



COVID-19 RESPONSES AND THE FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY OF VULNERABLE POPULATION GROUPS IN SOUTH AFRICA

RESEARCH REPORT

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COVID-19 Responses and the Food and Nutrition Security of Vulnerable Population Groups in South Africa

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Contents

Introduction	2
Problem Statement	3
Objectives	4
Key questions	5
Methodology: Planned and Realised.....	6
Key informant interviews.....	7
Beneficiary Survey.....	9
Telephonic and face-to-face interviews	18
Social protection during COVID-19: Global South experiences	21
Institutional Support for FNS in Covid19	25
Social development sector FNS-related interventions	25
Challenges encountered.....	27
Impacts of interventions.....	29
Food Assistance Relief During Covid-19.....	30
Beneficiary Survey Results – Descriptive Statistics.....	36
Pre-Covid19 Situation	47
Covid-19 Assistance.....	57
Recommendations	74
References.....	76
Appendix	80

Introduction

In light of Covid-19 pandemic, the South African government made extensive effort to mitigate the food and nutrition challenges which could result in the vulnerability of households and communities. Prioritising food access to poor and vulnerable South African families in responding to this shock was applied with several interventions which aimed at cushioning vulnerable households and communities. This included food parcels, food vouchers, and various social grants which were made available to families in need, based on a set of pre-determined criteria. The Department of Social Development (DSD) played a major role in the parcelling out of most Covid-19 relief packages, working together with other state and non-state institutions in the social sector, including South African Social Security Agency (SASSA), National Development Agency (NDA), Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), Non-Profit organizations (NPOs) and other food relief agencies.

Despite these efforts, there were concerns over whether the most affected households were being reached due to poor coordination in terms of distribution and over issues of inadequate supply of the food parcels. Thus, the implementation of these interventions has been characterised by some challenges, such that there is need to re-think the food delivery model that can achieve better results for agility of agro-food system value chain that promotes the right to nutritious food for all at all times as highlighted in the South African constitution.

It is against this background that the NDA has commissioned a study aimed at providing a better understanding on how the social development sector responded to food and nutrition needs to affected populations. Existing policies, programming strategies and resources during the COVID-19 guided social development sector responses. As expressly noted in the TOR, the outputs of the study must inform the

adjustments of these policies, strategies, and programming of responses during and post COVID-19 on food and nutrition interventions. This assignment seeks to inform and improve the design of future interventions.

This report explains how the study was conducted and its main findings. Whilst this report concentrates on the beneficiary survey, as detailed in the methodology, it begins with a reminder of the study problem statement and its objectives.

Problem Statement

The pandemic crisis disrupted South Africa's agrofood supply value chain, exposing agrofood system inequalities that reached new levels of acuteness. This crisis burdened growing numbers of low-income communities and households, intensifying their vulnerability to food insecurity and poverty. The SA government responded to reports of expanding hunger crisis with different types of social assistance such as the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) for individuals who lost their jobs during the pandemic period. Also, the most vulnerable households received temporarily increase on social grants (child support grants) considering that schools were closed and school nutrition programmes were not taking place in schools anymore. A new temporary Covid-19 grant (Social Relief of Distress-SRD) was created to assist unemployed workers that did not receive any assistance in the form of grants or UIF benefits. Additionally, in dealing with the issue of food insecurity at household level food aid through food parcel and food vouchers were provided in prioritising the Food and Nutrition Security through the programme coordinated by the Department of Social Development (DSD). DSD coordinated the programme to fast-track social relief measures during the pandemic considering that it was not an easy task to conduct as many households were vulnerable to food insecurity resulting to an increase in food

demand. Lastly, funds were made available by the government to assist small scale farmers operating in the poultry, livestock, and vegetable sectors (IMF, 2021).

In light of the mentioned social relief mechanisms provided, there were many social sector players involved so that all households that were victims can benefit. However, food access and consumption crisis exposed overlapping implementation gaps and limitations in different parts of the social relief system. Furthermore, FNS policy gaps were unfolded resulting to an urgent need for bolstering the efficacy of its implementation model and its functionality in practice. Hence, understanding how the food relief mechanisms can be strengthened for timely, effective, efficient and sustainable implementation of food delivery in disaster situations to build resilience and prompt response fitting to the people especially in vulnerable groups and population is an essential component for a response mechanism programme.

Objectives

The following study objectives have informed the research approach and findings explained below:

- Provide a comprehensive understanding of the South African food and nutrition policies and their response to disasters such as COVID-19 and identify the gaps to be addressed by policies
- Determine how South Africa should repurpose current policies to effectively respond to food and nutrition during and after the COVID-19 period.
- Determine the effect that COVID-19 responses have had on poor, unemployed and vulnerable groups and the safety nets put in place to protect these population groups.

- Propose comprehensive policy measures and strategy framework for South Africa to respond to COVID-19 effects on food and nutrition security and mitigate protection exposure for vulnerable populations.

Key questions

In understanding the level of importance, at policy and strategy levels, to recognize the extent of influence and demands by the expected increases in unemployment, joblessness and poverty levels on food and nutrition. The following are key questions to be addressed by the research:

- Have current policies on food and nutrition security been effective in ensuring access to nutritional security in light of Covid-19 pandemic in South Africa?

Has the value chain of the food supply in the country adjusted to the Covid-19 pandemic?

Are there limitations in the current policies that have failed to address emergencies or disasters situations such as the Covid-19 pandemic?

- Has the Covid-19 strategies and programmes instituted to respond to the food and nutrition security for the vulnerable population been effective?

What are the gaps in these strategies and programmes and how can they be addressed?

How can these programmes be structured to ensure sustainability in addressing food and nutrition security during emergencies and post disasters such as Covid-19 pandemic in South Africa?

Two main sections of this report discuss the new qualitative and quantitative information that this study has been able to collect. An integrated reading of the

qualitative and quantitative information is essential for a comprehensive picture of the findings and the recommendations. In fact, results assembled from the two modes of information collection illustrate the advantages of blending these data collection and analysis techniques. The national and provincial institutional assistance in terms of direct food transfers or income-based support is based on a series of key informant interviews. This institutional context is crucial to foreground and illuminate the quantitative results on recipients of state and non-state support in the context Covid-19. The analysis of the survey throws light on how the assisted individuals and their families benefitted from the food parcels or cash grants they received during the 2 initial waves of the pandemic in 2020.

Before these main sections, this report details the conceptual scribes the metod, These sections precede. of ... findings of the survey. needs to be is very helpful e qualitative data d on presented on its own packages responses;

Methodology: Planned and Realised

The data collection approach follows specific techniques highlighted in the TOR. To that end, both quantitative and qualitative methods will be used to collect data towards addressing project aims and objectives. The purpose of this mixed methods approach is to strengthen the reliability of data, validity of the findings and recommendations, and to broaden and deepen our understanding of the processes through which program outcomes and impacts are achieved (Bamberger, 2012). The use of quantitative and qualitative techniques in combination is important for triangulation purposes and achieving convergence, where one type of data is used to validate or confirm conclusions reached from analysis of the other type of data (Palinkas et al., 2019). The study will specifically involve four techniques: literature and documentary

reviews, secondary data analysis, key informant interviews, and a survey of beneficiaries.

Key informant interviews

Key informant interviews (KIIs) will be undertaken with officials in state and non-state entities involved in the provision of food and nutrition support to households at the national and provincial levels during the COVID-19 period. The aim will be to obtain an understanding into how South Africa responded to food and nutrition challenges during the pandemic and their views on how COVID-19 period responses will inform food and nutrition security interventions post the pandemic. These interviews will also assist in obtaining the views of key state and non-state officials around the effectiveness of current food and nutrition security policies and strategies in guiding food relief interventions in the face of such shocks as Covid-19, and where and how the policies and strategies can be improved.

Key informants will be identified mainly through the Department of Social Development portfolio using snowballing sampling. Key stakeholders to be engaged will include government officials in relevant entities and departments, particularly the DSD, NDA, SASSA, COGTA and the DBE (responsible for the National School Nutrition Programme). Civil society organisations, national food relief organisations and private business players involved in the mobilization of resources and donations to support food distribution during the pandemic period will also be engaged.

This section provides results emerging from interviews with key informant interviews at the national level. National-level key informant interviews were conducted with officials in the following entities: Department of Social Development, South African Social Services Agency (SASSA), Department of Basic Education (DBE), the National

Development Agency (NDA), and research academics who led the NIDS-CRAM survey.

Table 2. Key informant interview respondents

Stakeholders	KII Level	n	Total KIIs
DSD (2), NDA (2), SASSA (2), CSOs (2), COGTA (1), Business Community (1), National Food Relief Organizations (2)	National Level	12	12
Social sector stakeholders/programme managers, CSOs, Municipalities, SAPS/Security forces	Provincial level	5 per province	45
Total KIIs			57

Stakeholders	KII Level	N	Total KIIs	Realised KIIs	% Share
DSD (2), NDA (2), SASSA (2), CSOs (2), COGTA (1), Business Community (1), National Food Relief Organizations (2)	National Level	12	12	6	50%
Social sector stakeholders/programme managers, CSOs, Municipalities, SAPS/Security forces	Provincial level	5 per province	45	13	29%
Total KIIs			57	19	33%

Key informant interviews conducted

NATIONAL-LEVEL ENGAGEMENTS	
Entity/Department	No. of officials engaged
Department of Basic Education	1
Department of Social Development	2
National Development Agency (NDA)	1
South African Social Security Agency (SASSA)	1

NIDS-CRAM Convenor Researcher)	Survey (Academic	1
PROVINCIAL-LEVEL ENGAGEMENTS		
Province	Entity/Department	No. of officials engaged
Free State	NDA	1
	Red Cross	1
	Non-governmental Organisations (Meals on Wheels & METAD)	2
Eastern Cape	Department of Social Development	1
	SASSA	1
Gauteng	Department of Social Development	1
	SASSA	1
North West	Department of Social Development	1
	SASSA	2
Western Cape	Department of Social Development	2

Beneficiary Survey

This study will employ simple random sampling for selecting the study participants. This is the probability sampling strategy that permits each food aid package recipient to be chosen. According to Thompson, (2012), Simple Random Sampling is a sampling design in which k distinct items are selected from the n items in the population in such a way that every possible combination of k item is equally likely to be the sample selected. Advantages of random sampling are that it eliminates selection bias, since everyone has an equal chance of being selected and minimal knowledge of the population is required (Acharya et al., 2013). The SRS is the best technique for this study because it produces a balanced subset with the greatest potential to represent the largest group in most cases. For this study, the SRS process will be implemented by following the steps below.

Step 1. The Population

Target population refers to all the members who meet the particular criterion specified for a research investigation (Mohsin, 2016). In this study, the sample will be drawn from the households that received food packages during the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown. In particular, the sample will be taken from food package recipients in March and September 2020. The Department of Social Development reported having distributed food parcels to 523 490 households and covering 2 093 960 South Africans vulnerable to food insecurity and hunger. Households will be randomly selected using a random sampling procedure across the nine provinces and samples of recipients of food aid packages will be recruited to take part in the study. Recipients over 18 years of age will be eligible for recruitment to take part in this study.

Step 2. Constructing a List

A sample of households will be drawn from the Department of Social Development's portfolio of reports (DSD, SASSA, NDA). Administrative data from the DSD will provide a complete list of food relief package recipients from which to make a random selection. Since the data will include the list of recipients of different social relief packages in 2020, the team will identify the beneficiaries of food relief packages in March and September 2020 and then constructing a list of their names from which to draw a random sample. After compiling a list of beneficiaries, each household will be given an equal chance of being recruited to participate in this study by assigning a number to each household.

Step 3. Drawing the Sample

DSD administrative data suggests that by the third quarter of 2020, nearly a million households (999 047) have received food parcels through DSD distribution systems

and mechanisms. Compared to the data for March 2020, this means that the number of households who have received food parcels from DSD have almost doubled. To calculate the total number of people reached, the DSD uses an average household size of 4 (March) or 5 (September) as a multiplicative constant. Clearly, multiplying the number of beneficiary households with this constant does not influence uneven provincial distribution of food parcels.

