

**Links between matriculation,
poverty and the child support grant:
a review of the evidence**

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Working Paper No 7

**Centre for the Analysis of South African Social Policy
University of Oxford**



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1 Introduction

Our children are our nation's future. Prospects for development are seriously undermined by the kind of large-scale deprivation of children that South Africa has experienced. On the other hand investing in their health, nutrition and education not only improves our children's quality of life - the gains reverberate into future generations. [...] Children can be our spearhead for attacking poverty, reinforcing human rights, and accelerating economic growth and development. Such a programme will also help alleviate the urgent plight of the children of today, the principal victims of yesterday's neglect of the majority of South Africa's people. (Mandela, 1996)

Nelson Mandela's speech at the launch of the National Programme of Action for Children in 1996 is still very relevant today. The future of the nation rests with children, and central to the future social, economic and political development of South Africa is the education of children, particularly education beyond compulsory schooling. Children in South Africa are required by law to attend school between the ages of 7 and 15 (or the completion of grade 9). Matriculation ('matric') is an exam that is taken by children aged 17 or 18 in grade 12 and is required for tertiary education. Department of Education (DoE) statistics suggest that there is high under-enrolment in grade 12 (or matric - children aged): only 58.1% of the population of the relevant age were enrolled in schools in 2006 (DoE, 2008). There could be a number of reasons for this under-enrolment, but one possible explanation is poverty: parents are unable to send their child(ren) to school because they are unable to pay the school fees¹ or because they cannot afford the other expenses related to school, for example school uniforms and transport costs.

There have been calls recently, for example from the Alliance for Children's Entitlement to Social Security (ACCESS), to extend the child support grant (CSG) to all vulnerable children up to the age of 18, arguing that:

Poverty limits opportunities for children and youth to attend school. This creates a vicious cycle of destitution by reducing the household's capacity to break the poverty trap. Many poor children cannot attend school due to the costs associated with education, including the necessity to work to supplement family income. In addition, communities that are resource-constrained provide lower quality educational services, which negatively affect enrolment rates [...] In the absence of free schooling social grants do make education more accessible to children. Social grants boost available disposable income which helps to pay the otherwise unaffordable costs of attending school. Second, grant income means that a family might be more able to survive without the child having to work to contribute to the household income. Third, by indirectly increasing the resources available to schools, the quality of education may improve, making education a more attractive option to households. (ACCESS, 2007)

¹ Although legally they should be exempted from doing so if this is the case.

The extension of the CSG to older children is called for in addition to reforms of the current education system, for example, abolishing school fees, subsidised transport and affordable and subsidised uniforms. All of these are important reforms to consider for addressing school attendance and assisting poorer families. This paper reviews the research evidence on linkages between matric, CSG and poverty by focusing on:

- a) Numbers and characteristics of children aged 14 and over² (particularly children of matric age) not in school;
- b) Causes of non school attendance; and
- c) Whether receipt of CSG improves school attendance.

This will enable conclusions to be drawn first about the extent of the problem of children not continuing on to matric and whether this is largely due to poverty or other factors, and second whether extending the CSG to children under 18 would be an appropriate response.

2 Children not in school

There are a number of different data sources that can be used to identify children who are not in school. According to the General Household Survey (GHS) 2006, 80% of children aged 17 and 18³ are currently in school (and assumed to be doing matric or grade 12 further education and training - FET - equivalent⁴). Therefore 20% are not in school (and not doing matric or FET equivalent)⁵, a lower percentage than found by the DoE for the same year (41.9%), probably because the GHS figures will include people enrolled in FET colleges, whereas the DoE figures do not. The GHS 2006 figure is similar to the figure of 75% for 18 year olds reported by Crouch (2005) using the GHS 2003 and the 'more than 70%' reported by Nyanda (quoted in YPI, 2007) using the GHS 2004 and 2005.

There is a difference in the number of under 14s (7-13 years) not in school and the number of over 14s (14-17 year olds): 98% compared to 92%. These loosely translate as primary and secondary schooling attendance rates. There is clearly room for some improvement at the secondary level. The secondary school attendance rate drops to 88% if 18 year olds - too old for the proposed CSG extension - are included. A quarter of 18 year olds were not attending any educational institution.

² The age at which children are currently no longer eligible for the CSG.

