

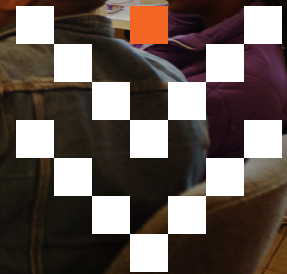
Centre for Social Development in Africa

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



UNIVERSITY
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JOHANNESBURG

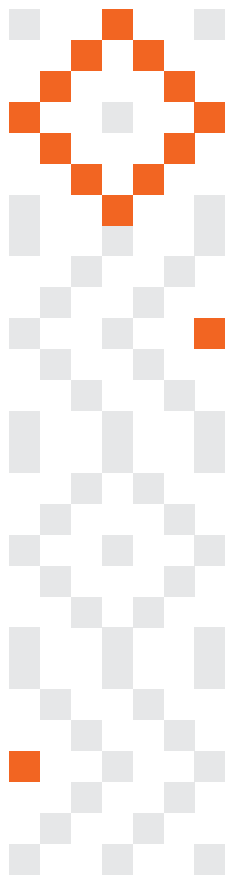
CENTRE FOR
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
IN AFRICA



FOSTERING SYSTEMS CHANGE TO PROMOTE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC INCLUSION

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: Fostering Systems Change to Promote Social and Economic Inclusion

The theme for this year's annual report is *Fostering Systems Change to Promote Social and Economic Inclusion*. I chose this theme because many of our projects recognise that dealing with poverty and promoting better human development outcomes relies on integrated interventions that can support people to overcome the multiple barriers they face as a consequence of the systemic nature of poverty.

Increasingly, social policy and social protection literature acknowledges that single interventions are inadequate. While they may offer some poverty alleviation effects, if we want to promote transformative social policy that enables people to overcome poverty, integrated and holistic interventions are necessary. However, how to deliver such interventions is incredibly complex. It requires disparate government departments to collaborate; it requires mechanisms that allow information and data sharing; and importantly, it must work for people who need to benefit from these interventions. I am really proud of the CSDA team members, who have taken on many of these difficult questions and who are therefore

contributing to cutting-edge thinking in the social policy and social development landscape.

In this report we feature the Communities of Practice for Child Well-being project, the Basic Package of Support for NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) youth, and the Nurturing Networks of Resilience project – all of which are underpinned by this question of how to deliver integrated services to vulnerable and excluded groups.

The recently published *Handbook on Social Protection and Social Development in the Global South*, edited by Leila Patel, Sophie Plagerson and Isaac Chinyoka, brings together leading expert insights on some of these questions, drawing on lessons emanating from various countries in the Global South. It is a foundational book for those studying social policy. I want to congratulate Leila, Sophie, Isaac and all authors on such an excellent contribution to the social policy literature.

Bringing our evidence to bear on crucial social policy debates

The CSDA team has also remained abreast of some of the most critical social policy debates in South Africa, particularly the debate about a potential Basic Income Grant. Dr Lauren Stuart graduated this year and her PhD, that I co-supervised with Leila, considered the social value

of work in public employment programmes. Her research points to how work through public employment provides a great deal of value to individuals and communities, under certain conditions. It is an important contribution and offers insights that have been largely overlooked in the debates about a Basic Income Grant.

Our first webinar of the year also considered some of the complexities of grants and livelihood strategies. Leila drew together several pieces of work, including her students' work, that had considered how grants were being used to promote livelihood activities. The key policy takeaway was that there are complex issues at play regarding whether grants can be used for other livelihood activities and much depends on other income coming into the household as well as entrepreneurial support for grant beneficiaries.

Finally, Sophie Plagerson and Senzelwe Mthembu led a project, together with Women in the Informal Economy Globalising and Organising (WIEGO) on how the Social Relief of Distress (SRD) grant was being used by informal traders. The research showed that the SRD had important "buffering" effects allowing businesses to survive. The research, funded by the French Development Agency (The Agence Française de Développement (AFD)), formed part of a wider set of studies for the Presidential Employment Stimulus, and is being used to inform thinking about the future of the stimulus package, including the possibility of a

longer-term grant for those who are unemployed. Our team really is making important evidence-based contributions to critical social policy debates at the moment.

Internationalisation



From the left: Prof Lauren Graham, Prof Flora Hadju, Prof Leila Patel

We have also had a successful year of internationalisation. We hosted the Inaugural colloquium of the International Consortium for Social Development's Africa branch in March, bringing together over 60 delegates from across the continent.

We were also thrilled to host the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) programme. This partnership has been cultivated by Prof Tanusha Raniga with colleagues from University of KwaZulu Natal, Midlands State University (Zimbabwe), and Dortmund University (Germany) and we were delighted to host the staff and students affiliated with the programme this year.



From the left: Prof Elmarie Fourie, Prof Marianne S. Ulriksen, Nosoyiso Fikani, Prof Sophie Plagerson, Prof Lauren Graham.

Several of our staff and students presented papers at international conferences including the International Consortium for Social Development (ICSD) Biennial

Conference in Sweden, and the South African Social Protection Experts Network (SASPEN) conference in Mauritius. We also hosted international colleagues from Denmark, China, Sweden, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

Awards and recognition

Leila Patel delivered the Shanti Khinduka lecture at the ICSD (International Consortium for Social Development) 23rd Biennial Conference in August. At the conference,

Prof Patel and Prof James Midgely (CSDA Honorary Professor) were jointly awarded the Jim Billups International Social Development Leadership Award which is awarded annually to honour a person who best exemplifies the values, commitments, and leadership in international social development as characterised by the life and work of James Billups. Leila was also asked to deliver the keynote address at the International Association for Schools of Social Work (IASSW) conference in Namibia.



Prof Leila Patel, pictured with all the 2022–2023 HSRC-USAf Award winners / Photo credit: Adziliwi Nematandani, External Communications Manager, HSRC

Prof Tanusha Raniga, Interim DSI/NRF South African Research Chair in Welfare and Social Development, was invited to deliver the keynote [Pinderhughes Diversity Lecture](#) at the Boston College School of Social Work.



