannesburg. Formal arrangements have been confirmed for the extension of the CoP project in 2023 with these departments. Constructive engagements and deliberations are ongoing with the Department of Basic Education and Department of Health with stakeholder meetings planned for early 2023. This collaboration with a range of partners aligns with the SDG 17, partnerships to achieve the goal.



**Innovation in application:** The project's main innovation continues to be the Child Well-being Tracking Tool that has been tested extensively in various scenarios since 2020. As a result of rigorous testing and troubleshooting, the CoP technical team are better

equipped to modify the app for the rural pilot. UNICEF SA and the national Department of Social Development have approached the CoP team to support and collaborate with them on the RISIHA project. The RISIHA project is part of the National Department of Social Development's Orphan's & Vulnerable Children Unit and runs across the country to assist vulnerable children and orphans. The RISIHA project uses the UNGUBANI child well-being assessment tool to collect data in Limpopo and this collaboration will compare the two tracking tools and share learnings.



#### **Human capacity development:**

Training and development of five CoP social workers and 11 Nursing Supervisors in research skills enabled these professionals participating in and learning from the CoP research project to develop advanced skills in their respective professions. Without research skills, the social work and nursing sectors are limited in developing big-picture

awareness of trends and tendencies needed to develop innovative strategies and understand how macro-level issues impact individual cases.

Two post-doctoral students and several emerging academics are currently working on the project.

#### **Alignment with Sustainable Development Goals**



### **4.3 Key projects**

Our work falls into four main thematic areas. Here we capture our key projects in these thematic areas and look at how each project shows our operating model in action.

#### **4.3.1 Thematic area 1: Social Policy in the Global South**

*Our work on emerging social policy solutions brings theoretical insight to understanding these policy developments; analyses social policy outcomes; and makes recommendations for social policy innovation in the global south.*



## **The local economic development effects of the Social Relief of Distress grant: A qualitative study of informal trader experiences of the Social Relief of Distress (SRD) Grant.**

In response to the social and economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on vulnerable groups, governments globally have significantly expanded their social protection systems. As part of the social assistance component of the COVID-19 stimulus package, the South African government introduced a new COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress (SRD) grant in April 2020. This study represents one component of a broader European Union – *Agence Française de Développement* (EU-AFD) research programme which aims to advance the evidence base and understanding of the stimulus effects of income transfer programmes in the South African context.

The aim of the project was to qualitatively analyse the interactions between the SRD and local economies through the lens of informal traders' experiences. We focused on the experiences of informal traders as they represent a significant proportion of workers in the informal sector and provide a unique perspective into the myriad of relationships and types of business that make up local economies. They were selected for this study based on the premise that they would be particularly sensitive to the potential economic impacts of the SRD, both in their capacities as consumers and as traders.

The study addressed the following questions:

- What were the effects of the SRD on customer demand, as perceived by informal traders?
- What were the effects of the SRD on informal traders' business trajectories?
- What were the combined effects of the SRD on supply and demand in local economies, as perceived by informal traders?
- What differences, if any, were they by gender, age, location and business type?

The largest social policy debate at the moment relates to whether to make the SRD a permanent grant (in the form of a Basic Income Grant). The research we conducted demonstrates that, in the context of a crisis, the expansion of social protection is crucial and provides a very important cushioning effect. Further, there is some evidence that it had stimulus effects, but that these were muted in the face of such a large economic shock. The research provided insightful policy recommendations including the importance of clear communication about eligibility, and stability in the provision of the grant over the crisis period. While these policy recommendations have implications for Basic Income Grant debates, more research is needed to understand the economic stimulus effects of such a grant in non-crisis times.

## How does this project show the CSDA operating model in action?



**Research excellence:** In line with the CSDA's strategic approach, research excellence remains the mainstay of the centre, informing all three of the other domains of our work, namely, innovation in application and human capability development and public engagement.

The project ensured this by forming a research team that would expertly and collaboratively execute the objectives of the study. The study leveraged the centre's research skills and knowledge in the social development research landscape and WIEGO's networks and knowledge of the informal economy. WIEGO led in facilitating interviews with informal traders and their representatives, while the CSDA led in overseeing and conducting fieldwork.