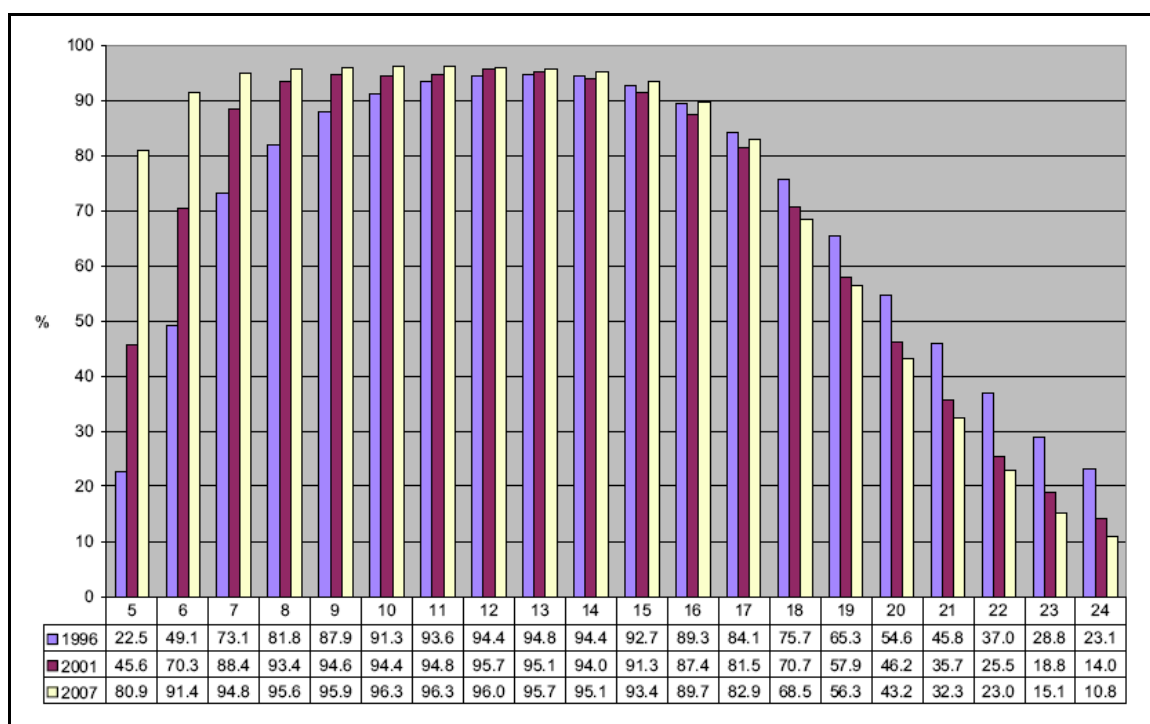
³ Selected as the relevant age for grade 12 pupils based on the DoE's approach of taking the year in which a learner turns seven as the appropriate age for entry into grade 1 (DoE, 2008).

⁴ Although this may not be the case, due to learners repeating grades, but there is no way of determining this from the survey (the highest level of education completed question may not be accurate).

⁵ Those who reported that they are not attending school because they are too old or have completed school, which is feasible if the child started school 'early' (i.e. when five turning six, rather than six turning seven), were excluded from this analysis. Were these children to be included, the figures would be 78.5% and 21.5% respectively.

Analysis of the Community Survey 2007 (CS 2007) similarly shows that 31.5% of 18 year olds were not attending an educational institution (Statistics South Africa, 2007)⁶. The CS 2007 also shows that the education system is retaining children aged 7 to 15 (the compulsory schooling age range), and attendance rates in the younger ages have greatly improved between 1996, 2001 and 2007. However, attendance starts to decline at 16 years, where it falls below 90% (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Attendance at educational institution amongst population aged 5-24 years: 1996, 2001, 2007



Source: Statistics South Africa, 2007

Of the children aged 17 and 18 identified as not in school in the GHS 2006, 21% live in KwaZulu-Natal, 19% in the Western Cape, 17% in the Eastern Cape and 14% in Gauteng. Table 1 shows the percentage of children aged 17 and 18 not in school by province: the highest percentage is the Western Cape (41%), followed by the Northern Cape (28%).

⁶ This slightly higher figure will not have been corrected for those who are too old or have completed school, as was done for the GHS (see footnote 5).

Table 1: Percentage of children aged 17 and 18 not in school by province

Province	Number of children not in school	Number of children	% of children
Western Cape	75733	186012	40.7
Eastern Cape	66484	338161	19.7
Northern Cape	9174	32791	28.0
Free State	15620	121750	12.8
KwaZulu-Natal	81596	433984	18.8
North West	28628	158973	18.0
Gauteng	52945	271153	19.5
Mpumalanga	25728	146891	17.5
Limpopo	33104	267783	12.4

Source: GHS 2006, CASASP analysis

There is racial disparity in children aged 17 and 18 not in school: approximately three quarters (77%) are black African and 17% are coloured. This is 18% of the black African and 42% of the coloured population of that age⁷. For the Indian population the figure is 31%, while for the white population it is 11%. There is a gender imbalance: 47% of 17 and 18 year olds not in school are male and 53% are female, which actually equates to 17% of the male population and 23% of the female population of that age. There is a high representation from lower income households: over 70% of 17 and 18 year olds not in school live in households that are in the bottom three expenditure categories (less than R1200 per month).