I am also immensely proud of our Communities of Practice for Child Well-being team, led by Prof Patel, which was nominated for a Team Award in the HSRC-USAf Awards for Social Sciences and Humanities. The Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) and Universities South Africa (USAf) annually award and acknowledge scholars who have made an outstanding contribution to the social sciences and humanities through their research, and the nomination reflects the ongoing commitment of the CoP team not only to cutting edge research, but to on-the-ground impact.

We also celebrated promotions in 2023. Ms Khuliso Matidza was promoted to Researcher, Dr Sadiyya Haffeejee received a promotion to Associate Professor, and I was made a Full Professor in May this year.

Publications and media engagement

The CSDA, its research associates, Visiting and Honorary Professors, and students published widely in 2023. We have had a successful year regarding publications with 56 published articles and 10 book chapters published. The majority of these are in leading international journals in their field.

We have also been very active in the media, generating media coverage worth over R8 million in Advertising Value Equivalent. Importantly, most of the media engagement was generated through requests for radio and TV interviews when our research was being read in relation to popular debates.

This year two of our students also had publications in the media. [News24](#) published an article written by CSDA Masters graduate Tunusha Naidoo. “Technology helped me ‘see’”, which documents the power of technology to enable people with disabilities to experience greater inclusion in society.



Prof Leila Patel, Dr Lauren Stuart and Prof Lauren Graham

Dr Lauren Stuart, a 2023 PhD graduate and former staff member/ researcher at the CSDA also published an important piece in [News24](#) about the social value of work as experienced by public employment programme participants.

Student success

We had some excellent graduate outputs this year. Thirteen Masters students graduated in 2023, two with distinction. We also celebrated with three PhD students

who graduated. Several of these students have had their first articles published. Tshegofatso Ramatsetse, a former MPhil student and the first Prof Tessa Hochfeld Memorial Bursary Fund recipient, published an article (with Prof Eleanor Ross – her supervisor) titled [“Understanding the perceived psychosocial impact of father absence on adult women”](#) in Volume 53, Issue 2 of South African Journal of Psychology and is available [here](#).

Transitions at the CSDA

2023 was also a year of transition for us. Late in 2022 Leila stepped down from her role as the DSI/NRF South African Research Chair (SARChI) in Welfare and Social Development. I wish to congratulate her on being awarded a Distinguished Professorship with the university. She continues to play a vital role at the CSDA. Prof Tanusha Raniga is currently serving as the Interim SDST/NRF Chair in Social Welfare and Development. The staff and I have thoroughly enjoyed working with her over this year. We have settled into a good working rhythm, learned about one another’s projects, and look forward to ongoing collaboration in 2024 through several exciting projects.

All of our achievements would not be possible without the very committed staff of the CSDA. Our administration team, under the leadership of Benter, runs an efficient system; our research team remains committed to

delivering on all aspects of our operating model and delivering impact not only in research terms, but also in communities and organisations; and Jabu ensures that we all work in a clean environment. I am also grateful to our research associates, and Visiting and Honorary Professors who enrich our scholarship so much.

Grateful thanks to our funding partners, and the University and Faculty for their ongoing support of the work of the CSDA. I am particularly grateful to our Executive Dean, Prof Kammila Naidoo for her ongoing strategic support of the CSDA. Our advisory board members have, at different times, been called on for insight and advice and have played an important role in our continued success.

Our work remains embedded in partnerships, whether with academic institutions, the private sector, and government and non-government partners. This partnership approach is essential if we are to bring the right expertise together to deliver impact, and I am grateful for how every partner enriches the work we are able to do.

Professor Lauren Graham
CSDA: Director





2. Report of the Interim DSI/NRF South African Research Chair in Welfare and Social Development: Advancing Welfare and Social Development Research

The year 2023 has been an exciting year of transition into my role as the Interim South African Chair in Welfare and Social Development, based at the Centre for Social Development in Africa at the University of Johannesburg. In contemporary times, humanitarian crises globally, regionally and locally, call for novel solutions and greater specialisation of social development professionals, including social workers. Multiple development challenges such as poverty, unemployment, inequality, vulnerability and social exclusion provide rich learning opportunities for enhancing social development in a rapidly changing world. The research focus of the Chair in Welfare and Social Development makes a significant contribution to the implementation of theory and practice of developmental welfare in the South African context. The design and testing of key developmental welfare ideas in practice to mitigate the feminisation of poverty, strengthen child and family well-being, identify significant factors that support youth entrepreneurial activities and mitigating elder abuse in society have formed part of my research focus in 2023.

German academic exchange service (DAAD) postgraduate symposium

Building national and international partnerships plays an important role in research activities. This role is especially



From the left: Prof Kammila Naidoo, Dr Mildred Mushunje, Prof Tanusha Raniga, Prof Michael Boecker, Dorothee Boecker, Dr Maud Mthembu.

important for postgraduate students in Africa and Germany as they deal with the effects of natural disasters, wars and health crises. During the week, 24 to 27 July, I hosted 52 academics and students as part of The Global Transformation and Social Work Practice Programme which is a partnership made up of four universities: Prof Michael Boecker at Fachhochschule Dortmund, myself at

the University of Johannesburg, Dr Maud Mthembu from University of KwaZulu-Natal and Dr Mildred Mushunje of Midland State University. DAAD is a German academic exchange organisation and the four-year programme aims to build partnerships between countries of the "Global North" and the "Global South" to advance the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. The Postgraduate symposium provided opportunities for collaborative work among students, allowing them to present jointly, fostering valuable networking opportunities and deeper connections with their peers. Beyond the academic sphere, the students had the chance to explore a bit of life in Johannesburg – beginning with a visit to the UJ food garden at the Bunting Road Campus, which is integral to the university's food justice initiative. Furthermore, a visit to the Rosebank Market and a historical tour of Mandela House in Soweto exposed students to an array of social and economic entrepreneurial activities.

As part of the commitment to enhance collaboration and co-publishing, a special edition of eight articles emerging from student and academic presentations at the symposium, under the theme: "Human Rights, Sustainable Development Goals and Social Work Practice" is to be published in the *Journal of Social Development in Africa* in April 2024, edited by myself and Prof Michael Boecker as lead editors.

