

# Social Development



The strategic goals of the Department of Social Development (DSD) are to:

- review and reform social welfare services and financing
- improve and expand early childhood development (ECD) provision
- deepen social assistance and extend the scope of the contributory social security system
- enhance the capabilities of communities to achieve sustainable livelihoods and household food security
- strengthen coordination, integration, planning, monitoring and evaluation of services. South Africa has made good progress in building social cohesion and promoting a new single national identity, and work is continuing in this regard.

More than half of all households in South Africa benefit from government's social assistance programme.

## Role players

### Ministry of Women

The Ministry of Women is situated in The Presidency. Its mandate is to lead, coordinate and oversee the transformation agenda on women's socio-economic empowerment, rights and equality.

### National Family Policy

The DSD is tasked with implementing the National Family Policy and provides training in family-preservation services, marriage preparation and enrichment, parenting/primary care-giving and families in crisis to service providers in the area of family services.

The Green Paper on Families emphasises the need for all to build strong families that protect the most vulnerable members of society.

The purpose of the Green Paper is to provide a platform for all South Africans to engage and exchange views on how to build stable families.

It also addresses some of the challenges faced by individuals in families, including the abuse of women and children, the elderly as well as people with disabilities.

### National Development Agency (NDA)

The NDA is a public entity, listed under Schedule 3A of the Public Finance Management Act of 1999. Its mandates are to:

- contribute towards the eradication of poverty and its causes by granting funds to civil-society organisations (CSOs)
- implement development projects in poor communities
- strengthen the institutional capacity of CSOs that provide services to poor communities
- promote consultation, dialogue and sharing of development experience between CSOs and relevant organs of State
- debate development policy
- undertake research and publication aimed at providing the basis for development policy.

The NDA supports the work of civil society in key areas of concern.

It is an important partner in the department's efforts to promote ECD by using its grants to strengthen the capacities of ECD community-service organisations, which support the department's efforts to reduce violence against women and children by providing key support to the gender-based violence sector.

NDA programmes include grant funding, capacity-building and research, policy dialogue and impact assessment.

Capacity-building interventions are geared towards ensuring that recipients of grant funding are not only given money to start and run their projects, but that they are empowered with the necessary skills to ensure sustainability.

The NDA has established the Programme Management Unit, which is responsible for offering project management services to private and public-sector stakeholders who wish to fund poverty-eradication projects.

Particular emphasis is placed on those in the NDA's primary areas of focus, namely food security, ECD, enterprise development and income generation programmes.

## **National Youth Development Agency (NYDA)**

In November 2014, the DSD published the 2014 State of the World Population Report, revealing that countries must invest more in the youth.

The theme of the 2014 State of the World Population Report was "The power of 1,8 billion: adolescence, youth and the transformation of the future."

The report provides the latest trends and statistics on adolescent and youth populations worldwide, which gives the department an opportunity to reflect on South Africa and

how it is doing (compared to the rest of the globe) concerning the issues contained in this report regarding young people.

The Mid-year Population Estimates by Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) show that South Africa still has a relatively young population. Two thirds of the population is younger than 35 years old. Those aged 15 to 35 years, which are defined as youth, comprise almost 40% of the total population. The youth are also the fastest growing age group in the country.

This trend creates the prospect for a so-called “Demographic Dividend”, in which resources are invested into activities that promote social and economic development and growth.

South Africa, like most countries, is grappling with the challenge of youth unemployment. Youth unemployment in South Africa is estimated to be 36,1%, which is significantly higher than adult unemployment at 15,6%.

Government has recognised the problem of poor economic participation of young people and has put in place numerous policy interventions geared towards bringing youth into the mainstream of the economy to enhance social inclusion and cohesion.

Through National Treasury and the Department of Labour, the DSD introduced youth unemployment policy options for South Africa with the aim of incentivising entities to employ young people.

The NYDA has provided the Integrated Youth Development Strategy with the key mandate of implementing interventions geared towards the economic participation of young people, namely, youth work, national youth services, and education and skills relevant to economic empowerment.

Government strives to provide an opportunity to raise the share of youth-owned businesses and to support youth to engage in cooperatives in the country. Social entrepreneurship is being explored.

