

Ensuring Children Count: Gauging progress for children



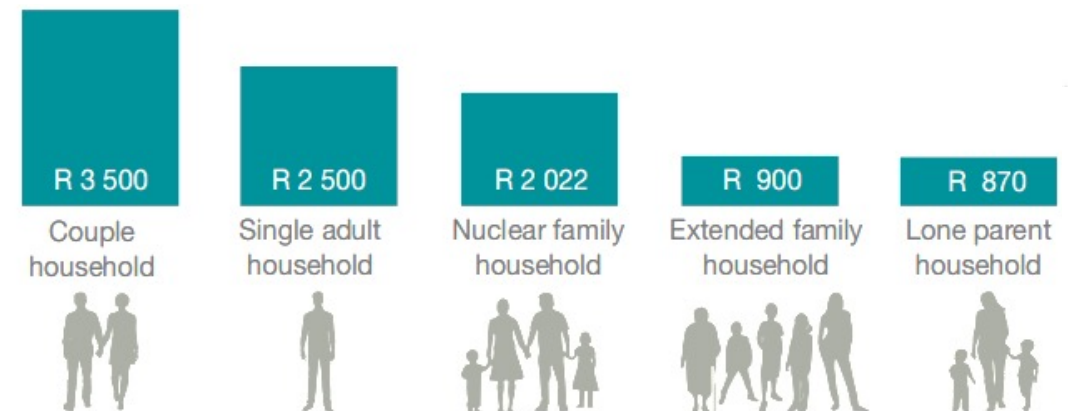
Lori Lake

Children's Institute, University of Cape Town

Children Count website

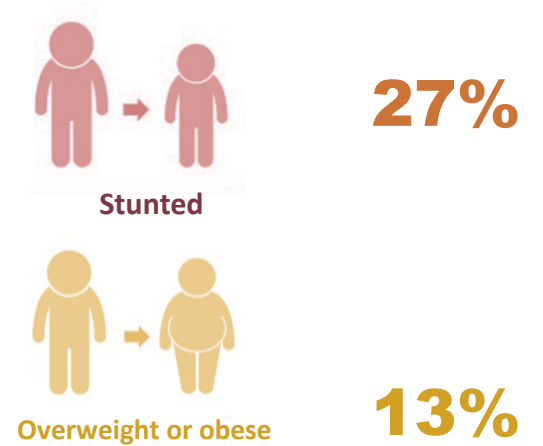
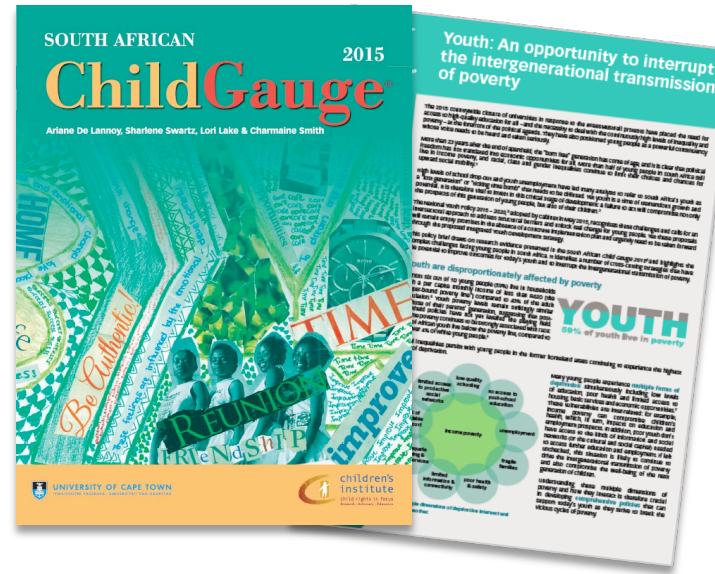
- Provides a **child-centred analysis** of national datasets in order to make children visible and track progress for SA's children
- Allows you to **disaggregate data** - by province, age, sex, race, geographic location and income quintile – to make visible inequalities and better target programmes
- Provides **expert commentary** on what the numbers are telling us

59% of children
live below the upper poverty line



South African Child Gauge

- Annual publication that makes the latest research findings accessible to decision-makers
- Each year focus on a particular dimension of children's lives e.g. health, education, ECD
- Draws on a wide range of quantitative and qualitative studies to provide an in-depth analysis of the challenges facing SA's children, the underlying causes and possible solutions



Intervene early

It is therefore essential to intervene early – starting even preconception and continuing through the critical first 1000 days of the child's life course, to adolescence.