The study employed a qualitative exploratory research design, incorporating elements of participatory methods that involved consultations with individuals representing or working with informal traders. We interviewed them as key informants and were able to ensure that the findings were an accurate reflection of the lived experiences of our participants.



**Innovation in application:** While there is substantial research that has tracked the social impacts of the COVID-19 social relief package, little is known regarding the economic impacts. The SRD policy recognised the precarious livelihoods of many working age adults, and although the grant was initially targeted at informal workers, it did come to be perceived as a grant for the unemployed. It is yet to be seen how the findings will influence policy decisions but we see informal traders as an important entry point for understanding the backwards and forward economic effects of the SRD; in terms of how informal traders used the grant when they received it, as well as in terms of changes they observed in their client base, many of whom started receiving the SRD. The study allowed us to take advantage of an innovative response to the Covid pandemic and to assess its effects.



**Human capacity development:** The CSDA employs and mentors many young, early-career researchers, all of whom are involved in research projects at various stages. Several research assistants were involved in the data collection, analysis and report writing.



**Public engagement:** This research represents one component of a broader EU-AFD research programme that aims to advance the evidence base and understanding of the stimulus effects of income transfer programmes in the South African context.

Our preliminary findings were presented last year as part of a workshop to discuss the first results of the papers funded under the project, “Measuring stimulus effects on the South Africa Economy”, led by the Presidency and funded by the EU-AFD Research facility on inequalities. A [media article](#) has also since been published and we are in the process of finalising the research report.

### Alignment with Sustainable Development Goals



### 4.3.2 Thematic area 2: Contemporary social development challenges

*Poverty and inequality are complex challenges that require nuanced and in-depth understanding to solve. Our work in this field seeks to understand the complexities of how poverty and various types of inequality (age, gender, class, disabilities and geographic location) shape people's lives. New social challenges including climate change must inform our analysis of poverty and inequality and their effects.*

#### Mental Health Cascades study

Across the world, one in seven children and young people under 18 years suffer from a range of mental health problems, with a marked inequality in terms of prevalence and access to resources associated with deprivation or vulnerability. Service barriers are compounded in developing contexts because of the additional stigma related to mental illness, structural inequalities and limited resources in terms of number of skilled professionals and services. Despite this well-established service gap in such contexts, there is a lack of child-focused and evidence-based policy and guidelines in South Africa.

The aim of this project is to address the mental health research, service and policy gap in South Africa by refining and implementing a child mental health service transformation framework to upskill professionals and communities in meeting the mental health needs of vulnerable children, by developing trainer capacity.

Through this study we are engaging in timely, and relevant research that contributes to a critical aspect of human development; mental health. We are working in ways that engage community members, capacitates community-based organisations and we are contributing to knowledge production in this area.

### How does this project show the CSDA operating model in action?



**Research excellence:** Through the Mental health Cascades study, our relationship with the University of Leicester continues, and through this the partnership we've developed collaborations in other contexts, like Pakistan. Together the team has a growing publication record.



**Public engagement:** The project requires the support and buy-in from local community stakeholders, like the Department of Education, and NGOs, for successful implementation. Capacity building, and dissemination of information, is an important feature of this project.



**Human capability development:** Junior researchers, as well as research assistants are involved in guiding and implementing the study. It offers opportunities for working directly with a range of community stakeholders, including young people.



**Innovation in application:** The project focuses on whole community development when looking at mental health outcomes for children. It is focused on strengthening the systems that surround the child, through education and skills building, so that children are better cared for.

### Alignment with Sustainable Development Goals





### 4.3.3 Thematic area 3: Welfare and social development innovations

*Innovative and evidence-based solutions, informed by technological developments are required to address the complex challenges of poverty and inequality. Our work in this field focuses on bringing evidence to bear on developing, adapting, and testing social development interventions informed by social development theory; and capacitating practitioners to implement successful interventions.*

#### **Nurturing Networks of Resilience: Teacher Resilience**

In 2022, we began with an exploratory study aimed at enhancing the resilience of teachers. This project draws on an existing body of work focused on child resilience, that shows that for youth at risk the presence of at least one caring, accessible adult relationship is critical to

youth resilience, allowing for positive adaptation and better well-being outcomes. Teachers are well placed to provide such support. Teachers, however, have high workloads and limited support. This intervention is intended to support teachers' well-being, so they are better able to respond to the needs of young people.