Enhancing collective consciousness and action

On the 14 November 2023 I hosted a Social Work networking event titled *Social Workers Reflecting on The Intersecting Realities Within a Transformative Neoliberal New Managerial Agenda*. The event was a chance for social workers to reconnect after COVID-19 and is the start of a series of future connections to enhance coordination of services and building of authentic partnerships in the sector. At the event, Dr Velo Govender – one of my doctoral graduates - presented her PhD findings about the consequences of neoliberalism and new managerial practices in the child welfare sector. Dr Leandi Erasmus also presented findings from her PhD titled *A Transformative Developmental Social Work Curriculum*. The presentations at the event raised consciousness and challenged social workers' thinking and collective action. The meeting gave social workers an opportunity to join the Social Workers' Action Network (SWAN). Founded by Dr Jessie Turton and Prof Linda Harms Smith, SWAN is a radical, campaigning organisation of social work and social care practitioners, students, service users, carers and academics. The organisation aims to promote a model of social work practice which is rooted in the values of social justice, which seeks to advocate alongside, and on behalf of, carers and service users and which values both individual relationship-based practice and also collective approaches on how to transform the social work sector in South Africa.

Keynote presentations

As a member of the Executive committee of the newly launched Africa branch of the International Consortium for Social Development (ICSD), I collaborated with Prof Lauren Graham to organise the inaugural colloquium of the branch which was held in Johannesburg from the 14-15 March 2023 under the theme: When Crises Collide - Social Development Responses to Intersecting Crises in Africa. The Colloquium brought together social development scholars, activists, practitioners and policy makers in Africa to share insights and solutions, to engage with other leading social development thinkers and practitioners on the continent, to enhance networking with other social development stakeholders, and to build the ICSD Africa Branch. I presented my published paper at the colloquium titled "Sustainable Development and Value Chain Development with women entrepreneurs: Lessons from an NGO in South Africa".

On 30 August I delivered the welcome address at the Women's Impact Innovation & Sustainability in Africa Conference at UJ's Bunting Road Campus. My presentation was titled "Women's roles in African Economies". This conference was a significant two-day event which provided women from business, government and civil society across the African continent and beyond with the opportunity to share experiences, network, build relationships and

take collective action against gender-based violence and gender discrimination which profoundly impacts women's personal and public spaces. Dr Ojo Tinuade, Director of the Pan African Women Studies Unit at the Institute for Pan-African Thought and Conversation at the University of Johannesburg is a collaborating partner of the Chair in Welfare and Social Development.

I was invited to deliver an Opening Address at the Conference on Cooperatives and the Solidarity Economy on 1 November 2023. The presentation was titled "Moving beyond the obvious about Cooperatives, Social and Solidarity Economy Research – what must Researchers ask?" I also presented my published paper "The Role of Economic Cooperatives in improving the lives of women in Gauteng, South Africa" on the second day of the Conference on Cooperatives and the Solidarity Economy at Birchwood Hotel in Johannesburg.

A highlight for me this year was a visit to four universities in the United States in April and May. I delivered the keynote Pinderhughes Diversity Lecture at the Boston College School of Social Work on 28 April 2023. My lecture was titled "Developmental Social Welfare and Sustainable Livelihoods: Lessons from South African Innovations". I also delivered lectures at Simmons University and Touro University in New York based on my research on the precarious role of women in the South African economy.

Looking ahead

I am passionate about the transference of knowledge and skills to the next generation of social development scholars. As such, this year I recruited two new postdoctoral fellows who joined the CSDA in September 2023 and three new PhD students who are in the proposal writing phase. As we embrace 2024, I look forward to teaching on the Social Policy and Development theory course which is part of the MPhil in Social Policy Programme offered by the Centre for Social Development in Africa. Some of the novel research in which I will be engaging in 2024 will cover a diverse range of topics including, "The Implementation of the Value Chain Development Model with Women Entrepreneurs in South Africa; Social Justice of Older Persons in Society; and Training of women entrepreneurs and social workers".

Professor Tanusha Raniga **Interim DSI/NRF South African Research Chair in** **Welfare and Social Development**

Please note that throughout the report the DSI/NRF South African Research Chair in Welfare and Social Development is referred to as SARChI.

3. 2023 Featured Projects

Each year we profile two projects, which clearly demonstrate how our work brings our operational model to life. These projects are rooted in research excellence, driving innovation in application, building social development capability, and contributing to public engagement.

3.1 Nurturing Networks of Resilience: Youth Mental Health Project

Youth mental health is a pressing global concern which is reflected in the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 3, which calls for good health and well-being for all. The Youth Mental Health Project, funded by the NRF (National Research Foundation), focuses on assessing the prevalence of mental health challenges among young people to inform the development of interventions and support mechanisms. This study is part of a broader global mental health survey, coordinated by University of Turku in Finland, which is being conducted in Finland, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Iran and Thailand among other countries. The independent project is gathering vital data to better understand the mental health landscape among young people in South Africa. The results will be instrumental in designing multi-system interventions involving youth, parents, and teachers. By examining mental health issues, risk factors, and resilience in youth, the

project seeks to contribute to more effective interventions and support mechanisms.

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



Research Excellence

This project demonstrates research excellence by conducting a rigorous assessment of youth mental health challenges using an instrument tested in a number of other countries. The survey questionnaire that is being used was

developed by Prof Andre Sourander, Professor of Child Psychiatry at the University of Turku and Adjunct Professor of Psychiatry at Columbia University. It includes measures like the SDQ - strengths and difficulties questionnaire, and CRIES-8 which is used to measure post-traumatic stress symptoms caused by the impacts of the pandemic. The questionnaire also includes questions related to self-esteem, body image, bullying, and suicidality. We have also included a resilience measure, the CYRM (Child and Youth Resilience Measure developed by Professor Michael Ungar). The study adheres to high research standards, ensuring the data's rigour and relevance. Ethics approval was received from the University of Johannesburg. We also obtained permission from the Gauteng Department of Education and consent from parents and participating youth.



Public Engagement

The project actively involves youth, parents, and teachers to understand their perspectives and experiences, making the research inclusive and community focused. Findings will be shared with schools and at wider forums, including the Department of Education.



Innovation in Application

By focusing on innovative multi-system interventions, the project seeks to bridge research findings with practical solutions. This approach acknowledges that addressing mental health problems requires novel strategies and the

application of research outcomes in real-world settings. The project seeks to make recommendations that better support the well-being of youth by working with teachers and parents to ensure more supportive, enabling environments for young people.