This study will estimate the sample size at a 95% confidence interval and a 5% margin of error using the method for estimating the sample size developed by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). Krejcie and Morgan (1970) employed the following formula to determine the appropriate sample size:

$$S = \frac{X^2 NP(1 - P)}{d^2(N - 1) + X^2 P(1 - P)}$$

Where S = the required sample size, X^2 = the table value of chi-square for one degree of freedom at the desired confidence level (3.841), N = the population size (523 490), P = the population proportion (assumed to be .50 since this would provide the maximum sample size) and d = the degree of accuracy expressed as a proportion (.05) Considering the above, the sample size for this study can be estimated as follows:

$$S = \frac{3.841 * 523\,490 * .50(1 - .50)}{.05^2(523\,490 - 1) + 3.841 * .50(1 - .50)} = \frac{1\,005\,362.55(0.5)}{0.0025 * 523\,489 + 1.9205(0.5)}$$

$$S = \frac{502\,681.30}{1\,308.72 + 0.96025} = \frac{502\,681.30}{1\,309.68}$$

$$S = 383.82$$

A sample of **384 households** will be needed for this study. However, allowing ~10% of the non-response rate, the adjusted sample size will be **420 households**.

Step 4. Contacting participants

The study's participants will be contacted through the DSD office. The study considers the POPI Act, and any information gathered will be kept strictly confidential. The beneficiaries of food parcel will be contacted to arrange a visit prior to fieldwork through community development workers in their respective provinces.

1. Collected data; Excel & SPSS/STATA

The collected data will be entered into an excel spreadsheet, processed, and examined for errors and omissions, which will be corrected where possible. For further analysis, the cleaned data will be exported to SPSS/STATA. Before performing any analysis, the quality assurance process will be followed.

2. Structure of sampling weight (Weighting)

The study will utilize the sampling weight to ensure that the collected data is reflective and broadly representative of the population. According to (Ibrahim, 2008), sampling weights are required to correct for flaws in the sample that may result in bias and other deviations from the reference population. Imperfections include the selection of units with unequal probabilities, a lack of population coverage, and a lack of response. The primary goal of using weighting in this study is to adjust the weighted sample distribution for key variables of interest for it to conform to a known population distribution.

As outlined in the introductory chapter, the beneficiary survey in this project will be drawn from the recipients of food relief packages in March and September 2020. Each household will be given an equal probability to be recruited to be part of the sample. If

n beneficiaries are selected from a population of N beneficiaries according to a simple random procedure, then the probability of each beneficiary i to be part of the sample is equal to:

$$P_i = n/N$$

In this case, if 420 beneficiaries are randomly selected from a population of 523 490 beneficiaries, the probability of each beneficiary i to be part of the sample is equal to:

$$P_i = n/N = 420/523\,490 = 0.0008023076$$

In other words, each household has 0.008 chance out of ten of being selected. Weights are usually defined as the inverse of the probability of selection. In the case of a simple random sample, the weight will be equal to:

$$W_i = 1/p_i = N/n$$

The weight of each of the 420 beneficiaries selected from a population of 523 490 beneficiaries will therefore be equal to:

$$W_i = 1/p_i = N/n = 523\,490/420 = 1246$$

This means that each beneficiary in the sample represents himself or herself, as well as 1245 other beneficiaries. Since each unit has the same selection probability in a simple random sample, the weight attached to each selected household will also be identical. Therefore, the sum of the weights of the selected units will be equal to the population size, i.e. N.

Sample size

How do plan to distribute the sample across all 9 provinces? First, let us recall the sample size estimated above. A sample of 384 households will be needed for this

study. However, allowing ~10% of the non-response rate, the adjusted sample size will be 420 households (recipients of state support).

Second, distribute the targeted samples in direct proportion to number of food parcel recipients in each province. This means, provinces with more food parcel recipients will make up a larger share of the sampled beneficiaries. DSD administrative records show this aggregated quarterly information for March and September in 2020. It is worth pointing out that this does not match the provincial distribution of typical SASSA grants, like child support and old age pension.

PROVINCE	Subnational Sampling Options, 95% CI with ~10% oversample					
	HH Food Parcels (Sep2020)		HH Food Parcels (March2020)		Mean % For Sep & March 2020	Avg. number of Social Grant Recipients
	N	%	N	%		
Eastern Cape	14	3,34	17	4,05	4	65
Free State	22	5,24	10	2,39	4	24
Gauteng	210	50	124	29,53	40	65
Kwa Zulu Natal	22	5,24	26	6,2	6	93
Limpopo	51	12,15	68	16,2	15	60
Mpumalanga	36	8,58	67	15,96	13	35
Northern Cape	22	5,24	37	8,81	8	29
North West	12	2,86	21	5	4	11
Western Cape	36	8,58	55	13,1	11	38
Total	420	100	420	100	100	420

Doing complex surveys rests on assistance received from local agents who have access to research sites and population that should be interviewed. While cooperation from provincial stakeholders, especially DSD, NGO's, Civil Society organisations and especially the communities or the households that we interviewed (or the interviewees

or respondents) remained essential from the outset, it varied from widely in practice. It is therefore instructive to sum up experiences from the field on this issue.

Eastern Cape: The fieldwork team traced the beneficiaries mainly with information on their physical addresses. While the physical addresses were helpful, the cellphone numbers that EC DSD provided were either wrong or do not exist at all. As a result, the team had to travel long distances, often arriving in localities where no interviews could be conducted. Lists often referred to centres that did not exist. In some remote and hard to access areas, the team could not establish contact with those identified in the targeted sample list. DSD EC officials provided no or minimal assistance in fieldwork, especially when it came to communicating with recipients of support.

Gauteng: DSD officials did not only welcome the team to the province, but also mobilized the participants and in some instances accompanied the team with their own cars to visit the centres where many participants assembled. At each centre that the team visited, there was a DSD official and a person from Gauteng Food Bank. This assistance enabled the team to execute fieldwork with ease.

Western Cape: Actual fieldwork execution stands in sharp contrast with feedback to initial requests for assistance submitted to DSD WC in 2021, when there was a spirit of cooperation and collegiality between the HSRC and provincial officials. DSD officials did not cooperate with the HSRC team during the fieldwork. In response to requests for beneficiary lists, district managers sent the team from pillar to post. Promised follow-up support was not forthcoming from these officials. Going into communities to conduct door-to-door visits and snowballing were the only options open to the team. Communities welcomed the team and spoke to fieldworkers with openness and frankness.

Free State: After a welcome meeting with DSD colleagues, the team visited district offices where an official was delegated to assist the team. The provincial manager facilitated these processes, easing access to centers where targeted respondents go for their daily meals.

Northern Cape: DSD officials supported fieldwork implementation from the planning stages in late 2021. However, due to other DSD activities at the time of the fieldwork, officials could not join the team on field visits but called local leaders of the centres to notify them of the support that will be needed and to secure local assistance for the team. In two districts, a CDP accompanied the team on door-to-door visits to the households in townships.

KwaZulu-Natal: Mr. Mcunu, the provincial DSD manager, welcomed the team and organised a meeting with district managers to inform them about the study and fieldwork programme. This briefing clarified the purpose of the study and what kind of assistance the team will need. Dr. Mfusi, a provincial head responsible for all the centres in KZN, accompanied the team for 2 weeks to visit all centers in the districts. An official from the local DSD office was also with the team during the visits to the communities.

Limpopo: At the introductory meeting on day one, the provincial DSD office delegated 2 officials who joined the fieldwork team to all sites and centers. This session included the head of research as well as the provincial stakeholders from DSD. District coordinators also cooperated with the team, notifying participants when they would be visited for the survey. This assistance made it easy to interview the selected participants.

Mpumalanga: A DSD official, Mr. Jacob Shaba, assisted the team to move around and accompanied the team to all the districts. Mr. Shaba also arranged for assistance from district coordinators to invite targeted respondents to centers for the interviews. CDPs were particularly helpful to set up the interviews during these visits to centers.

North West: One of the directors who deals with the sustainable livelihoods accompanied the team to the centres and expressed a keen interest in this project. In addition to their interest in the outcomes this study, NW officials wanted to know about the methodology to collect data and the criteria for inclusions in the sample. (The team had similar inquiries from the Limpopo office where they have embarked on a similar project but lacked experience in designing studies like this one. An official accompanied our team to pick up some research practice tips.). A district coordinator with info about the study was on leave and this almost caused a communication breakdown which was resolved.

Despite the disappointing experiences in Western Cape and Eastern Cape, assistance to fieldworkers were predominantly positive rather than negative. The Western Cape was a standout contradiction in which fieldwork experiences cannot be reconciled with upfront promises and imposing a second-round ethics review on the team. Without an anchor within the lead department to champion project actions within provinces and districts, it will be frustrating to implement primary data collection. An insider within the department with a stake in the project and who wants to see it succeed is a critical ingredient.

Telephonic and face-to-face interviews

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and factors listed above, a dual mode of administering the survey had to be opted for: telephonic and face-to-face modes. Irrespective the mode of survey fieldwork, the accuracy of information in local DSD contact bases was the main determinant in how to proceed. Where cellphone numbers did not work, fieldworkers used alternative ways to get in touch with the targeted or sampled individual or households.

To fast-track data collection, the team opted for telephonic interviews in December 2021. However, this method yielded limited success in only a small number of provinces. The team struggled with the telephonic interviews. Face-to-face interviews were much better mainly because we had assistance from coordinators and it was easier to bridge language barriers, especially in Western Cape and Northern Cape. In some instances, we relied on a DSD official to help with translations during the interviews. Telephonic interviews in December were restricted to Western Cape.

Searching for recipients did not only consume a lot of time but risked the safety and security of fieldworkers in addition to imposing expenses beyond the budgeted amounts onto this study. Interviews at the centers used the sampling criteria, including the number of targeted respondents, to guide selection rather than verifying if the name was on the original admin lists. Difficulties in locating respondents raise questions about the quality of the administrative databases.

Province	No: Telephonic interviews	No: Face-to-Face interviews	Total	Percentage
Eastern Cape	0	61	61	12.15
Free State	2	24	26	5.18
Gauteng	13	72	85	16.93
KwaZulu-Natal	5	119	124	24.70

Limpopo	10	56	66	13.15
Mpumalanga	0	48	48	9.56
Northwest	0	21	21	4.18
Northern Cape	1	30	31	6.18
Western Cape	9	31	40	7.97
Total	43	459	502	100

Mismatches between the targeted sample and actual interviews also occurred in North West, Limpopo and Mpumalanga. What compounded the mismatching problem was that a number of sampled individuals were not willing to participate in the survey. In Mpumalanga, there was confusion about the time when the person actually received the food parcels, forcing the research team to draw a new sample. Over-sampling and snowballing helped to include recipients of different income-based interventions in Limpopo.

The team conducted a small number of telephonic interviews in Limpopo in December. However, comparing the 2 modes of data collection, the face-to-face interviews yielded far better results. Furthermore, local coordinators assisted the team to locate recipients of assistance during these specific waves of the pandemic.

Problems that beset these emergency food and nutrition assistance schemes can undermine their intended positive outcome. Three of the most prominent issues identified are optimally efficient administration, systematic monitoring and evaluating them properly. Administrative disarray that is evident from beneficiary registers calls into question claims about the actual numbers of beneficiaries. Retrospective studies of the solidarity grants and support mechanisms for needy people during Covid-19 might be more difficult than real-time investigations using social media applications.

Deviating from the logic in the background paper on sample design and sample construction is a major concern. Advice from an experienced sampling statistician might be able to us overcome this problem. Mixing snowballing strategies in the context of representative sampling can pose serious difficulties in the construction of sampling weights. In representative sampling, there must be a sound and scientifically valid justification why a targeted person in the sample gets replaced with another candidate. Constructing a full probability sample study with proper weights in the end is not as straightforward as it appears at first sight.

Social protection during COVID-19: Global South experiences

The number of people in the world affected by hunger continued to increase in 2020 under the shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic across the globe. The spread rose nearly as much as in the previous five years combined, to 30.4% (FAO,2021). Consequently, about one in three people in the world did not have access to adequate food in 2020. Global estimates from mid-2020 suggested that, economic contractions and food supply chain disruptions had led to 95million people falling into extreme poverty and had contributed to increased household food insecurity (Osendarp et al.2021). When the lockdown began, several schools closed, resulting in loss of school meal programmes in both high- and low-income countries. The WFP estimates that 370 million children lost access to school meals due to school closures in the wake of the pandemic (WFP, 2020a). In Latin America, the number of people requiring food assistance has almost tripled in 2020 (UN, 2020a).