Infants and young children

- Exclusive breastfeeding (0 – 6 months)
- Optimal complementary feeding support
- Growth monitoring and nutrition counselling
- Treatment of severe malnutrition
- Primary health care health services
- Parenting education and support
- Childcare

Older children and adolescents

- National school nutrition programme
- Nutrition education
- Food gardens
- School health services including health promotion, screening and referrals
- Youth-friendly clinics
- Sport and recreation



Pregnant women

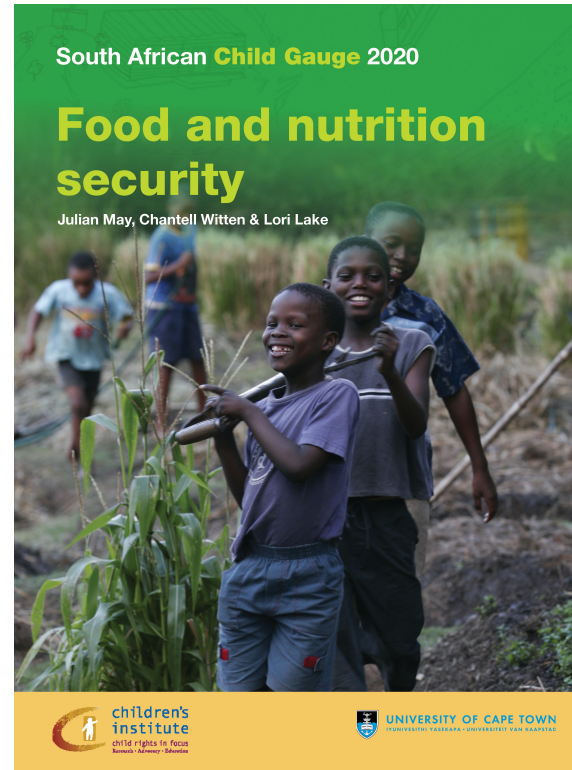
- Pregnancy weight gain monitoring and dietary counselling
- Micronutrient supplementation
- Mental health screening and support



Children and COVID-19 advocacy briefs

- Document the **impact** of the pandemic on children and children's services
- Identify **opportunities** to strengthen systems, improve outcomes and better support children in future waves and crises.
- Draw on administrative data from the **Western Cape**, as even in this well-resourced province children were overlooked and left behind