Human Capability Development

The project has the potential of contributing to human capability development by raising awareness about youth mental health and training individuals in implementing evidence-

based interventions. It can potentially empower youth, parents, and teachers to better support those facing mental health challenges. A second phase of the study will potentially use findings to provide workshops for young people at risk, parenting interventions and training for teachers.

Alignment with Sustainable Development Goals



3.2 Understanding the effects of the SRD on informal traders

The CSDA recently conducted an important policy-related study, in partnership with Women in the Informal Economy Globalising and Organising (WIEGO) and The Agence Française de Développement (AFD), on the role of the Social Relief of Distress (SRD) grant on informal traders. The SRD was rolled out to all people who were unemployed and not receiving any other form of state aid, as a response to the COVID-related lockdowns and economic effects. The roll-out of the SRD was the first time in South Africa's history that a grant was made widely available to working-

age unemployed adults. Many of the beneficiaries were informal traders. As part of the Presidential Employment Stimulus Package was to evaluate the effects of the SRD, the CSDA and WIEGO were approached to understand how the grant had affected informal traders. The research was conducted in the Eastern and Western Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng with informal traders in the food sector. The findings demonstrated that although informal traders still lost a great deal of income over the period, the grant acted as a “buffer” allowing many to keep their businesses ticking over during that time. Informal traders also mentioned having new clients who otherwise would not have had the money to buy from them and who now could, given that they were receiving the SRD.

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. Furthermore, 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

The project ensured research excellence by forming a research team that expertly and collaboratively executed 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.



Innovation in application

The COVID SRD grant formed part of a suite of innovative policy responses to the pandemic, and was lauded internationally as an example of good practice in the field of social protection. The roll-out of the SRD was also the first time that a grant

had been made available to working-age adults who did not have a disability. Given these innovations, research to understand the effects of the SRD grant is necessary. The research formed part of a wider body of research supported by Agence Française de Développement (AFD)

for the Presidential Employment Stimulus team. This research is being used to inform policy thinking about some form of social protection for working-age adults. The focus on informal traders allowed us to highlight the backwards and forwards economic effects of 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.

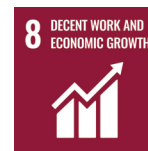


Public engagement

The [research report](#) was finalised and published on The Agence Française de Développement (AFD) website. The findings have been presented at one local and one international academic conference and to the Presidential Employment

Stimulus Package team that is responsible for policy thinking on instruments such as the SRD. The findings were noted in the [President's newsletter](#) and in two media articles on [TimesLive](#) and the [Daily Maverick](#).

Alignment with Sustainable Development Goals



3.3 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.

3.3.1 Thematic area 1: Social Policy in the Global South

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

One of the key social policy questions we tackle at the CSDA is how to make existing social policy instruments work better and in a more integrated fashion, to ensure that people are able to achieve better development outcomes. There is a substantial body of research that has



Participants attending a Department of Social Development CoP review workshop

focused on the effects of the Child Support Grant (CSG) in alleviating the effects of childhood poverty. However, cash alone is insufficient to improve overall well-being outcomes for children. Children and their families need a range of services to ensure that barriers resulting from the systemic nature of poverty can be overcome.

For this reason, the Community of Practices (CoP) for Child Well-being project was initiated in 2020. It focuses on CSG beneficiaries in the foundation phase (Gr R to Gr 3) and aims to enhance children's well-being by bolstering social support systems around them. Based on research that identifies early childhood as a period of heightened responsiveness to interventions, the CoP leverages a multisystemic framework that integrates health, education, mental health and welfare sectors.

The project brings together teachers, social workers and allied professionals. Using a digital tool, social workers assess child well-being in multiple domains and children at high risk have tailored interventions designed for them and their families. The research reflects the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on various aspects of well-being across households, caregivers and children, and shows how children fared at the end of the pandemic in 2022.

In 2023 the focus of the project has been on assessing the feasibility of the CoP approach for institutionalisation. This

goal was achieved through further testing and evaluation of the CoP model in a rural environment, where resources may be more constrained; and assessing the usefulness and effectiveness of the Child Well-being Tracking Tool (CWTT). The team also evaluated the effectiveness of CoP interventions and tracked child well-being over three key foundational years, from grade R to grade 3.



Research Excellence

The CoP project continues to drive research excellence. It is an interdisciplinary project that brings together recognised experts across several disciplines to form part of the Advisory level of the Community of Practice. This advisory group works alongside an interdisciplinary team of researchers, committed to producing research of the highest quality and in 2023, the team produced seven research articles, including in a highly rated journal, the *International Journal of Social Work*, an article titled [*Using a Community of Practice Approach for Developmental School Social Work: A South African Experience*](#). The team also produced the [*CoP Wave 3 Research Report*](#), several working papers, as well as an infographic for [*Wave 3*](#). This Research excellence was recognised when the CoP team was nominated for a team award in the HSRC-USAf Awards for Social Sciences and Humanities. This award acknowledges scholars who have made an outstanding

contribution to the social sciences and humanities through their research.



Public & Policy engagement

The CoP team engaged with various government departments and development agencies that play a prominent role in policy research, locally and internationally. These stakeholders are critical in advocating for the scaling-up &

institutionalisation of the CoP model. This collaboration with a range of partners aligns with SDG 17, partnerships to achieve the goal. MOUs were signed with the National and Gauteng Department of Social Development, and the Ndlovu Care Group in Limpopo for the CoP rural pilot. At the same time there is ongoing stakeholder engagement at national, provincial and local levels with: Department of Health, Department of Basic Education, Department of Social Development and the City of Johannesburg and with development agencies UNICEF, SAVE the Children and local NPOs. The Department of Basic Education, is excited to partner with the team to roll out the CWTT and the CoP approach to more schools.

The CoP team held a [webinar](#) titled “How Well Are Children Faring?” where the team presented a comparative analysis of children’s well-being over three years, offering insights into strengths and areas for improvement in social systems.

The project has been shared with the public more broadly through media coverage on [eNCA](#) and [BusinessDay](#).