To counter the global food crisis, multilateral agencies have promoted the scaling up and enhancing robust social protection programmes for improved household access to healthy and nutritious food. Income assistance, vouchers for household food purchases, and school lunch programmes have all been shown to be effective means of support in some social contexts (Gerard et al., 2020). Vouchers for food purchases should function in formal and informal markets and allow for adequate fruit and vegetable purchases. In cases where schools are closed for extended periods due to COVID-19, governments need to think creatively about how to deliver alternatives to school lunch (WFP, 2020b).

Between 1 February and 31 December 2020, 209 countries and territories announced at least 1,622 social protection measures in response to the COVID-19 crisis. The overall response rate in the world stood at 92.9%. According to ILO (2020), most measures entail the introduction of new programmes or benefits accounting for 53.1%, followed by social protection programme adjustments (21.6%), social spending adjustments (12.8%) or improvements in administration (7.6%). Some new measures or benefits received adjustments of about 4.9% such as extension of their duration. Projections according to World Bank (2020) indicated 88 to 115 million extreme poverties in which a third of them were from Sub-Saharan Africa. In response to these shocking projections on Covid-19 pandemic, the African region has introduced 238 food and nutrition related measures in 38 countries (ILO,2020). Latin America introduced 53 food and nutrition measures responding to the COVID-19 pandemic (ILO,2020).

Income and job protection schemes made up approximately 15% of all support measures in the 2020 but the lack of data for 2019 does not allow for showing the magnitude of this change. Unemployment assistance accounted for slightly more than 10% of all social protection benefits distributed in 2020, which represents a more than 3-fold increase from 3,2% in 2019. Whilst each of the other two social support measures in Table 1 was in the order of 7%, the expansion in the general income support was much higher than poverty and vulnerability measures when compared with their respective shares in 2019. In light of this expansion, it is safe to conclude that the substantial increase in direct food and nutrition security support in 2020 amounts to an underestimation of anti-hunger support measures.

Table 1: Global shares (%) of active Social Protection Measures with direct/indirect Food and Nutrition outcome, 2018-2021

Social Protection Main Function/Outcome	2018	2019	2020	2021**
Food and Nutrition	0,73%	3,20%	8,00%	0,83%
Poverty/Vulnerability	1,46%	4,09%	7,04%	4,96%
Income/Job Protection	2,92%	- -	14,87%	9,09%
General Income Support	1,09%	1,60%	7,40%	0,83%
Unemployment	1,82%	3,20%	0,75%	14,05%

Source: ILO, Social Protection Monitor (Excerpt) [<https://www.social-protection.org/gimi/WSPDB.action?id=32>]

Note: The SPM counts types of social benefits in both high and low-income countries. As a living database the SPM is regularly updated with data assembled from latest country-level reports. Global aggregation of this count does not exclude high income countries with more developed institutional capacities to document and monitor social protection. The number of social protection measures in poorer countries with very limited capacity to monitor all benefit categories might be fully represented.

Different countries dealt with the pandemic differently but with the same aim of preventing negative consequences. For instance, Ethiopia did not implement its national lockdown during the time when other countries did, instead of implementing a national lockdown like most other governments in Africa, the country initiated other essential measures in January, which was even ahead of most developed countries. The government then continued with their responses in mid-March, when the first COVID-19 case was reported in the country and declared a state of emergency only in April. Production and other economic activities continued during the crisis, thus considerably easing the pressure on vulnerable social groups and the informal sector. On the other hand, the Asian countries such as India and Indonesia moved away successfully from patchwork welfare programs to implementing more comprehensive social protection (Chopra, 2015). These countries have put new social protection initiatives into law instead of formulating executive policies that do not work for the

Asian region, and during COVID-19, this worked to their advantage in serving the vulnerable populations (ILO,2020).

Institutional Support for FNS in Covid19

To place the experiences in context, interviews with institutional actors explored 4 key issues: a) the types of food and nutrition (FNS)- related interventions rolled out to vulnerable population groups under the social development sector as well as establishing the legal and policy basis of these interventions, b) challenges encountered in delivering the interventions, c) the impact of the interventions, and d) recommendations towards comprehensive policy measures and a strategy framework towards effectively responding to similar future FNS-related shocks.

Social development sector FNS-related interventions

Three main interventions were noted as having been spearheaded by social development sector players during the first and second waves of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Firstly, was the provision of food relief through food parcel and food voucher distribution as mainly overseen by the Department of Social Development (DSD), as well administration of the school nutrition programme as overseen and undertaken by the Department of Basic Education (DBE). The two DSD officials interviewed noted that the DSD partnered with the Solidarity Fund, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), civil society and community-based organisations to distribute food parcels across all the country's 9 provinces.

Secondly, was the provision and administration of social grants rolled out during that (first and second wave) period, which helped in cushioning most vulnerable and poor households against food and nutrition insecurity. SASSA was the main entity involved in this and it oversaw the administration of the special Covid-19 social relief of distress

(SRD) grant of R350 a month introduced for unemployed South Africans who were not receiving any other form of social assistance from the government prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. According to the SASSA official interviewed, the agency also oversaw the administration of the augmented Child Support Grant (CSG) and other grants – whereby beneficiaries of the CSG received an extra R300 in the first month and an additional R500 per caregiver thereafter, whilst all other grants were increased by R250.

The third FNS-related intervention overseen by the social development sector was the profiling of food relief recipients throughout the country so as to obtain a holistic picture of the exact demand for food relief across the provinces as the pandemic unravelled. This was carried out by the DSD. The DSD was also responsible for collating all figures and reports on food security in the country and presenting these to the National Joint Operational and Intelligence Structure (NATJOINTS), to enable informed policy and action responses across all government departments and entities.

As noted by interviewed respondents, the legal and policy basis of their interventions was grounded firstly in the national Constitution – which states that “everyone has the right to have access to sufficient food and water” (Section 27 (i) (b) of the Republic of South Africa), then Section 27 (2) which note that “the state must take reasonable legislative and other measures, within its available resources, to achieve the progressive realisation of each of these rights”. They therefore had an obligation to provide the noted interventions according to the supreme law of the land. Secondly, the National Disaster Management Act and accompanying regulations also provided a basis for the rolling out of the various noted interventions. Thirdly officials from different entities noted that they were guided by specific pieces of legislation and regulations which have always guided them even before the pandemic; such as the

Social Assistance Act and social assistance regulations in the case of SASSA as well as the Conditional Grants Framework in the case of the DBE (vis-à-vis implementation of the National School Nutrition Programme).

Challenges encountered

Several challenges vis-à-vis the noted interventions were highlighted. The first major challenge noted by most interviewed officials was the sudden surge in numbers of those who were to be reached across all interventions – from those requiring food assistance, to those who were to be enrolled on and assisted with the special Covid-19 SRD Grant. As the SASSA official interviewed noted for example, their staff complement and their payment systems were not prepared for such a surge in numbers hence there were problems in getting the systems going particularly in the first months of the first wave of the pandemic. The SASSA official noted that:

“Before the pandemic, SASSA was paying about 18 million grants to plus or minus 12 million people, and it took SASSA almost 20 years to set up the systems to be able to smoothly deal with those numbers. When Covid came, we now had to reach about 6 million people in 3 months, and this inevitably resulted in several capacity constraints...”

In addition to the increased numbers of beneficiaries, it was noted, in the case of SASSA, that they had to shift to serving their clients mainly through online services/digital platforms so as to comply with Covid-19 regulations around limiting physical personal contact and interaction. This resulted in two main challenges. Firstly, the majority of their clients were not conversant with online technologies and this resulted in delays in the payment of grants to many people. Secondly, utilising digital platforms for client verification for example, was against SASSA regulations as the

(pre-Covid) regulations required that for a person to be provided with SASSA services, they had to present themselves in person to be verified and for particular documents to be signed in person before a SASSA official. Whilst they had to switch to online platforms therefore, there was no standing regulation to support the switch specifically in the first days of the first wave of the pandemic.

Another challenge highlighted by DSD officials interviewed was the difficulty in coordinating the various NGOs and Community Based Organisations (CBOs) which emerged to assist poor and vulnerable households during the first and second waves of the pandemic. With the numbers of NGOs and CBOs operating in the provinces suddenly increasing, it became difficult to set some form of uniform criteria of who could be a beneficiary of a food parcel or what the contents of the food parcel should be as this differed across organisations. Challenges in coordination also meant some households and areas in the country benefitted more than others – whereas this could have been averted if proper coordination mechanisms (from the national to sub-national levels) were in place.

There were also challenges reported around violent conflict and looting associated with desperate measures to secure food were reported in provinces such as the Western Cape.

A last challenge as raised by DSD officials was around the unclear and rather exclusionary policy around government food parcel and food voucher distribution, particularly as it related to undocumented foreign nationals. They noted that a directive was given that these (food parcels and vouchers) should be given to South African citizens and permanent residents only – which was somewhat unusual in the context of a pandemic such as Covid-19 which affected everyone regardless of the immigrant

status. They noted that, whilst NGOs and CBOs later stepped in to fill in the gap and assist people in this (undocumented foreign national) category, the government should revisit its policy in this area in future emergencies.

Impacts of interventions

All interviewed officials noted that whilst there were several challenges encountered in rolling out various interventions, it appears the interventions were extremely helpful in ensuring some form of food security for most poor and vulnerable households in the country. One of the DSD officials interviewed, for example, noted that they (the Department) did conduct a rapid national assessment study on the impact of the SRD grant on access to enough food during the first and second waves of the pandemic and the study showed that 93% of the grant recipients involved in the study used it mostly on food, and many claimed that even though the grant amount was little, it did go a long way in averting hunger in recipient homes during this period.

Interviewed officials from other entities were however careful to note that they have not conducted any form of evaluation or impact assessment of their interventions yet, hence it was somewhat difficult to authoritatively state a position on whether or not their efforts had positively impacted on beneficiaries vis-à-vis food and nutrition security in the context of the first and second waves of the pandemic.

SASSA noted that they were pleased with the numbers reached during the first and second waves of the pandemic. The interviewed official indicated that whilst they initially aimed to reach about 7 million people during that period, they had managed around 6 and a half million people – which was an impressive return on their side.

Food Assistance Relief During Covid-19

In March 2020, government presented a wide-ranging relief package to mitigate the immediate Covid-19 impact related lockdowns. President Ramaphosa has announced short-term economic support totalling R500 billion (National Treasury, 2020). R41 billion was allocated for social security and R40 billion allocated for wage support.

Table 3 in the appendix summarises the main characteristics of the social safety nets that the SA government introduced as part of its pandemic response plan intended to protect vulnerable people.

Food parcel

The aim of food parcels is to provide support to households experiencing food shortages and mitigate hunger (Wills et al., 2020). The food parcels provided basic food support to household for two to three weeks (Solidarity Fund, 2020). The Department of Social Development is responsible for ensuring that food relief reaches the most vulnerable. During the pandemic, the department worked with various stakeholders to ensure that many people were reached. Initially, DSD distributed cooked meals but shifted to parcels to comply with the safety protocols of the pandemic. The briefing also highlighted that the highest demand for support was in the North West (37%), the Northern Cape (32%), the Eastern Cape (25%) and KwaZulu-Natal (25%).

Criteria for food parcels differed as various organizations were involved in the distribution of food parcels. Government used a means test to assess one's eligibility (Will et al., 202). In Gauteng, citizens earning less than R3600, pensioners, differently-abled bodies and military veteran grant recipients qualified for food relief (Vermeulen et al., 2020). Some organization used geographical targeting focusing on outskirts of

cities, poverty-stricken areas, informal settlements and rural areas (Will et al., 2020). Some organizations targeted recipients using their own knowledge of who needed assistance while some assisted anyone in need regardless of whether they were on government grants or not (Wills et al., 2020).

Food parcels contained starch-rich foods (10kg maize meal and 5kg rice), protein-source foods (1kg soya, two tins of baked beans, two tins of fish and 880g peanut butter), two litres of cooking oil, one packet of tea bags, 2.5kg sugar, 1kg salt and three non-food items (Vermeulen et al., 2020). The parcels have been criticised for lacking diet diversity. According to Vermeulen et al. (2020), the parcels have high carbohydrate content and lack items such as dairy, eggs and fresh produce.

Coordination between stakeholders was challenges, that it wasn't always clear who was providing what to whom and provinces operated in their own will. In a PMG briefing focusing on implementation of food distribution programmes on 25 June 2020 it was highlighted that Eastern Cape distributed food through the District offices; Free State distributed through Premiers office; Mpumalanga used the Department of Agriculture and Education; North West worked with SASSA, COGTA and Department of Public Works. Other provinces used charity organizations and food banks. Lack of coordination also led to duplication of food parcels to same recipients (Auditor General, 2020).