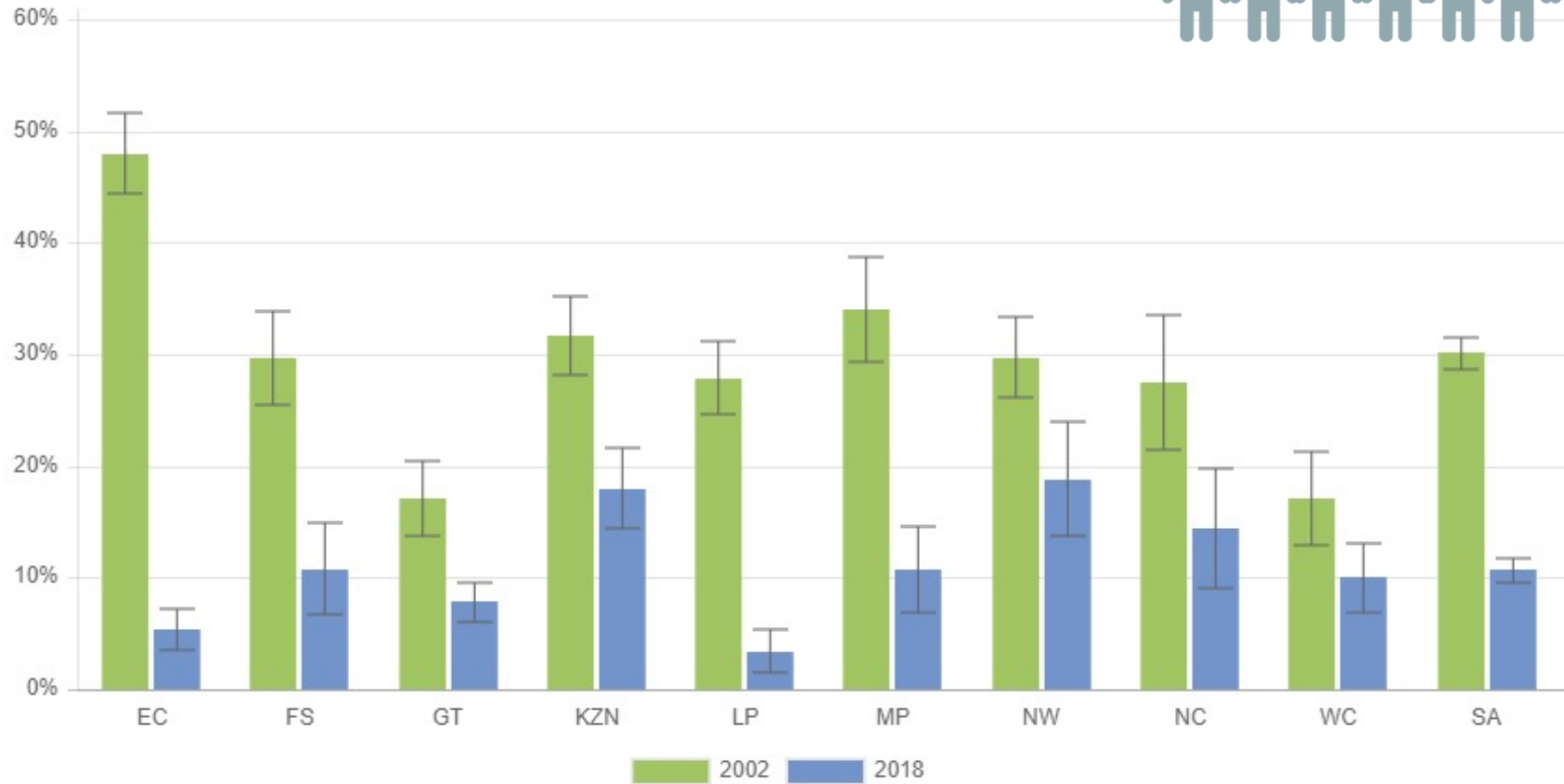


What do we know about child nutrition in SA?

Child hunger

1 in 10 children

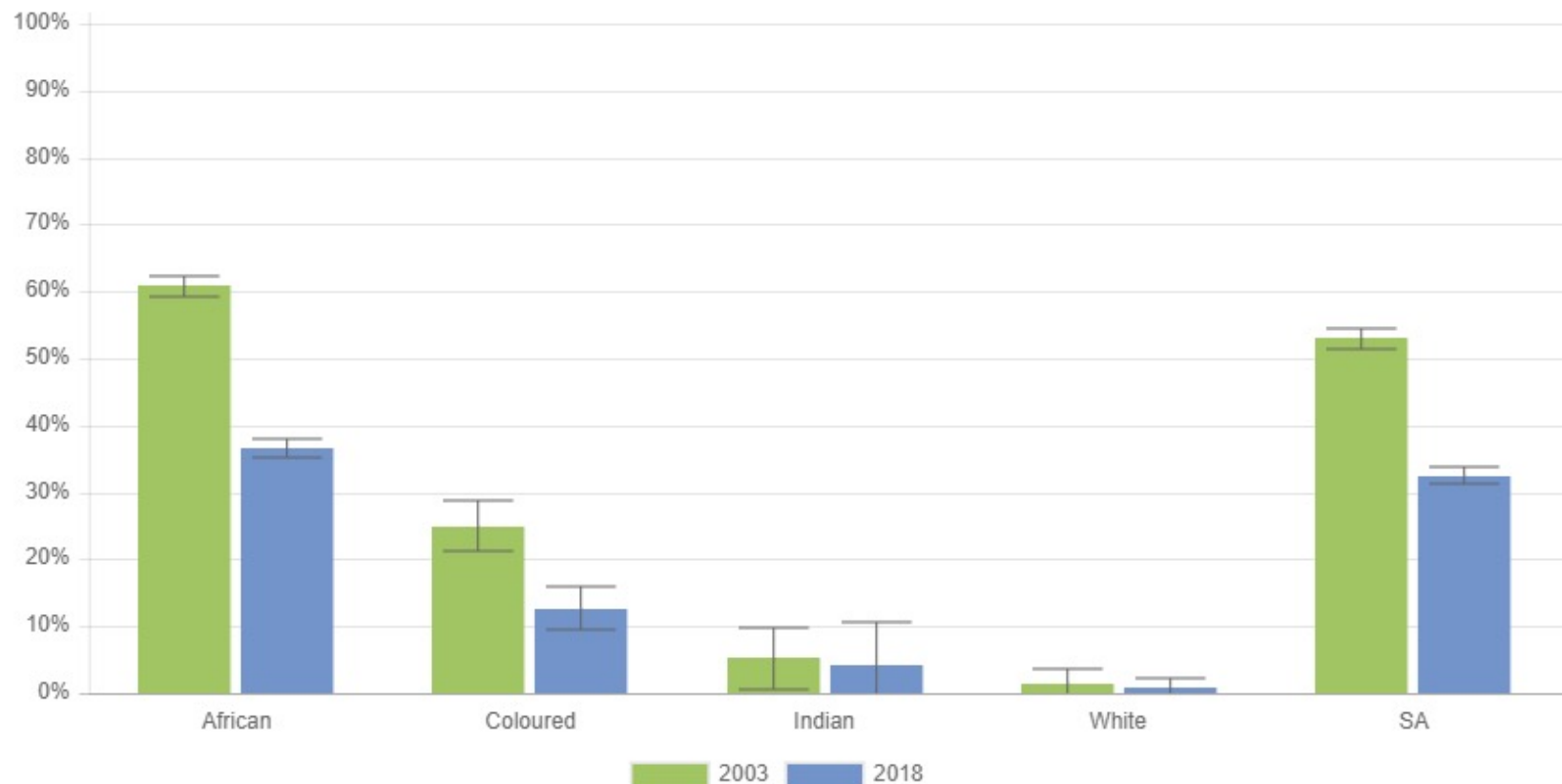
live in households where children go hungry



