



Social development

The aim of the Department of Social Development is to ensure the provision of comprehensive, integrated, sustainable and quality social-development services against vulnerability and poverty, and to create an enabling environment for sustainable development in partnership with those committed to building a caring society.

Legislation

The National Assembly passed the Children's Bill in December 2005 and the Older Persons Bill in March 2006.

The Older Persons Bill, which was passed in the National Assembly in March 2006, became law at the end of 2006.

The Older Persons Act, 2006 contains provisions to improve the lives of older South Africans. The main objective of the Act is to:

- maintain and promote the status, well-being, safety and security of older persons
- recognise the skills and wisdom of older persons
- promote participation of older persons in community activities to promote them as people.

The Policy Framework and Strategic Plan for the Prevention and Management of Child Abuse will ensure the swift implementation of the National Child Protection Register, which will link provincial and national databases of children under 18 years who have allegedly been abused.

Payment of social grants

Beneficiaries of social grants increased from 3,8 million people in April 2001 to more than 11 million in March 2006.

Fact:

By March 2006, grants were paid to 11 million South Africans, including foster care grants (300 119), care dependency grants (91 604), war veterans' grants (2 858), old-age grants (2 131 820), disability grants (1 312 726) and child-support grants (6 961 046).

Research studies have consistently confirmed that these grants not only reduce the occurrence of hunger and extreme poverty, but that they also facilitate household access to basic services and economic opportunities.

This has been the fastest-growing category of government expenditure since 2001, and amounts to R70 billion a year, which is about 3,4% of gross domestic product.

Social grants contribute more than half of the income of the poorest 20% of households and have doubled in real terms over the past five years.

Poverty relief

Eradicating poverty is the biggest priority in government's efforts to build a better life for all.

In addition to providing social assistance, the Department of Social Development also manages the Poverty-Relief Programme, which aims to assist communities in a range of developmental projects. The Independent Development Trust has been contracted to provide implementation support to these projects.

The programme entrusts state resources to communities to enable them to undertake and dictate development for themselves by themselves.

The programme emphasises access to economic opportunities for specific targeted groups and the establishment of local structures able to identify, own and manage the ongoing implementation of development initiatives in the community.

The programme focuses at the following objectives:

- youth development

- women's co-operatives
- HIV and AIDS
- food security
- older persons
- social finance.

Home- and community-based care

The social impact of HIV and AIDS is evidenced by an increase in the number of orphans and child-headed households, manifesting itself in the disintegration of families and communities.

About R4,2 billion was expected to be spent during 2006/07 on social-sector employment programmes. These include home-based community care and early childhood development, community health workers and social-development partnerships with non-governmental organisations. Care of child-headed households, strengthening of HIV and AIDS programmes and appropriate management of children in conflict with the law are among the social-service priorities.

The Home- and Community-Based Care and Support Programme teaches life skills to children and the youth and provides a range of care and support services focusing on families and on children orphaned through the AIDS-related death of their parents.

In 2005/06, the programme:

- identified 218 259 orphans and vulnerable children and extended appropriate services to them
- visited 26 623 child-headed households to provide counselling and support services
- referred 30 863 children for foster-care placements

Fact:

By July 2006, the social grants function had been moved from the provinces to the South African Social Security Agency (Sassa). Sassa is accountable and responsible for managing, administering and paying social grants. By July 2006, Sassa had completed a pilot project in three offices and was averaging

- assisted 268 382 affected families and distributed 170 184 food parcels
- established 600 child-care fora nationwide to identify orphans and vulnerable children.

National councils

The department strives to strengthen the capacity of civil society to actively engage in social and economic development, by supporting the following national councils:

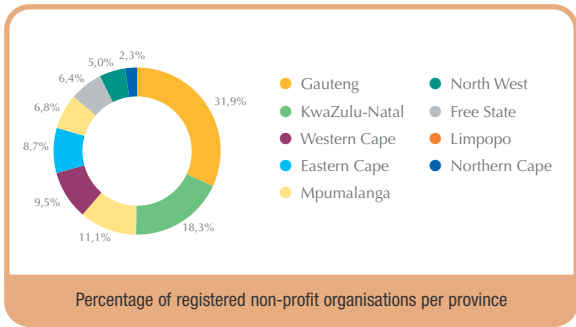
- National Council for Persons with Physical Disabilities
- Deaf Federation of South Africa
- South African National Epilepsy League
- South African Federation for Mental Health
- Cancer Association of South Africa.

Statutory bodies include the National Development Agency (NDA), relief boards and the Central Drug Authority.

Amounts of grants per month as at 1 April 2006

Grant type	Amount
Old-Age Grant	R820
Disability Grant	R820
War Veterans' Grant	R758
Foster Care Grant	R590
Care Dependency Grant	R820
Child Support Grant	R190
Grant-in-Aid	R170

a turnaround time of between one and three days in processing applications. Bids for the provision of mobile units in remote and rural areas to improve access to social-grants services were invited.



National Development Agency

The NDA is a statutory funding agency that aims to contribute to the alleviation of poverty, address its causes, and strengthen the capacity of civil-society organisations to combat poverty.

The key strategic objectives of the NDA are, among other things, to grant funds to civil-society organisations to meet the development needs of poor communities; proactively strengthen organisations' institutional capacity for long-term sustainability; source funds for the NDA; and promote consultation, dialogue and the sharing of development experiences.

The Non-Profit Organisation (NPO) Act, 1997 mandates the Department of Social Development to contribute towards creating an enabling environment within which NPOs can flourish. The Directorate: NPOs was established in terms of this legislation to manage the registration facility and increase public access to information on registered organisations. The legal mandate requires that the directorate registers organisations within two months after receipt of a complete application and provide support for organisations to register and meet reporting requirements.

Fact:

In October 2006, Cabinet approved the National Drug Master Plan and Programme. The plan is in line with the Drug Dependency Act, 1992, which requires that government reviews such a plan every five years. The Prevention and Treatment of Substance Abuse Bill will provide for the transformation of

The registration and reporting of organisations has increased substantially since the inception of the Act in 1998. During 2005/06, 13 405 organisations applied for registration. Of these, 8 398 met the registration requirements. By March 2006, the total number of registered organisations was 37 532. Most registered organisations are in Gauteng (32%) followed by KwaZulu-Natal (18%). The Northern Cape (2,3%) has the least.

Social assistance and security fraud

To root out fraud and corruption, the department set aside R47 million in 2006/07 and maintained a co-operation agreement with the Special Investigating Unit (SIU).

Over 70 staff members were trained and used in the fight against fraud and corruption, and probed the details of all grant beneficiaries.

By May 2006, 829 cases of social grants fraud were brought to court, with 453 convictions. Half of the 12 000 public servants who have been found to be defrauding the system are expected to be prosecuted between 2007 and 2008.

The department, in collaboration with all national and provincial law-enforcement agencies, including the South African Police Service and the SIU, was expected to establish the Inspectorate for Social Security.

The department has set aside R25,5 million in 2006/08 for the establishment of the inspectorate and R19,4 million for the development of effective monitoring, evaluation and impact-assessment systems.

services in the field of substance abuse, for community-based interventions, the development of minimum norms and standards for different levels of service delivery for substance abuse and ensure registration and monitoring facilities. This Draft Bill was released for comment in January 2007.