Social Relief of Distress Grant (R350)

The aim of the Social Relief of Distress (SRD) grant was to protect those who live in poverty, without income, not benefitting from any government grant and unable to meet their basic needs (DSD, 2021). The grant targeted those who are South African citizens, permanent residents or refugees; not working; does not qualify for UIF; not in

any government funded or subsidized institution; not funded by National Student Financial Aid Scheme(NSFAS); above 18 years and not receiving any income (DSD, 2021). Recipients received cash transfer at the value of R350 once a month (DSD, 2021), SASSA is responsible for these transfers. This grant is able to reach those who are outside the social protection system and not covered by existing social grants (PEAC, 2020). Van den Berg et al. (2021) have criticized the grant for not being well targeted.

Even though the grant reducing poverty and not directly seeking to improve the food and nutrition security of recipients, a report by DSD (2021) has revealed that majority of respondents use the cash to purchase food. According to van den Berg et al. (2021) R350 is less likely to raise people above food poverty. The report has also revealed that the grant has lifted many people out of financial hardship during the time of the pandemic. Since its inception the grant has grown, currently it been extended for another year, and over 10 million people stand to benefit from the grant (Lebakeng, 2022).

The Auditor General (2020) highlighted a few implementation issues that the grant experienced. Inefficiencies associated with the relatively slow-rollout of the COVID-19 SRD grant, attributable to limited administrative capacity or possible confusion surrounding the correct eligibility criteria. Non-qualifying applicants approved and received the special R350 grant, those who are eligible rejected. Initially, the grant experienced from various challenges related to its online application portal, its complex verification process and its payment system, this led to payment delays.

The introduction of this grant has also stimulated the debate of Basic Income Grant (BIG) in South Africa. In a Parliamentary Monitoring Group (PMG) discussion on

update on response to Covid19 pandemic issues; with Deputy Minister, Social Department highlighted that the department is aware of the ongoing debates and are looking in to policy work with relevant government department and are looking in to phasing in of various processes and financing options. A study on the feasibility of BIG revealed that BIG can improve income equality and support investment in human capital investment such as improved nutrition (Nedlac, 2022). However, this would bring large financial implications for the treasury According to PEAC (2020), a BIG, set at R350 per month would cost R243 billion per year, based on the 2020 Mid-Year Population estimates.

Temporary Employer-Employee Relief Scheme (TERS)

Ters is a job retention policy which aims to prevent jobs losses at firms experiencing a temporary reduction in activity by alleviating labour costs and supporting the incomes of workers in response to the COVID-19 pandemic (Kohler & Hill, 2021). Government budgeted R R40 billion for wage support (National Treasury, 2020). The scheme targeted workers who Workers registered and contributing to the UIF; workers who operate in an industry which is not permitted to commence operations either partially or in full due to the lockdown regulations; workers who are over the age of 60 years and/or have comorbidities and are not able to implement alternative working arrangements; workers who are required to remain in COVID-19-related isolation or quarantine – are also eligible for benefits in this period (Kohler & Hill, 2021). Provides cash transfer as source of income relief for vulnerable firms and workers in South Africa (Kohler & Hill, 2021).

Improving food and nutrition security was not directly the focus of the Ters policy, therefore there is insufficient evidence to prove the direct impact it has had in

eradication food insecurity. Van den Berg et al. (2021) argue that because Ters beneficiaries received cash ranging between R3 500 and R6 838 may have provided income to a level where these households did not run out of money to buy food. Recipients of TERS may not have run out of money for food precisely because they received this grant (van der Berg et al., 2021).

A report by Auditor General (2020: 41) highlighted a number of challenges experienced by Ters. Lack of verification of employee salaries submitted during benefit claims; Inaccurate system calculations of TERS benefit payment in first lockdown period; no verification of employer details; no consideration of salary portion paid by employer in calculation of pay-out in first lockdown period; inadequate system functionality for bank confirmation of uploaded documents; inaccurate system calculations of TERS benefit payment in first lockdown period.

Social grants

Social grants aim to provide support to those living in poverty and in need and seek to provide for a basic minimum standard of living (NDP, 2012). They are targeted at children, persons with disabilities and people over the age of 60. According to the NDP (2012), social grants dominate the income profile of many vulnerable of households in south Africa. Currently 18.4 million are on social grants, child support grant (CSG) being the biggest grant support followed by old age grant (OAG) (SASSA, 2021). SASSA was responsible for the disbursement of these grants. In response to the pandemic, government topped up Old Age Grant, Disability Grants and Foster Care grants by R250 and topped up the child grant by R300 per child, later changed to R500 per caregiver (DSD, 2020).

The top-up happened only for 6 months, between May – October 2020 (Kohler & Borat, 2020). The cancellation of the top-ups after October weakened the safety net for many poor households (van der Berg, 2021). Social grants aim to address poverty not directly address food and nutrition security. A NIDS-CRAM survey revealed that food insecurity increased in Wave 3 (van der Berg et al., 2021), this is after the cancellation of the top-ups. However, increase may not only be attributed to the cancellation of top-ups, other factors might have contributed to the increase in food insecurity. To supplement for the cancellation top-ups, government announced an additional allocation of R6.8 billion to the Department of Social Development (DSD) to extend the SRD grant and an additional R1 billion for food relief to vulnerable households (van den Berg et al., 2021). Top-up grants improved the financial situation of poor households with no income but are still unable to lift poor households above the poverty line (van der Berg et al., 2021)

Conclusion

Excluding food parcels, Ters, social grants and covid-19 grant and Ters do not directly seek to improve food and nutrition security. Food and nutrition security need to be at the centre of social security policies. The contents of food parcels need to be revised, they need to be nutritionally balanced. The SRD R350 grant is the first grant that covers those excluded by the social protection system, those who are 18-60 years and unemployed. The grant has been extended for another year however there needs to be a permanent solution to this. The BIG debate between government departments needs continue to fill his gap. The SRD grant is a little amount and is able to lift people beyond the food poverty line, the amount needs to be revised.

Beneficiary Survey Results – Descriptive Statistics

Beneficiaries Profiles

The weighted sample size of 999 047 beneficiaries was collected across all the nine provinces in South Africa. Table 1 shows that Gauteng accounts for a larger proportion of the population represented by the sample (49.90%), followed by Limpopo (11.93%), Mpumalanga and Western Cape which contributed 8.50% respectively. North West accounts for least number (4.18%) of the population represented by the sample.

Table 1: Number of beneficiaries interviewed per province

Province	Freq.	Percentage (%)
Eastern Cape	32 329	3.24
Free State	50 698	5.07
Gauteng	498 516	49.90
Kwa-Zulu Natal	50 460	5.05
Limpopo	119 229	11.93
Mpumalanga	84 889	8.50
North West	26 894	2.69
Northern Cape	51 086	5.11
Western Cape	84 946	8.50
Total	999 047	100

Table 2 shows that the interviewed beneficiaries came from 34 of the 52 districts/metropolises. In North West, all four districts are represented in the sample, whereas Limpopo, Western Cape, and Mpumalanga provinces each have only one outstanding district. The province of KwaZulu-Natal has six unsampled districts, this is due to unavailability of administrative data from the province.

Table 2: Number of districts per province contributing to sample

Province	No. of districts	Districts covered	Districts not covered
Eastern Cape	8	5	3
Free State	5	3	2
Gauteng	5	3	2
Kwa-Zulu Natal	11	5	6

Limpopo	5	4	1
Mpumalanga	3	2	1
North West	4	4	0
Northern Cape	5	3	2
Western Cape	6	5	1
Total	52	34	18

Table 3 presents the number of beneficiaries that were interviewed per district and province. The table indicates that Bonajala and Naaka Modiri districts in North West has the least number of beneficiaries interviewed. City of Johannesburg accounts for half of participants in Gauteng while King Cetywayo forms majority of interviewed beneficiaries in Kwa-Zulu Natal.

Table 3: Number of informal beneficiaries interviewed per district

	Freq.	Percentage		Freq.	Percentage
Western Cape			Eastern Cape		
City of Cape Town	10 618.25	12.50	Nelson Mandela Bay	9 009.72	27,87
Cape Wine Lands	23 360.15	27.50	Alfred Nzo	5 299.84	16.39
Overberg	12 741.90	15.00	Chris Hani	5 299.84	16.39
West Coast	21 236.50	25.00	OR Tambo	6 359.80	19.67
Garden Route	16 989.20	20.00	Sarah Baartman	6 359.80	19.67
Total	84 946	100	Total	32 329	100
Gauteng			Kwa-Zulu Natal		
City of Ekurhuleni	111 432.9	22.35	Amajuba	4 883.23	9.68
City of Johannesburg	263 920.2	52.94	Harry Gwala	11 394.1	22.58
City of Tshwane	123 162.7	24.71	King Cetywayo	14 649.6	29.03
Total	498 516	100	Ethekwini	14 242.7	28.23
			Umgungundlovu	5 290.20	10.48
			Total	50 460	100
Free State			Northern Cape		
Fezile Dabi	13 649.46	26.92	ZF Mgcawu	16 479.3	38.71
				6	

Mangaung	19 499.23	38.46	Pixley Seme	Ka	14 831.4	29.03
Thabo Mafotsanyana	17 549.31	34.62	JT Gaetsewe		19 775.2	38.71
	59 698	100			51 086	100
Limpopo			North West			
Capricon	28 904	24.24	Bonajala		3 842	14.29
Sekhukhune	19 871.50	16.67	Dr Kenneth Kaunda		8 964.67	33.33
Vhembe	43 356	36.36	Dr Ruth Segomotsi		10 245.3	38.09
Waterberg	27 097.50	22.73	Naaka Modiri		3 842	14.29
	119 229	100			26 894	100
Mpumalanga						
Ehlanzeni	58 361.19	68.75				
Nkangala	26 527.81	31.25				
	84 889	100				

Figure 1 indicates that almost half (48.07%) of the population represented by the interviewed beneficiaries live in informal settlement followed by rural settlement which account for a quarter (26.70%) of the sample. Urban settlement residents contribute 22.51% while semi-urban settlement contribute the least number 2.71%.

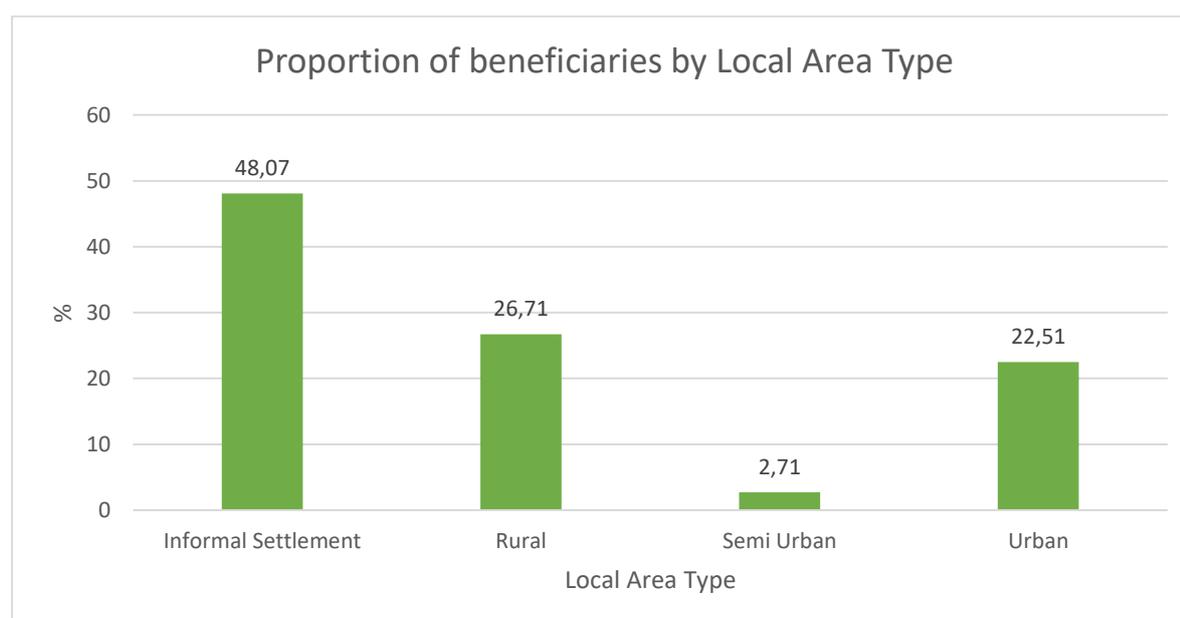


Figure 1: Proportion of beneficiaries by local area type

A.1 Gender

Figure 2 presents the gender composition of beneficiaries by provinces. Results reveal that an overwhelming majority (75%) of the interviewed beneficiaries are women, while 25% are males. This is expected as women are generally caregivers to 13 530 714 children receiving social grant in South Africa (SASSA, 2021). The graph further reveals that Free State province had the highest proportion of Male beneficiaries (42.31%) represented in the sample, while Limpopo has a least (15.15%). However, in terms of the proportion of female beneficiaries across the provinces, Limpopo had the highest proportion (84.85%), followed by Mpumalanga (83.33%) and Western Cape (82.50%), respectively.

