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Household resource flows and food poverty during South Africa's lockdown: Short-term policy implications for three channels of social protection¹

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Abstract

In response to the COVID-19 crisis, and the anticipated socio-economic impacts of a hard lockdown, the South African government has leveraged three channels of social protection to protect livelihoods: social insurance, a social assistance programme of grants and localised social relief efforts. Using a mixed methods approach, this policy paper highlights that while the response from government and the social sector has been commendable, large groups of households are experiencing tremendous hardship as a direct consequence of the lockdown. New evidence from a telephonic survey suggests that 2 of every 5 adults reported that their household lost its main source of income since lockdown started in South Africa on the 27th of March 2020. This has had devastating consequences for food insecurity and household hunger. Of interviewed adults, 47% reported that their household ran out of money to buy food in April. Between May and June 2020, 21% reported that someone in the household went hungry in the last 7 days and 15% reported that a child went hungry in the last 7 days. To stave off mass, chronic hunger we simply cannot let up on the support being provided to households through all three channels of social protection. Failure to do so could deepen an emerging humanitarian crisis, hamper economic recovery, and threaten socio-political stability.

JEL codes: I32, I38

Keywords: poverty, transfers, welfare policy, social protection, COVID-19

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Executive summary

New evidence suggests that 2 of every 5 adults in South Africa reported that their household lost its main source of income since lockdown started in South Africa on the 27th of March. This has had devastating consequences for food insecurity and household hunger. Among interviewed adults, 47% reported that their household ran out of money to buy food in April. Between May and June 2020, 21% reported that someone in the household went hungry in the last 7 days and 15% reported that a child went hungry in the last 7 days. Far too many people, and far too many children, are going hungry.

This has occurred despite significant emergency relief. South Africa's R500 billion fiscal relief package has drawn on three channels of social protection available to countries in the short-term to address the socio-economic fall-out of the coronavirus pandemic:

1. Expanding the social insurance system to reach a larger proportion of the labour force,
2. Building on its existing social assistance programme of grants, and
3. Expanding social relief efforts through local governments and non-state institutions (Gerard, Imbert and Orkin 2020).

In this mixed methods study we highlight that while this response from government and the social sector has been commendable, large groups of households are experiencing tremendous hardship as a direct consequence of the lockdown and losing household income sources.

To stave off mass, chronic hunger we simply cannot let up on the support being provided to households through all three channels of social protection simultaneously. Sustaining and broadening financial and administrative capacity to provide short-term social insurance, social assistance such as social grants and localised, community level social relief, is an urgent national priority. Failure to do so will deepen an emerging humanitarian crisis, hamper economic recovery and threaten socio-political stability.

Objectives and method

This policy paper sets out to do three things:

- i) Explores how household resource flows have been impacted during lockdown.
- ii) Provides preliminary evidence on whether income shocks have exacerbated food poverty.
- iii) Considers the reach and depth of localised social relief efforts in responding to a humanitarian crisis created through lockdown as household incomes have been lost.

Our study draws on quantitative analysis of a new NIDS-CRAM telephonic survey conducted from 7 May to 27 June 2020 (corresponding to stages 4, 3 and 'advanced' level 3 of the national lockdown). The survey is made up of adults broadly representative of persons 15 years or older in South Africa in 2017. These findings are complemented by insights from key informant interviews with social relief organisations involved in food distribution during the lockdown period. The analysis is operationalised through the lens of social protection, as we consider how outcomes differ by household access to social grants and localised social relief efforts.

We outline our key findings below and implications for how we view three channels of social protection.

1. Significant evidence of income shocks to households, even among grant households

Losses of main household income sources have occurred extensively among both non-grant receiving households and those receiving grants. The possibility of job loss or a downturn in business presented a major threat to the livelihoods of a large proportion of grant receiving households because pre-lockdown, many relied on sources of income *other* than grants. GHS 2018 data indicates that 75% of grant receiving households were receiving income from sources *other* than grants, such as from employment, business or remittances.

Since the lockdown started on 27 March, as many as 42% of adults in grant receiving households lost their main source of household income. This figure is 36% for those in non-grant receiving households.

For those non-grant receiving households that were already living on the edge of survival, lockdown has been a further blow. As many as 54% of adults in non-grant receiving households in the poorest income quintile (measured by per capita household income in 2017) report that the household lost its main source of income, compared to 26% in the wealthiest quintile. In this respect, there is evidence that the poorest non-grant receiving households have been the hardest hit by lockdown.

2. Food poverty is being exacerbated due to household income shocks

Even though pre-lockdown levels of food poverty were already notable, current indicators of food insecurity are higher than the pre-lockdown situation. This is reflected in both NIDS-CRAM and responses from key informant interviews who raised concern about the dramatic increase in requests for food relief over lockdown.

In particular, losses in household income are exacerbating food poverty. Compared to not losing a main household income source, reporting of any household member going hungry in the past 7 days is about 12 percentage points higher if the main source of income for the household was lost during lockdown. Particularly vulnerable to hunger are households that have depended on money from family and friends and who have lost this income source: After controlling for factors that would pre-dispose households to food insecurity, almost 60% of adults in households that lost their main source of income from family and friends reported that someone went hungry in the past 7 days.

Among the NIDS-CRAM sample of adults in grant receiving households, 53% report that the household ran out of money to buy food in April, 24% report that someone in the household went hungry in the last 7 days and 18% report that a child went hungry in the last 7 days (if there were children in the household). The reports of hunger occurred in the first two months of the roll-out of grant ‘top-ups’ typically valued at R250 per grant (or R500 *per caregiver* for child support grants from June) that commenced at the start of May. Despite the extensive reach of the grant system, new ‘top-ups’ or other social relief efforts, the data suggests that many households were still going hungry.

3. Social relief efforts in the face of a humanitarian crisis

The social sector and communities have engaged rigorously in relief efforts. During lockdown, 18% of adults reported accessing support for food or shelter from government (8%), NGOs, churches or other associations (6%) or neighbours and the community (9%). Three quarters of those accessing external relief were in households receiving a government grant. In this respect, localised social relief efforts are largely getting to vulnerable groups in households *already* reached by the grant system. However, it is clear that the gaps and needs are great as revealed in significant hunger rates, even where social assistance is being provided. Where multiple channels of social protection reach the same household, this is not necessarily a waste or misdirected distribution of private or public sector finances, because the gaps are large. Hunger, particularly reported child hunger, is very high where localised social relief efforts have been provided to those already reached by the social grants: a quarter of respondents in these households benefiting from both grants and social relief report that a child went hungry in the last 7 days. However, social relief efforts need to expand targeting to households not covered by social protection.

Short-term policy implications for three channels of social protection

As South Africans have experienced significant shocks to their livelihoods, the threat of hunger presents a major concern for health, political and social stability. One cannot hope to rebuild and recover economically as a nation when too many people are hungry. In the short-term, we have to continue to leverage all three channels of social protection as effectively and efficiently as possible. For this reason, we both affirm current social policy efforts, and make further suggestions to strengthen the three arms of South Africa’s social protection response.

1. Social insurance

Urgent need to remedy the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) administrative system to ensure those eligible for pay-outs receive their income protection timeously:

While the social insurance system may not reach informal workers, where people are due to be paid UIF due to job losses, this system needs to work. The likelihood of hunger is significantly higher in households that report that their main sources of income such as earnings have been lost. The value of UIF pay-outs to individuals is considerably larger than grant top-ups, going further to cover shortfalls in income and to mitigate household hunger in the short-term. Urgent attention needs to be given to rectifying technical glitches that exist in the UIF system (Mathe 2020).

2. Social assistance

Reaffirm the importance of expanding the reach of the grant system through the COVID-19 SRD grant: Pre-lockdown, over 60% of people in South Africa and 80% in rural areas were living in a grant-receiving household. However, the roll-out of the COVID-19 social relief of distress (SRD) grant is highly necessary in expanding the social security net due to the prevalence of hunger in households currently not covered by grants. The administrative process of ‘enrolling’ more South Africans on the formal social protection system through the COVID-19 SRD grant could enable the government to respond quickly in getting emergency relief to more households presently and in the future.

Continue ‘top-ups’ for 3 more months to January 2021

With the projected contraction of the South African economy by 7.2%, economic recovery will be slow. It is unlikely that the significant losses to income that are being reported will return to a pre-lockdown state before ‘top-ups’ are scheduled to stop in October 2020. With the alarming levels of hunger being reported where incomes have been lost in May and June, despite the initial injection of ‘top-up’ grants into households, removing this additional support could have further devastating consequences for households, resulting in chronic hunger and malnutrition. This in turn may have negative implications for political and social stability.

Data to plan and track the potential demand for new qualifying grant applications:

It is alarming that there is significant reporting of lost household incomes by respondents from households in the poorest income quintiles but not yet reached through the social grants system. This may have implications for an already stretched social protection system if the economy does not recover quickly enough to reabsorb people in poor households into the labour market. Regular and accurate data is needed from various administrative sources (e.g. UIF, CCMA) and household data collection activities to effectively model increased demand for grants and prepare the fiscus in advance for this scenario.

3. Social relief

Reaffirming the value of social relief efforts in response to a humanitarian crisis

Despite the state’s response to the lockdown through leveraging the social insurance and social assistance systems at scale, the needs remain large. We need to continue to encourage generosity and giving for humanitarian relief through effective distribution platforms. Even though localised community-based social relief efforts will never have the reach of the grant system, they are necessary to improve depth of support to households to mitigate food shortages and hunger. However, as the economy contracts, it is likely to have consequences for available finance for NPOs, churches and other associations in sustaining short-term food relief efforts. With funding that remains, there needs to be a call for corporate social investment (CSI) and private philanthropy to view food insecurity as a short to medium term priority in South Africa, rather than viewing this as ‘anti-development’.

Greater utilisation of the social sector to reach vulnerable individuals

There needs to be greater utilisation of non-profit organisations (NPOs), community-based organisations (CBOs) and faith-based organisations (FBOs) to reach vulnerable individuals and groups of people who are hard-to-reach, especially those who are outside the grant system. In a resource constrained environment, effective social relief will require increased coordination and collaboration across government, the NPO sector and private philanthropy.

Build local information flows to improve targeting of social relief to hard-to-reach groups and to those not covered by social protection and social insurance

Effective social relief will also require improving local information flows to improve targeting so as to reach those most in need of support. Countries that have invested in setting up registers of need appeared to have been able to reach vulnerable populations in a short space of time, as for instance in India. This requires investments in building these information systems. This could be done with the support of NPOs, CBOs and FBOs working with credible local leaders who enjoy the trust of people in the community, where they are effective in identifying and reaching those most vulnerable to food poverty.

Build capacity within the state and across organisations for effective and quick disaster relief

Our key informant interviews revealed that a lack of specialist capacity in disaster management was identified as a critical barrier to an efficient and effective response to the pandemic. There is need for technical advisory support to be provided to governmental and other national and provincial structures, as well to non-governmental organisations, to build disaster relief capacity.

Introduction

Across the developing world, countries have imposed restrictions on movement and economic activity in response to the coronavirus pandemic. These domestic measures to curb the spread of the virus, coupled with reduced global demand for goods and services and declining international investment, have had severe negative consequences for business sustainability and livelihoods. Household incomes have been directly impacted as workplaces have shut, and severe restrictions on trade and freedom of movement have been imposed. While these measures may have assisted in reducing the spread of the virus, their implications for exacerbating poverty, food poverty and malnutrition across the developing world is forecasted to be severe. Global poverty projections suggest that the international response to the virus will push over 70 million people into extreme poverty³, with sub-Saharan African being the hardest hit (Mahler, et al. 2020).

In mitigating the short-term socio-economic fall-out of the virus, countries typically have had three strategies available to them in providing an emergency safety net to citizens:

1. Expand the social insurance system reaching a proportion of the labour force,
2. Build on existing social security or assistance programmes, and
3. Involve local governments and non-state institutions to reach vulnerable groups not covered by the first two options (Gerard, Imbert and Orkin 2020).

South Africa's R500 billion fiscal relief package has incorporated elements of all three options to mitigate the short-term impacts of lockdown on business and livelihoods. Social insurance has been expanded, the extensive social grants system that was already in place pre-crisis has been leveraged to reach more households with increased support, and there have been strong calls to action in expanding localised support through non-state institutions, particularly with respect to food relief.

In the first part of this paper, we use existing and newly collected data to review the reach of the grant system, and the extent to which additional localised social relief efforts have assisted households during lockdown. We then turn to issues of the sufficiency of depth of support that social assistance and relief efforts provide to households by analysing changes in resource flows and current experiences of food insecurity.

We highlight that while the response has been commendable, households are experiencing tremendous hardship as a direct consequence of the lockdown. We show that even among households that were already covered by South Africa's social assistance programme of grants, livelihoods have been significantly affected. Other income sources upon which many grant-receiving households rely, such as income from employment, business or remittances, have declined or been lost completely. This has implications for food poverty. Pre-crisis, food insecurity was already a considerable issue, yet new data suggests it has become particularly prolific during lockdown where household incomes have been lost, despite the reach of the existing grant system, new grant 'top-ups' or other localised social relief efforts.

The collective findings from the analysis have important implications for how we view government's social policy response to the lockdown as outlined in the final section: Short-term policy implications for three channels of social protection.

Background: South African social policy responses to the imposed lockdown

On 27th March, a full national lockdown was imposed in South Africa and a national state of disaster declared to enact these regulations in curbing the spread of the coronavirus. Globally, South Africa's lockdown has been recognised as one of the most severe where under "stage 5 lockdown", lasting 35 days, economic activity virtually came to a standstill. But the more severe the lockdown, the more severe the economic consequences. South Africa was already facing significant economic challenges pre-crisis. Originally forecasted economic growth for 2020 of 0.9% has been revised to an expected

³ Less than \$1.90 per day

contraction of 7.2% (IOL 2020). Although a staged approach to re-opening the economy has been adopted, where gradually more industries have been allowed to operate under levels 4 and 3, at the time of writing (100 days later), the nation remains in partial lockdown⁴ and business activity has been severely affected (Statistics South Africa 2020). This is all occurring in a time when the South African fiscus is highly constrained with soaring national debt levels set to reach 82% by the end of this fiscal year (Mboweni 2020).

In anticipation of the socio-economic impacts of lockdown, South Africa has leveraged three available approaches to social protection (Gerard, Imbert and Orkin 2020) to mitigate job losses, declines in household incomes and to provide stop-gap measures to address food insecurity.

1. **Social insurance:** The South African social insurance system was leveraged at the start of lockdown to expand its existing job retention scheme⁵ and use the existing unemployment insurance fund to assist those who are laid off. Drawing on the temporary employer relief scheme (TERS), initially introduced in December 2019 to assist companies in financial distress, a COVID-19 TERS was created through the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF). This scheme aims to prevent the destruction of jobs due to temporary closure of business operations for up to 3 months during lockdown, by covering the cost of salaries for employees on an income replacement rate sliding scale of 38% (for high earners) up to 60% (for low earners). However, social insurance programmes tend to be limited in reach to formally employed individuals. Informally employed workers are typically not protected by this system.
2. **Social assistance:** Acknowledging the limitations of social insurance programmes in reaching informally employed workers (Bassier, et al. 2020) and a wider share of the population, the existing social security or ‘grant’ system has been expanded temporarily with additional ‘top-ups’ being provided to existing grant recipients for a six-month period. The reach of the existing grant system was already significant. At the beginning of March, pre-lockdown 18.2 million grants were paid to 11.3 million beneficiaries where the child support grant has had particularly wide reach of 12.7 million children making up 70% of the total number of grants in March 2020 (SASSA 2020). For six months, starting in May 2020, an extra R250 per month has been added to all grants with exception of the child support grant, where the ‘top-up’ is R500 *per caregiver* from June. The grant system has also been temporarily extended to a wider share of the population through the introduction of the temporary ‘special COVID-19 social relief of distress’ grant of R350 per month. However, “all these measures will come to an end in October” (Mboweni 2020).
3. **Social relief:** The provision of localised social relief through local government and non-state institutions has also been geared up during lockdown. Pre-crisis, South Africa has had a large non-governmental sector with 230 000 registered non-profit organisations in 2020 (Department of Social Development 2020). At the start of lockdown, calls were made by government to the private sector and citizens at large to contribute towards national social relief efforts through ‘The Solidarity Fund’. The food relief programme attached to this fund was intended as a short-term “stop-gap measure to allow time for the more systemic government grant solutions to come on stream, and the resumption of government feeding programmes at schools and DSD centres. The food parcels provided basic food relief for a household for two to three weeks (depending on household size)” (Solidarity Fund 2020). The model involved working with large food NPOs, community based and faith-based organisations to distribute food parcels, food and vouchers across nine provinces. The programme is said to have reached in excess of 280 000 households by the start of June (Solidarity Fund 2020). However, there have also been reports of resources being diverted by local elites. Despite running the risk of leakage and being less subject to accountability, the localised provision of relief efforts can be used to reach groups living at the margins of social

⁴ Advanced level 3.