3 Reasons for not attending school

The reasons cited in the GHS 2006 for children aged 17 and 18 not attending school are given in Table 2 below⁸. Approximately 41% are not attending school because they cannot afford the school fees. The second most common reason is because education is considered useless or uninteresting (15%). The other main reasons are that he or she is working (9%) and pregnancy (9%). The first of those reasons could be related to poverty – the need to work to earn money to help the family, rather than enrol for matric.

It is likely that the percentage reporting a lack of money in the GHS would have been higher had the question been asked about all school expenses and not just school fees. The financial barrier to education is not simply school fees, for which, legally, no child should be excluded (although there is a great deal of qualitative evidence suggesting this is not the case, for example

⁷ Although black Africans have a relatively high enrolment rate, this does not necessarily translate into grade attainment. High rates of grade repetition have been found in predominantly black African schools in the Cape Town area of the Western Cape (Lam et al., 2007). Research has also found higher rates of employment amongst coloured youth than black African youth at age 16 and above, and the proportion of coloured youth working exceeding the proportion enrolled at age 18 (Lam et al., 2008).

⁸ Respondents were asked to give the main reason why the child is not attending school.

ACCESS, 2002; Clacherty and Budlender, 2004; Clacherty and Donald, 2002; Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2005; Sogaula et al., 2001; Veriava, 2006; Vuk'uyithathe Research Consortium, 2000; Wilson, 2003). There is limited state assistance for transport and uniform costs, and as a result, these education expenses constitute a barrier, sometimes insurmountable, for some children and their families (CALs and Social Surveys Africa, 2006).

Table 2: Reasons why children aged 17 and 18 are not attending school

Reason not attending	% of children
No money for fees	40.5
Education is useless or uninteresting	15.4
He/she is working (at home or job)	9.4
Pregnancy	9.4
Failed exams	7.3
Illness	6.7
Family commitment (e.g. child minding)	6.2
School/education institution is too far away	1.6
Unspecified	1.6
Other	1.4
Got married	0.5

Source: GHS 2006, CASASP analysis

Streak et al. (2007), in a study of the causes, nature and impact of work activities of children in commercial agriculture in the Western Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Mpumalanga found that there was higher school drop-out at the higher grades. Causes of drop-out identified in the research included the need to earn money to supplement family income ('I had to leave school in order for me to fight poverty at home' - Youth, Mpumalanga site, Streak et al., 2007: 51), difficulties in finding the money to pay for school uniforms and the view that completion of education does not necessarily guarantee employment. To some extent, these reasons mirror the top three reasons for non attendance revealed by the GHS 2006.

A small study by the Vuk'uyithathe Research Consortium (Porteus et al., 2000; Vuk'uyithathe Research Consortium, 2000), which tracked down out of school children in three communities in the Kathorus area of East Johannesburg, found six categories of factors underlying non school attendance. The primary factors are shown in Table 3 below. The main cause is poverty, which is described as the inability to meet the costs of schooling or for the child to contribute to the family's survival, which interacts with social isolation and feelings of disempowerment.

The Youth Policy Initiative of the HSRC reports a similar finding through consultations with young people about the causes and effects of giving up school early. Financial problems made it difficult for learners to stay in school and led to pressure to leave school and look for work to support the family (YPI, 2007).

Table 3: Primary factors underlying school non-attendance

Categories of factor	Primary	
	Frequency	%
Poverty	34	50.7
Individual child-related*	11	16.4
Residential mobility/documentation	9	13.4
Family stability and support	6	9.0
School-related**	6	9.0
Community violence	1	1.5
Total	67	100.0

Source: Porteus et al. (2000)

Notes: *Includes health problems, pregnancy, sight or hearing problems, cognitive problems and attitudinal problems

** Includes lack of places in schools, distance from school, children being refused mid-year entry, children being sent away for not paying fees and abuse by teachers.

The evidence from the GHS 2006 and other sources does suggest that there is a problem of children not taking matric due to poverty, demonstrated both as a lack of resources to afford school fees and other expenses and the need for children to work to help support the household.

A number of qualitative studies - relating to poverty, child poverty, child rights, child labour, barriers to education and out of school children - have been undertaken in recent years, all of which similarly report financial barriers to attending school. The same stories are told repeatedly of children being denied access to school because the family cannot afford school fees or uniform, or being unable to attend school because of the cost of transport, a particular problem for children in rural areas who live a long distance from school. Alternatively, children are allowed access to school but are treated in an abusive or discriminatory way once there, for example having their reports withheld because they have not paid fees or being made to sit on the floor rather than at a desk or being denied stationery and textbooks. Such treatment could have a demoralising effect on children, causing them to drop out of school.