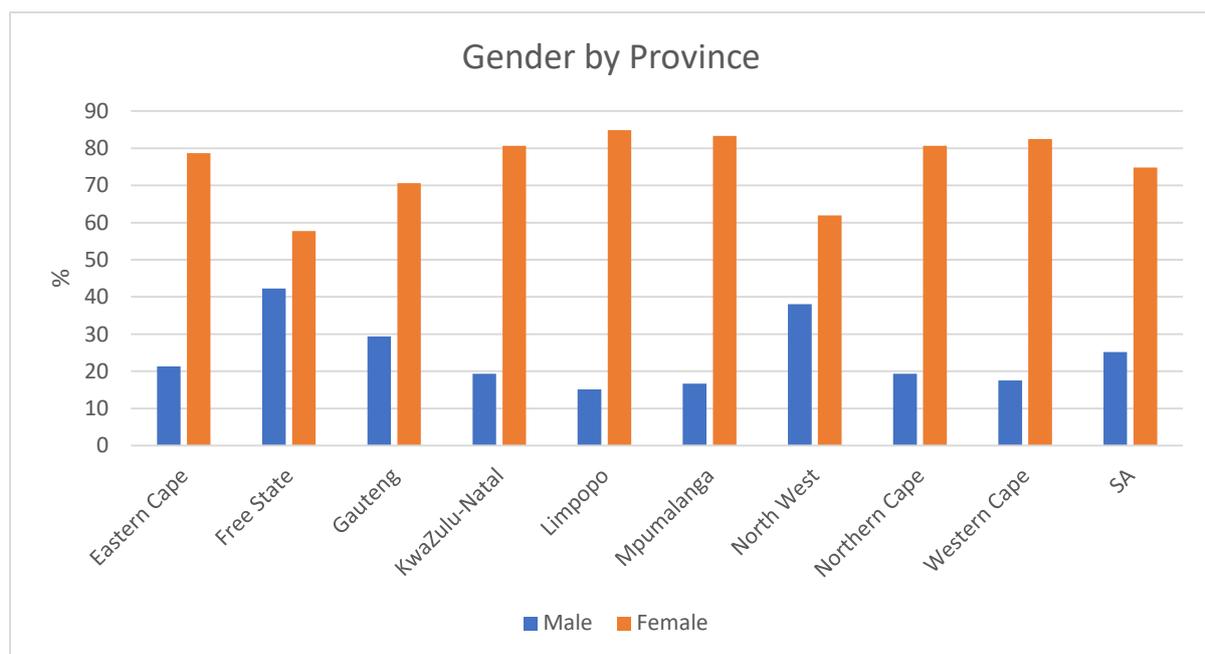


Figure 2: Age of beneficiaries

A.2 Age

The results of the survey revealed that most of participants (29.05%) belong in the 18-35 age group, followed by adults (46-60) population which accounts for 27.83%.

Young adult population contributes a quarter (24.19%) of the sample while those above 61 account for the least proportion of 18.92%. According to the results of the survey, Mpumalanga had the highest (43,73%) of adults who are between 46 and 60 years of age, followed by Western Cape (37.50%) and KwaZulu-Natal. Figure 3 show that Mpumalanga had a lowest proportion of youth (28.75%) represented in the sample.

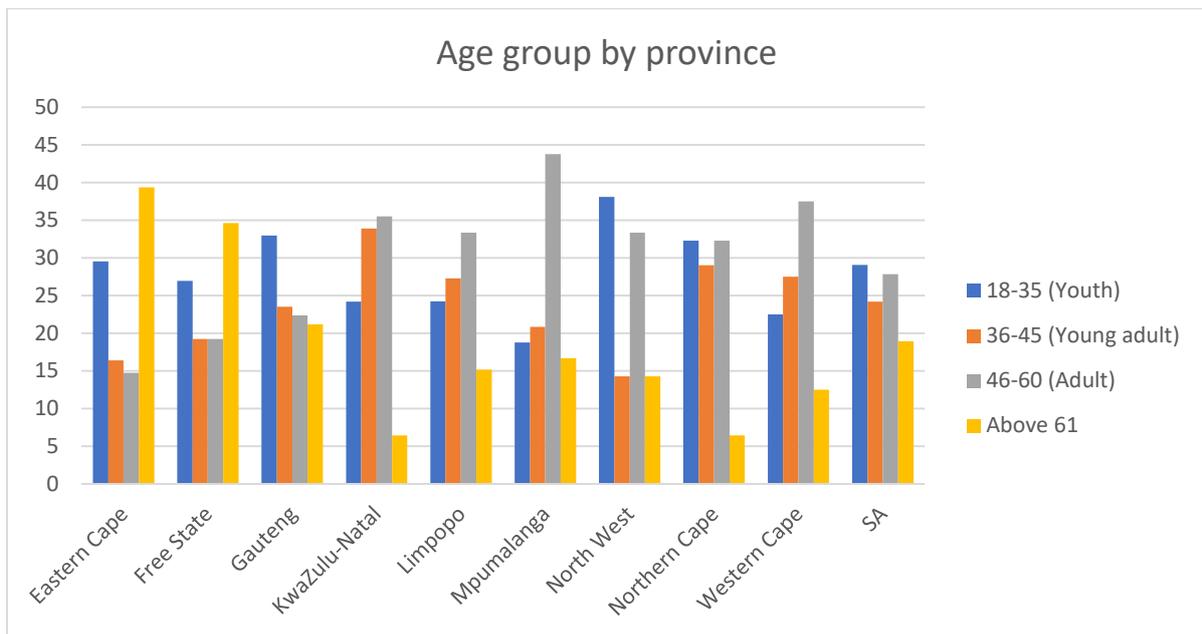


Figure 3: Proportion of participants by age group

A.3 Nationality

Figure 4 shows the nationality of beneficiaries. The chart indicates that an overwhelming majority 98% of participants are South African. Only a tiny minority of 2% presents non-South Africans who benefitted from Covid-19 responses.

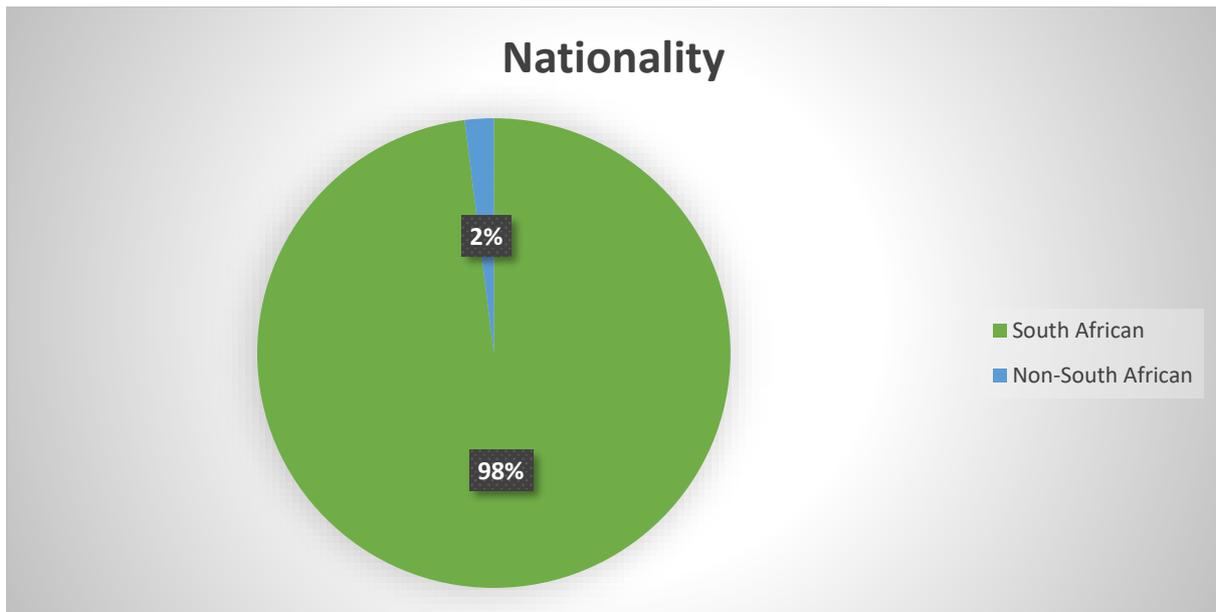


Figure 4: Nationality

A.4 Race

Figure 5 shows the distribution of race by provinces. Majority of the vulnerable population (89.52%) are black/African, while 10.48% are coloured. Asian and white population are not represented in the population represented by the sample. It can be observed from the Figure 5 below that the highest proportion (71.79%) of coloured people are residing in Western Cape followed by Northern Cape and Eastern Cape with 58.06% and 11.48%, respectively. Gauteng had a least number (1.22%) of coloured people living in the province.

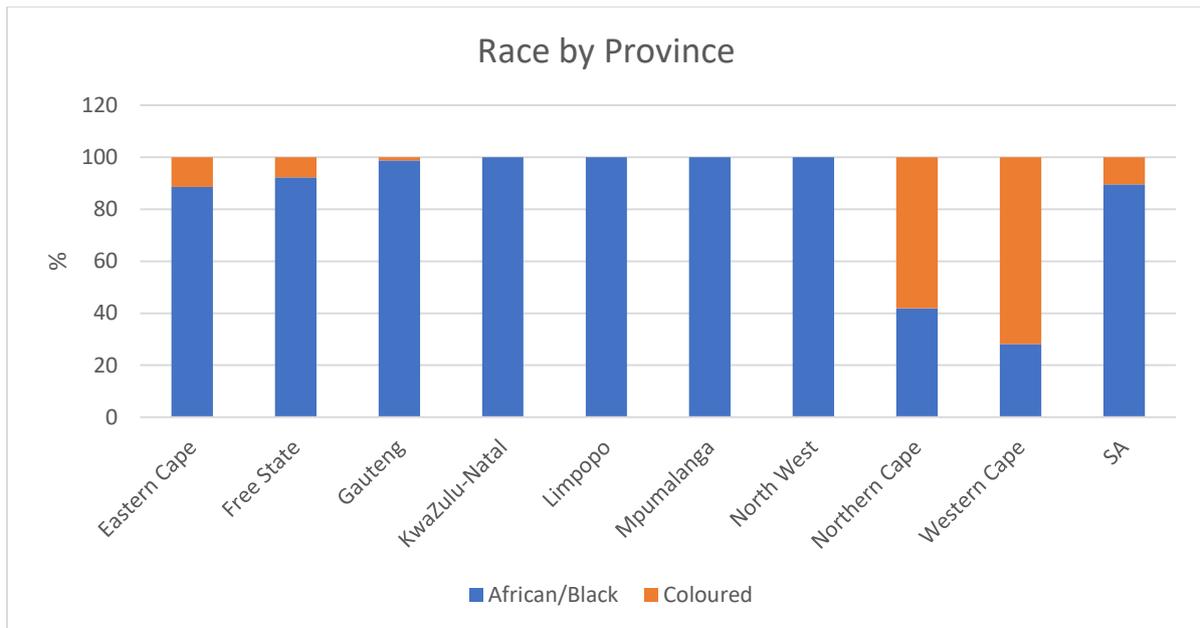


Figure 5: Proportion of beneficiaries by race

A.5 Employment status

According to the results of the survey, majority of beneficiaries (80.21%) represented in the sample are unemployed. This is expected in a country with 34.9% unemployment rate (Stats SA, 2021). Only 9.1% of beneficiaries are employed, followed by 7.82% of those who reported that they are doing voluntary employment and other types of jobs. Only 2.87% of beneficiaries are self-employed. The graph depicts that Eastern Cape had the highest proportion (95.08%) of beneficiaries who are unemployed, followed by Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal, with 89.41% and 83.18%, respectively. Western Cape had a least proportion (65%) unemployed beneficiaries represented in the sample as indicated in figure 6 below.