⁵ Job retention schemes are argued as important for speeding up economic recoveries due to frictions in the labour market which prevent quick rehiring or finding new jobs (Giupponi and Landais 2020). They are also important for limiting the longer-term impacts on the size and productivity of formal sectors attributed to job losses.

insurance or assistance such as refugees and immigrants (Gerard, Imbert and Orkin 2020). We also note that although school feeding programmes are not usually classified under social relief, the importance of this form of support became clear from its *absence* during the lockdown.

While this combined approach to social protection provides different channels to reach households, there are individuals and households that may still be missed, as it is difficult to perfectly target and implement every programme. However, equally problematic as ensuring that these programmes reach a large enough share of the population is ensuring sufficient depth of reach in supporting households when livelihoods have been drastically affected.

In this paper, we evaluate the social assistance and social relief efforts adopted by the state in response to the coronavirus, and how these compare to the need that has been created through lockdown as we evaluate changes in resource flows and food poverty indicators during lockdown.

Method

The research process underpinning this paper has been guided by three overarching research objectives and related questions:

- i) Exploring how household resource flows have been impacted during lockdown.
 - Prior to lockdown, what types of incomes other than grants were sources of income for grant receiving households?
 - How have sources of household income among grant receiving households been affected by lockdown?
- ii) Providing preliminary evidence on whether income shocks have exacerbated food poverty.
 - How prevalent was food poverty pre-lockdown?
 - How prolific has food poverty been during lockdown, particularly among grant receiving households, and could this be attributed to changes in resource flows to and among these households?
- iii) Considering the reach and depth of localised social relief efforts in responding to a humanitarian crisis created through lockdown as household incomes have been lost.
 - What was the nature and scope of in-kind social relief provided during the lockdown?
 - What were the achievements and challenges in the implementation of food relief over the first three months of the lockdown between the end of March and June 2020?

In achieving these objectives, we adopt a mixed-methods analysis. Our enquiry is operationalised through the lens of social assistance, as we consider how outcomes differ by household access to social grants. For this reason, we commence the analysis with a review of the reach of the existing social grant system and social relief efforts.

In addressing objectives i) and ii) we draw on largely descriptive analysis of existing and new data to address these questions, supported through multivariate econometric analysis to identify the association between food poverty during lockdown and changes in resource flows. The depth of food poverty as reflected in the NIDS-CRAM data is then corroborated against the experiences of key-informants involved in social relief efforts during lockdown. In addressing objective iii) we draw on both quantitative analysis and qualitative insights from key-informant interviews.

Quantitative data

This paper uses three sources of quantitative data: Wave 5 of the National Income Dynamics Study (NIDS) 2017, wave 1 of the National Income Dynamics Study: Coronavirus Rapid Mobile Survey (NIDS-CRAM); and the General Household Surveys of 2017 and 2018.

NIDS and the GHS

NIDS is a panel survey that commenced in 2008 with interviews of a nationally representative sample of 28000 people across South Africa.⁶ In 2017, the NIDS sample was expanded again to account for the attrition of wealthier sub-groups over the years to generate a sample of 40,000 individuals that were broadly representative of South Africans in 2017. NIDS contains comprehensive information on grant receipt among household members and on individual earnings, household income and food expenditure (Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit 2018). However, wave 5 of NIDS is limited with respect to indicators of food insecurity. For this reason, we supplement analyses using the annual General Household Survey (GHS) collected by Statistics South Africa – a nationally representative sample of over 70 000 persons and 20 000 households. Amongst other things, the GHS contains information on sources of income for the household, earnings from employment, grant receipt and various indicators of food insecurity.

About NIDS-CRAM

In response to the coronavirus pandemic, NIDS-CRAM was initiated by researchers across various South African universities⁷ to measure the socioeconomic impacts of the national lockdown. This is a unique follow-up telephonic survey with a subsample of adults (aged 18 or older in April 2020) surveyed in NIDS wave 5 in 2017 (Ingle, Brophy and Daniels 2020).⁸ The survey is broadly representative sample of persons 15 years or older in 2017 in South Africa, who were re-interviewed in 2020 for NIDS-CRAM (Kerr, Ardington and Burger 2020). As far as phone surveys go, NIDS-CRAM has achieved a high response rate of over 40% (Hoozeveen, et al. 2014, Ballivian 2015).⁹ Successful interviews with 7074 adults were conducted between 7th May and 27th June, over stages 4, 3 and ‘advanced’ level 3 of the national lockdown as shown in Table 1.

While we use this data to make inferences about lockdown impacts, we do so cautiously, and outline caveats related to its use in the Appendix. We mention one key issue here: NIDS-CRAM is a telephonic survey of individuals, not households. While most questions are directed at the individual, the respondents are also asked some questions about the household in which they live including grant receipt, lost household income sources during the lockdown, food poverty and access to external material assistance from local government, NGOs and the community (Spaull, et al. 2020). We have to rely on what the individual reports for the household as a whole to determine what is happening at the household level even if the sampled individual may not always be in the best position to respond on behalf of the household. This also restricts analyses using NIDS-CRAM to the individual as the unit of analysis.

Table 1: Sample successfully interviewed in NIDS-CRAM wave 1, by lockdown level

	Successfully interviewed (N)	Successfully interviewed (%)
During lockdown level 4	1917	27
During lockdown level 3 [^]	3241	46
Lockdown level 3 ‘advanced’ [*]	1916	27
Total	7074	100

Notes: [^]Commenced 1 June. ^{*}Announced 17th June.

⁶ These people were re-interviewed every two to three years, as well as anyone they were living with.

⁷ Working group members are from the University of Stellenbosch, the University of Cape Town (UCT), the University of Witwatersrand (Wits), the University of Johannesburg and Rhodes University.

⁸ The mode of implementation for NIDS-CRAM was limited to a phone survey. Other large survey initiatives in South Africa during lockdown have depended on online or Whatsapp, but many people in South Africa do not have smart phones or easy access to the internet, resulting in highly unrepresentative responses. However, phone surveys had seldom been used in South Africa for nationally representative socioeconomic surveys and thus the project commenced with considerable uncertainty about drivers of non-response. For this reason, the sample is drawn using a stratified sampling design but with “batch sampling” that allows the sampling rate in each stratum to be adjusted as “fieldwork” progresses. The sampling was done at the individual level rather than the household level; however, this does not limit the selection of individuals to only one person per NIDS wave 5 household.

⁹ Less than 8% refused to be interviewed. Being non-contactable was the main reason for non-response.

Table 2: Adults in households receiving a grant in NIDS-CRAM, wave 1 2020

		Mean	SE	95% CI		N
				Lower	Upper	
Grant receipt, 2017 <i>(NIDS-CRAM linked to NIDS wave 5)</i>	All	59.3	1.5	56.4	62.2	6 986
	Urban	50.4	2.1	46.2	54.6	3 649
	Rural	75.7	1.7	72.4	79.0	3 337
Grant receipt, 2020 (NIDS-CRAM linked to NIDS wave 5)	All	66.7	1.1	64.5	69.0	6 986
	Urban	59.6	1.5	56.7	62.6	3 649
	Rural	79.8	1.4	77.1	82.4	3 337
Grant receipt, 2020 (NIDS-CRAM)	All	66.0	1.2	63.7	68.3	7 074
	Urban	58.6	1.5	55.6	61.6	3 712
	Rural	79.9	1.3	77.2	82.5	3 362

Source: NIDS-CRAM, wave 1. NIDS 2017 wave 5. Notes: Weighted estimates. *Rural/urban indicator is from the NIDS wave 5 household used. 'Rural' combines farm and traditional areas.

Despite a distinct difference in how household grant receipt is defined using NIDS-CRAM relative to other household surveys (see appendix Table A2 for a comparison of definitions of household grant receipt used across surveys), there appears to be some level of comparability across NIDS wave 5 and NIDS-CRAM with respect to the percentage of individuals aged 18 or older reporting grants received by their household, to support the use of this data. Although a slightly higher percentage of the total NIDS-CRAM sample are living in grant receiving households at 66% than reported among adults 18 years or older in NIDS 2017 at 59%, grant receipt figures for the NIDS-CRAM sample of adults interviewed in NIDS 2017 (wave 5) is comparable at 59% (see

Table 2). It is noted however that personal grant receipt is significantly under-reported in NIDS-CRAM – particularly in relation to the child support grant - and thus we do not focus on individual level receipt of grants (see the Appendix).

Qualitative data – key informant interviews

The aim of the qualitative interviews was first to assess what the nature and scope of in-kind social relief was during the lockdown, and second to establish what the achievements and challenges were in the implementation of food relief over the first three months of the lockdown between the end of March and June 2020.

Eleven key informants were purposively selected who could provide information on the provision of food relief during lockdown or who could comment on the connection between social relief (including school nutrition) and social protection. Participants were selected who could provide insight from different perspectives; namely government, intermediary organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), Community Based Organisations (CBOs), Faith-Based Organisations (FBOs), humanitarian organisations and philanthropic initiatives. Individuals who were directly involved at a policy level in government were invited to participate while others were involved at a strategic, supportive and operational level in the provision of humanitarian assistance. Four senior national government officials were interviewed who were responsible for cash and in-kind social assistance, school feeding and monitoring of social protection strategies. A further six interviews were conducted with the following individuals: a person responsible for the organisation of food relief in partnership with government; two persons from philanthropic foundations; 1 person from a humanitarian relief organisation, another two persons from an FBO and welfare NGO.

Interviews were confidential and the names of organisations are only mentioned where reports and content are in the public domain. Ten questions were asked relating to the overall aims of the study. In some instances, where the interviewees were not involved in food distribution but in policy making roles, delivery issues and challenges were explored, including short-term policy options. The interviewer made notes during the interviews, and some interviewees completed the semi-structured interview guide and also submitted organisational/monitoring reports of food distributed. The information was collated thematically according to the above aims.

The reach of the grant system and social relief efforts

1. The reach of the South African grant system pre-lockdown and implications for reach during lockdown

Pre-crisis South Africa has had a well-established and well-funded social welfare system to leverage to provide an emergency safety net for families. Grants have been designed to target people who are most vulnerable to poverty, including older people, people with disabilities and children, with targeting to vulnerable persons supported through means-testing attached to most grant applications¹⁰. Pre-crisis more than 18.2 million social grants were being paid monthly to 11.3 million beneficiaries (SASSA 2020). While the number of beneficiaries paid as a ratio of the South African population is about 1 as to 5 persons, the reach of the grant system is much more extensive than this when considered from the perspective of households or individuals in those households receiving grants. Poor households pool their income to cover the food and non-food needs of household members, not only of grant beneficiaries – so social grants have multiple uses and multiple users (Devereux and Waidler 2017, Sekhampu and Gboblir 2017). In 2017/18 about 44 to 46% of households contained at least one person receiving a grant, and in harder to reach traditional or farm areas (rural) roughly 61-63% of households were accessing grants in 2017/18 (see Table 3). Since grant receiving households are typically larger than non-grant receiving households, when one considers the percentage of individuals in households with grants, these figures are much higher. Roughly two thirds of individuals (64-67%) were located in households receiving at least one grant in 2017/18, with around 82% of individuals in rural households served by the grant system.

Table 3: Social assistance: Reach of grants to households and individuals in those households, 2017-2018

Percentage of households and individuals in households receiving at least one grant												
	All households				All individuals				Individuals 18 years or older			
	Estimate (%)	95% CI		N	Estimate (%)	95% CI		N	Estimate (%)	95% CI		N
GHS 2018												
All areas	44.3	43.5	45.1	20 908	63.5	62.6	64.5	71 137	55.8	54.8	56.7	45 913
Urban	36.2	35.2	37.2	13 605	53	51.7	54.2	43 591	46.5	45.3	47.8	29 984
Rural	63.1	61.6	64.6	7 303	83	81.9	84.1	27 546	76.2	74.9	77.5	15 929
GHS 2017												
All areas	43.8	43	44.6	21 225	62.7	61.8	63.6	72 291	54.9	54	55.9	46 376
Urban	35.6	34.7	36.6	13 844	52	50.8	53.2	44 203	45.7	44.5	46.8	30 184
Rural	62.8	61.3	64.2	7 381	82.2	81.1	83.3	28 088	75.1	73.7	76.5	16 192
NIDS 2017												
NIDS All	45.6	42.2	48.9	10 637	67	64.6	69.4	39 411	58.6	56.1	61.2	23 441
Urban	37.9	33.7	42.1	6 302	58.4	54.8	62	20 156	50.7	47.1	54.4	12 971
Rural	61.0	56	66	4 335	81.6	79.6	83.6	19 249	74.5	72	76.9	10 464

Source: GHS 2017-18. NIDS 2017. Notes: Multistage sampling design used. Rural combines farm and traditional areas.

The temporary top-up of grants has thus had the potential to reach over 60% of people living in South Africa with extensive reach to over 80% of people in rural households. As the temporary special COVID-19 social relief of distress (SRD) grant is rolled out, with clear criteria that limits its reach to individuals who do not yet receive any social grants, UIF or other government funding such as bursaries for university or TVET college study (NSFAS), the reach of the grant system is set to expand further.

While over 7 million applications for the COVID-19 SRD grant were received, the number of qualifying beneficiaries after duplicate applications were removed was around 3.3 million eligible persons.

¹⁰ Means-testing supports the targeting of grants to the poor, which either disqualifies receipt altogether or places limitations on how much a recipient receives.

Dealing with applications involved cross checking applications against various data bases. This was time consuming and beyond the capacity of the DSD, as reflected by one key informant interviewed. Electronic systems had to be set up that would allow for uploading of documents on a cell phone or to submit web-based applications and mobile phone payments - new technologies that had not been used previously. Not surprisingly, the applications systems collapsed as the electronic systems were not in place. The DSD participant reported that 1 095 090 applicants had been paid their grants by 15 June 2020.