Data Statistics South Africa (2003 - 2019) *General Household Survey 2002 - 2018*. Pretoria: Stats SA.
Source Analysis by Katharine Hall & Winnie Sambu, Children's Institute, UCT.

Food poverty

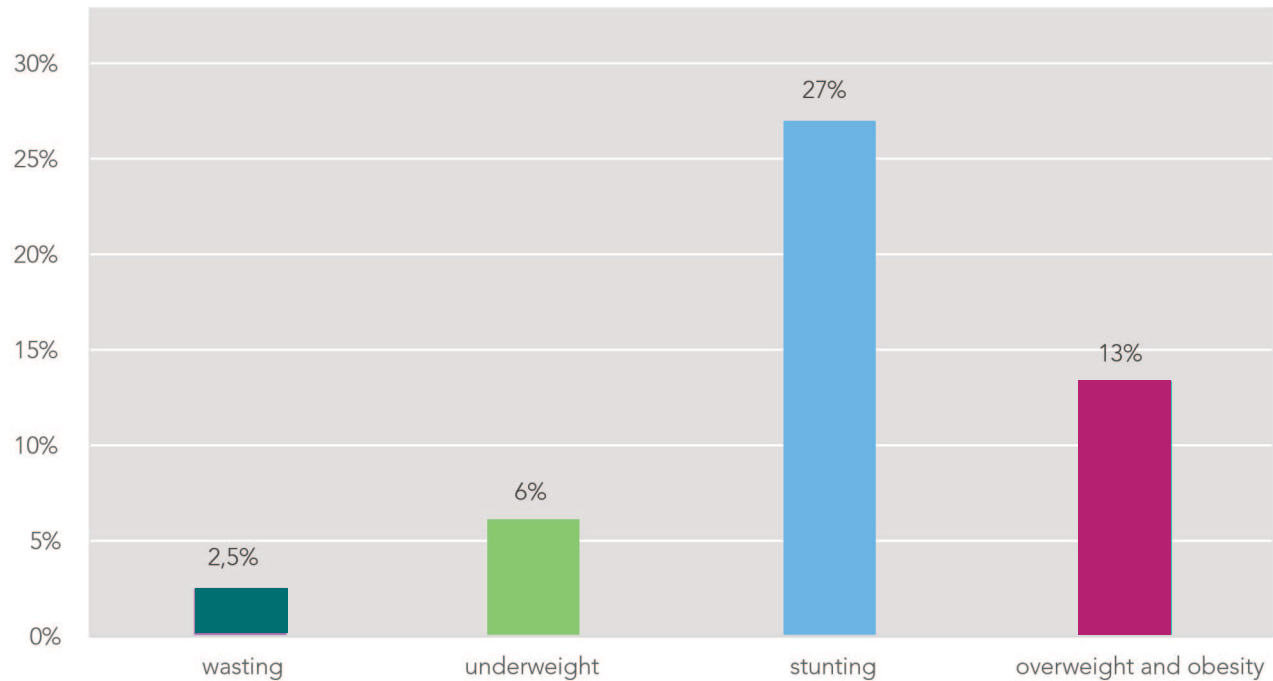
1 in 3 children
live below the food poverty line