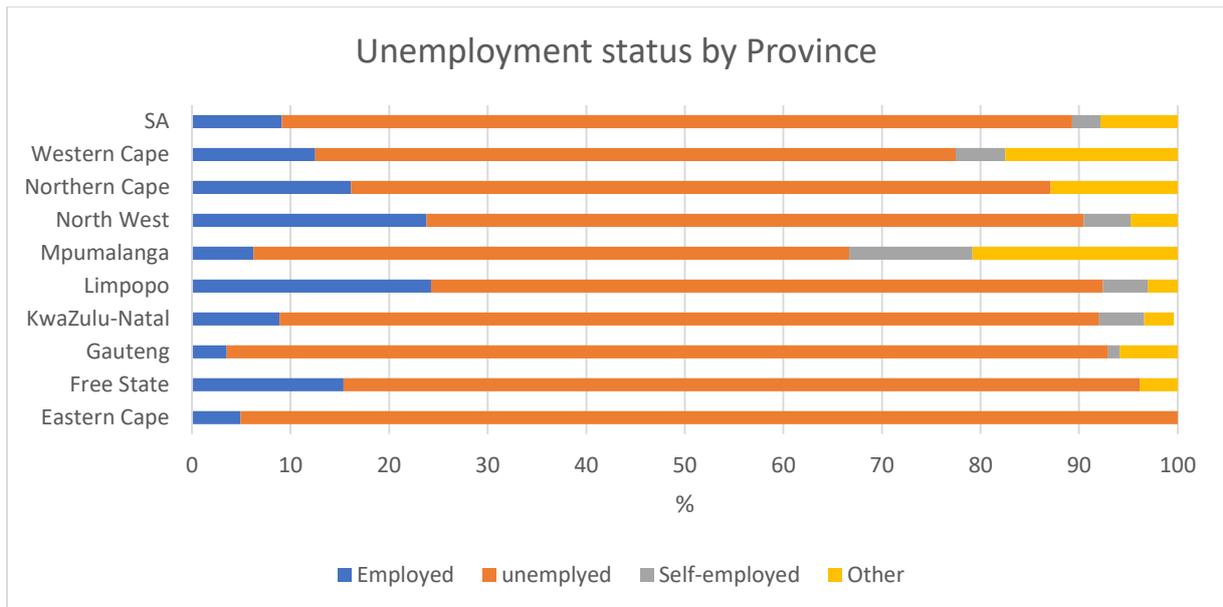


Figure 6: Employment status of beneficiaries

A.6. Marital Status

Figure 7 presents marital status of beneficiaries. Over half of beneficiaries (59.1%) indicated that they are single followed by 18.1% of those who are married. Most (67.21%) respondent who are Single are reported to be residing in Eastern Cape, followed by Gauteng (65.48%) and Limpopo (65.15%), while North West has a least (28.57%). The result of the survey shows that 11.85% of the beneficiaries represented in the sample are widowed, followed by 7.9% of beneficiaries who are in cohabiting relationship. Only 3% of beneficiaries represented in the sample indicated that they are divorced.

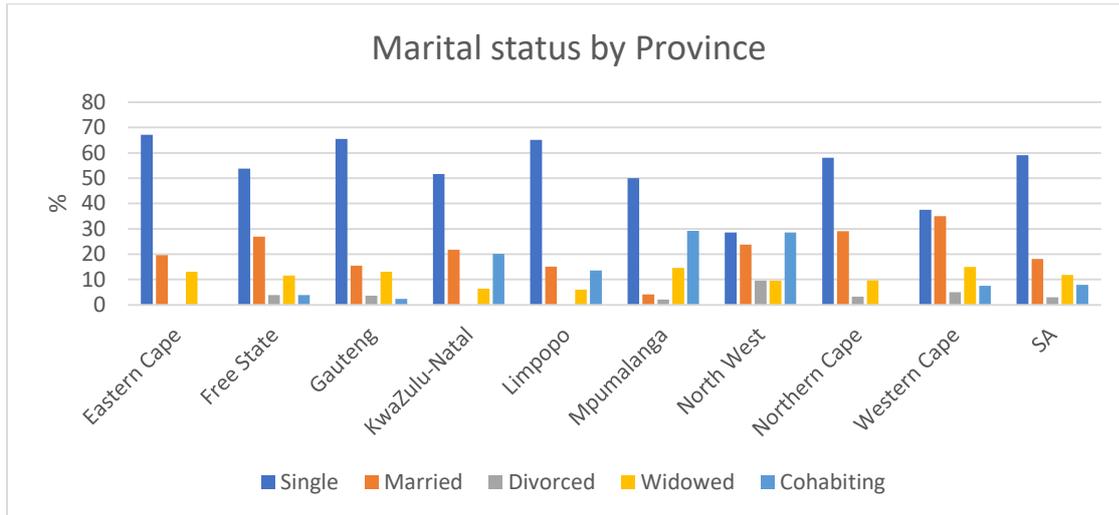


Figure 7: Marital status of beneficiaries

A.7 Level of education

Figure 8 presents the level of education of beneficiaries. Majority (62.49%) of beneficiaries have secondary education followed by almost a quarter (19.98%) of those who have primary education. The graph shows that Free State (76.92%) and North West (76.19%) has the most beneficiaries represented in the sample who have primary level education followed by Limpopo (69.70%) and Eastern Cape (62.30%). Mpumalanga has a least proportion (47.92%) of respondents with primary level education. Those who have no formal education contribute 11% to the sample while only 6,53% went to tertiary school.

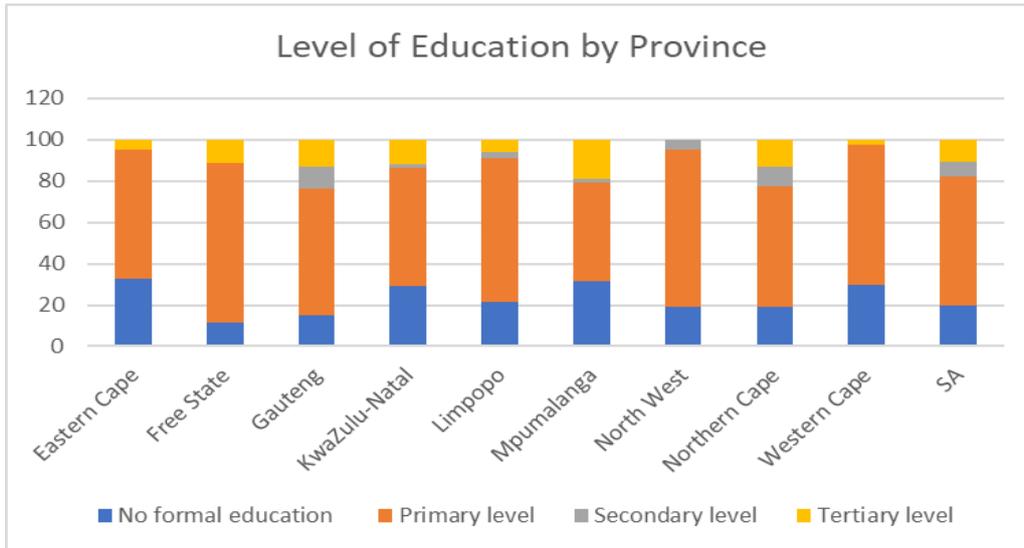


Figure 8: Level of education

A.8 Household size by province

Figure 9 shows the proportion of average household size by provinces. The figure below shows that KwaZulu-Natal has the highest number of household size, followed by Eastern Cape, Mpumalanga, Limpopo, and Northern Cape with an average of 5 people per household. The survey revealed that there was an average of 3-4 adults in the household across all the provinces. Majority of household had an average of 2-3 children across all the provinces

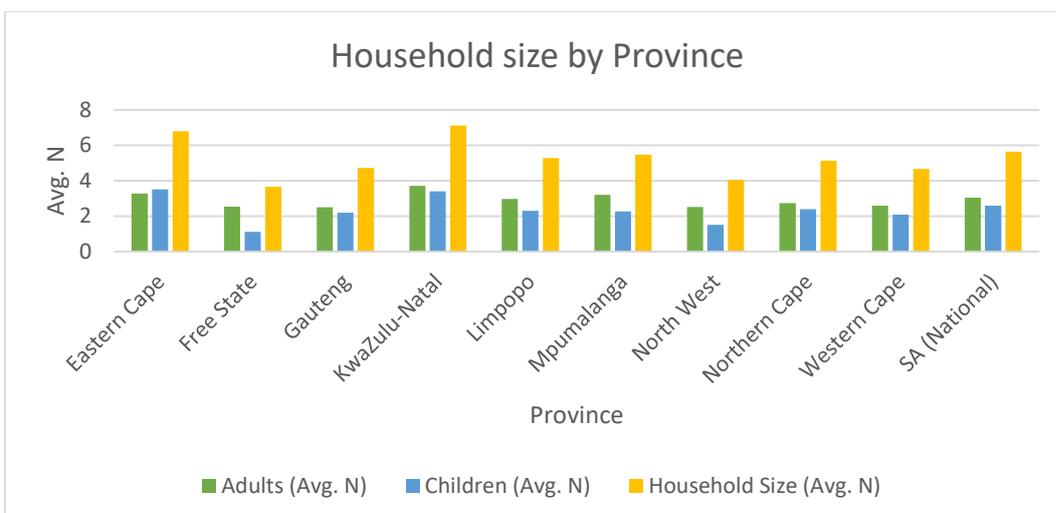
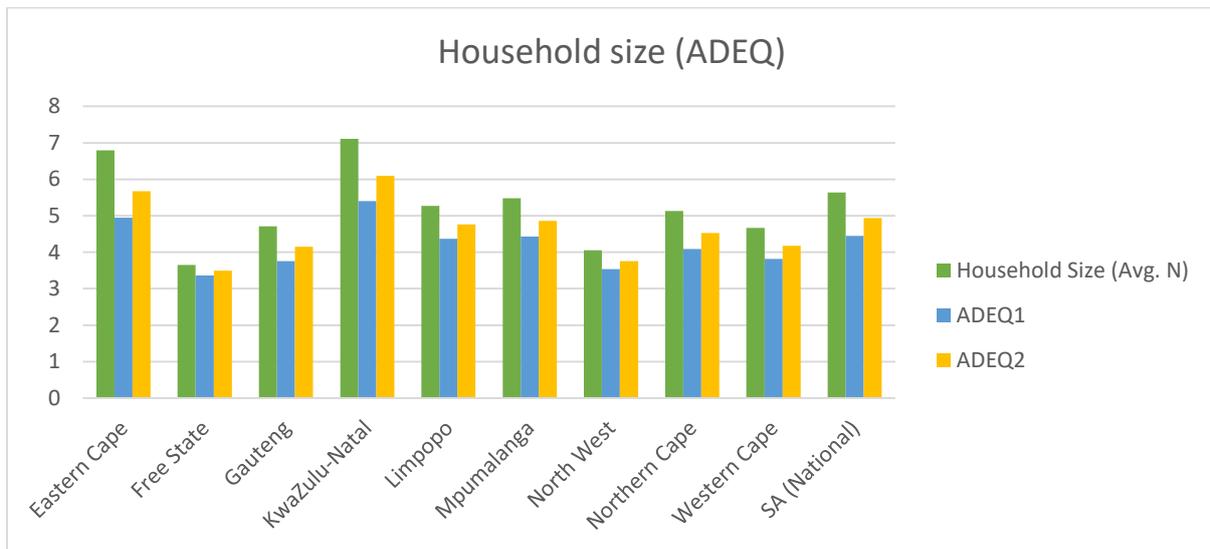


Figure 9: Household size by province

A.9 Household size (ADEQ)

Figure 10 presents an Adult Equivalent (ADEQ) scale with weight for children in the household at alpha 0.5 and 0.75, respectively. The figure below shows that the average household size is between 6-7 per adult equivalent. This shows that there were more people in the average rural household, which can possibly have a significant impact on the household food expenditure.