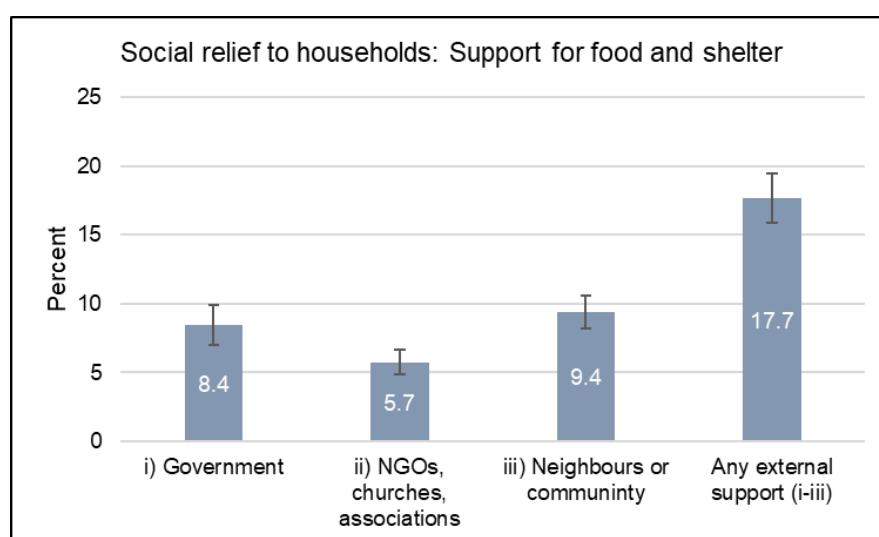
Despite the delays of rolling out the COVID-19 SRD grant, and concerns that it will be provided for too short a time (South African Social Security Agency 2020), the sheer administrative process of ‘enrolling’ more South Africans on a formalised system could enable the government to respond quickly in getting emergency relief to more households both for short-term relief now and for disasters that may arise in an uncertain future. This is very necessary. As explained in the next section, evidence suggests localised social relief efforts have been very important for increasing the depth of support to households in the short-run, but we cannot rely extensively on these social relief efforts reaching wider shares of the population that are vulnerable. An effective emergency net facilitated through the social grant systems is critical to providing quick humanitarian relief to households.

2. Social relief to households during lockdown: The reach of efforts as reflected in quantitative data

In NIDS-CRAM, individuals were asked the following questions in relation to accessing localised social support with respect to food and shelter: *During or since the lockdown started on 27th March have you received food or shelter: i) from government? ii) from any NGOs, churches or other associations? iii) from your neighbours or your community?*

Nearly 18% (17.7%) of adults from the NIDS-CRAM sample reported accessing at least one of these forms of external support, as seen in Figure 1. About 6% indicated that this support came from NGOs, churches or other associations; more people reported receiving support from neighbours or the community (9%) or from government (8%). Where external support is provided to households through local relief efforts, this support is largely going to persons *already* in households reached by the grant system, as seen in Figure 2. Three quarters (13.2 percentage points of 17.7%) of those receiving external support were in households receiving a government grant. Just 4.5% of the entire sample received social relief only.

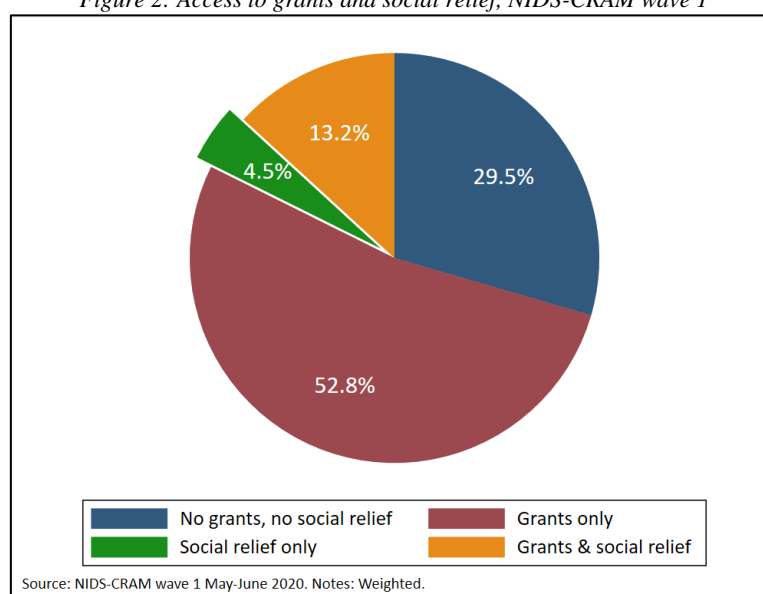
Figure 1: Individuals reporting household received external support for food and shelter, NIDS-CRAM wave 1



Source: NIDS-CRAM 2020. Notes: Sampling weights, clustering and stratification accounted for in estimates. Unit of analysis is the individual. Error bars reflect 95% confidence intervals.

The operation of localised social relief during the pandemic has been commendable. It plays a role in extending the *depth* of support to households with respect to basic needs, complementing the administrative social assistance system which can reach a wider share of the population. As described in the remainder of this paper, even where households are already reached by grants, more support is needed to mitigate shortfalls in incomes and food in the current crisis. The most widely distributed grant, the child support grant, and ‘top-ups’ to it are small, and spread thinly across household members. Additional support through localised social relief efforts to households already receiving grants is neither a waste, nor should it be viewed as a misdirected distribution of private or public sector finances. Furthermore, where external support is targeted at non-grant beneficiary households, we show later that this support appears to be well-targeted at the most food poor households.

Figure 2: Access to grants and social relief, NIDS-CRAM wave 1



3. Social relief to households during lockdown: Nature and scope of food relief as revealed by key informant interviews

Key informant interviews provide more nuance to this quantitative data, revealing the nature and scope of, specifically, food relief efforts during lockdown.

Based on the data provided by key informants, Table A3 in the appendix summarises the number of food parcels distributed by governmental, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), faith-based organisations (FBO's), humanitarian relief organisations and philanthropic organisations considered here. In total, nearly 1 million food parcels were provided by the organisations included in this study, including government, and this may have reached about 5 million individuals¹¹. Based on the limited information available, the contributions from the organisational sources in the interviews appeared to be significant, amounting to over R400 million if the average food parcel was R400. The generosity of various other organisations and individuals not considered here, would considerably raise this value. It is difficult to estimate expenditure on social relief by non-state actors due to a lack of information such as individual contributions to family, friends, neighbours or others in a person's social networks. Yet, when measured against the social grant system, with more than R15 billion paid out *monthly* even before the pandemic, the provision of social relief is much smaller. As a comparison, 2019 total corporate social investment expenditure in South Africa was estimated at around R10.2 billion *for the year* (Trialogue 2019, 30).

¹¹ Assuming 5 persons per household.

Food provided

The value of food parcels distributed ranged between R400 and R700 for families typically averaging 4.5 members and was provided for one month. However, the content of the food parcels was often too limited for large families (Solidarity Fund 2020) and questions were raised about the quality of the food distributed, particularly with respect to its nutritional value. One key informant from Foundation A raised concern about the high carbohydrate content of the food. The need for the sourcing of locally grown and accessible perishable goods was of concern for another key informant (Foundation B). High carbohydrate contents may be due to the challenges of distributing vegetables and other perishables (Solidarity Fund 2020). Approaches to relief and contents of food is often driven by pragmatic considerations with respect to logistics and prioritising ‘how to stave off hunger’ rather than the specifics of nutrition, as indicated in the response of one organisation experienced in disaster relief.¹²

Targeting

The bulk of the provision considered in this study was by government and the Solidarity Fund, distributed through various relief channels, including provincial government and non-profit organisations (NPOs). Personal communications with researchers revealed that local authorities also distributed food at various points in the lockdown, but no interviews could be conducted with local government officials. Key informants indicated that assessment of need was made either through formal applications to the respective organisations or through community-level assessment processes involving local leaders and NGOs, CBOs and FBOs who had knowledge of people in need. Government assessments also included the use of a means test, possibly in assessing eligibility for in-kind assistance for social relief of distress. Geographic targeting was also used by some organisations.

Despite these innovative proxy measures used to identify vulnerable groups who were not in receipt of formal assistance, it cannot be ruled out that food parcels were provided to individuals who were in receipt of formal social assistance, as the NIDS-CRAM data indicate. Some respondents expressed concern about this, while others were adamant that they reached those in need, regardless of whether they were in receipt of government grants. The Solidarity Fund (2020) conceded that duplicate provision may have occurred, and questions were posed by one of the government officials about how and to whom the Department of Social Development (DSD) distributed the food.

Appendix Table A3 provides more information about the social relief activities of the organisations interviewed.

Box 1: Politicisation, corruption and lack of coordination in food distribution

Media reports identified the politicisation of food distribution and related corruption as one of the key problems in responding to hunger during lockdown (Davis 2020). The same article also identified other challenges pertaining to a lack of coordination and communication between the different actors. These issues were subsequently addressed in a parliamentary briefing session by the Portfolio Committee for Social Development (Social Development 2020).

In our key informant interviews, except for one mention of political interference by an interviewee, no claims of corruption were made by our group of key informants. This does not mean that corruption did not occur. Participants in the study were probed about how they managed corruption and political interference in food distribution. One of the NPOs thought that their track record and the public’s trust in them is one of the reasons why corruption is largely absent from their organisation’s relief drives. They also adopt a no-tolerance approach to corruption. ‘There was no looting of our trucks or disorderly behaviour in the food queues, we work with the relevant parties in the community and do not experience these types of problems’, said the key informant from the humanitarian relief organisation. The intermediary organisations funding NPOs produced detailed end-of-project reports on food distribution, which suggests that in these cases monitoring systems were in place.

¹² Their food packs consist of high carbohydrate items such as maize and rice but also included protein items such as legumes, canned fish, canned beans and peanut butter.

In juggling the stringent regulations on trade imposed by the lockdown and claims of corruption and lack of coordination in the distribution of food, the Minister for Social Development implemented contentious strategies. Attempts were made to bar the delivery of cooked food to the hungry (Abrahams - Democratic Alliance 2020) and to implement government controls in the distribution of food parcels. Attempts at more government control impacted on NGOs' emergency response as they had to obtain authorisation from the Department of Social Development 48 hours prior to food distribution. The Democratic Alliance subsequently instituted legal proceedings over food distribution restrictions; the case is still pending (Lorimer - Democratic Alliance 2020). The Minister of Social Development's strategies were generally not well received by NPOs, the public and one of the key informants.

Exploring resource flows among grant receiving households

Having considered the reach of social assistance and social relief efforts, we now consider whether the depth of support has been sufficient, given changes in other resource flows experienced during lockdown by households already covered by social protection. This insufficiency of support is then revealed through indicators of food insecurity.

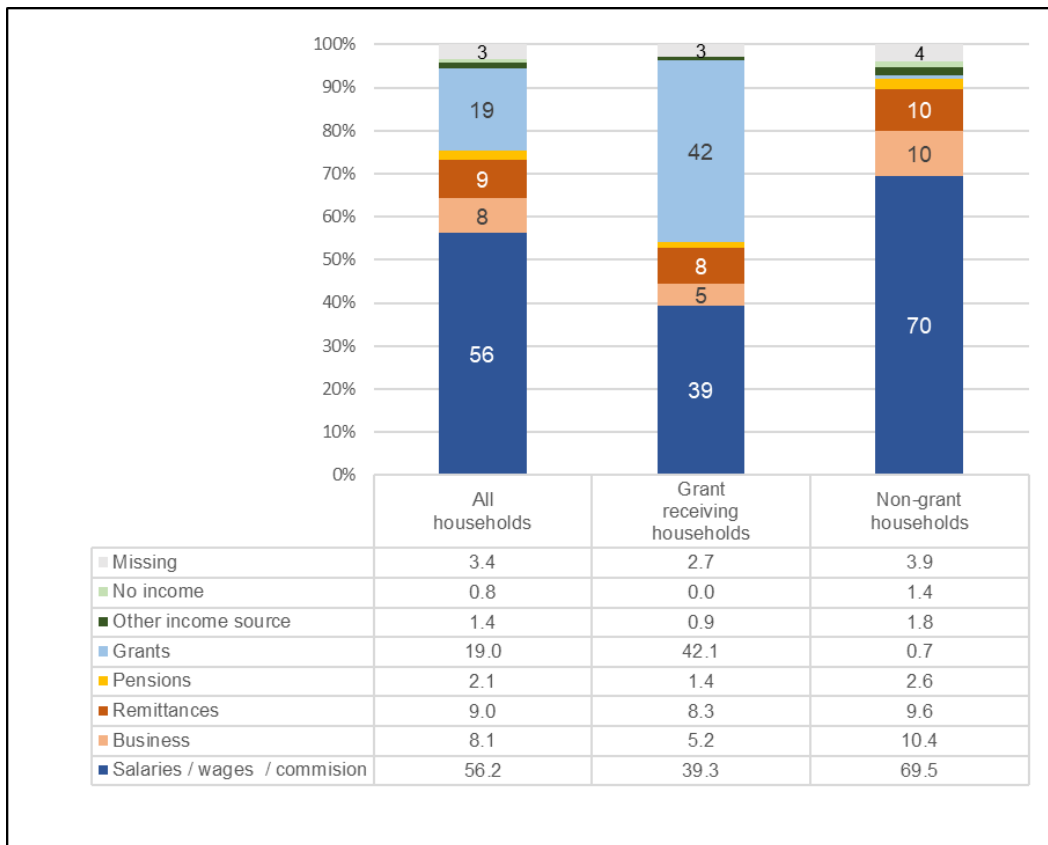
1. Pre-crisis sources of income for grant receiving households

With means-testing attached to grant receipt, there is often a misconception that grant receiving households rely predominately on these grants to meet their basic needs, and thus their livelihoods are invariant to the income shocks of the lockdown. While for the poorest grant receiving households, in the lowest income deciles this may be true (Ardnt, et al. 2020), a large proportion of grant receiving households are largely reliant on other income sources. In 2018, roughly 57% of grant receiving households included at least one household member that was employed. As many as 52% of grant receiving households reported receiving income from salaries, wages or commissions and a further 11% received income from a business (often an informal business). Remittances were a further source of income for 20% of grant receiving households (see Appendix Table A8). Income earned or generated through business was the *main* source of household income for as many as 44% (39% + 5%) of grant receiving households, which is slightly higher than the percentage reporting that their main source of income was from grants, as seen in Figure 3. Only a quarter¹³ of grant receiving households reported that grants were their *only* source of income in the GHS 2018.

Despite access to social protection, the threat of job loss or a downturn in business presents a major threat to the livelihoods of a large proportion of grant receiving households whether in the form of earnings losses for resident household members or those that send remittances to the household. The likelihood of job losses for those in grant receiving households during lockdown is also expected to have been high given that employed persons in these households are significantly represented in low to medium skilled jobs or occupations / industries that are not conducive to working from home (Ardnt, et al. 2020).

¹³ If the unit of analysis is the individual aged 18 years or older in a grant receiving households, then only 20% indicate that grants were the *only* source of income.

Figure 3: Main sources of household income reported in GHS 2018



Source: GHS 2018. Notes: Weighting and multi-stage sampling design accounted for in estimates. Unit of analysis: household.

2. Income shocks experienced in grant receiving households during lockdown

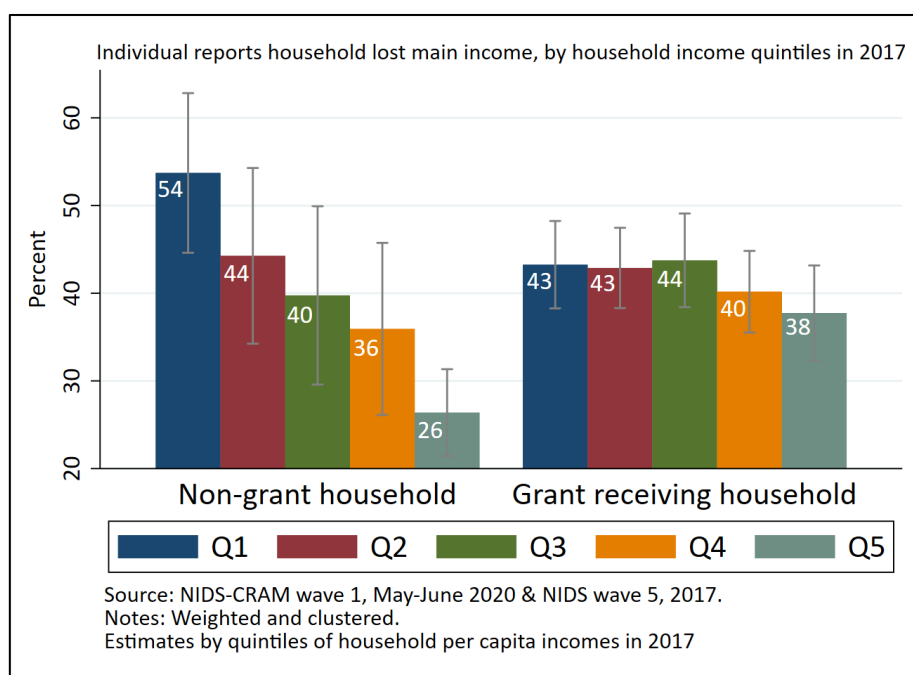
Using NIDS-CRAM we provide an indication of the dire impacts of lockdown on the livelihoods of South African households. Respondents were asked the following question: “*Has your household lost its main source of income since the lockdown started on 27th March?*” Two of every 5 adults (40%) said yes, with similar responses across individuals in grant and non-grant receiving households, as seen in Table 4.