Innovation in application

This study demonstrates the importance of monitoring the multi-dimensional well-being of children and their families in their school and community context in order to intervene appropriately. Ensuring that multidisciplinary teams (part of the

community of practice approach) are capacitated and work together to share knowledge, resources, and skills to find impactful and tangible solutions is critical if we are to improve children’s growth and development outcomes in the early years of schooling.

The project’s main innovation continues to be the Child Well-being Tracking Tool. The tool was modified 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 (a community- based prevention and early intervention programme for orphans and vulnerable children) to compare the CSDA’s Child Well-being Tracking Tool and the UNGUBANI child well-being assessment tool used to collect data in Limpopo.



Human capacity development

The CoP enabled the training and development of five CoP social workers and 11 Nursing Supervisors in research skills. 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



3.3.2 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 globe one in seven people under the age of 18 struggle with mental health challenges – what this number does not reveal is that prevalence is higher among vulnerable and deprived children and that these children have limited access to resources and services. In countries like South Africa young people also encounter stigma which prevents them accessing services as well structural inequalities, and constraints in terms of skilled professionals and services.

The primary objective of the Mental Health Cascades project was to address the mental health research, service, and policy gaps in South Africa by refining and implementing a child mental health service transformation framework. The project trained child community care workers and communities so that they could meet

the mental health needs of vulnerable children. Child community care workers then disseminated their knowledge to various groups.

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



Research Excellence

This project showcases excellence in research through its comprehensive exploration of mental health challenges among children and youth in South Africa. The initiative adopts evidence-based practices and a transformative framework, ensuring that the research contributes significantly to the field. There are currently four articles in progress/or under review. The study is being conducted in collaboration with leading experts Prof Panos Vostanis, a psychiatrist and the founder of World Awareness of Children in Trauma (WACIT) and Prof. Michelle O'Reilly, Associate Professor of Communication in Mental Health and Chartered Psychologist in Health at Leicester University.



Public Engagement

The study actively engages the public by cascading training to youth through community-based organisations. A range of young people were engaged including: 15 adolescent girls (aged 13-19) who

attended fortnightly sessions over six months focusing on well-being and gender-based violence; 60 pregnant teenagers who attended one session weekly for four weeks on mental health care of mothers and children; 70 youth (aged 14-19) who attended four emotional literacy sessions; and 175 youth (aged 15-24) who participated in four-hour community mental health awareness events.



Human Capability Development

The project focuses on human capability development by training community development workers and young people. They received psycho-social training on child mental health in four key areas: (1) foundation skills (concepts, stigma, child development, risk and protective factors), (2) common child mental health problems (emotional, behavioural, and attachment-related), (3) psychological interventions, and (4) working with communities - all interspersed with trainer skills. The project also included emerging researchers in data collection and analysis to enhance research capacity.



Innovation in Application

Through its adoption of an ecological framework, the project seeks to create a supportive environment, ensuring the comprehensive care of children in the community. Collaborating with local CBOs, NGOs, and youth, the project conducts

targeted training sessions, thereby shaping public discourse and raising awareness about mental health in the community.

Alignment with Sustainable Development Goals



3.3.3 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.

■ *Basic Package of Support*

The Basic Package of Support (BPS) had an exciting year of transition in 2023. We reached “proof of concept” in our Atlantis and Orange Farm sites, with our research demonstrating that the project could be rolled out as planned and that the early outcomes were being achieved. These outcomes included improved well-being amongst young people, and many young people taking up and staying with learning and earning





opportunities. We also established a site in KwaZulu-Natal, partnered with Amandla Edufootball to test a partnership model of implementation, conducted scoping work to inform how to adapt the programme for a rural setting, and concluded several phases of pilot funding for the project.

In the latter part of 2023, the focus was firmly on pathways to scale. The lessons for the partner implementation process are now being brought into developing a social franchise strategy for the programme, with the DG Murray Trust. Moreover, we continue to do the research work to inform policy engagements that could lead to greater uptake of the approach in the departments that connect with young people, such as Department of Basic Education, the Department of Higher Education and Training, and the Department of Labour.

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

Research excellence



Research Excellence

The research regarding the BPS continues to be shared in international forums. Prof Lauren Graham presented the study findings at the International Sociological Association conference in Melbourne, and the findings were also presented at the Youth Employment

Research Forum hosted by the International Labour Organisation in Geneva.



Public Engagement

The BPS continues to be a key partner within the National Pathway Management Network – the partnership that implements the Presidential Youth Employment Intervention. The findings of the BPS outcomes were also presented at a Jobs Fund Webinar in November 2023.



Human Capability Development

Several research assistants have worked on the research aspects of the Basic Package of Support. Two South African students and one international student also completed their Masters research focusing on different aspects of the BPS.



Innovation in Application

The BPS is a programmatic innovation based on several years of research with young people. Having tested if the programme model works, the focus in 2023 and in the coming years will be on how to adapt it for different contexts, how to align it with government delivery to

young people, and to evaluate what the outcomes are for young people.



Alignment with Sustainable Development Goals



3.3.4 Thematic area 4: Economic and social inclusion

Key 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.

■ *Precarious Work and Future Careers (PWFC) project*

The PWFC project stemmed from an awareness that globally, young people are increasingly facing precarious work, such as internships and zero-hour contracts, as their first work experience. The growing “gig economy” has

contributed to this precarious work. While there have been some policy responses to this trend in many European countries, in upper and lower-middle income countries where youth unemployment rates are growing, such jobs are sometimes seen as a panacea – any job is better than no job.

However, we have very little evidence in developing contexts to assess whether precarious early work experiences lead to later stable careers; and if so, under what conditions. We therefore partnered with colleagues at Tianjin University and Glasgow University to assess this situation in China and South Africa.

We used panel data that were available in both countries to assess what happens to young people who engage in precarious work over time. The findings demonstrate that although rates of precarious work are lower in China than in South Africa, they are increasing. In both countries early precarious work opportunities almost always act as a “dead-end” – young people struggle to transition to more stable forms of work and frequently end up being unemployed. We also found that education does act as a protective factor – those who did transition to more stable forms of work had higher levels of education.