ADEQ1 = Adult Equivalent with weight for children (alpha=0.5)

ADEQ2 = Adult Equivalent with weight for children (alpha=0.75)

Figure 10: Household (ADEQ)

Pre-Covid19 Situation

This section focuses on the pre-covid status of households. It also examines the amount of income for homes before covid-19, as well as whether they had adequate food, nutritious foods, and whether or not they had received government assistance. It further investigates if this assistance aided the household in having access to healthy meals.

1. Findings

B.1 Main source of income for the household until 2019

As illustrated on the table below, we can deduce that many beneficiaries are recipients of social grants and consist of 63.02%. Eastern Cape and Limpopo have the highest proportion of beneficiaries who rely on social grant as their main income, with 88.52% and 80.30%, respectively. Over half (50.84%) of the beneficiaries represented in the sample support their households with social grant as their main income in Western Cape. Those receiving salaries consisted of 17.81% while 6,63% revealed that their main source of income comes from their businesses. Further findings revealed that the main source of income for other households include remittances, other and no income and consisted of 2.58%, 7.08% and 2.88% respectively.

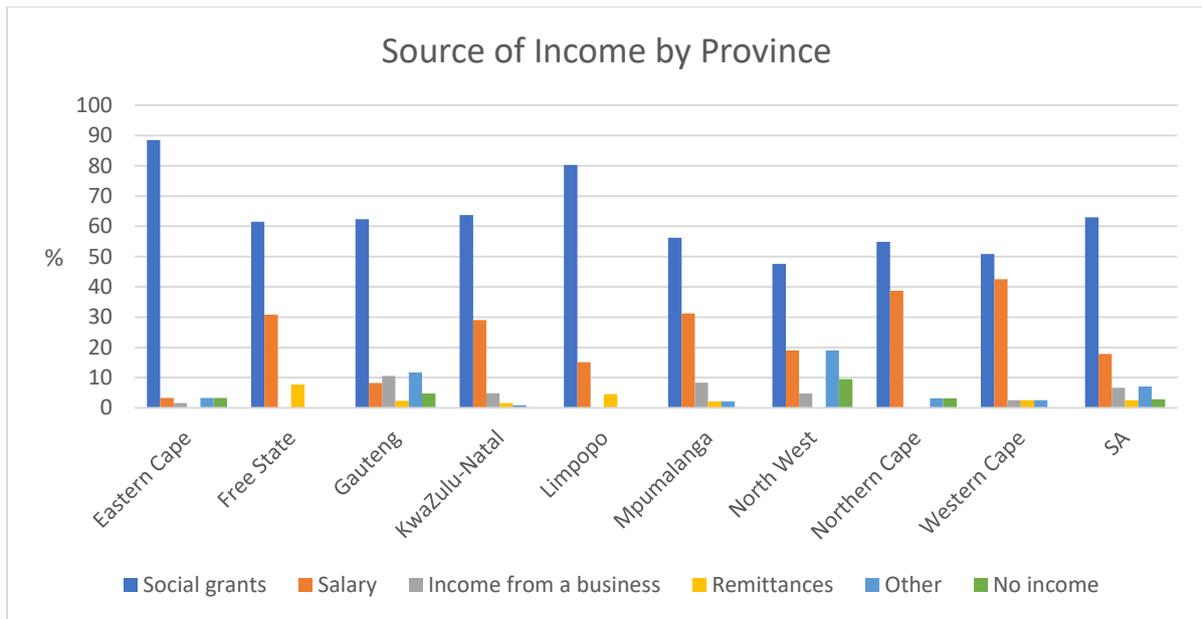


Figure 11: Source of income

Table 4 below shows the household income and food spending per household before and during the pandemic by provinces. It can be observed from the results of the survey that Northern Cape and Western Cape has the highest average of household income in 2019, while free state had the lowest average household income before the pandemic. Moreover, it can be observed that the household food expenditure per month was high across all the province during same year. The result of the survey revealed that the average monthly household income of the beneficiaries decreased significantly during the covid-19 pandemic in 2020. This can be attributed to loss of other sources of income because of measures implemented to curb the spread of the virus.

Table 4: Monthly income and food spending per household, averages for 2019 and 2020

Province	HH Income, pm (Avg.) 2019	HH Income, pm (Avg.) 2020	HH Food Spend, pm 2019
Eastern Cape	1984.9	917.38	2526.4
Free State	1526.9	896.54	1983.5
Gauteng	1909.5	894.94	1977.1
KwaZulu-Natal	2375.6	1295.1	2420.8
Limpopo	1961	1041.2	2353.5
Mpumalanga	1826.5	981.67	2327.1
North West	1808.1	865.71	1927.1
Northern Cape	2832.2	1389	2733.9
Western Cape	2728	1472.5	2818
SA (National)	2130.8	1099.4	2348.4

Table 5: Monthly income and food spending by ADEQ, averages for 2019 and 2020

Province	HH Income, pm (ADEQ Avg.) 2019	HH Food Spend, pm 2019 (ADEQ)	HH Income, pm (ADEQ Avg.) 2020
Eastern Cape	416.76	193.78	538.93
Free State	466.58	270.28	629.67
Gauteng	560.26	265.34	574.62
KwaZulu-Natal	434.75	234.51	456.28
Limpopo	467	241.66	561.05
Mpumalanga	530.65	285.22	672.43
North West	515.04	253.35	528.11
Northern Cape	709.06	354.6	721.18
Western Cape	687.99	375.15	688
SA (National)	509.35	261.83	567.61

According to StatsSA (2014), poor families spend an average of R8 485 a year on food, accounting for roughly 34% of their entire household spending. Non-poor households, on the other hand, spend an average of R14 020 each year on food. This barely accounts for 10% of their entire household spending. The results shows that the household food expenditure per ADEQ were lower in 2019 across all the provinces, particularly in rural provinces such as Limpopo, Eastern Cape, and KwaZulu-Natal, with R241.66, R193.78 and R234.51, respectively. According to HSRC (2009), there are several ways of making sense of why rural households in the

same expenditure group spend less on food per adult equivalent (ADEQ). One of the most obvious reasons is that there are more people in the average rural household.

The table below (Table 6) shows the FGT poverty share by province. According to the results of the survey, the 2019 ADEQ income of beneficiaries were below the R640 per person per months. This shows that the beneficiaries of various covid-19 social assistance were food poor, hence the support was very useful during the pandemic.

Table 6: FGT poverty shares (%) by Province, 2019 ADEQ Income (Povertyline = R640 pp/pm)

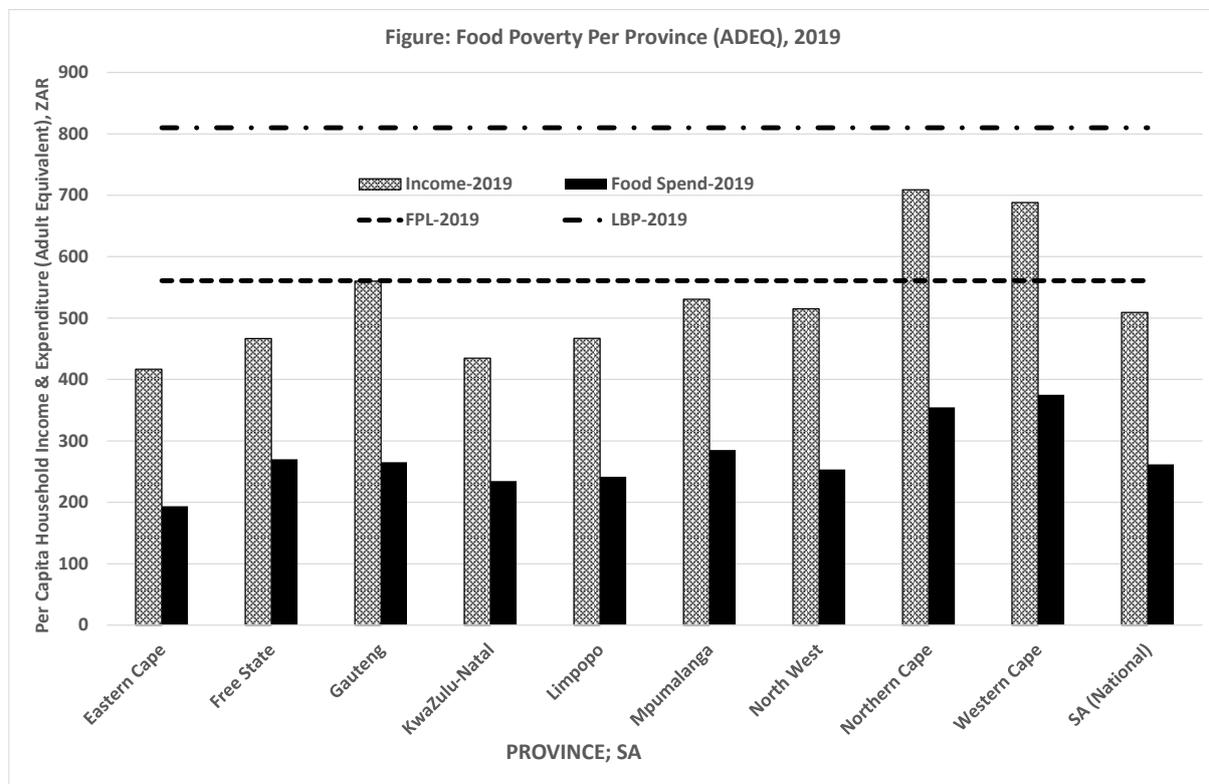
Province	a=0	a=1	a=2
Eastern Cape	85.25	42.81	27.48
Free State	73.10	37.13	23.99
Gauteng	74.12	39.99	27.40
KwaZulu-Natal	82.26	43.70	26.82
Limpopo	77.27	39.80	24.13
Mpumalanga	75.00	37.26	22.12
North West	71.43	35.92	24.87
Northern Cape	61.29	29.57	17.89
Western Cape	55.00	24.81	14.27

Table 7: FGT poverty shares (%) by Province, 2019 ADEQ Income (Povertyline = 561 pp/pm)

Province	a=0	a=1	a=2
Eastern Cape	72.13	37.82	23.60
Free State	61.54	32.79	20.68
Gauteng	65.88	35.62	24.222
KwaZulu-Natal	79.84	38.40	22.50
Limpopo	72.73	34.70	20.14
Mpumalanga	72.92	32.06	18.30
North West	66.67	31.26	22.22
Northern Cape	54.84	25.72	14.93
Western Cape	50.00	21.06	11.64
South Africa (National)	66.09	33.41	21.34

Table 7 shows that there is a concentration of a lower living standard amongst beneficiaries of social relief package across the rural province at alpha=0. According

to the result of the survey most beneficiaries are living below the 2019 ADEQ income (Povertyline= R585 pp/pm).



B.6 Run out of money to buy enough food in 2019

From the chart below (Figure 15), 88.05% of the beneficiaries ran out of money to buy enough food for the household. Free state, KwaZulu-Natal and Northern cape reported the highest proportion of household who ran out of money to buy food before the pandemic, with 96.15%, 94.35% and 93.55%, respectively. Furthermore, only 11.95% of the households had enough money to buy enough food. This shows the extent to which South African households cannot afford basic food packages. On the other hand, StatsSA (2019) revealed that the inadequacy of food and hunger continues to be a problem. Poverty-stricken families lack the financial means to purchase food and are unable to generate their own. These households are restricted by their incapacity to find work or create revenue. Poor households are also characterized by a small

number of income earners and many dependents, making them particularly sensitive to economic shocks.