Table 4: Individual reports household lost its main income source since lockdown started, NIDS-CRAM sample

	Mean	SE	95% CI		N
			Lower	Upper	
Entire sample	40.0	1.1	37.8	42.1	6 899
Non-grant household	36.2	1.9	32.6	39.9	1 688
Grant receiving	41.9	1.2	39.5	44.3	5 211

Source: NIDS-CRAM wave 1. Notes: Estimates at individual level. Weighted, clustered and stratified. 168 individuals of 7074 responded 'don't know' or 'Refused' are not included in estimates.

Figure 4: Individual reports that its household lost its main source of income since 27th March 2020, disaggregated by quintiles of per capita household incomes in 2017



By linking NIDS-CRAM to NIDS 2017, we show disaggregated responses to this question by quintiles of household per capita incomes for quintiles of the households in which these individuals resided in 2017 (

Figure 4). For individuals in grant receiving households, reported loss of income is relatively similar across those in household income quintiles 1 to 4. But in non-grant receiving households, the reported patterns of income loss are clearly skewed towards individuals in the poorest households. As many as 54% of adults in non-grant receiving households in the poorest income quintile report that the household lost its main source of income compared to 26% in the wealthiest quintile. Income losses are prevalent across all income quintiles, but there is clear evidence that the poorest non-grant receiving households have been hardest hit.¹⁴ If the economy does not recover quickly enough to reabsorb those who have lost jobs, this may have significant implications for the grant system, and the already depleted fiscus, if a larger pool of the population meets eligibility criteria for grant applications after losing incomes.

We disaggregate reporting on main household income source being lost by pre-lockdown household income sources in February 2020.¹⁵ Figure 5a) shows specific pre-lockdown household income sources reported by NIDS-CRAM respondents, while Figure 5b) disaggregates individual responses on households losing their main source of income by these pre-lockdown income categories. The orange set of bars restrict estimates to only grant receiving households. Among individuals in grant receiving households, 38% reported household earnings from employment or business activities in February, and of this group 51% reported that the household lost its main source of income during lockdown. There are some anomalies in reported data where of the 50% of individuals reporting only household income from grants in February, 34% go on to say their household lost its main source of income. It is highly unlikely that so many grant households would have ‘lost’ grants. We strongly suspect this group had other sources of income in February which they did not report but that were lost during the lockdown. Drawing from the GHS 2018, we would expect the percentage of individuals in grant receiving

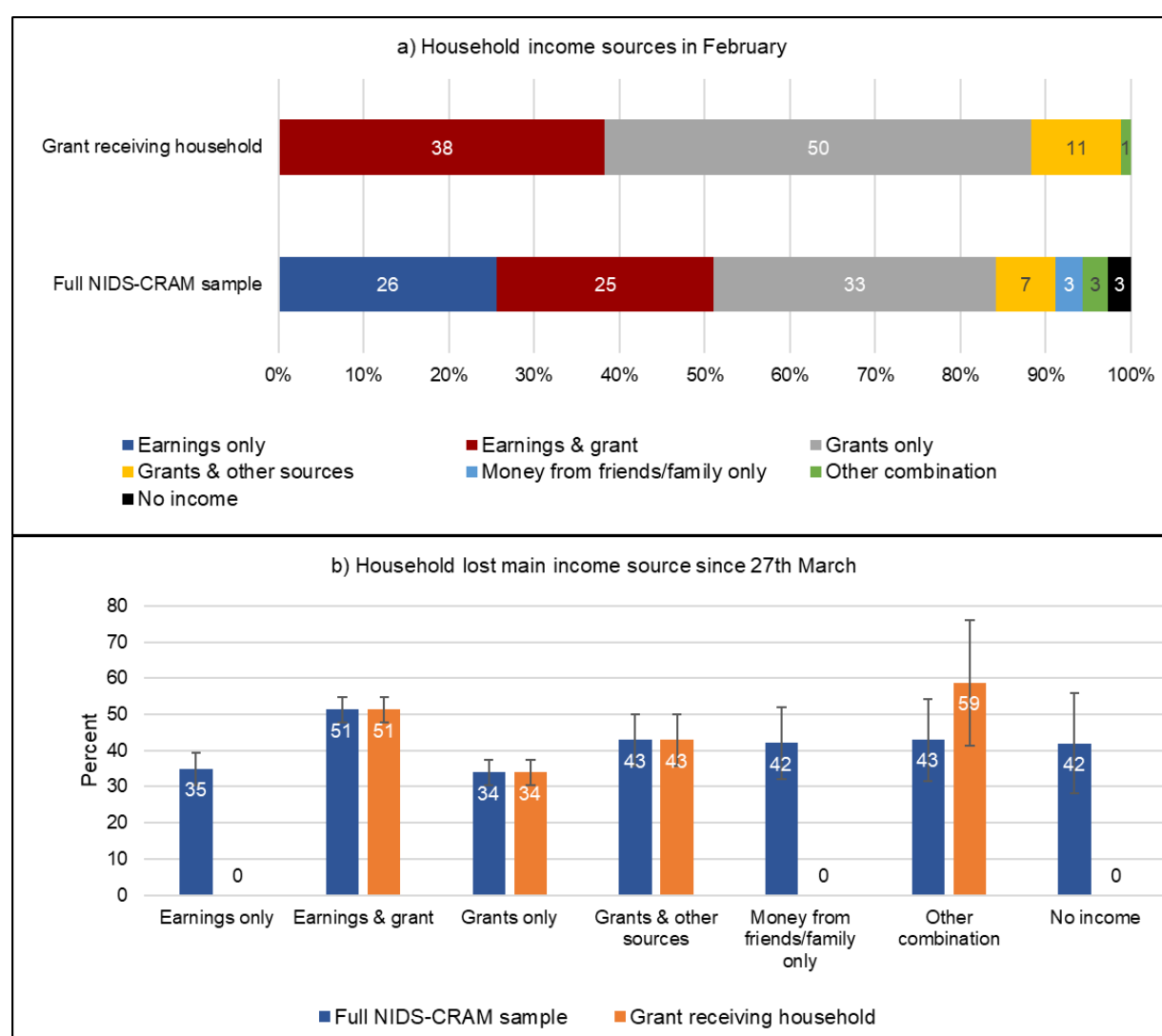
¹⁴ A very similar picture emerges if we restrict the sample to individuals less likely to have moved from their original 2017 NIDS household.

¹⁵ NIDS-CRAM wave 1 asked respondents the following questions: “If you think of the time in February, which of these were sources of income for this household?” Response options include ‘income from employment’, ‘income from a business’, ‘government grants’, ‘money from friends or family’, ‘other’ and ‘household had no income in February’. Using this multiple response question, we identify all combinations of income sources reported (at most three were reported). If any grant receipt in the households was indicated elsewhere by the respondent, but grant income was not explicitly identified, it was assumed that grant income was received by the household in February. As an important caveat there are reliability concerns associated with both responses to this question, and subsequent questions on income losses.

households that report that grants were their only source of household income in February to be between 20-25%, not 50% as reflected in NIDS-CRAM.

In exploring changes in resource flows, we have only considered lost income as a binary indicator. We did not evaluate levels of income because although NIDS-CRAM asked respondents about household income in April, 37% of respondents didn't know or didn't respond to this question. Furthermore, a pre-lockdown household income level baseline was not collected. However, in future tracking of household dynamics, it is critical to collect better household income data. We should also collect rapid information on whether households are selling productive assets and accumulating more debt because of income shocks (Das and Sanchez-Paramo 2020). This would provide a fuller picture of the impacts on livelihoods and ability to bounce back from income shocks.

Figure 5: Individual reporting of household income sources in February 2020 against "lost main source of income", NIDS-CRAM 2020



Have changes in resource flows during lockdown contributed to food poverty?

In the developing world, the economic downturns resulting from lockdown restrictions associated with the coronavirus pandemic have been anticipated to have devastating consequences for food poverty. News agencies reported dramatic footage of kilometre queues of individuals lining up for food relief during South Africa's level 5 and 4 lockdown (BBC News 2020); and heated debates have emerged

about evidence of rising cases of reported child malnutrition at health facilities (Evans and Cowan 2020). While the remainder of this analysis is concerned with identifying how altered flows of resources to households are associated with food poverty during lockdown, it is important to highlight that many South African households were already living on the edge pre-lockdown, struggling to meet their basic food needs (Waidler and Devereux 2019). Child stunting rates – an indicator for chronic undernutrition and lack of food – remained inexorably high at 1 as to 4 children (27%) in 2016.¹⁶ Some argue that many people had ‘no reserves’, with the shock of the Covid-19 pandemic expected to cause a spike in acute malnutrition if rapid action was not taken to protect food and nutrition security among the most vulnerable (Mabasa 2020).

1. Pre-crisis state of food insecurity

Existing literature confirms that the child support grant (CSG) and old age pension (OAP) have been important for boosting incomes, contributing to declines in poverty in post-apartheid South Africa, and reducing stunting (Duflo 2003, Coetzee 2013). But while the expansion of the grant system in post-apartheid South Africa has had significant positive impacts in addressing food insecurity, the reach and depth of the grant system were not extensive enough to entirely mitigate food shortages. Grants have been insufficiently large to meet required food needs and eradicate hunger in beneficiary households (Devereux and Waidler 2017), although they may have assisted in covering part of the gap.

The most recent pre-lockdown data we have on food security indicators is from the 2018 GHS. About 21% of all households reported running out of money to buy food in the past 12 months, 14% reported skipping any meals in the past 12 months because there wasn’t enough money to buy food and 14% indicated that either an adult or child went hungry in the past 12 months. As an indicator of depth of food poverty, 5% of households reported skipping any meals for 5 days in the past 30 days.

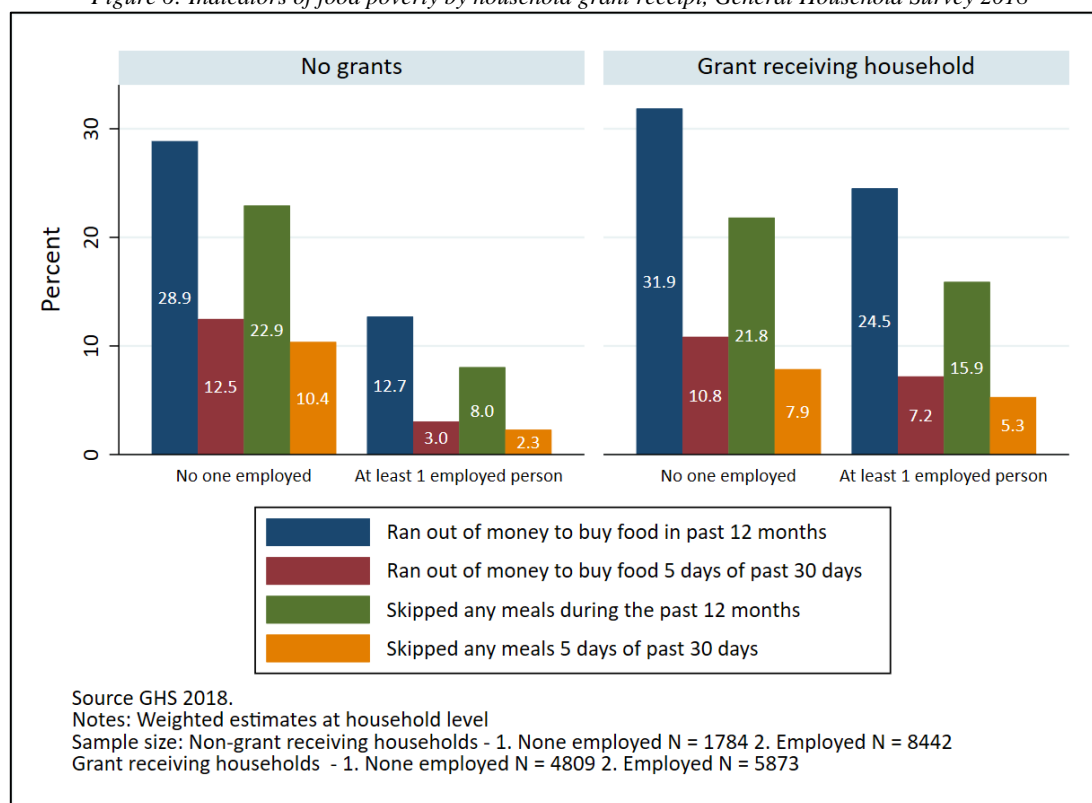
Food insecurity, however, differs notably across households, depending on their access to resource flows. Figure 6 shows the percentage of households by grant receipt and presence of an employed person that report i) running out of money to buy food in the past 12 months, ii) running out of money to buy food for 5 days of the past 30 days, iii) skipping any meals in the past 12 months and iv) skipping any meals for 5 days of the past 30 days. The figure highlights pre-crisis realities:

- As expected, access to employment income in households – including grant receiving households – significantly limits exposure to food poverty. In this respect, the most effective approach to mitigate food poverty is to stave off job losses, and create jobs in the mid to long-term. But even in some grant receiving households containing employed persons, food poverty was evident pre-lockdown, because limited earnings are spread thinly across household members. A quarter of households receiving grants, with at least one employed person, reported running out of money to buy food in the past 12 months and 5% reported skipping meals for 5 days of the past 30 days. These figures were 12% and 2% respectively for households with employed persons but that were not targeted by the grant system.
- The profile of food poverty for households with no employed persons was not that dissimilar across grant and non-grant receiving households. About 10% of households with no income from grants or employment reported skipping meals for 5 days of the past 30 days. This was slightly less at 8% for grant receiving households without employed persons.

Despite an expansive social grant system (and significant reductions over the years in households reporting hunger), the depth of support pre-crisis was already insufficient to address critical shortfalls in household income to address food poverty.

¹⁶ Demographic Health Survey

Figure 6: Indicators of food poverty by household grant receipt, General Household Survey 2018



2. Food poverty during lockdown: Descriptive quantitative analysis

The NIDS-CRAM data provides alarming evidence of food poverty during lockdown. Of the adult sample:

- 47% report that the household ran out of money to buy food in April,
- 21% report that someone (adult or child) in the household went hungry in the last 7 days
- 14% report that a child went hungry in the last 7 days (if there were children in the household).

Adults from grant receiving households reported considerable levels of food poverty: 53% indicated that the household ran out of money to buy food in April; between May and June 24% indicated that someone went hungry in the last 7 days and 17% indicated that a child went hungry in the last 7 days (see Figure 7). To reiterate, these responses were gathered *after* the roll-out of the top-up grants. Nevertheless, the prevalence of reported hunger and lack of money to buy food in households is also high among individuals in non-grant receiving households, where 35% of adults in these households report that they ran out of money to buy food, and 14% indicated that someone had gone hungry.