There are policy implications of these findings. In both countries, the state has implicitly sanctioned precarious work. In China this situation has been an effect of reforms to

promote China's global economic competitiveness. In South Africa, while global competitiveness may also play a role, a strong policy imperative is the threat of unemployment, which has seen both the proliferation of training and entry-level precarious jobs to address youth unemployment. It is the employer that benefits from this policy orientation, while employees have limited gains. There is thus a need to discuss policy approaches that curtail precarious work and protect employees, particularly those most at risk.

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



Research excellence

This project uses advanced statistical techniques to ensure excellence in the research outputs. The project involved a highly experienced statistician from Glasgow University and the country case studies were reviewed by external peer

reviewers. The [research report](#) was released and several articles have been submitted for publication.



Innovation in application

The project has the potential to inform social welfare interventions for young people. It shines light on the real experiences of young people during labour

market engagements and how those experiences shape their future careers. Two policy briefs were developed:

[China Policy Brief](#) | [South Africa Policy Brief](#).



Human capacity development

The PWFC projects involve early career researchers who are managing the projects. Three of the project participants were trained on advanced panel statistical analysis techniques.



Public engagement

The team, which was convened in 2020 at the height of COVID-19, met for the first time in person this year and presented at a [webinar](#) titled, “*Young People's Transitions from Precarious Work in China and South Africa*”, hosted by the CSDA at the UJ

Library on 18 July where the findings of the two case studies were presented.

Alignment with Sustainable Development Goals



4. 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. The year 2023 was a very successful one in which 13 of our students graduated, two of them with distinctions.

The graduates include:

- Anthony Paul Ambrose
- Samantha Jane Henderson
- Matimba Luchen
- Mokolo Bernice Maponyane
- Nothando Happiness Ngwenya
- Wayne Samuel Saldanha
- Hape Setloboko
- Patience Ubisi
- Andiswa Kona
- Thobile Zulu
- Phomelelo Makondo
- Joe Totana

CSDA research assistant Dominique Ralarala also graduated with her MPhil in Social Policy and Development and eight students submitted their dissertations at the end of 2023.

We congratulate them and wish them all the best as they begin the next chapter in their careers in social development.

We also had a new intake of 14 students starting the programme in 2024.



Prof Lauren Graham, CSDA Director



5. Public engagement

5.1 ICSD Africa Colloquium

The CSDA hosted the [International Consortium for Social Development \(ICSD\) Africa branch inaugural colloquium](#). The colloquium focused on the theme “When Crises Collide: Social Development Responses to Intersecting Crises in Africa”. The colloquium was an intimate in-person gathering of eminent social development experts made up of 62 delegates from 12 African countries. From the plenary session, titled, *Reflections on the field of Social Development in Africa: Key Successes & Ongoing Challenges* which featured Profs. Abye Tasse Chief of Mission, Expertise France and Leila Patel Distinguished Professor in Social Development Studies, to the breakaway discussions, it was clear that the continent’s social development scholars and practitioners have a great deal to offer in terms of solutions to those myriad, complex crises.

5.2 Webinars

The CSDA hosted five webinars throughout the year:

Webinar 1: [Social Grants and Livelihoods Activities of Beneficiaries](#)

Date: 21 February 2023

Summary: Prof Leila Patel presented the findings from a [research brief](#) that sought to understand how grants are used to support livelihood activities. The webinar included a presentation on the quantitative data providing an overview of grant recipients in South Africa, the employment status of grant recipients and the livelihood activities of grant recipients during the COVID-19 pandemic. The second part of the presentation included qualitative research into how grant recipients use their grant money to search for jobs, provide seed money to generate income, make investments in education, save in stokvels and burial societies, and limit the stress they experience as a result of economic hardship.

Panel participants: Panel Chair Prof Raniga, interim SARChI in Welfare and Social Development, Phumelele Ngcobo, Specialist Programme Development and Implementation at Finmark Trust, Kathy Nicolaou- Manias, Digital Innovations Expert and Technical Advisor supporting the Presidential Employment Stimulus programme and Tim Kohler, Junior Research Fellow at the Development Policy Research Unit, University of Cape Town.

Prof Leila Patel (Left) – Distinguished Professor of Social Development, Founding Director of the Centre for Social Development in Africa, University of Johannesburg and Prof Abye Tasse – Chief of Mission, Expertise France, in the opening plenary session titled 'Reflections on the field of Social Development in Africa: Key Successes & Ongoing Challenges.'



Webinar 2: The Effects of COVID-19 on in-school nutrition programmes

Date: 24 May 2023

Summary: This webinar focused on the effects of COVID-19 on in-school nutrition and was based on [The Voice of the Child study](#), conducted in partnership with the Tiger Brands Foundation. The study sought to understand, from the perspective of children, how they were affected by the shifts in in-school nutrition programmes during the pandemic. Khuliso Matidza (Junior Researcher, CSDA) presented findings highlighting the importance of implementing cost-effective strategies to prevent and address child malnutrition. Dr Sadiyya Haffejee (Senior Researcher, CSDA) highlighted the perspectives of children. Dr Hema Kesa (Food Evolution Research Laboratory (FERL) Director) presented the findings on the nutritional value of the meals. The interviewees reported that the school feeding programmes have added value to the schools and their communities. They affirmed that the school feeding had improved school attendance, punctuality and children's alertness in class. Academic improvement (in some cases) was also noted by the school teachers.

Panel participants: Dr Granville Whittle (Deputy Director-General for Sector Care and Support Services, Department of Basic Education) and Karl Muller (Operations Manager, Tiger Brands Foundation) participated in the panel discussion. Dr Whittle acknowledged the impact of COVID-19 on the department's operations, which resulted in the programme reopening and the distribution of food parcels to families. As a result, students were able to receive their meals at nearby schools rather than travelling long distances. Both Dr. Whittle and Mr. Muller expressed support for listening to the voices of children. Mr. Muller acknowledged that children have a deep understanding of their own needs and challenges and that the Tiger Brands Foundation can use this information to tailor their programmes.

Media coverage: The webinar was covered by [News24](#), and [The Citizen](#) and Dr Hema Kesa was interviewed by John Perlman on [702](#).