Some examples are given below from seven studies with children and/or caregivers⁹. Although the quotes are not specifically from older learners, it is

⁹ The studies (in chronological order) are: 1. Vuk'uyithathe Research Consortium (2000) - a study of out of school children in three communities in Katorus area of East Johannesburg. 2. (Sogaula et al. (2001) - a study of social security transfers, poverty and chronic illness in the Mount Frere area of the Eastern Cape. 3. ACCESS (2002) - workshops across South Africa, through which poor children shared their experiences and talked about their needs. 4. Clacherty and Donald (2002) - a project that looked at children's experiences of violations of child rights. Children were asked to describe their experience of rights in their lives and discussed solutions to the rights violations they experienced. 5. Clacherty and Budlender (2004) - consulted children about their experiences of child labour and a proposed Child Labour Action Programme. 6. Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2005 - a study on education in rural communities. 7. Barnes and Wright (2007) - focus groups with adults where necessities for an acceptable standard of living (for adults and for children) were discussed.

likely that the situation is common to children in all grades. The studies were all conducted prior to the reforms of the school fee and funding system in 2005, which aimed to strengthen the provisions against discrimination of poor learners (Veriava, 2005), and so whether the problems identified in the studies are still as prevalent is unknown. A new study on the barriers of access to education by the Centre for Applied Legal Studies (CALs) at the University of Witwatersrand should provide useful evidence in this regard.

General financial difficulty

I am not in school. There isn't anyone to take me to school. My mother works but not here. My father is not working and when my mother sends money he drinks it, buys dagga and alcohol. (Boy, 16, Western Cape - ACCESS, 2002)

Teachers don't understand and they are not prepared to listen to our story. It is very hard because when parents say they don't have money there's nothing we can do. It is not right for children. (Boy, primary, informal - Clacherty and Donald, 2002)

Fees

Margaret's story: Margaret a client at Ekupholeni clinic had managed to get her four children back to school but they did not have the money for school fees. They were denied stationery and textbooks by the school. The family had no income and because the mother was ill the clinic arranged a sponsorship for the family that would cover food for Margaret and her children. When the children were denied stationery because they had not paid school fees Margaret made the decision to use food money to pay the fees so the children went hungry but they got their stationery. (Vuk'uyithathe Research Consortium, 2000)

In household 11 the economic consequences of having to pay school fees are harsh. Although they are relatively old, two of the children, aged 13 and 11 respectively, are still in their first year of primary schooling (Grade 1), because they have been previously barred from attending school due to failure to pay school fees. They now have to sell wood to pay for their school fees and so be able to progress through the school system. The children have also been wearing the same school uniform for almost 3 yrs as the informant states that she cannot afford to buy them a uniform. (Sogaula et al., 2001)

In the case of household 3, the child of the informant was removed from school because the mother could not afford the school fees. In addition to not having school fees the mother says she could not provide her daughter with a lunch box and that was a disgrace for the household. (Sogaula et al., 2001)

With school fees we come from different families - some they can pay, some they cannot afford to pay R1.20 even. They will allow you to attend the school but at the end of the year she would not get her results. Even if you try to explain to the teacher but they would not understand. I would like them to understand our problem but they will not understand. I ended up plaiting people's hair and had to make the money myself. (Girl, secondary, informal - Clacherty and Donald, 2002)

They force you to pay because they do not give you your report. No one told us we could apply for exemption. (Katlehong, Gauteng - Clacherty and Budlender, 2004)

In terms of school fees we were told to go home and ask for money from parents. The rule was that if you don't have money, you can go home and come back when you have the money. The parents at home would simply say 'go and plough the land' when it's summer and get the money, or in winter they will say 'go and get wood from the forest then you will get the money'. (Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2005)

In many of the studies, parental or caregiver knowledge of the exemption policy for those who cannot afford to pay fees seemed to be limited.

Uniform

I don't like it when they beat us because we don't have uniform. Sometimes one doesn't have uniform. My parents are not working. What can I do? Or you have uniform but then you don't have soap to wash it with, just like it happens to me. Some teachers are horrible. You feel like running away the minute they appear. (Vuk'uyithathe Research Consortium, 2000)

Maybe you don't have shoes and you can't come to school. They don't even ask what your problem is. They just shout, and just beat you. (Vuk'uyithathe Research Consortium, 2000)

Last year I was kicked out of school because I did not have school clothes. (Girl, 10, KwaZulu-Natal - ACCESS, 2002)

What I know is if you don't have school uniform sometimes they send you home. Other times they take the clothes you are wearing, like a jersey. They don't want children to wear something that is not school uniform. (Boy, primary, informal - Clacherty and Donald, 2002)

Transport

'Technical schools should be brought closer to communities. We are tired of having to travel to places like Johannesburg where we pay a lot of money for travelling and accommodation. These technical colleges should be brought to V.' (Limpopo, African, low income, rural, former homeland, Venda, male - Barnes et al., 2007)

As you can see, I start the day by going out to sell wood so that I can get money with which to buy a bus coupon. This is because there is no high school nearby; they are all far away. (High school learner, Mngqagayi - Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2005)

As part of the Indicators of Poverty and Social Exclusion (IPSE) project (Barnes and Wright, 2007), focus group discussions were held with adults where for one activity participants were asked to say who is excluded from different areas of life. In the sphere of education, some of the focus group participants said that people who are excluded from education comprise people who cannot afford fees, people who live a long way from schools and people with disabilities. Some of the quotes relating to exclusion due to poverty - many from people from low income households with a likely direct experience of poverty - are presented below.