In Figure 8, food poverty indicators are shown by type of grant received in the household of an individual respondent. Figure 9 further disaggregates food poverty in the NIDS-CRAM sample by access to localised social relief. Even though social relief efforts have largely been targeted at individuals in households reached by the grant system, it is clear that reporting of food poverty is particularly high in households with grants that are also accessing other localised social relief. In particular, a quarter (25%) of respondents in households with children reached by both social assistance and social relief reported that a child went hungry in the past 7 days. It is important to note, that high rates of food poverty among children may have been exacerbated through the suspension of the National School Nutrition Programme, in addition to household income losses, as discussed in Box 2.

Figure 7: Food poverty indicators in 2020 by household grant receipt, NIDS-CRAM sample

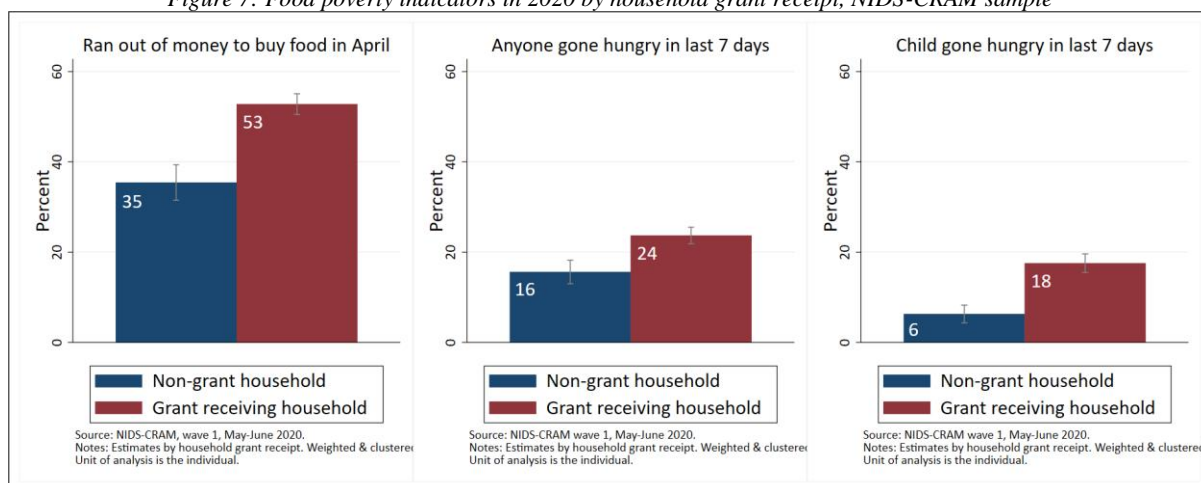


Figure 8: Food poverty indicators in 2020 by access to grant types, NIDS-CRAM

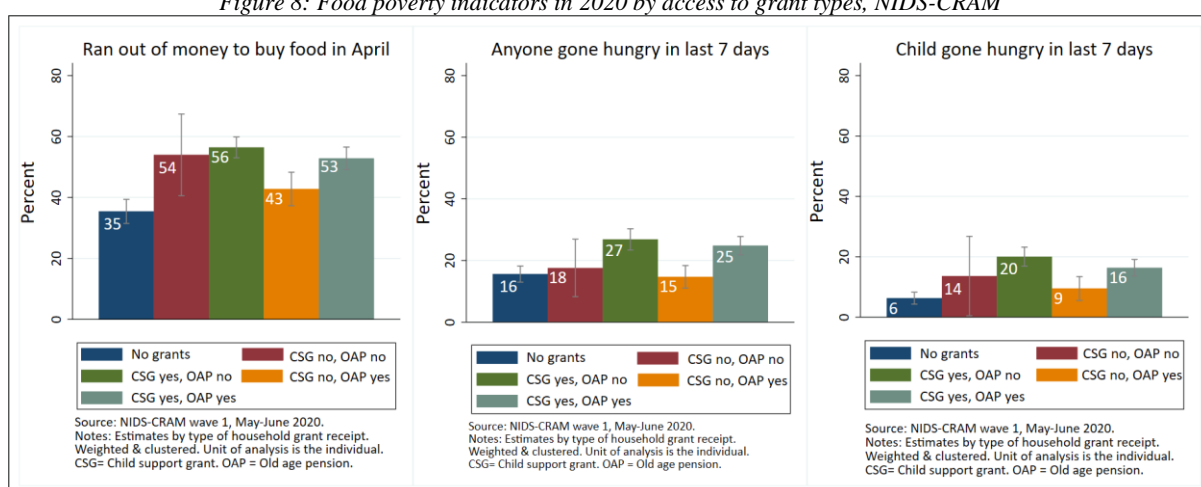
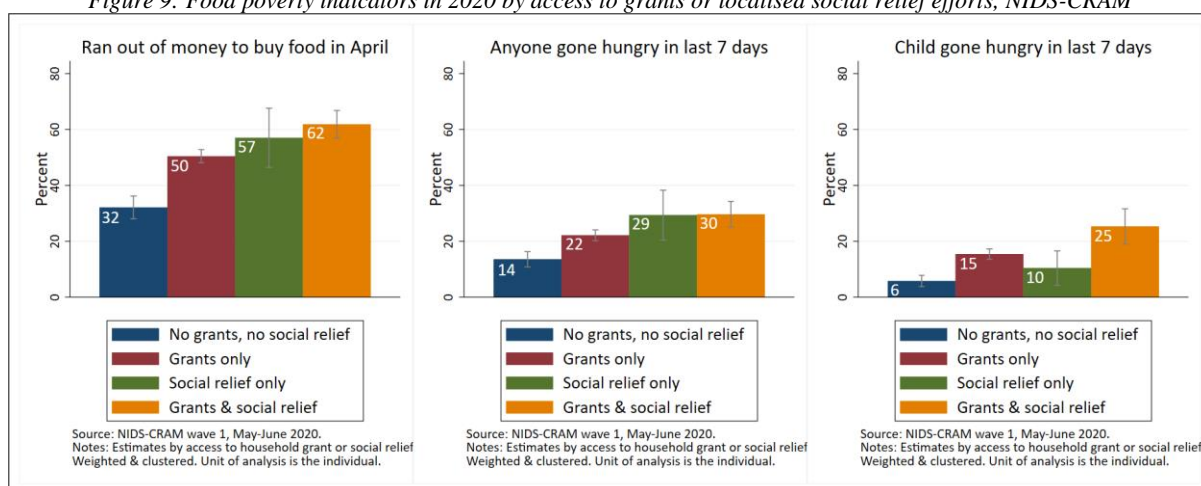


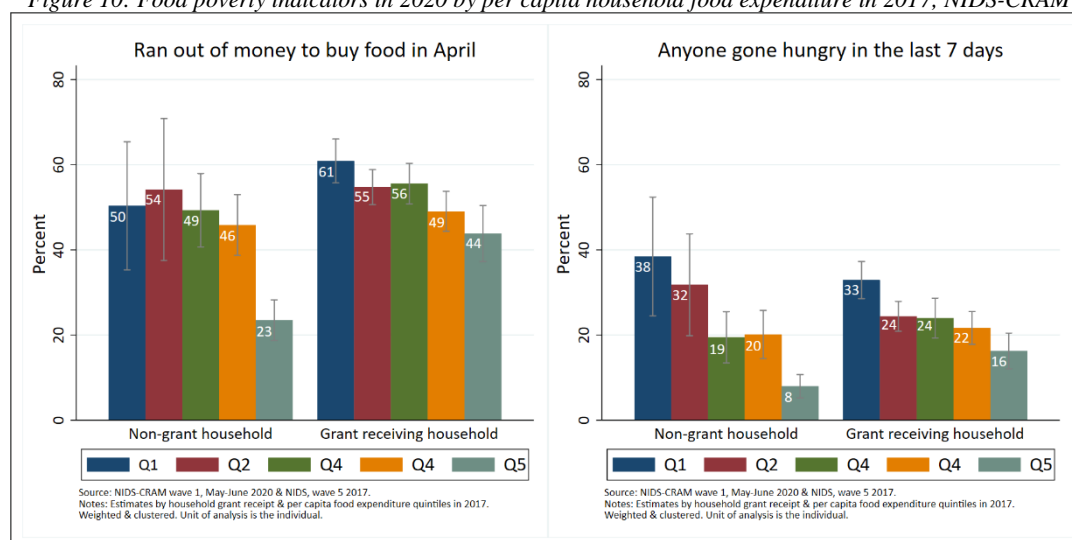
Figure 9: Food poverty indicators in 2020 by access to grants or localised social relief efforts, NIDS-CRAM



A limitation of the NIDS-CRAM data is that one does not have a clear pre-crisis baseline against which to compare changes in food insecurity. One approach is to proxy for this baseline using household per capita food expenditure data from NIDS 2017. Obviously, this assumes that the individuals surveyed still live in the same household, which cannot be determined clearly from the data, but it goes somewhere to addressing the baseline problem. Figure 10 shows indicators of household food poverty across grant and non-grant receiving households, but by quintiles of per capita household food

expenditure for the household in which the responding adult lived in 2017. As expected, reported household food insecurity indicators during the lockdown period are worse for individuals in households in the lowest food expenditure quintile in 2017. However, food insecurity is still a considerable issue even in households in the highest food expenditure quintile, although far less so than in the four poorer quintiles. Even in the richest quintile of grant receiving households, 44% indicated that they ran out of money to buy food.

Figure 10: Food poverty indicators in 2020 by per capita household food expenditure in 2017, NIDS-CRAM



Box 2: National School Nutrition Programme during lockdown and new developments

During the lockdown and school closure, the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP) no longer operated, impacting on 9.6 million children who had previously received a school lunch daily.

Following legal action against the Department of Basic Education and a court ruling that school feeding needed to be restarted, great strides appear to have been made in putting provincial plans in place to commence school feeding when most grades return to school from 6 July 2020. Hot meals will again be served at school by over 60 000 food handlers (volunteers who are paid a stipend as part of the NSNP). Should schools close due to risk adapted lockdown measures, children will still be able to access food. The necessary social distancing measures have been developed. For those children in far flung schools in rural areas, a one month's supply of a food parcel consisting of 117 nutritional foods will be distributed. To divert funds from NSNP budgets to cover the costs of protective clothing and social distancing, changes were affected to the Conditional Grants Framework to make this possible (National School Nutrition Programme Amended 2020). These measures are expected to be in place irrespective of whether schools are operational or not. This will go a long way in ensuring that child hunger is addressed. The inclusion of school breakfast is receiving attention by the Department of Basic Education, although it is complex to implement. (Interview with key informant from the NSNP).

3. Food poverty during lockdown: A multivariate quantitative analysis

To extend the analysis of food poverty, we use a multivariate model using linear regression models to identify the association between indicators of food poverty during lockdown and three resource flows of interest: the household losing its main source of income, access to grants and access to localised social relief support. To avoid exaggerating lockdown impacts on food insecurity, we assess this association by controlling for pre-lockdown food poverty exposure factors, including the log of per capita food expenditure in 2017, dwelling type (as a proxy for household income), household access to running water, household size and the respondent's education (having a post school certificate or tertiary qualification). We also add controls for location: living in a metropolitan municipal area and

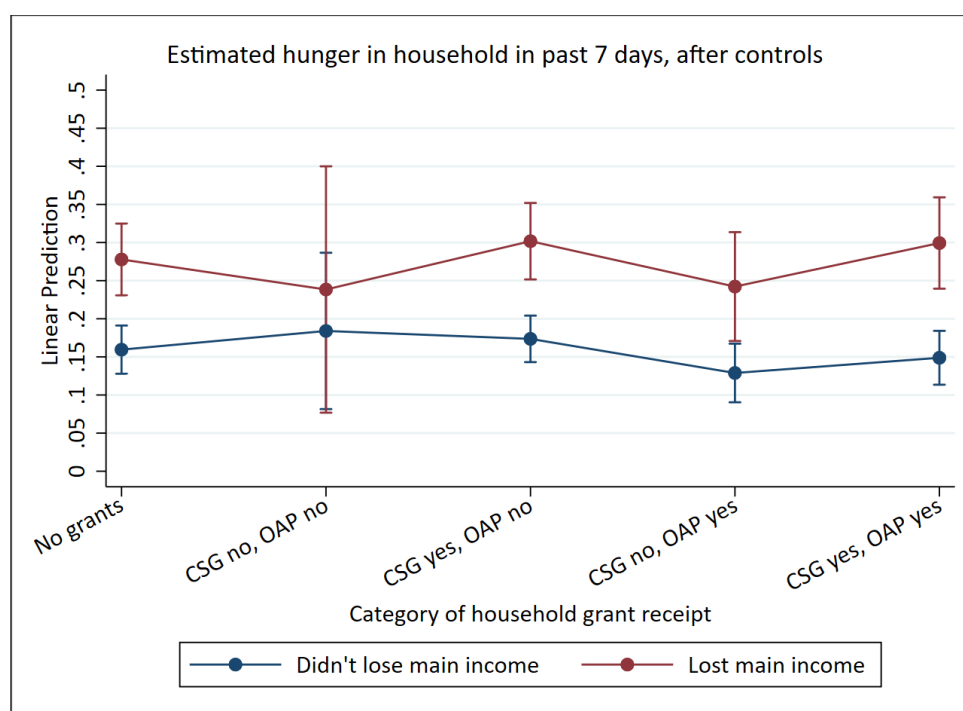
province of residence during lockdown. The detailed estimation results are provided in appendix Tables A4-7. For brevity sake we graph some key results in Figures 11 to 13, which show conditional estimates of household hunger associated with the three resource flows of interest. From these regressions we highlight overall findings and related implications.

1. After accounting for pre-crisis food poverty exposure risks, individuals in grant receiving households are no more likely to report higher levels of hunger in the household than those in non-grant receiving households. However, losing the main household income source is a significant driver of food poverty, regardless of social assistance received (see Table A4). After controls, reporting of anyone going hungry in the past 7 days is 12 percentage points higher in households where the main source of household income has been lost relative to where this was not lost.
 - Among households that were receiving income from both grants and earnings from employment or business activity, a loss of main income source is associated with a significantly higher likelihood of hunger (see Table A5).¹⁷
 - Losses of main income sources are associated with increased likelihood of hunger in households containing child support grant (CSG) beneficiaries, as seen in Figure 11. If individuals from these CSG households report that the main source of household income was lost during lockdown, they are significantly more likely to report hunger in the past 7 days compared to households with CSG beneficiaries that did not report lost income.
 - It appears that one of the most vulnerable groups of households at present with respect to hunger, are households completely reliant on money from friends and family but this source of income has ceased (see Table A5). Hunger among this group is more than 20 percentage points higher than any other group with nearly 60% of individuals in this group reporting that someone went hungry in the household in the past 7 days, after controls. This is a group that would clearly need to be targeted through social assistance or social relief.
2. Comparing across three levels of social relief efforts –government, NGOs (and churches or other associations), or neighbours and community, we only find a significant coefficient on support from neighbours or community but this association is *positive* (not negative) with reporting of hunger in the last 7 days being 12-14 percentage points *higher* compared to where no social-relief is provided (see Appendix Table A5). This does not imply that community support is having a negative impact on hunger. This rather implies that neighbourly and community relief efforts are more likely to be targeted at the hardest to reach groups in most need (or this relief is smaller in size). Communities and neighbours are more likely to know who is most in need, compared with larger NGOs or local government.
3. Applying the same logic, where social relief is being targeted to households that have lost main sources of income, regardless of existing access to social assistance, this is being very well targeted. Where social relief is being provided to households with children receiving grants, but having lost main household income sources, reported child hunger is very high: over 30% after accounting for food poverty exposure factors.

It is to be noted that in the regression we also controlled for days passed since the respondent's date of interview and when lockdown commenced, as income flows and food poverty may be sensitive to the level of restrictions on movement and trade attached to the phased opening of the economy. However, we find no significant associations between the probability of household hunger and the number of days that have passed since the lockdown started relative to when the respondent is interviewed.