## How does this project show the CSDA operating model in action?



**Research excellence:** In this study, we are conducting a scoping review to look at what has been done before and what gaps still exist. This will provide a holistic picture that is a valuable research tool.



**Public engagement:** For successful implementation this project requires the support and buy-in from local community stakeholders, like the Department of Education and community NGOs. Capacity building of these key stakeholders and dissemination of information, is central to project success.



**Human capability development:** As with many CSDA projects junior researchers and research assistants are involved in implementing this work. Through this study researchers are gaining skills and experience in conducting scoping reviews and practical experience implementing an intervention with teachers.



**Innovation in application:** The project focuses on whole-community development when looking at

mental health outcomes for children. It is focused on strengthening the systems that surround the child, through education and skills building, so that children are better cared for. This is an innovative approach that draws on the strengths of a range of service providers to offer more integrated care and support.

### Alignment with Sustainable Development Goals



#### 4.3.4 Thematic area 4: Economic and social inclusion

*Core to explaining challenges of poverty and inequality is how people and communities are excluded from social and economic opportunities. Our work in this field seeks to understand the nature of various aspects of exclusion, including how the changing nature of work affects people; and what strategies work to enhance and leverage agency of such groups; and challenge structural inequalities to promote better outcomes.*



## The Voice of the Child Project

Several countries have made significant progress in improving child nutrition over the last three decades. Malnutrition and stunting rates in South Africa, on the other hand, remain alarmingly high. In response, the South African government established the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP). Each school day, the NSNP feeds over nine million children. The programme is designed to provide 30-40% of a child's daily recommended dietary allowance. In recent years, the NSNP has collaborated with a variety of public and private organisations, such as the Tiger Brands Foundation, to expand their in-school nutrition offerings and an additional breakfast is now provided in many schools.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated food insecurity and significantly hampered schools' ability to feed children on a regular basis. During the initial period of COVID-19 regulated restrictions, the NSNP ceased entirely. The cancellation of the programme sparked public outrage and a legal challenge. Despite the court-ordered resumption of the programme, logistical and service delivery issues posed additional challenges. Although the courts ordered schools to continue providing the NSNP meal even during school closures, the realities of delivering the food within this



context most likely resulted in children receiving fewer meals and meals with fewer nutrients through in-school nutrition.

The aim of this study was to understand, from the perspective of 182 children, how they were affected by the shifts in in-school nutrition programmes during the COVID-19 pandemic and, secondly, to comparatively assess the nutritional value of the in-school nutrition programmes delivered at selected schools in four South African provinces. The study was conducted in Gauteng, Western Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and the North West province.

To capture children's voices, a child-centred qualitative approach was used, which included participatory visual methods deemed appropriate for data collection with children. The findings indicate that the pandemic had a negative impact on children's well-being across multiple domains.

Recommendations based on the findings which will go a long way to improving the quality and effectiveness of the in-school nutrition programmes include an increase in supply of fresh fruits, meat and eggs and an increase in the quantities children receive.

### **What is the importance of this work?**

The Voice of the Child study plays an important role in advocacy surrounding the importance of in-school

nutrition programmes and how crucial it is to continue investing in running such programmes.

The objectives aligned to these aims are to:

- Profile how children were affected by these changes, with particular reference to their learning, energy, physical and emotional well-being.
- Understand, from the perspective of children, how they and their families coped during these periods.
- Make recommendations regarding the importance of in-school nutrition and building the resilience of such programmes to better attend to children's needs.

Following this and based on the results from the study, a strategy to improve children's access to healthy diets may be developed especially for those provinces found to have higher rates of malnutrition.

### **How does this project show the CSDA's operating model in action?**



**Research excellence:** The study employed a mixed-method approach that resulted in a study that brought together a powerful combination of research methods. These included the use of individual interviews and focus group discussions at selected schools (qualitative method) and calculating nutritional values of the menus (quantitative method). To capture the voices of children, we employed a child-centred qualitative approach.