It's children who cannot go to school because their parents do not have money for school fees and uniform. (Gauteng, African, low income, urban, formal, Sesotho, female)

A: Parents do not have the means to take children to school.

Facilitator: What are those means?

All: It's money.

M: They are not able to buy children's school requirements.

A: Cannot pay school fees.

(KwaZulu-Natal, African, middle income, urban, formal, Zulu, female)

It's people who are impoverished and have not got the money to pay for their education. They cannot even buy school wear' (Eastern Cape, African, low income, urban, informal, Xhosa, male)

All: People who do not have money

B: Uniform. Not having clothes to go to school.

L: Not having parents to pay for schooling.

J: Being destitute.

(KwaZulu-Natal, African, plantation workers, low income, rural, Zulu, female)

Orphans and street children were cited, along with poor children, as those who could not afford to attend school.

R: It's children who cannot go to school because their parents do not have money for school fees, uniforms and other requirements.

C: That is common with orphans.

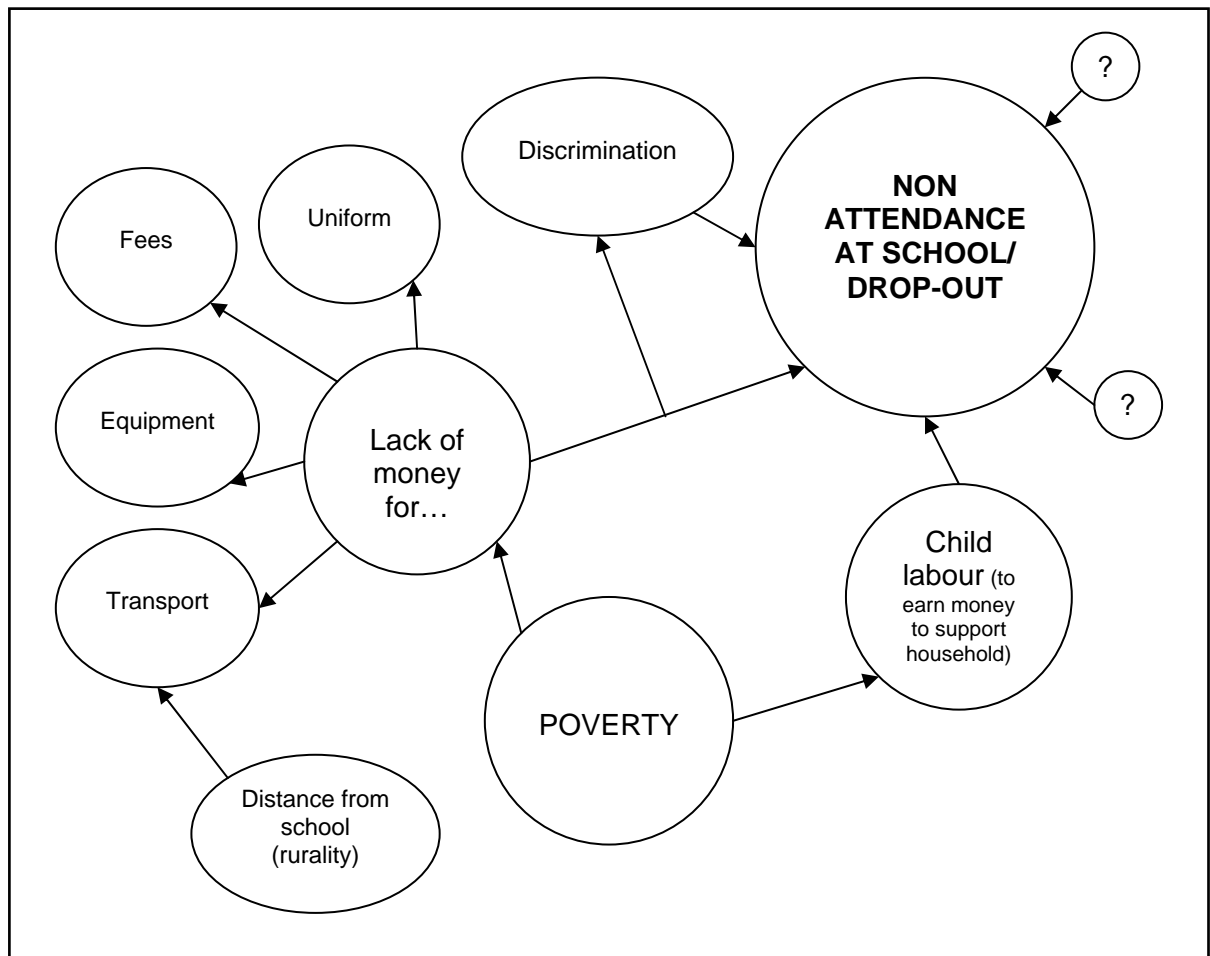
(Gauteng, African, middle income, urban, formal, Sesotho, male)