The National Development Plan is clear about the need for skills development in promoting economic growth and reaching related goals and the country has done well in the past 20 years of democracy to ensure that practically all children who should be in primary school are there.

### **South African Social Security Agency (SASSA)**

SASSA's core business is to administer, finance and pay social security transfers. The agency is required to:

- develop and implement policies, programmes, standard operating procedures and systems for an efficient and effective social assistance benefits administration system
- deliver innovative and cost-effective services to beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries through multiple access channels
- pay the right grant to the right person at the right time and place.

SASSA ensures the provision of comprehensive social security services against vulnerability and poverty within the constitutional and legislative framework.

The agency's key functions include the effective management, administration and payment of social assistance, as well as:

- the processing of applications for social assistance, such as social grants, grant-in-aid and social relief of distress
- the verification and timely approval of grant applications
- the management and reconciliation of grant payments to eligible beneficiaries by contractors
- the marketing of social assistance quality service assurance by ensuring compliance with norms and standards, and fraud prevention and detection.

## Programmes and projects

### ECD Programme

The government has identified ECD as a key focus area in its effort to improve the quality of basic education and care for children.

The department recognises that one of the ways of breaking the cycle of inter-generational poverty is investment in children to aid their development, especially from the ages of 0 – 4.

There are plans in place to ensure that all ECD centres are registered and early childhood practitioners appropriately trained. Programmes for parental training are also in the pipeline.

### Project Mikondzo

Project Mikondzo (which means “footprint” in Xitsonga) compels office-bound officials from the department, the NDA and the SASSA to join frontline officials to interact with communities in a bid to tackle social problems such as poverty, malnutrition, violence against women and child-headed households.

The 1 300 wards form part of 23 district municipalities from seven provinces, which Cabinet has prioritised for additional support.

The project includes an audit of ECD centres and the setting up of a command centre with a toll-free hotline open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

It also includes a substance abuse awareness campaign targeting sports and music events, the targeting of gender-based violence and the strengthening of NPOs.

The project helps government reach the about two million children who qualify for CSGs but who have not registered with SASSA to receive grants. The project is funded by SASSA and the DSD.

### **Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP)**

The EPWP is a nationwide programme under the auspices of government and state-owned enterprises.

The programme provides an important avenue for labour absorption and income transfers to poor households in the short to medium term. It is also a deliberate attempt by public sector bodies to use expenditure on goods and services to create job opportunities for the unemployed.

EPWP projects employ workers on a temporary or ongoing basis either by government, contractors or non-governmental organisations under the Ministerial Conditions of Employment for the EPWP or learnership employment conditions.

### **Social security and assistance**

South Africa's social assistance system is one of the largest in Africa and is government's most direct means of combating poverty. Spending on the social grant system accounts for 3% of the gross domestic product and is projected to rise from R118 billion in 2013/14 to R145 billion by 2016.

The Child-Support and Old-Age grants are the two largest social grant programmes, constituting about 75% of total grant spending. Others are the War Veterans, Disability, Grant-in-Aid, Foster Child and Care Dependency grants.

### **Food for All Programme**

The DSD is tasked with facilitating and monitoring the implementation of the Food for All Programme. Distressed households were being provided with food through the department and Food Bank South Africa programme.

While social relief of distress provides short-term relief for poor households, government recognises that longer-term solutions are needed.

FoodBank South Africa, aimed at strengthening the Food for All Programme, is meant to feed three million people by 2015/16.

The Food Banks Programme, which is part of the Zero Hunger Strategy, is an important channel through which vulnerable people access food.

### **HIV and AIDS support**

The National Strategic Plan (NSP) on HIV, AIDS, Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) and Tuberculosis (TB) 2012 – 2016, which addresses the social drivers and social impact of HIV and AIDS, is a key component of the department's fight against the spread of HIV and AIDS.

The DSD developed a new National Action Plan for orphans, vulnerable children and youth affected by HIV and AIDS (2012 – 2016), which is aligned with the NSP on HIV, STIs and TB (2012 – 2016).

The action plan calls for meaningful involvement and participation by all stakeholders in the national response to orphans, vulnerable children and youths affected by HIV and AIDS.