**Innovation in application:** The study employed a child-centred qualitative approach to elicit in-depth and a more nuanced understanding of the perspectives of children on how they were affected by the shifts in in-school nutrition programmes during the COVID-19 pandemic. A child-centred

qualitative approach was suitable as it involves participatory methods that are suitable for and sensitive to data collection with children.



**Human capacity development:** The project employed a senior researcher, a junior researcher and research assistants who were involved in the data collection and analysis stage. As the research drew on participatory approaches, junior researchers were capacitated in the use of new research methods. The junior

researcher was also supported in coordinating the project and liaising with key stakeholders.



**Public engagement:** Preliminary findings from the interviews with children and school personnel involved in the food programme were shared with the Tiger Brands Foundation team. Hema Kesa, Senior Researcher at the Food Evolution Research Laboratory (FERL) who worked

on the project, also presented the findings to the TBF Foundation board and at the University of Free State's Continuous Nutrition symposium.

### Alignment with Sustainable Development Goals



## 5. Students and teaching – The next generation of researchers

### Masters of Philosophy in Social Policy and Development

The Masters of Philosophy in Social Policy and Development continues to be the mainstay of our commitment to developing the next generation of social development scholars and practitioners. 2022 was a very successful year in which 19 of our students graduated,





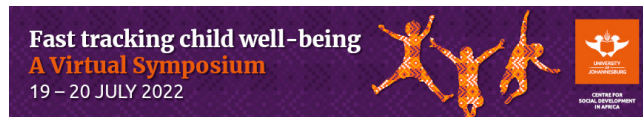


seven of them with distinctions. We also had a new intake of eleven students starting the programme in 2022. Prof Leila Patel supervised three doctoral students to completion this year. Edwin Mtambanengwe, Jenita Chiba and Somaya Abdullah all completed their PhDs in 2022.

## 6. Public engagement

### 6.1 Community of Practice Symposium

The Fast Tracking Child Well-being Virtual Symposium shared research, and lessons learnt from one the CSDA's flagship project, community of practice model to fast-track child well-being outcomes for early-grade learners in our schools. This symposium was the culmination of a two-year CoP research and intervention study and a partnership between three research chairs at the University of Johannesburg and the DSI/NRF Centre of Excellence in Human Development at the University of the Witwatersrand. It brought together researchers, practitioners, civil society organisations, government representatives and policymakers to interrogate what constitutes the most appropriate cross-sectoral interventions to step up child well-being outcomes in the early grades. Over 300 people attended the symposium. Read more about the CoP on page 15.



### 6.2 Webinar

Amidst the busyness of the year and in addition to hosting the Fast Tracking Child Well-being Virtual Symposium, we also hosted a webinar.

The webinar was entitled Context matters: *Child growth within a constrained environment* and formed part of the Community of Practice for Social Systems Strengthening to Improve Child Well-being Outcomes (CoP). Dr Lukhanyo Nyati postdoctoral fellow at the South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC) Developmental Pathways for Health Research Unit (DPHRU) at the University of the Witwatersrand delivered the main presentation that interrogated how a child's context impacts on their growth. His presentation highlighted that child growth often provides a good indication of the conditions in society and that many low and middle-income countries experience the double burden of malnutrition and over nutrition. He noted that South Africa has performed poorly in addressing stunting when compared with other low and middle-income countries. When looking at the research results from the study he highlighted that poor growth is associated with poorer short and long-term health and