'Children who do not have uniform because their parents do not work or are dead' (Limpopo, African, middle income, urban, former homeland, Venda, female)

Drawing from the evidence presented above, the following flow diagram (Figure 2) presents possible poverty-related reasons for non-attendance at school. Poverty means that first, a household cannot afford the range of necessary school expenses and therefore children are unable to attend school, or they attend school but are treated in a discriminatory way once there and the negative experience at school may ultimately result in non-attendance. Unfair treatment may make children less eager to attend school, or discriminatory actions such as not providing textbooks or stationery may cause children to fall behind in their studies, become demoralised and stop attending school. Second, poverty means that children work to earn money to support the household and therefore do not attend school on a regular basis.

The flow diagram only presents reasons relating to poverty. There will of course be other factors that impact on attendance such as health and disability, language barriers, quality of education, distance to school and availability of transport, and violence and abuse at school.

Figure 2: Poverty-related mechanisms leading to non-attendance at school



4 The CSG and school attendance

Various studies have looked at the impact of social grants, including the CSG, on households and the well-being of children within these households. Budlender and Woolard (2006) provide a thorough review of the literature on the impact of social grants on education, from which much of the evidence presented here is drawn. There are more studies on the old age grant (OAG) than any other grant, and these studies generally report that the OAG is used to pay for costs related to education (e.g. Ardington, 1998; Case and Deaton, 1998; Lund, 1993; HelpAge International, 1996; Mohatle and Aqyarko, 1999) and that the impact on school attendance of the OAG is positive (Budlender and Woolard, 2006; Case and Ardington, 2006; Samson et al., 2001; Samson et al., 2004).

Budlender and Woolard (2006) attribute the lack of studies on the impact of CSG on education to the fact that it has only fairly recently been extended to children of school-going age. A handful of studies have examined the impact of CSG on school attendance. Samson et al. (2004) used the Income and Expenditure Survey and Labour Force Survey 2000 to demonstrate that social

security grants provide poor households with more resources to finance education. Children in households that receive social grants were found to be more likely to attend school, even when controlling for the effect of income. Both the OAG and the CSG were found to be statistically significantly associated with improvements in school attendance, and of a substantial magnitude. For example, a household's receipt of a CSG was found to be associated with a reduction of approximately 25% in the school non-attendance rate.

The Umkhanyakude study of 10,000 households in KwaZulu-Natal found that receipt of CSG led to an 8% increase in school enrolment among six year olds, remarkable because households were also shown to be poor, and enrolment rates already high (Case et al. 2005).

Recognising the deficiencies in the literature, Budlender and Woolard (2006) conducted their own research using the GHS 2004 and the third wave of the KwaZulu-Natal Income Dynamics Study. Both data sources suggest that the CSG is probably having some effect in encouraging school attendance among the children who are the direct beneficiaries. The effect is small in terms of percentage points, but this, it is argued, is to be expected given the already high overall enrolment rates at the age at which CSG can be claimed for children. If expressed as the relative change in the number of non-attendeers, the apparent impact is much larger. Multivariate analysis on the GHS data confirmed that receipt of a CSG has a statistically significant, although small, impact on attendance. Such analysis also shows that when another child in the household is a direct CSG recipient, attendance of children who are not direct CSG beneficiaries is more likely. In respect of economic activity, their analysis suggests that CSG receipt may tend to decrease the likelihood of older children in the household working, but caution that the percentage reported to be working is small, and therefore this finding may not be robust. According to Budlender and Woolard (2006: 41), 'given that the analysis shows that the CSG helps to keep children in school (and drop out rates are higher among older age groups), we would very cautiously suggest that the analysis might be supportive of an extension of the CSG to older children'.

The most recent study on this subject, Williams (2007), using the GHS from 2002 to 2005, found that increased probability of receiving a CSG is associated with increased school attendance. Actual receipt of a CSG increases the likelihood of a child attending school by 2.4 percentage points. The effect is much larger for children who are living with their mother and, in contrast to Budlender and Woolard's analysis, the effect is almost entirely on the child who receives the grant, rather than on other children in the household.