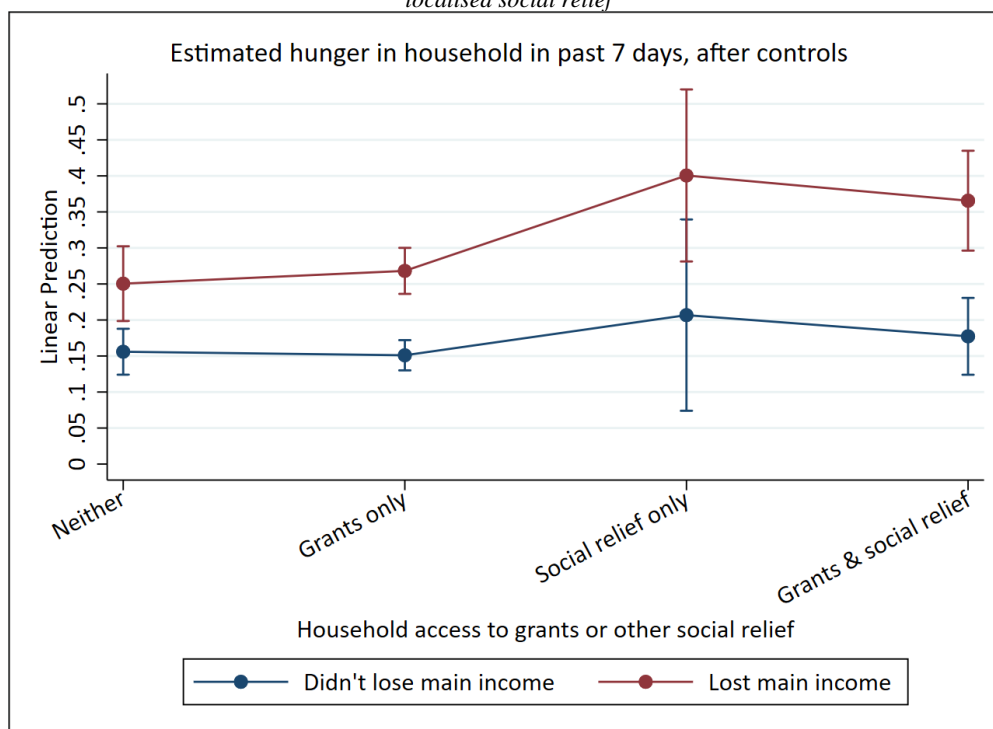
¹⁷ This pattern of higher predicted hunger associated with lost income holds among households only reporting grants as source of income in February. We strongly suspect this unexpected result could be explained by non-reporting of income from other sources in February, and does not reflect loss of grants.

Figure 11: Estimation of “Anyone went hungry in the past 7 days” by lost household income and types of grants in the household



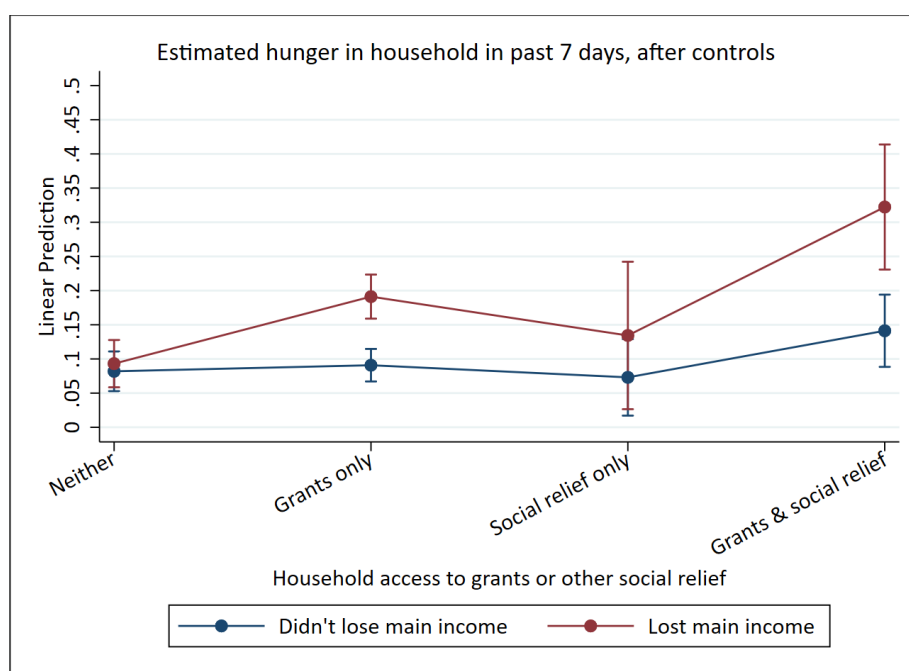
Source: NIDS-CRAM wave 1, 2020. Notes: Figure shows predicted reporting of hunger in households in the past 7 days after controlling for pre-lockdown food poverty risk factors including log of per capita food expenditure in 2017, dwelling type (as a proxy for household income), household access to running water, household size and the respondent's education (having a post school certificate or tertiary qualification), living in a metropolitan municipal area, province of residence during lockdown and days passed between the start of lockdown and interview date. Linear regression estimates account for weighting, clustering and stratification. Error bars reflect 95% confidence intervals. See Table A4.

Figure 12: Estimation of “Anyone went hungry in the past 7 days” by lost household income and receipt of social grants or localised social relief



Source: NIDS-CRAM wave 1, 2020. Notes: See Figure 11, Table A6.

Figure 13: Estimation of “Any child went hungry in the past 7 days” by lost household income and receipt of social grants or localised social relief



Source: NIDS-CRAM wave 1, 2020. Notes: See Figure 11, Table A7.

Food poverty during lockdown: Insights from key informant interviews

The prevalence of food insecurity reflected in the NIDS-CRAM data is supported through the responses of key informants involved in social relief efforts. Key informants reported high rates of hunger in the communities in which they worked and through their various networks, as well as experienced through direct systems of requests and formal application processes for food relief. The following statements from key informants across different organisations reflect desperate calls for food relief during lockdown:

‘Our organisation published a call for NPOs to apply for food relief during lockdown. We received 539 applications and were over-subscribed in 48 hours as the need was so great. We only had R5 million to share between 20 organisations’. - Key informant, Foundation B.

‘We have never had such a demand for food before. [During lockdown] we received 8 000 emails per day and a large volume of phone calls at our call centre, all for food relief. Besides the poor, we have never seen this number of requests for food aid from middle income groups’. - Key informant, humanitarian relief organisation.

‘Our Foundation has not funded food relief programmes before...but we realised quickly that communities needed support. We asked our 45 grantees if they needed to repurpose their existing grants for food aid... the response was overwhelming. In a short time, they were able to gear up to distribute food in the Eastern Cape, Kwazulu-Natal, Mpumalanga and Limpopo. We have now made additional emergency grants available. Local level NGOs and CBOs were agile and they were spectacular [in their outreach]’. - Key informant, Foundation A.

‘Our team worked until 1am distributing food parcels at school [X] in Somerset Strand. The principal called us because there was no school feeding during this time. With her and the help of the community members we distributed 1500 food parcels until 1am. The parents stood in the lines, patiently, late into the night to receive the food that they so desperately needed’. - Key informant, humanitarian relief organisation.

These key informant accounts were also supported by several media reports of the demand for food in the early weeks of the lockdown (Davis 2020). There were also media reports at the time that SASSA (South African Social Security Agency) received 9 000 calls per hour for food parcels (Tshabalala 2020). At that stage the Minister of Social Development, Lindiwe Zulu, reported that only 10% of the one million food relief parcels had been provided (Social Development 2020).

Box 3: Challenges of implementing emergency humanitarian relief

Interviews with relief organisations brought to the fore a wide range of organisational challenges in implementing humanitarian relief at scale.

Organisations had limited mechanisms for emergency response: Social relief was meant to be a stop-gap measure until other social protection mechanisms such as the top-ups were introduced or rolled-out and school feeding recommenced. But gearing up emergency disaster relief at scale was a challenge. Many governmental and non-governmental welfare and development organisations were not operational in the first part of the lockdown. But some organisations, such as the humanitarian relief organisation that was interviewed, had an effective disaster management infrastructure in place. They could deploy resources rapidly to respond to the need with warehouses, trucks for transport, food stocks, cash reserves, trained staff, systems to identify those in need and the logistical and technical know-how built up over three decades. This machinery was put in motion and a rapid response could be mounted. But for many organisations without this disaster management capacity and infrastructure, their responses were slower as they first had to implement systems and mobilise local actors to deliver the food. Despite these obstacles, many community organisations and NPOs reported putting in enormous effort, displayed agility and commitment to reach out to those in need.

A lack of a register of needs: The lack of a register of the poor and those who are unemployed proved to be a major barrier to effective targeting. Government officials interviewed called for government investment in information and a data base for this purpose. Countries that have invested in setting up registers of this kind, including inter-operational electronic systems to identify people in need, appeared to have been able to reach vulnerable populations in a short space of time. This was the case in India, where 30 million people were reached with emergency Covid-19 related social relief over a one-month period. The success of this intervention is attributed to the Indian government having made investments in building these registration and electronic systems over the past decade (NITI Aayog and MicroSave Consulting (MSC) 2020)

Food vouchers a challenge to distribute: Although the provision of food parcels was the main social relief strategy adopted by governmental and other agencies to meet food shortages during the lockdown, two organisations experimented with the provision of food vouchers. A few key informants argued that food vouchers enable greater choice, allowing beneficiaries to buy what they needed, and could be delivered more rapidly and effectively. However, the use of food vouchers requires assessment of need and administrative systems which could not be set up quickly enough. Concerns were raised that the large retailers stood to gain more from a food voucher system, unless small operators such as spaza shops could be incorporated into the voucher scheme. While all the key informants argued that short-term relief generated by the lockdown was necessary, they called for medium to longer-term solutions to improve opportunities for the development of people's livelihood capabilities as well as stimulating local township economies, including promoting local food production and supply chains, especially of fresh fruit and vegetables.

Use NGOs, CBOs and FBOs in scaling up the provision of food assistance to hard-to-reach groups. There appeared to be substantial agreement among key informants that NGOs, CBOs and FBOs could play a crucial role in scaling up the provision of food assistance to vulnerable groups who fall outside of formal social protection. There was support for the view that this resource was under-utilised in the social relief response to the lockdown. A key informant from an intermediary NGO said that the main challenge is 'how best to harness the considerable capacity of the NGO sector in the country as

well as how to unlock the funds from donors for support for these efforts needs to be addressed'. This view is supported by the fact that there were over 230 000 NPOs registered with the Department of Social Development's Directorate of NPOs (Department of Social Development 2020). However, intermediary organisations thought that donors and government funding of NPOs set onerous requirements that could hamper rapid food distribution, calling for a better balance between governance requirements of NPOs, and the need to enable rapid distribution and responsiveness to need.

Mobilise philanthropic donors to support relief efforts: An interviewee also remarked that philanthropic donors and corporate social investment (CSI) initiatives tended to view social relief and food assistance as 'anti-development' and as part of a handout culture. This informant said that 'we need to mobilize philanthropic donors to support relief efforts' to respond to the deepening levels of income and food poverty brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic. Key informants also reported dwindling financial resources available to NPOs and FBOs. Although this had already been a challenge prior to the pandemic, organisations are now battling, with some stating that they do not have the financial resources to survive beyond the next six months (Key informants, intermediary organisation and FBO). Sustainability and continuing the provision of social relief and development activities into the future is a big challenge for the sector.

Summary findings

The NIDS- CRAM survey clearly adds much to the information available on the effect of the pandemic and lockdown on households, and on the role of social insurance, social assistance and social relief in ameliorating poverty, especially food poverty, during this crisis.

The data clearly suggest that losses in main sources of household income during lockdown – affecting 40% of the sample – are having devastating consequences for exacerbating food poverty. Collectively, this data indicates that neither the reach nor the depth of social assistance during lockdown has been sufficient to mitigate serious food shortages due to declines in resource flows to households.

Grant 'top-ups' have played an important role but have been insufficient to address food poverty associated with losses in alternative sources of income during lockdown. In particular, food poverty in CSG beneficiary households is exacerbated through income losses. However, the situation would have been much worse without the 'top-up' grants. While this was not the focus of this paper, delays in pay-outs through the UIF system need to be addressed urgently to support households where formal sector jobs have been lost. UIF pay-outs are much larger than 'top-ups' provided through the grant system and would more effectively cover gaps in lost household income from earnings.

Both the survey data and interviews with key informants indicate that well targeted, localised social relief efforts need to be continued and bolstered as a stop-gap measure to reach those not covered by social insurance or social assistance. It is evident that the needs are great, and thus limited resources must be targeted to the most vulnerable and hardest to reach groups. Where community efforts at supporting vulnerable households are most well targeted, this reinforces the need for effective local information flows to inform social relief efforts.

While the country's social assistance system is expansive in reach, it has not been able to address the needs of large sectors of the population who are unemployed or in informal employment and who do not qualify for social insurance. Low grant values mean that despite the expansive reach of the grant system, food poverty persisted among grant beneficiaries even before the lockdown (Waidler and Devereux 2019). The loss of other income sources has made the social grant system even more crucial. While top-ups to the existing social grants are being paid, the roll out of the new grants such as the Covid-19 Social Relief Grant and the Temporary Employee/Employer Relief Grant are not fully operational. This leaves a significant gap in social protection.

Looking ahead, the temporary measures introduced thus far have variable end dates – social grants are to be provided until October 2020 and UIF temporary assistance is only for three months. Given the

high levels of food poverty due to employment and income losses during this period, hunger and food insecurity is likely to continue beyond October 2020. It is also possible that the rapid rise of infections will lead to possible further lockdown measures. **There is therefore need for the extension of access to social assistance and social insurance, with careful consideration to food assistance as a necessary complementary strategy to reach those excluded from receiving support through formal systems of provision.** In the face of the fiscal challenges that the government is facing, it will be difficult to devote much more resources to social protection, yet undoubtedly the prevention and amelioration of hunger must be a priority. Additional funding from government and private providers will need to be allocated to food relief programmes and to expanding provision more efficiently and effectively through existing welfare, development and humanitarian relief structures. Failure to do so could have grave consequences for social and economic development and stability. Investments in social protection and short-term humanitarian relief are a necessary condition for recovery of the economy and for improved human development.

Policy implications for the three channels of social protection

As South Africans have experienced significant shocks to their livelihoods, the threat of hunger presents a major concern for health, political and social stability. One cannot hope to rebuild and recover economically as a nation when large groups of people are hungry. We have to continue to leverage all three channels of social protection as effectively and efficiently as possible. For this reason, we both affirm current social policy efforts, and make further suggestions to strengthen the three arms of South Africa's social protection response.

1. Social insurance:

Urgent need to remedy the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) administrative system to ensure those eligible for pay-outs receive their income protection timeously:

While the social insurance system may not reach informal workers, where people are due to be paid UIF due to job losses, this system needs to work. The likelihood of hunger is significantly higher in households that report that their main sources of income such as earnings have been lost. Urgent attention needs to be given to rectifying technical glitches that exist in the UIF system (Mathe 2020).¹⁸

2. Social assistance:

Reaffirm the importance of expanding the reach of the grant system through the COVID-19 SRD grant:

Pre-lockdown, over 60% of people in South Africa and 80% in rural areas were living in a grant-receiving household. Yet, the roll-out of the COVID-19 social relief of distress (SRD) grant has been necessary in expanding the social security net as revealed in the current prevalence of hunger in households currently not covered by grants. Furthermore, one cannot rely on informal local social relief efforts in getting to a significantly wider share of the population. Despite the technical challenges of rolling out the COVID-19 SRD grant, the sheer administrative process of 'enrolling' more South Africans in a formal social protection system could enable the government to respond quickly in getting emergency relief to more households, presently and in the future.