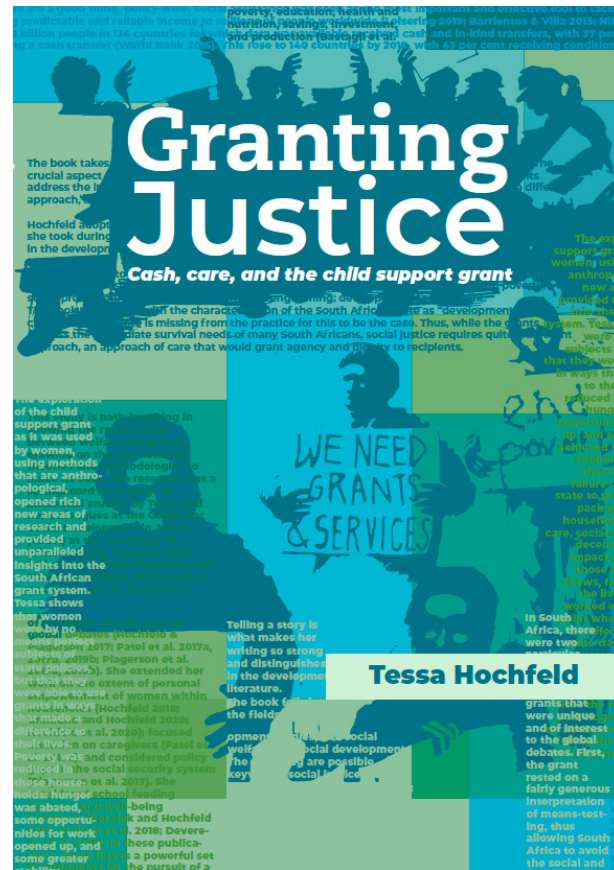
economic outcomes and in addition increased risk of infection impairs growth.

The research undertaken by the team sought to identify the factors that are associated with positive child growth and development to identify potential levers for interventions to support child growth and development. Some of the key findings that he shared included that 12,7% of participants had stunting, 7,5% were underweight and 28,2% were over-weight.

He concluded that increasing social dependency is a threat to achieving the goal of reducing malnutrition, improving education of girls may provide extra protection to malnutrition, reducing crowding in homes (possibly through acceleration of low-cost housing projects) may provide some protection. However, macro-economic factors such as economic growth and employment are major drivers.

## 6.3 Book Launch

The Centre for Social Development in Africa (CSDA) in partnership with the HSRC Press and Governing Intimacies at Wits hosted a hybrid book launch for the late Prof Tessa Hochfeld's book *Granting Justice: Cash, Care and the Child Support Grant* on 21 June. The book unpacks the problematic characterisation of the South African state as developmental, looking at how the practice of care is missing from the social grant system. It features the experiences of women and how they define their own needs in direct comparison to how the state defines their needs.



The event was co-hosted by the CSDA and members of the UJ-Wits writing group of which Tessa was a part and was attended by colleagues, friends, and family of Tessa in person and on Zoom. The launch discussed how many different people came together to transform Tessa's PhD thesis into this published book, the significance of Tessa's book and her wider research.

Prof Lauren Graham extended thanks and gratitude to Tessa's family for approaching the CSDA about setting up a bursary in Tessa's name as another legacy that she leaves behind. The Tessa Hochfeld Memorial Bursary Fund has funded two students so far Tshegofatso Rametsetse and Yibanathi Mabunda. These two students worked together with artist/videographer Firdoze Bulbulia to voice over Nandi's story which is one of the key cases in the book. Tessa's reflections can be heard in the way that it is presented. It captured Tessa's approach to research, which the students are encouraged to use as well.

## 6.4 Policy Engagement

CSDA researchers have had many policy relevant engagements over the past year. Many of these have already been profiled in the project descriptions. Importantly we are working at several levels to actively engage the people who can make a difference. At the end of 2022 our longstanding engagements with the National Department of Social Development (DSD) resulted in

a signed Memorandum of Understanding between UJ and the department. The MoU underpins an agreement to collaborate in three areas – the ongoing work of the Communities of Practice for Child Well-being study, continued engagements regarding social protection and livelihood strategies, and seeking connections on the Basic Package of Support project.

The Communities of Practice project in particular has made several successful policy inroads. At a national level, CoP is in discussions with DSD and DBE on collaboration and the inclusion of officials on the Advisory Level CoP. At a provincial level DSD and Gauteng Department of Education are key partners on the CoP and are working closely with the CoP team regarding how to build in the CoP approach to policy guidelines. At a local level, a collaborative intervention pilot with CoP social workers and DSD Gauteng social workers commences in March 2023 where the CoP Model will be used in five CoP schools with children identified as being red flagged for support.