### **People with disabilities**

In November 2014, the DSD finalised the National Disability Rights Policy.

The policy includes a monitoring and evaluation framework that will allow the department to track progress made in eradicating inequalities and reducing poverty among people with disabilities and their families.

Through the policy, South Africa ensures to honour its obligations under the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, to which it is a signatory.

The policy is also a means to promote the active participation of people with disabilities in the country's economy.

Government remained committed to ensuring that people with disabilities were not left out of the Post 2015 Development Agenda and that the Africa 2063 Agenda took everyone on board.

South Africa had to collectively contribute to the empowerment of people with disabilities through accessible disability information services, inclusive ECD opportunities and accessible rehabilitation services.



This would enable persons with disabilities to take up the opportunities created in much larger numbers, improving performance in achieving equity targets.

In 2014, there were 11 members of Parliament and 72 local councillors with disabilities.

Persons with disabilities represent the voice of the sector in institutions such as the South African Human Rights Commission, the Commission on Gender Equality, the Board of the South African Broadcasting Corporation, National Youth Development Agency and many transformation and developmental entities.

The South African experience has also helped to shape the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Continental Plan for the African Decade of Persons with Disabilities.

In November 2014, South Africa hosted an international conference to tackle the challenges experienced by deaf and blind people.

South Africa has been celebrating the International Day for Persons with Disabilities annually since 1997.

### **Children and youth**

The Home Community-Based Care (HCBC) programme is the centrepiece of government's interventions to build a protective and caring environment for vulnerable children. Most services to orphans and vulnerable children are rendered through the HCBC programme and include early identification of vulnerable children and their families, referrals, training of community caregivers and psychosocial support and



material assistance, to name a few.

This approach is geared towards keeping children within their families and communities.

It is aimed at providing comprehensive care and support which is complemented by proactive action at community level. This includes linking families with poverty alleviation projects and other services in the community, such as food security initiatives and ECD services.

## **Blind SA**

Blind SA is an organisation for the blind and is governed



by the blind. Situated in Johannesburg, it is aligned with other member organisations throughout South Africa. The organisation provides, among other things, study bursaries for visually impaired students for further education, Braille publications in all of South Africa's official languages, Braille training that entails writing and reading, and orientation and mobility training.

## **South African Braille Authority**

The South African Braille Authority was established in May 2012 as a non-governmental organisation. Its purpose is to set and maintain standards for Braille in all 11 official languages of South Africa.

## **South African National Council for the Blind (SANCB)**

The SANCB is the coordinating body for over 100-member organisations throughout South Africa. These organisations

span the full spectrum of services offered for and to blind and partially sighted persons.

## Support for the deaf

South Africa's national organisation for the deaf is the Deaf Federation of South Africa (DeafSA), formerly the South African National Council for the Deaf, which was established in 1929. DeafSA has nine provincial chapters throughout South Africa. An estimated 500 000 to 600 000 South Africans use South African Sign Language.

## Older people

The DSD promotes a holistic approach to active ageing and well-being among the country's senior citizens. A number of initiatives have been rolled out by the departments of social development, health, tourism, sport and recreation South Africa and other stakeholders to promote general health among older persons, especially through sports to promote general well-being.

In October 2014, the Minister of Social Development opened the National Older Persons Golden Games at the Mbombela Stadium in Mpumalanga.

The games, hosted in partnership with Sports and Recreation South Africa, saw older persons participating in sport and recreation activities such as the duck walk, dress-up race, football, athletics and others.

The government has since 2008 implemented a national active ageing programme in line with the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing of 2002.

The Madrid Plan of Action offers a bold new agenda for handling the issue of ageing in the 21st century. It focuses on three priority areas: older persons and development, advancing health and well-being into old age and ensuring enabling and supportive environments.

The Older Persons Act of 2006 aims to enhance the quality of life and improve the health of older persons by engaging them in programmes that promote social, physical, mental and emotional well-being to prevent or delay the onset of ageing challenges and keep old age related illness at bay.

The Older Persons' Parliament takes place annually in October. It gives elders the opportunity to engage with the executive on critical issues affecting their lives.