R624

Data Statistics South Africa (2004 - 2019) General Household Survey 2003 - 2018. Pretoria, Cape Town: Statistics South Africa.
Source Analysis by Katharine Hall & Winnie Sambu. Children's Institute. University of Cape Town.

A double burden of malnutrition



Key Indicator Report. Pretoria: DOH, Stats SA, MRC & ICF

- 1 in 4 young children are **stunted** or short for age
- 1 in 8 young children are **overweight or obese**



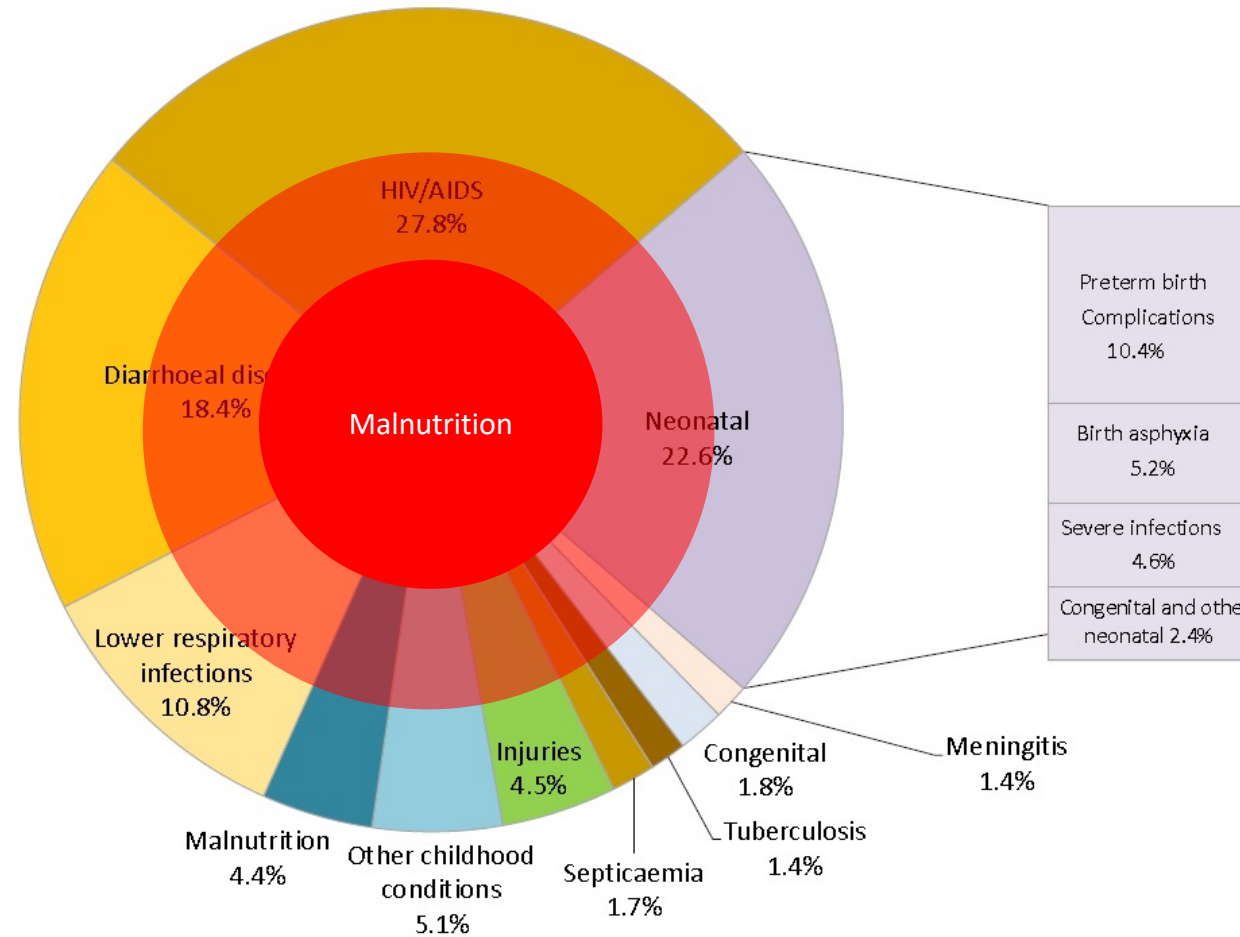


A **slow violence** “that occurs gradually and out of sight,
a **violence of delayed destruction** that is dispersed across time and space,
that is typically not viewed as **violence** at all.”