Continue top-ups for 3 more months to January 2021: With the projected contraction of the South African economy by 7.2%, economic recovery will be slow. It is unlikely that the significant losses to income that are being reported will return to a pre-lockdown state before top-ups are scheduled to stop in October 2020. With the alarming levels of hunger being reported where incomes have been lost, despite the injection of top-up grants into households, removing these additional top-ups could have further devastating consequences for households, resulting in chronic hunger and malnutrition. This in turn may have negative implications for political and social stability.

Data to plan and track the potential demand for new qualifying grant applications:

It is alarming that there is significant reporting of lost household incomes by individuals situated in the poorest quintile of households but not reached through the social grants system. This may have implications for an already stretched social protection system if the economy does not recover quickly enough to reabsorb people in poor households into the labour market. Regular and accurate data is needed from various administrative sources (e.g. UIF, CCMA) and household data collection activities to effectively model increased demand for grants and prepare the fiscus in advance for this scenario. As Stefan Dercon (2020) writes: "*In a year or two, many will regret a lot of policy decisions that are being made today. Recriminations will follow. But waiting for better data is not an option: decisions have to be made now as this risks turning into a disaster, not just for health, but also for people's livelihoods.*"

3. Social relief

Reaffirming the value of social relief efforts in response to a humanitarian crisis

Despite the state's response to lockdown, the needs remain large. We need to continue to encourage generosity and giving for humanitarian relief through effective distribution platforms. Even though

¹⁸ Systemic challenges have been experienced by the Unemployment Insurance Fund Temporary Employee/Employer Relief Scheme (TERS). Due to systems problems, R16 billion was paid for 3 million workers for April, but payments were still being processed for applications in May and June 2020, leaving millions of workers vulnerable to food poverty (Joffe 2020).

localised community-based social relief efforts will never have the reach of the grant system, localised social relief efforts are very necessary to improve depth of support to households to mitigate food shortages and hunger.

Yet, as the economy contracts, it is likely to have consequences for available finance for NPOs, churches and other associations to sustain short-term food relief efforts. This is a real concern for two reasons: Private companies with the largest CSI spending are in sectors reporting significant contractions in the first quarter of 2020 and many NPOs (43% in 2019) typically do not hold cash reserves or if they do, usually only have reserves for six months (Trialogue 2019, 216). With funding that remains, there needs to be a call for corporate social investment (CSI) and private philanthropy to view food insecurity as a short to medium term priority in South Africa, rather than viewing this as ‘anti-development’. Pre-crisis, food security and agriculture only attracted a minor share of total NPO expenditure (5-6%) and CSI expenditure (9%) in 2018/9 (Trialogue 2019, 41). Altering this will require redirecting funds already earmarked for other purposes, such as education and community development which tend to get the lion’s share; but in the current climate, this may be a necessary (yet unfortunate) short-term trade-off.

Strengthen collaboration between the government, NGO sector and private philanthropy

In a resource constrained environment, effective social relief will require increased coordination and collaboration across government, the NPO sector and private philanthropy. Government should use NGOs, CBOs and FBOs in scaling up the provision of food assistance to groups that are hard to reach through social insurance or social assistance or through the state’s own social relief efforts. Similarly, philanthropic donors must be mobilised to support relief efforts.

Build local information flows to improve targeting of social relief to hard-to-reach groups, and those not covered by social protection and social insurance

Effective social relief will also require improving local information flows to improve targeting so as to reach those most in need of support. As discussed, there is now growing evidence that countries that have invested in setting up registers of need appeared to have been able to reach vulnerable populations in a short space of time, as for instance in India. This requires investments in building these information systems. This could be done with the support of NPOs, CBOs and FBOs working with credible local leaders who enjoy the trust of people in the community, where they are effective in identifying and reaching those most vulnerable to food poverty.

Build capacity within the state for effective and quick disaster relief

Our key informant interviews revealed that a lack of specialist capacity in disaster management was identified as a critical barrier to an efficient and effective response to the pandemic. There is need for technical advisory support to be provided to governmental and other national and provincial structures (and some non-governmental organisations) in building disaster relief capacity. Some organisations have built this capacity already – much can be learnt from their skills, operations and systems.

Conclusion

To stave off mass, chronic hunger we simply cannot let up on the support being provided to households through all three channels of social protection simultaneously. Sustaining and broadening financial and administrative capacity to provide short-term social insurance, social assistance such as social grants and localised, community level social relief, is an urgent national priority. Failure to do so will deepen an emerging humanitarian crisis, hamper economic recovery and threaten socio-political stability.

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Appendix:

1. Limitations of NIDS-CRAM

The efficacy of NIDS-CRAM will become increasingly evident in future waves as it enables researchers to track the health and socio-economic well-being of individuals across waves as economic conditions respond to changes in lockdown regulations. However, as a wave 1 cross section, it must be used with caution. Box A1 outlines some of these limitations to be cognisant of: representativity and question reliability and comparability with other surveys.

Box A1: Acknowledging the limitations of NIDS-CRAM

Limitation	Explanation
1. Sampling frame is not perfectly representative of current South Africa	Despite the sampling frame being drawn from a nationally representative NIDS 2017 dataset the sample could only have been representative of individuals aged 15 years or older in 2017. Thus, even if call outcomes were completely representative of the sampling frame, the sampling frame is not perfectly representative of South Africans or their households in 2020.
2. CRAM is sampled at the individual level, limiting household analyses	It was decided to sample individuals rather than households from NIDS 2017. This was considered a more practical approach for the phone survey application, yet this decision combined with the questionnaire limits to phone surveys, reduced the ability to ask details about other non-sampled individuals living in the same household. This is a particular constraint for analyses of grant receipt, household income, poverty and other household level issues especially if the sampled individual is not in the best position to know about the details of the household (or has moved their temporarily).
3. Question reliability and comparability	The sudden imposition of the lockdown required a very quick turnaround process for CRAM survey implementation. Question testing, piloting, question revision processes, translation and training of call centre agents was seriously compromised by tight time frames. The questionnaire design process for CRAM also started before a sampling frame was finalised so that the CRAM questionnaire was not well pegged to any specific questionnaire. The nature of the phone survey process required succinct questions and the lockdown period and various "stages" required that questions had to be adjusted to account for the very transient period (and much confusion that it presents for providing responses). All of these issues compound concerns for data reliability and comparability with other surveys.

2. Defining grant receipt using NIDS-CRAM relative to other household surveys

In other surveys such as GHS or NIDS, household grant receipt is typically determined by collating responses for specific household residents. Many questions posed to various individuals are then collated to construct household level grant indicators. As a departure from face-to-face socio-economic surveys such as NIDS or GHS which ask questions about all individuals that live in a household, the limitations on survey length imposed by telephonic interviewing prevent this. Nevertheless, reported household grant receipt by individuals in NIDS-CRAM is roughly comparable to other household surveys. But personal grant receipt is significantly under-reported in NIDS-CRAM as seen in Table A 1. While this may be due to adults not associating collecting grants for others such as the child support grant with ‘personal receipt of a grant’, this doesn’t explain why personal receipt of old age pensions are also significantly under-reported.

Table A 1: Personal receipt of grants, comparison across NIDS 2017 and NIDS-CRAM sample

	Mean	SE	95% CI		N
			Lower	Upper	
NIDS 18+ Any grant 2017	32.4	0.7	30.9	33.8	23 380
NIDS-CRAM Any grant 2017	29.8	0.9	27.9	31.6	6 965
NIDSw5-CRAM Any grant 2020	18.1	0.7	16.6	19.5	6 945
NIDS-CRAM Any grant 2020	18.0	0.7	16.5	19.4	7 031
Child support grant					
NIDS 18+ CSG 2017	21.1	0.6	19.9	22.3	23 419
NIDSw5-CRAM CSG 2017	20.2	0.8	18.6	21.9	6 976
NIDSw5-CRAM CSG 2020	5.9	0.4	5.1	6.8	6 976
NIDS-CRAM CSG 2020	5.8	0.4	4.9	6.6	7 062
Old age pension					
NIDSw5-CRAM OAP 2017	8.8	0.5	7.7	9.8	6 976
NIDSw5-CRAM OAP 2020	8.5	0.5	7.5	9.5	6 976
NIDS-CRAM OAP 2020	8.6	0.5	7.6	9.7	7 062
NIDS 60+ OAP 2017	72.8	2.0	69.0	76.7	3 705
NIDS-CRAM 60+ OAP 2020	52.7	2.7	47.3	58.1	978

Source: NIDS-CRAM wave 1, NIDS 2017. Notes: Estimates at individual level. Weighted, clustered, stratified.

Table A 2: Defining household grant receipt in NIDS-CRAM, NIDS, and the GHS

Dataset	Questionnaire approach to grants	Adopted definition of household grant receipt	Can determine receipt of CSG or old age pension
NIDS-CRAM 2020	NIDS-CRAM asks the individual respondent about 1) the number of child support grants received in the household 2) the number of old age pensions received in the household, as well as 3) asking about whether they themselves personally receive any government grant and which type. The questionnaire also asks about 4) sources of household income in February 2020, including government grants.	<p>Relevant questions:</p> <p><i>“How many child support grants does this household receive?”</i></p> <p><i>“How many people in your household receive an old age pension grant?”</i></p> <p><i>“Do you personally receive any kind of government grant?” “... If yes, “Which government grant (or grants) do you receive?”</i></p> <p><i>“If you think of the time in February, which of these were sources of income for this household?...government grants”</i></p> <p>If any of these indicators (1-4) reflects any grant receipt, then the household in which the individual lives is identified as receiving at least one grant.</p>	Yes, but the individual responding may not be the best person to know whether other people in the household receive grants and which types, especially if they are not the household head or have only moved into the household recently.
NIDS 2017	Each adult and proxy adult (18+ years) is asked about whether they receive any income or assistance from grants, and how much they receive each month in each grant source. The receipt of grants for each child in the household is also asked, as well as identifying the person in the household who receives the grant for the child.	<p>Relevant questions:</p> <p><i>Adult and proxy questionnaire: “Did you receive income or assistance from [...] i) state old age grant, ii) disability grant, iii) child support grant, iv) foster care grant, v) care dependency grant, vi) grant in aid, vii) war veterans pension [...] in the last month [yes, no]?” If yes... “How much did you receive last month in Rands?”</i></p> <p><i>Individuals aged 15-17: “Does anyone currently receive a child support grant, foster grant or care dependency grant to care for you?” “Who is the person that the grant is paid to?”</i></p> <p><i>Child questionnaire: “Does anyone currently receive a child support grant, foster grant or care dependency grant for this child?” “Who is the person that is receiving the grant for this child?”</i></p> <p>If income from grants at the adult or proxy level is indicated or a grant for a child can be linked to any adult in the household, then the household is identified as receiving any grant.</p>	Yes. Since individuals complete their own questionnaire they are best positioned to know about whether they receive or qualify for grants, so these individual responses can be collated to yield an accurate indicator of a grant receipt at the household level.
GHS 2017/2018	A household respondent is asked to identify for all household members whether they receive any social grant or social relief assistance from government. Then for each person, the household respondent is asked to specify which specific grants they receive. The question is asked in relation to who “qualifies” for the grant.	<p>Relevant questions:</p> <p><i>“Does anyone in this household receive a social grant or social relief assistance from the Government? [Yes, No, Don’t know]”</i></p> <p><i>“Does receive a(n) i) Old-age grant, ii) disability grant, iii) child support grant, iv) care dependency grant, v) foster child grant, vi) war veterans grant, vii) grant-in-aid. [Note: Answer for each person who qualified for the grant and NOT for the person who applied on behalf of/physically receives the money].”</i></p> <p>If a grant of any kind is received by anyone in the household, this is defined as a grant receiving household.</p>	Yes. Individuals do not complete their own questionnaires, only the selected household respondent who may not be as knowledgeable about who receives grants and what types of grants are received for specific individuals in the household, resulting in slight under-reporting of grants relative to NIDS.

Table A 3: Nature and scope of social relief provided during lockdown by organisations considered in this study

Organisations	Nature of social relief provided	Scope of provision
Solidarity Fund (SF) (see Solidarity Fund, 2020)	<p>Food parcels to the value of R400 per food parcel.</p> <p>Selection criteria: the most vulnerable were targeted & those not receiving social grants or UIF. Distribution coverage was national.</p> <p>Partnership distribution model: Four pillars of distribution were used with over half distributed via four large national NGOs; the rest were distributed via CBOs & FBOs and via DSD Nutrition Centres. The CBOs & FBOs were purposively selected to fill geographic gaps not reached by large NGO and government partners.</p>	<p>280 097 food parcels were delivered. A further 23 500 households were planned to be reached via the SA Council of Churches with food vouchers by June 2020. Between 1.1 and 1.4 million people were estimated to have received food parcels, of which the largest were in Kwazulu-Natal, Gauteng, Eastern Cape and Western Cape.</p> <p>Reach: SF estimates a potential reach of 300 000 households with current infrastructure.</p>
Department of Social Development (DSD) & other government agencies	<p>Food parcels in collaboration with other stakeholders: 569 870 (excluding aid distributed through the SF). SASSA Social Relief of Distress (SRD) programme distributed 73 493 food parcels (12%) of total distributed. A parcel was for 4 people per household of approximately R400 per household.</p> <p>Selection criteria: Individuals not receiving social grants and awaiting the payment of a grant (South African Social Security Agency 2020)</p> <p>Distribution model: Provincial DSD; SASSA (SRD) & Dept. of Environment, Forestry & Fisheries.</p>	<p>Reach: 2 279 480 individuals likely received food parcels between 30 March and 25 May 2020 with a major drive between 17 and 21 May 2020 reaching 10% of this total. Provincial distribution: Gauteng (29%), Western Cape (13%), Limpopo (16%) and Mpumalanga (15%) received the largest number of food parcels.</p>
Faith-based Organization	<p>Distributed 350 food parcels to people in a small town via the parish welfare society and at shelters for the homeless. The value of the food parcel is on average R700 per family and ranged between R500 and R1000, depending on donations. The parcel was for one month.</p> <p>Selection criteria: Loss of employment and income due to Covid-19. Applications are made at church offices followed up with a home visit by a social worker.</p> <p>Distribution model: Parish welfare society</p>	<p>Reach: 1 680 individuals reached in a small town in Limpopo.</p>
Welfare NGO	<p>3 650 food parcels distributed in first week of lockdown funded by the DSD to direct and indirect beneficiaries (including families in community).</p> <p>Selection criteria: Beneficiaries of agency and community focus targeted Orphans and Vulnerable Children affected by HIV/AIDS.</p> <p>Distribution model: A children's home and via its drop-in centre.</p>	<p>Reach: 14 600 (1 food parcel per household for 4 members); Geographic spread: Soweto – Zola, Emdeni, Westbury, Kathrada Park, Slovo Park.</p>
Philanthropic organisations	<p>Foundation A's response: 45 grantees were offered the opportunity to re-purpose their grants for food distribution. E.g. one of the grantees distributed 10 500 food parcels in rural parts of the Eastern Cape. Food was for households made up of 5 persons</p> <p>Selection criteria: Households not receiving any support from DSD in community; child-headed households, older persons, disabled or special needs families, women headed households and households that lost income due to lockdown. Selection was done in consultation with CBOs</p> <p>Distribution model: CBOs in deep rural areas.</p>	<p>Foundation A:</p> <p>Reach: NGO in one rural area distributed 10 500 food parcels via community funded CBOs in the Eastern Cape. In total 52 000 individuals benefited.</p> <p>Future funding: NGO raised R2 million to continue funding for community partners for food aid for a further 6 months.</p>