In support of the above findings, the GHS 2006 shows that of the 3,045,914 children of school going age (7 to 13 year olds¹⁰) who are in receipt of the CSG¹¹, 98.5% are currently attending school¹². For 56% of those not

¹⁰ The age range for which a child can be in school and in receipt of CSG.

¹¹ The GHS reports 6,705,831 recipients of the CSG in total (6,467,661 are reported as the child receiving and the remainder are reported as an adult in the household receiving which was assigned to

attending, the reason given is being too old or too young (presumably the latter because they could not be too old). Not having money for fees was the reason for 13%.

The finding on lack of money for fees even when in receipt of CSG is supported by focus groups carried out for a project on employment and social security (Surender et al., 2007), where most participants complained that the CSG is simply not enough to meet the basic needs of the child on whose behalf it is received:

The Child Support Grant is helpful but not enough – you get it today and the next day you don't have it. It does not cover all the needs of the child. You are only able to do few things. On top of the groceries you have to give the child money everyday when s/he goes to school. It is helpful but not enough. (Female, Makhaza)

The study found that even with the CSG, a considerable number of parents struggle to meet their children's school needs. According to the parents, school authorities and teachers were often less tolerant towards children receiving the CSG if they did not pay their school fees or lacked a school uniform, with children sent home or prevented from writing examinations because they could not afford school fees or school uniform. Therefore, the CSG alone does not necessarily guarantee that school fees and other education costs can be paid, resulting in better school attendance or reduced discrimination. The amount of the CSG, when it was introduced, was based on the food costs of children, but not any other needs (Lund, 2008). Given this, and the fact that the value of the grant has eroded over time (Lund, 2008), it is not surprising that the CSG does not meet all the needs of the child, including school expenses.

Nevertheless, caregivers do regard the CSG as an important factor in helping children attend school:

I wish the government could help until the child finishes school. Because now, when you have a child who is not the grant age, you take that child out of school even if she's still studying, because you have no means for that child. (Caregiver, rural site - Hall and Monson, 2006)

Children have also been consulted for their views on extending the CSG. The ACCESS workshops, for example, discussed a grant for children under 18 years old, which was generally supported by the children. They saw this grant as one way they could continue schooling which would help them to earn a living themselves as they grew older:

all children in the household of the correct age (under 14) in the absence of information on the specific child for which the CSG is received).

¹² This compares to 98.2% of all children of that age and 97.9% of children of that age not receiving CSG. While this might suggest a very slight impact on attendance for CSG recipients, the confidence intervals overlap for all three estimates.

I think it [the CSG] must come until we leave school so that we can get the opportunity to go to school and to live a better life because we have education. (Girl, 14, Gauteng)

Clacherty and Budlender (2004) report that a group of children in Katlehong, Gauteng, also talked about how extending the CSG to older children would encourage children to stay in school:

I think giving grants to all children will be good. If the kids I look after are getting grants I can use that to buy food and clothes for them but I also need money for me and with a grant I can pay for my things and then go to school instead of working. (Child head of household, Katlehong, Gauteng)

The children suggested that receipt of the CSG would mean that older children would not have to work to support the household. According to Clacherty and Budlender (2004: 65) however, 'research on child work internationally suggests that extension of welfare grants does not necessarily reduce the amount of work children do. If children have opportunities to supplement the family income through work they will continue to do this even when the family has access to a grant'.

5 Summary and recommendations

There is evidence of lower school attendance in the higher grades and particularly for 18 year olds. The GHS shows that poverty - expressed as an inability to afford school expenses and/or children having to undertake paid work to support the household - is one barrier to completing education in the post-compulsory phase¹³. A number of qualitative studies back up this finding. There is also evidence showing that social grants, including the CSG, have played a positive, although relatively small, role in school attendance for younger children. In the context of already high school enrolment in the compulsory phase, the fact that the effect is only small is unsurprising. It is quite possible that at older ages, where attendance is not so high, the CSG could have a larger impact.

A number of organisations have recommended the extension of CSG to 18 years, as a crucial response to maintaining school attendance for the vulnerable 15-17 age group. Based on the available evidence, the extension of the CSG to all children 0-17 years is strongly supported. However, young people aged 18 appear to be particularly affected and therefore it is recommended that the CSG is extended to 0-17 year olds plus 18 year olds still in school to enable them to complete their education (as is the case with the foster child grant currently)¹⁴.

¹³ A number of other barriers are highlighted in quantitative and qualitative research studies.

¹⁴ Children who start school when they are six turning seven and make normal progression through school would be expected to finish matric when they are 18. Children who repeat grades and therefore make slower progress through the system may still be in school past the age of 18. It may be important to consider support for these children to enable them to complete matric and not be further disadvantaged.