Webinar 3: Young People's Transitions from Precarious Work in China and South Africa

Date: 18 July 2023

Summary: Prof Lauren Graham from University of Johannesburg, Dr Lesley Doyle from Glasgow University, and Dr Geng Wang from Tianjin University of The Precarious Work and Future Careers project, funded by the British Academy presented their research which sought to determine whether early precarious work experiences lead to longer-term careers in China and South Africa. The project also sought to assess potential links between differing outcomes and each country's economic, labour market, and social welfare policy environments. Dr Geng Wang and Mr Zhonghan Wang (Zhejiang University) presented the China case study while Viwe Dikoko, CSDA researcher, spoke about the findings from the South African case study. Prof Lauren Graham discussed the implications of these findings highlighting the fact that once a person is in precarious employment, it is very difficult for them to transition out of it and that precarious workers are particularly vulnerable to unemployment. While education provides pathways out of precarious work.

Panel Participants: Dr Yisu Zhou an Associate professor of education policy at the University of Macau joined the webinar as a discussant. He commented that the cross-national comparison aspect of the study made the cases very interesting.





Webinar 4: "How well are children faring?"

Date: 21 September 2023

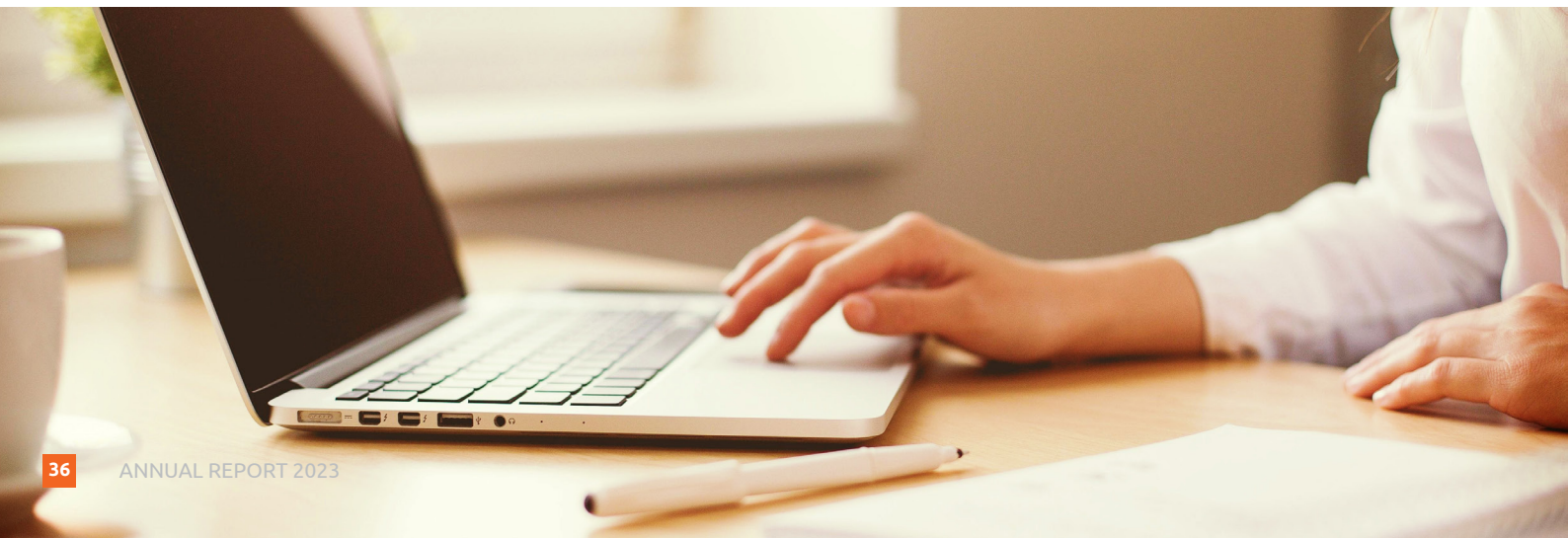
Summary: Prof Leila Patel shared the results from a longitudinal assessment of child well-being. The research shows that child well-being has come a long way since the start of the pandemic, with reduced child hunger and caregiver depression levels. However, children still face economic risks to their well-being and safety, protection, and care. Dr Lukhanyo Nyati, Data Scientist and Researcher, University of the Western Cape and Prof Leila Patel presented results from the third wave of the CoP study.

Panel participants: The presenters then engaged in a robust discussion with Anthony Meyers, Director of the Psychosocial Support Unit at the Gauteng Department of Education.

Webinar 5: the "Use of Digital Technology in Social Development"

Date: 19 October 2023

Summary: The CSDA hosted Prof. Bingqin Li, Professor of Social Policy at the University of New South Wales and a research associate of the centre. She shared her insight into the advantages and challenges of digital technology in the welfare sector. Prof. Lauren Graham and Prof. Leila Patel also presented and spoke about the Child Well-being Tracking Tool employed in the CSDA's Communities of Practice for Child Well-being project as an innovation from that project. The tool was developed to enable a holistic assessment of children looking across the six domains of well-being. Prof Patel spoke about the intention of the tool and why the digital application of the tool was useful. She also spoke about the challenges with the tool and the lessons that were learnt.

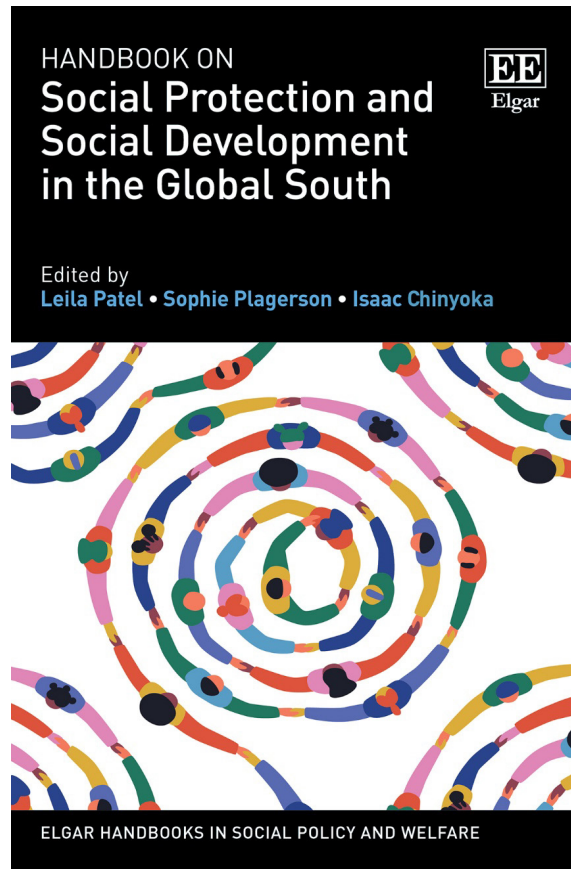


5.3 Book Launch

A major highlight of the year was the publication of the *Handbook on Social Protection and Social Development in the Global South*, edited by Leila Patel, Sophie Plagerson and Isaac Chinyoka launched on 25 October 2023.