	<p>Foundation B's response: 20 000 grocery packs distributed; 56 000 meals served and 7 400 food vouchers distributed.</p> <p>Selection criteria: Assessment of need.</p> <p>Distribution model: 20 small to medium sized NGOs in Gauteng that had demonstrated capacity to deliver. Rapid distribution model. Each NGO received R250 000 and a total of R5 million was donated.</p>	<p>Foundation B</p> <p>Reach: 97 490 beneficiaries reached (data only available for half of the organisations)</p>
Humanitarian Relief Organisation	<p>100 000 food parcels distributed in all nine provinces. Additional targeted food aid for vulnerable groups e.g. refugees; mining communities (funded by company donations); schools where the feeding scheme stopped due to lockdown (1500 food parcels); workers who lost jobs (2100 food parcels); farm workers & farmers and 10 000 food parcels distributed at mosques.</p> <p>Value of food parcel: R400 and lasts a family of 5 for one month. Content includes a large portion of starch and some protein to stave off hunger.</p> <p>Selection criteria: A) People not receiving government assistance or other donor assistance. Community selection process involving local organisations, credible leaders including FBOs who reach consensus on who is in greatest need. B) approaches are made via the organisation's call centre and via email request. These are screened and followed up.</p> <p>Distribution model: Direct distribution via the organisation's national network & infrastructure. Collaboration with local partners, government and corporate sponsorships. Organisation employs 140 staff nationally and has an extensive volunteer network.</p>	<p>Reach: 500 000 individuals. Additional 65 500 vulnerable individuals supported based on numbers supplied. Reach is national with a focus on communities 15 km on the outskirts of city centres & towns; focus is on rural and deep rural areas.</p>

Table A 4: Estimating if anyone in household has gone hungry in the last 7 days (Resource flow of interest: Grant Receipt)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Grant receiving household [ref: non-grant household]	0.081*** (0.015)	0.020 (0.016)	0.006 (0.016)	0.001 (0.016)	0.001 (0.016)	-0.001 (0.017)	0.001 (0.016)	0.001 (0.017)	0.003 (0.017)	-0.006 (0.019)
Log of pc food exp. 2017		-0.082*** (0.009)	-0.065*** (0.010)	-0.064*** (0.010)	-0.064*** (0.010)	-0.064*** (0.010)	-0.063*** (0.009)	-0.062*** (0.009)	-0.064*** (0.009)	-0.064*** (0.010)
Household size 2020			-0.002 (0.002)	-0.002 (0.002)	-0.002 (0.002)	-0.002 (0.002)	-0.003 (0.002)	-0.003 (0.002)	-0.002 (0.002)	-0.002 (0.002)
A traditional house like a mud hut [ref: A house or flat]			0.049* (0.029)	0.042 (0.029)	0.042 (0.029)	0.043 (0.029)	0.042 (0.030)	0.042 (0.030)	0.039 (0.029)	0.042 (0.029)
An informal house like a shack [ref: A house or flat]			0.119*** (0.030)	0.097** (0.031)	0.097** (0.031)	0.097** (0.031)	0.098** (0.031)	0.098** (0.031)	0.098** (0.031)	0.098** (0.031)
Other [ref: A house or flat]			-0.026 (0.056)	-0.011 (0.056)	-0.011 (0.056)	-0.011 (0.056)	-0.007 (0.056)	-0.007 (0.056)	-0.004 (0.056)	-0.010 (0.055)
Household has piped or tap water			-0.055** (0.023)	-0.046** (0.023)	-0.046** (0.023)	-0.047** (0.023)	-0.048** (0.023)	-0.048** (0.023)	-0.047** (0.023)	-0.046** (0.023)
Certificate or tertiary			-0.057*** (0.014)	-0.057*** (0.014)	-0.057*** (0.014)	-0.056*** (0.014)	-0.052*** (0.014)	-0.052*** (0.014)	-0.051*** (0.014)	-0.057*** (0.014)
Lives in a metropolitan area			-0.051** (0.021)	-0.046** (0.021)	-0.045** (0.022)	-0.048** (0.021)	-0.046** (0.022)	-0.046** (0.022)	-0.048** (0.021)	-0.046** (0.022)
Household lost main income source				0.128*** (0.015)	0.129*** (0.015)	0.129*** (0.015)	0.122*** (0.015)	0.122*** (0.015)	0.123*** (0.015)	0.117*** (0.028)
Days since interview				-0.000 (0.001)	-0.000 (0.001)	-0.000 (0.001)	-0.000 (0.001)	-0.000 (0.001)	-0.000 (0.001)	-0.000 (0.001)
Social relief: government					-0.008 (0.026)				-0.016 (0.030)	
Social relief: NGO, church, association						-0.008 (0.035)			-0.054 (0.040)	
Social relief: Neighbour / community							0.133*** (0.034)	0.133*** (0.034)	0.150*** (0.035)	
Contributions to household 2017								0.003 (0.018)		
Grant receiving household ## Lost main income										0.017 (0.033)
Constant	0.156*** (0.013)	0.697*** (0.062)	0.682*** (0.076)	0.653*** (0.087)	0.653*** (0.087)	0.660*** (0.088)	0.634*** (0.086)	0.633*** (0.087)	0.643*** (0.087)	0.661*** (0.088)
Observations	7010	7010	6965	6813	6800	6800	6805	6801	6786	6813
R-squared	0.009	0.038	0.064	0.086	0.086	0.087	0.095	0.095	0.097	0.086

Source: NIDS-CRAM wave 1, May-June 2020 and NIDS wave 5 2017. Notes: Estimates account for weighting, clustering, stratification. Standard errors in parentheses. ***p < 0.001, **p<0.05, *p<0.1. Coefficients on province controls not shown.

Table A 5: Estimating if anyone in household has gone hungry in the last 7 days (Resource flow of interest 2: Household income sources pre-lockdown and lost income during lockdown)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(9)	(10)
Earnings & grant [Ref: Earnings only]	0.067*** (0.018)	0.015 (0.020)	0.001 (0.020)	-0.016 (0.020)	-0.015 (0.020)	-0.016 (0.020)	-0.015 (0.020)	-0.014 (0.020)	-0.030 (0.022)
Grants only [Ref: Earnings only]	0.157*** (0.019)	0.087*** (0.022)	0.072** (0.023)	0.084*** (0.022)	0.086*** (0.022)	0.083*** (0.022)	0.082*** (0.022)	0.084*** (0.022)	0.057** (0.025)
Grants & other [Ref: Earnings only]	0.123*** (0.032)	0.074** (0.032)	0.065** (0.032)	0.046 (0.031)	0.047 (0.031)	0.045 (0.032)	0.047 (0.032)	0.049 (0.032)	0.024 (0.040)
Money friends-family only [Ref: Earnings only]	0.254*** (0.056)	0.218*** (0.054)	0.202*** (0.053)	0.202*** (0.048)	0.202*** (0.048)	0.201*** (0.048)	0.195*** (0.049)	0.196*** (0.050)	0.088* (0.053)
Other combination [Ref: Earnings only]	0.019 (0.035)	0.006 (0.034)	0.006 (0.035)	0.004 (0.036)	0.003 (0.036)	0.002 (0.036)	0.006 (0.036)	0.004 (0.036)	0.007 (0.036)
No income [Ref: Earnings only]	0.171** (0.055)	0.139** (0.058)	0.119** (0.055)	0.122** (0.057)	0.127** (0.058)	0.126** (0.058)	0.115** (0.058)	0.113* (0.058)	0.147** (0.069)
Log of pc food exp. 2017		-0.074*** (0.009)	-0.059*** (0.010)	-0.056*** (0.010)	-0.057*** (0.010)	-0.057*** (0.010)	-0.056*** (0.009)	-0.057*** (0.010)	-0.057*** (0.010)
Household size 2020			-0.002 (0.002)	-0.002 (0.002)	-0.002 (0.002)	-0.002 (0.002)	-0.002 (0.002)	-0.002 (0.002)	-0.002 (0.002)
Lives in a traditional house like a mud hut [Ref: A house or flat]			0.047* (0.028)	0.040 (0.028)	0.040 (0.028)	0.041 (0.028)	0.040 (0.029)	0.036 (0.029)	0.042 (0.028)
Lives in informal house like a shack [Ref: A house or flat]			0.121*** (0.030)	0.101** (0.031)	0.100** (0.031)	0.101** (0.031)	0.102** (0.031)	0.101** (0.031)	0.104*** (0.031)
Other [Ref: A house or flat]			-0.017 (0.057)	0.002 (0.058)	0.002 (0.058)	0.002 (0.058)	0.005 (0.058)	0.008 (0.058)	0.003 (0.057)
Household has piped or tap water			-0.052** (0.023)	-0.042* (0.023)	-0.042* (0.023)	-0.043* (0.023)	-0.044* (0.023)	-0.043* (0.023)	-0.040* (0.023)
Certificate or tertiary			-0.045** (0.015)	-0.042** (0.015)	-0.042** (0.015)	-0.042** (0.014)	-0.039** (0.015)	-0.038** (0.015)	-0.045** (0.015)
Lives in a metro.			-0.047** (0.021)	-0.041* (0.021)	-0.040* (0.021)	-0.042** (0.021)	-0.041* (0.021)	-0.043** (0.021)	-0.043** (0.021)
Household lost main income source				0.139*** (0.015)	0.139*** (0.015)	0.140*** (0.015)	0.133*** (0.015)	0.133*** (0.015)	0.092** (0.030)
Days since interview				-0.000 (0.001)	-0.000 (0.001)	-0.000 (0.001)	-0.000 (0.001)	-0.000 (0.001)	-0.001 (0.001)
Social relief: government					-0.019 (0.025)			-0.026 (0.030)	
Social relief: NGO, church, association						-0.016 (0.033)		-0.055 (0.039)	
Social relief: Neighbour / community							0.124*** (0.033)	0.142*** (0.034)	
Earnings & grant ## Lost main income									0.041 (0.042)
Grants only ## Lost main income									0.074* (0.041)
Grants & other ## Lost main income									0.058 (0.060)
Money friends-family only ## Lost main income									0.274** (0.086)
Other combination ## Lost main income									-0.000 (0.079)
No income ## Lost main income									-0.054 (0.123)
Constant	0.119*** (0.014)	0.610*** (0.067)	0.603*** (0.078)	0.569*** (0.090)	0.570*** (0.090)	0.575*** (0.091)	0.554*** (0.090)	0.564*** (0.091)	0.598*** (0.092)
Observations	6966	6966	6925	6777	6764	6764	6769	6750	6777
R-squared	0.030	0.053	0.076	0.102	0.103	0.103	0.110	0.112	0.106

Table A 6: Estimating: If anyone in household has gone hungry in the last 7 days (Resource flow of interest 3: Grants and social relief)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Grants only [Ref: No grants, no social relief]	0.086*** (0.015)	0.025 (0.017)	0.009 (0.017)	0.003 (0.017)	-0.005 (0.020)
Social relief only [Ref: No grants, no social relief]	0.158*** (0.047)	0.125** (0.048)	0.120** (0.049)	0.099** (0.049)	0.051 (0.071)
Grants & social relief [Ref: No grants, no social relief]	0.161*** (0.028)	0.093** (0.031)	0.082** (0.031)	0.062** (0.031)	0.021 (0.031)
Log of pc food exp. 2017		-0.078*** (0.009)	-0.061*** (0.010)	-0.060*** (0.010)	-0.060*** (0.009)
Household size 2020			-0.002 (0.002)	-0.002 (0.002)	-0.002 (0.002)
Lives in a traditional house like a mud hut [Ref: House or flat]			0.053* (0.029)	0.046 (0.029)	0.045 (0.029)
Lives in informal house like a shack [Ref: House or flat]			0.120*** (0.031)	0.098** (0.032)	0.100** (0.032)
Other [Ref: House or flat]			-0.023 (0.055)	-0.010 (0.055)	-0.007 (0.055)
Household has piped or tap water			-0.057** (0.023)	-0.049** (0.023)	-0.050** (0.023)
Certificate or tertiary education			-0.055*** (0.014)	-0.055*** (0.014)	-0.057*** (0.015)
Lives in a metro.			-0.051** (0.021)	-0.046** (0.022)	-0.046** (0.022)
Household lost main income source				0.125*** (0.015)	0.095** (0.030)
Days since interview				-0.000 (0.001)	-0.000 (0.001)
Grants only ## Lost main income					0.023 (0.035)
Social relief only ## Lost main income					0.099 (0.095)
Grants & social relief ## Lost main income					0.094* (0.049)
Constant	0.136*** (0.013)	0.653*** (0.065)	0.641*** (0.077)	0.624*** (0.086)	0.632*** (0.088)
Observations	6994	6994	6950	6798	6798
R-squared	0.018	0.044	0.070	0.090	0.092

Source: NIDS-CRAM wave 1, May-June 2020 and NIDS wave 5 2017. Notes: Estimates account for weighting, clustering, stratification. Standard errors in parentheses. ***p < 0.001, **p<0.05, *p<0.1. Coefficients on province controls not shown.

Table A 7: Estimating: If any child in household has gone hungry in the last 7 days (Resource flow of interest 3: Grants and social relief)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Grants only [Ref: No grants, no social relief]	0.096*** (0.014)	0.071*** (0.017)	0.048** (0.018)	0.039** (0.018)	-0.005 (0.020)
Social relief only [Ref: No grants, no social relief]	0.046 (0.032)	0.032 (0.033)	0.030 (0.033)	-0.003 (0.035)	0.051 (0.071)
Grants & social relief [Ref: No grants, no social relief]	0.195*** (0.033)	0.168*** (0.034)	0.147*** (0.034)	0.126*** (0.034)	0.021 (0.031)
Log of pc food exp. 2017		-0.032*** (0.009)	-0.020** (0.009)	-0.022** (0.009)	-0.060*** (0.009)
Household size 2020			0.005 (0.004)	0.005 (0.004)	-0.002 (0.002)
Lives in a traditional house like a mud hut [Ref: house or flat]			0.020 (0.028)	0.021 (0.029)	0.045 (0.029)
Lives in informal house like a shack [Ref: house or flat]			0.105** (0.032)	0.090** (0.032)	0.100** (0.032)
Other [Ref: house or flat]			-0.008 (0.066)	0.015 (0.066)	-0.007 (0.055)
Household has piped or tap water			-0.022 (0.020)	-0.018 (0.019)	-0.050** (0.023)
Certificate or tertiary			-0.015 (0.015)	-0.011 (0.015)	-0.057*** (0.015)
Lives in a metro.			-0.053** (0.023)	-0.048** (0.022)	-0.046** (0.022)
Household lost main income source				0.098*** (0.014)	0.011 (0.022)
Days since interview				-0.000 (0.001)	-0.000 (0.001)
Grants only ## Lost main income					0.089** (0.029)
Social relief only ## Lost main income					0.050 (0.063)
Grants & social relief ## Lost main income					0.170** (0.052)
Constant	0.058*** (0.010)	0.268*** (0.063)	0.204** (0.072)	0.215** (0.075)	0.245** (0.076)
R-squared	0.027	0.032	0.051	0.066	0.071
Subpopulation N	5413	5413	5381	5267	5267

Source: NIDS-CRAM wave 1, May-June 2020 and NIDS wave 5 2017. Notes: Estimates account for weighting, clustering, stratification. Standard errors in parentheses. ***p < 0.001, **p<0.05, *p<0.1. Coefficients on province controls not shown.

Table A 8: Income sources for households in GHS 2018 (unit of analysis is the household)

	All households		Grant receiving households		Non-grant households	
	Estimate (%)	SE	Estimate (%)	SE	Estimate (%)	SE
Salaries /wages /commissions	64.8	0.4	51.7	0.5	75.3	0.5
Business	13.6	0.3	11	0.3	15.7	0.4
Remittances	16.6	0.3	19.7	0.4	14.1	0.4
Pensions	4.2	0.2	3.3	0.2	4.9	0.2
Grants	45.2	0.4	100	0	1.6	0.1
Other income source	3.9	0.2	3.9	0.2	3.9	0.2
No income	0.8	0.1	0	0	1.4	0.1
N	20 908		10 682		10 226	

Source: GHS 2018. Notes: Weighting and multi-stage sampling design accounted for in estimates. Unit of analysis is the household.