Rob Nixon, 2011

Burden of Disease Study

Causes of death in children under five years of age, 2010



48% of child hospital deaths are associated with moderate or severe acute malnutrition



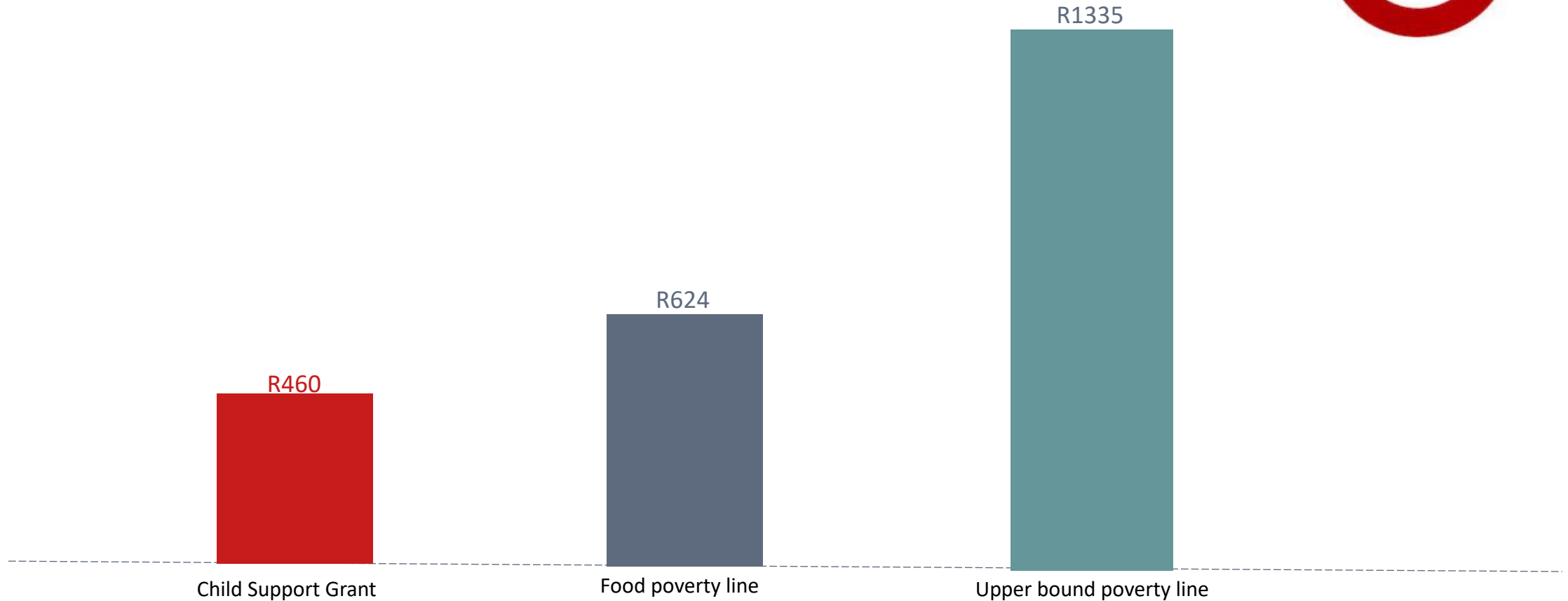
Impact of COVID-19

- **Rising food prices** (12.6% annual increase, March 2020-2021, PMBEJD)
- **Rising unemployment** (34.4% official, 44.4% expanded Q2 2021)
(with women more likely to have lost their jobs than men (30% vs 22%, NIDSCRAM))
- **Closure of schools and ECD programmes**
- **Rise in child hunger** (15% in Apr/May 2021)
- **Disruption of health care services**
making it harder to identify and support children at risk of malnutrition