We also continue to work closely with the Presidential Youth Employment Intervention via the Basic Package of Support project and Prof Lauren Graham is represented on the pilot steering committee of the National Pathway Management Network. Prof Graham presented alongside collaborator Prof Ariane De Lannoy at a webinar hosted by the Jobs Fund on 19 July, which discussed how the

Basic Package of Support (BPS) is attempting to build the networks and systems that will create an ecosystem of support for young people as they navigate the transition from school into income-earning opportunities.

The project on the SRD grant and informal workers has been commissioned on behalf of the Presidential Employment Stimulus programme and the recommendations arising from this project are influencing policy thinking related to the stimulus package that forms a key strategic thrust of the President's efforts to promote economic growth.

## 6.5 Media engagement

This year the CSDA team engaged extensively with media in order to influence public debate on key social development issues. In total the CSDA generated about R9 million in Advertising Value Equivalence for the university. This includes both solicited and unsolicited media engagements. Some of the highlights included Prof Leila Patel's article published in *The Conversation* titled [Social security is the bedrock of South Africa's human rights protection. But there are gaps](#). The article received media attention from several media houses including *The South African*, *The Star* and *The Cape Argus*. Prof Patel was also interviewed on *702* about the article.

On 5 May, Youth Capital launched their report, "[Beyond](#)

[the Cost: what does it really cost young people to look for work?](#)". Insights from the report were discussed in a panel discussion with Youth Capital's Kristal Duncan-Williams, CSDA Researcher Senzelwe Mthembu and financial journalist Duma Gqubule. The report built on the CSDA's [Siyakha Youth Assets Employability Study](#) and sought to understand the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic, the lockdowns and the increased use of online platforms for job seeking has had on the cost of job seeking for young people.

The *Beyond the Cost* report has received lots of media attention with Senzelwe Mthembu interviewed on the Cathy Mohlahlana show on [SAfm](#) and a [Power 98.7](#) roundtable on the cost on job seeking in South Africa.

Prof Lauren Graham was interviewed by Cathy Mohlahlana on SAfm and by John Perlman on 702 about the unemployment rate in South Africa. She was also interviewed on [SABC News](#) and by [SAfm's](#) Steven Grootes about social grant developments.

CSDA Researcher Senzelwe Mthembu, Director Lauren Graham and Visiting Associate Professor Sophie Plageron collaborated with partners at Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO) to explore how the SRD helped informal traders to stay afloat during the COVID-19 pandemic. Their article which drew on rich insights from informal traders was featured in [News24](#).



## 7. Publications

### Journal Articles Published 2022

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1. Alferts, L., Chen, M., & **Plagerson, S.** (2022). Social Contracts and Informal Workers in the Global South. Sociology, Social Policy and Education subject collection <http://dx.doi.org/10.4337/9781839108068>.

This book was co-edited with Laura Alferts and Martha Chen, Women in Informal Employment: Globalising and Organising (WIEGO), and draws on the accounts of informal workers, who represent over 60 per cent of the global workforce. It also includes case studies from several countries to advocate for new conceptualisations of state-society, capital-labour and state-capital-labour relations, which respond to the demands of the working poor in informal economies.

2. **Midgley, J.** (2022). *Advanced Introduction to Social Protection*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
3. **Androff, David K.** (2022). Refugee Solutions in the Age of Global Crisis: Human Rights, Integration, and Sustainable Development, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780197642191.001.0001>, accessed 20 Sept. 2022.

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1. Alfers, L., Chen, M., & **Plagerson, S.** (2022). Conclusion: Post-pandemic epilogue-the bad old contract, an even worse contract or a better social contract for informal workers?. In *Social Contracts and Informal Workers in the Global South* (pp. 216-231). Edward Elgar Publishing.
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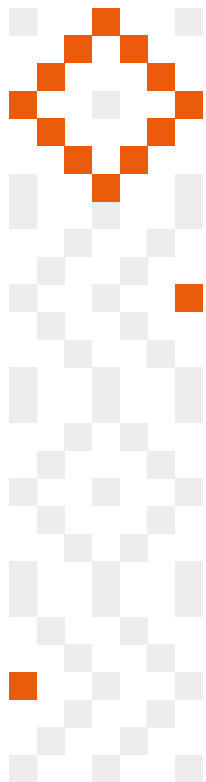








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