The CSG alone, at its current level, cannot cover all the costs of education. A range of educational reforms are required in addition to the extension of the CSG, for example abolishing school fees and introducing transport and clothing grants. In the meantime, it would seem that properly applied school fee exemption policies (including the automatic exemption for children for whom a grant is received) and a change in school principals' and educators' attitudes towards poor children are necessary.

The CSG also cannot combat household poverty. It is intended to be used on the child, and as we have seen, is barely sufficient to cover these costs. It cannot and should not be used to support other members of the household. Therefore some form of assistance is required to tackle poverty for other members of the household of working age who are unemployed or on very low incomes (Whitworth and Noble, 2008). Tackling household poverty may also mean that children do not have to work to support the household which may in turn have a positive impact on school attendance.

A current nationally representative study involving children and caregivers aims to identify and quantify the social and economic factors existing at the household and school level which stop children from accessing (in terms of enrolment, attendance, intake, survival and repetition) public schooling. The results of this study by CALS, due to be released by the end of the year, should be examined for further evidence of the effect of poverty on completion of matric.

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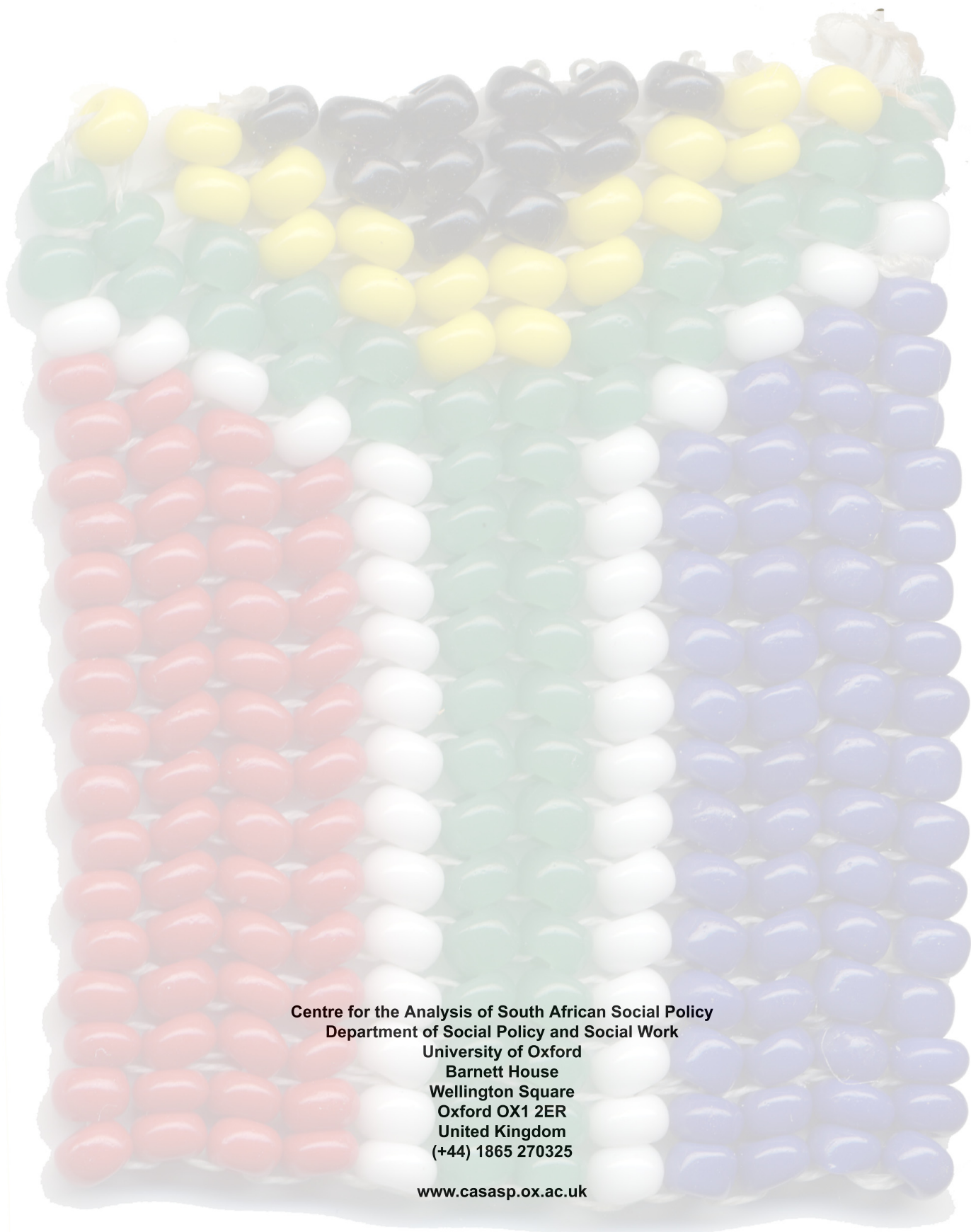
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