“Children eat the same food every day. Starch every day. Starch every day. Starch every day. Starch every day. People are not okay. It is not healthy to eat starch every day. We do want to eat right but we don’t have a choice. We can only buy the basic foods now. We buy the same things over and over again. We have no choice; we have to survive.”

Du Noon, Cape Town, November 2020
Pietermartizburg Economic Justice and Dignity Project

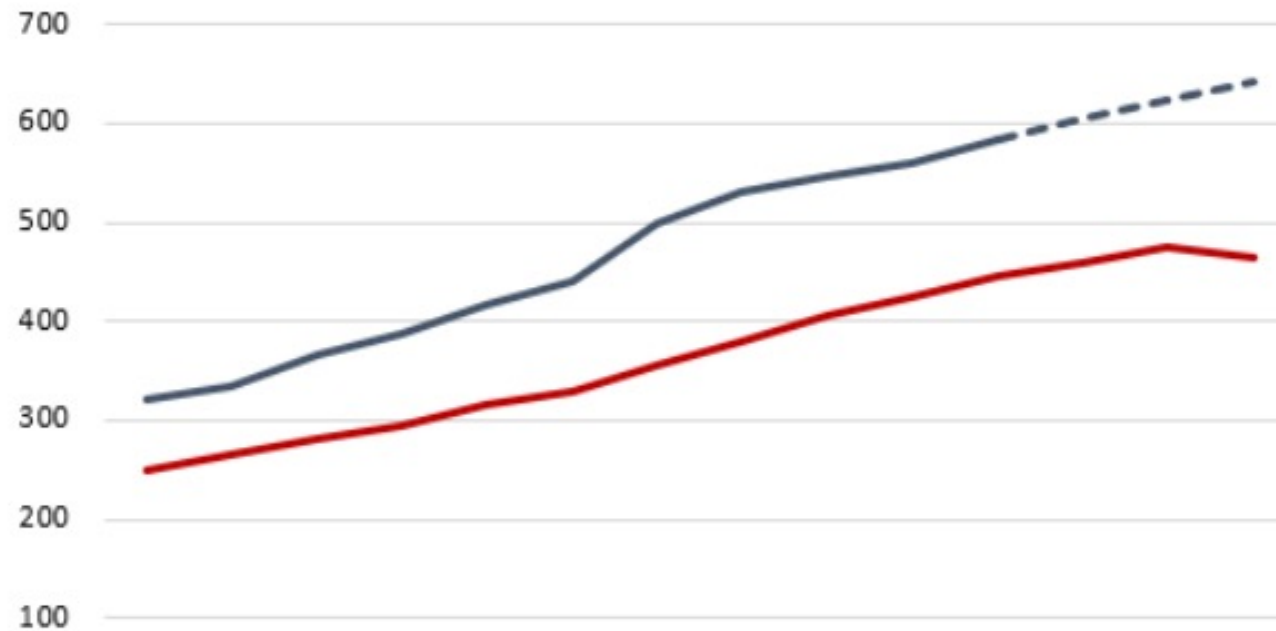
Social assistance



13 million children
benefit from the Child Support Grant

Build a strong foundation

Increase the value of the CSG



	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Child support grant *	250	265	280	295	315	330	355	380	405	425	445	460	475	465
Food poverty line **	320	335	366	386	417	441	498	531	547	561	585			

A child rights imperative

- No child should be experience hunger of the slow violence of malnutrition.
- The state has an **immediate obligation** to respect, protect, promote and fulfil children's right to basic nutrition (Section 28, Bill of Rights)
- Even in an economic crisis, the State may only introduce regressive measures as a last resort and must ensure that children are the last to be affected.
(UNCRC General Comment 19 on General Implementation Measures)

*Many things we need can wait. The child cannot.
Now is the time his bones are formed, his mind developed.
To him we cannot say tomorrow, his name is today."*

Gabriela Mistral, Nobel Prize winning poet from Chile.