The book was published by Edward Elgar and brings together a wide range of insights from top local contributors as well as emerging scholars on the innovations in social protection that have emerged in the Global South. In the introduction, Leila argues for social protection to be situated in a wider system of social welfare and development programmes for low- and middle-income countries. Focusing on the role of citizens and communities in enhancing human development, it explores how welfare systems are unfolding in diverse contexts across the global South.

The handbook examines the nature, design, scope, goals and linkages of social protection and social development programmes. It then presents excellent case studies that highlight diverse social policy and protection debates including examining responses to the COVID-19 pandemic; the entrepreneurial character of modern social protection schemes; cash transfer schemes and the move towards cash-plus policies; and the fluidity between progression and regression of social protection.





Bridging theoretical and empirical approaches, the *Handbook on Social Protection and Social Development in the Global South* proves to be an invaluable resource for social policy scholars and highlights the knowledge and innovation that is emerging in the global South. The book's comprehensive overview of the field will also be useful for policymakers and practitioners working on social welfare and development in the global South.

"We are very proud to be associated with this groundbreaking book and the potential it offers for disrupting mainstream social policy discourse - which is so often dominated by debates in global North contexts. This book was a prestigious project to work on and we're proud that Leila was approached to edit this book - a testament to her experience, expertise and the significance in the social policy sector," said Prof Lauren Graham.

47% of South Africans rely on social grants - study reveals how they use them to generate more income

Published: May 3, 2023 12:53pm SAST



Informal trading is one way grant recipients use to supplement their income. shutterstock

5.4 Media engagement

This year the CSDA team engaged extensively with media to influence public debate on key social development issues. In total, the CSDA generated approximately R8.5 million (in Advertising Value Equivalence) in media coverage for the university. This figure includes both solicited and unsolicited media engagements. Some of the highlights included Prof Leila Patel's article published in *The Conversation* titled, ["47% of South Africans rely on social grants - study reveals how they use them to generate more income"](#). The article generated significant media interest, Prof Patel was interviewed on [702](#), [SAFM](#), and [NewzRoom Afrika's](#) The Pulse with Stephen Grootes and Thembekile Mrototo. The story was also covered in [MoneyWeb](#). Leila was also featured on the podcast [Kaya Biz](#) with Gugulethu Mfuphi. Prof Leila Patel was also interviewed on [Cape Talk](#) about the myths around how grant recipients spend their money.

Finance Minister Enoch Godongwana presented [The Medium-Term Budget Policy Statement](#) on the 1 November and announced that the Social Relief of Distress Grant has been extended for another year. Professor Lauren Graham, spoke to [eNCA](#) about this extension.



Prof Lauren Graham also participated in the *Daily Maverick's* Live Journalism Webinar "[Now Hiring: The role of SMME's in Addressing the Youth Unemployment Crisis](#)" supported by Youth Capital. Lauren together with Ray Mahlaka, *Business Maverick* Journalist and Michael Jordaan, Co-founder and Chair of Bank Zero and Former CEO of First National Bank, discussed the integral role that SMMEs play in combating South Africa's youth unemployment crisis. The webinar flowed out of the recent report by Youth Capital, titled "[Bridge the Gap](#)" that shows that as youth unemployment continues to be a national crisis, small, micro and medium businesses (SMMEs) have become critical in absorbing young talent but they face specific challenges to hiring young people.

Prof Lauren Graham also joined a panel discussion on [Metro FM](#) where the youth NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) crisis was unpacked – the panel discussed the impact of public employment programmes like the Presidential Employment Stimulus in tackling youth unemployment. Lauren was joined by Youth Capital's Project Lead Kristal Duncan Williams and Zimbali Mncube, a researcher at the Institute for Economic Justice.

Prof Lauren Graham also participated as a panellist at the [Sunday Times 2023 Directors Event](#). The panel discussion focused on social impact and what that means for business, particularly with regard to youth employment.

Prof Leila Patel was interviewed on [eNCA](#) about the [Communities of Practice for Child Well-being](#) project's wave 3 report findings, with a particular focus on the reduction of child hunger and caregiver depression.

6. Publications

6.1. Journal Articles Published in 2023

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 11. Chow, C., Zhou, X., Fu, Y., Jampaklay, A. & **Jordan, L.P.** (2023). From Left-Behind Children to Youth Labor Migrants: The Impact of Household Networks, Gendered Migration, and Relay Migration in Southeast Asia. *Social Sciences*, 12 (3), art. no. 135, DOI: 10.3390/socsci12030135.
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6.2. Books Published 2023

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2. **Patel, L., Plagerson, S., & Chinyoka, I.** (Eds). (2023). *Handbook on Social Protection and Social Development in the Global South*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing.
3. **Rowlands, E.** (2023). *Male Powerlessness: Men and Intimate Partner Violence*. Johannesburg: UJ Press.

6.3. Published Book chapters

1. Ansong, D., Okumu, M., Huang, J., Sun, S., Huseynli, A., Koomson, I., **Chowa, G.**, Ssewamala, F., Sherraden, M.S. & Sherraden, M. (2023). Financial capability and asset building: innovations in social protection and development. In Patel, L., Plagerson, S., & Chinyoka, I (Eds.) *Handbook on Social Protection and Social Development in the Global South*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishers.
2. **Chinyoka, I.** (2023). Ending poverty on the African continent: consolidating the agrarian welfare regime in Zimbabwe. In Mtapuri. O. (Ed.) *Poverty, Inequality, and Innovation in the Global South* (pp. 35-59). Palgrave MacMillan.
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