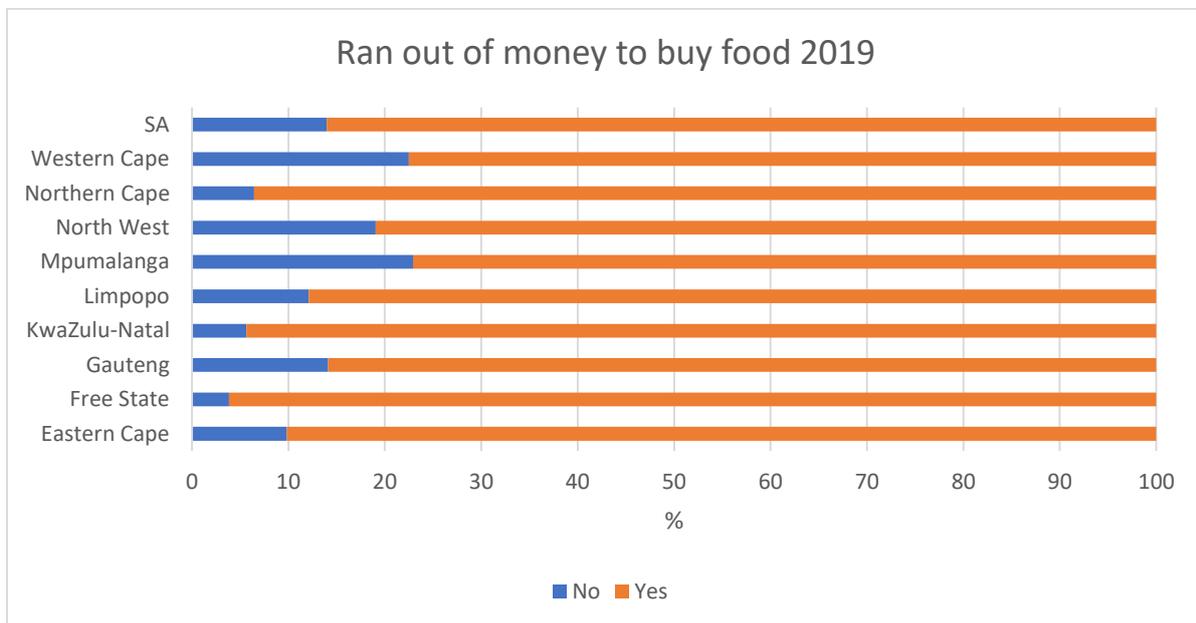


Figure 12: Percentage of households that ran out of money to buy food

B.7 Number of weeks (approx.) without enough money to buy enough food in 2019

While food scarcity and hunger continue to be a problem, the report revealed that beneficiaries that did not have enough money to buy food in 2019 for 1 and 2 weeks were 24.61% and 26.62% respectively. Majority of household in Eastern Cape (76.79%) reported that they ran out of money to buy food for a week, while none reported the same in Western Cape (0%). Households that did not have enough money to buy food for 3 and 4 weeks were 13.87% and 7.61% respectively. 27.29% of households revealed that the number of weeks without enough money to buy food is more than 5 weeks.

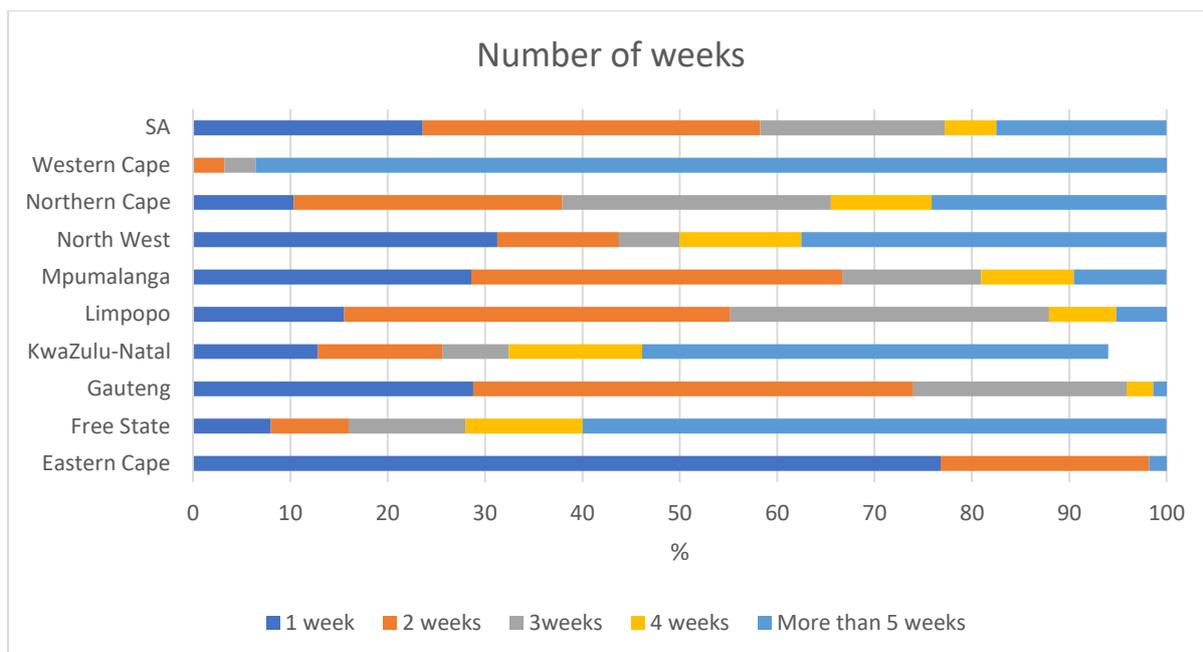


Figure 13: Number of weeks (approx.) without enough money to buy enough

B.8 Government grant/regular social intervention received in 2019

54.85% of the beneficiaries revealed that they receive regular government grants and other social interventions such as housing and sanitation. Amongst those beneficiaries, majority (81.82%) are from Limpopo, followed by Gauteng (57.65%), Mpumalanga, and North West, with 57.14%, respectively. Below half (45.15%) of the beneficiaries revealed that they did not receive any regular government grants and social interventions.

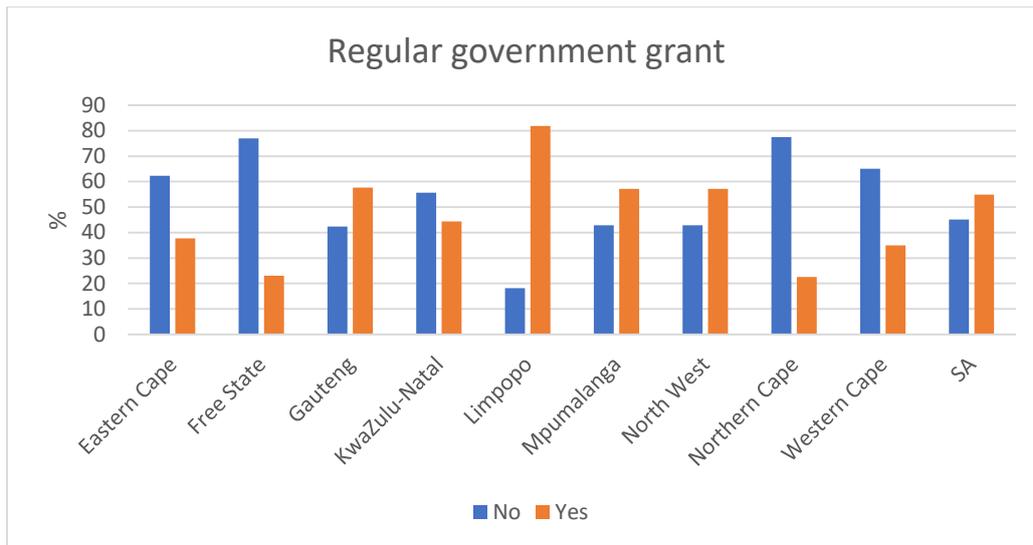


Figure 14: Government grant/regular social intervention received in 2019

B.8 Intervention(s) assist in the availing of enough food

59.04% of the beneficiaries revealed that the regular social interventions from the government assisted their households to a large extent in availing enough food for them while 27.09% revealed that to some extent the regular social interventions played a huge role in availing enough food. 70.91% of beneficiaries in KwaZulu-Natal reported that the regular grants are very useful in terms of availing enough food, while only 9.09% reported that they do not provide enough food in the same province. Only 13.37% revealed that these interventions did not assist in availing enough food for their households in 2019.

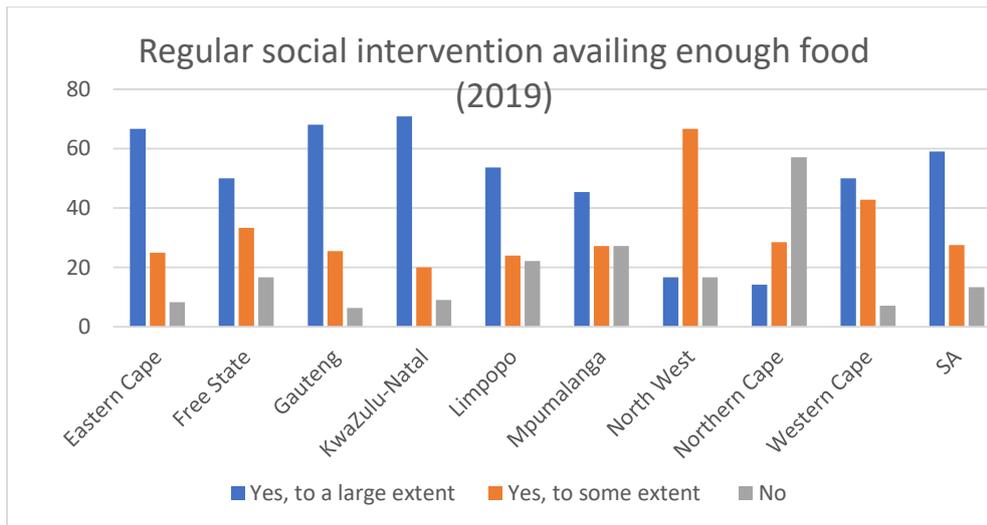


Figure 15: Enough food in 2019

B.9 Intervention(s) assist in the availing of nutritious food

53.46% of the beneficiaries revealed that the regular social interventions assisted their households to large extent in availing nutritious food for them while 33.94% revealed that to some extent the regular social interventions played a huge role in availing nutritious food for their household. Majority of beneficiaries in Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal reported that the regular government intervention assisted their household to have nutritious food, with 70.83% and 70.91%, respectively. Only 12.60% revealed that the regular social interventions did not assist in availing enough food for their households in 2019. Most of these households are in Mpumalanga (51.52%) and Northern Cape (42.86%), respectively.

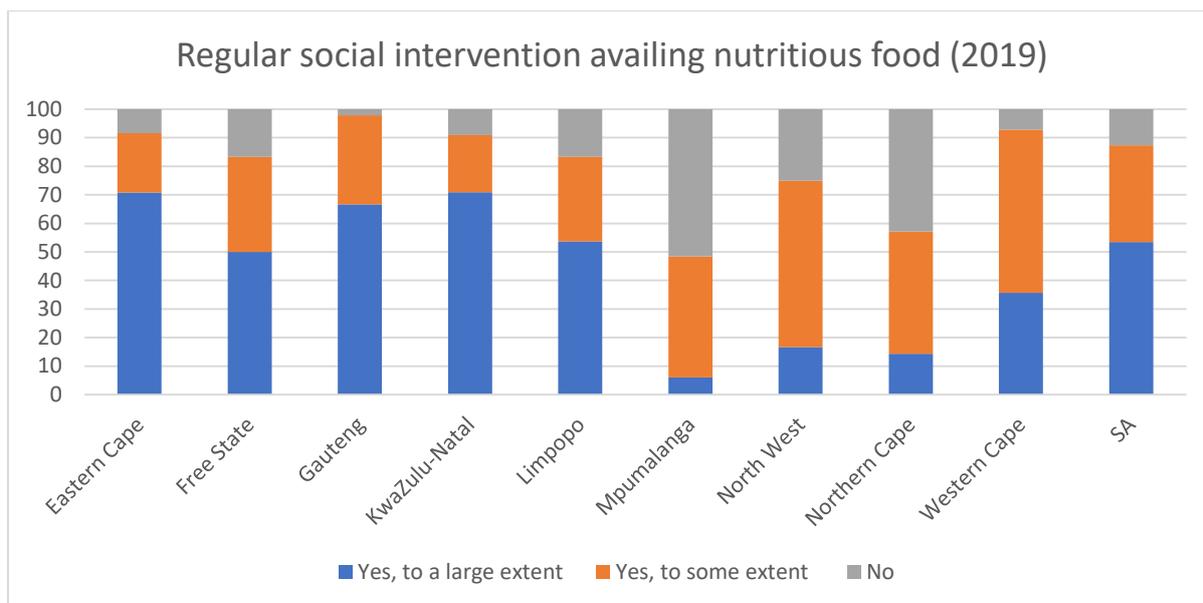


Figure 16: Nutritious food in 2019

2. Conclusion

It is evident that the need for social grants and social interventions can never be overstated. Social grants are provided to persons who are poor and in need of government assistance to help them improve their living conditions. Grants have also aided in the achievement of human development goals in South Africa, such as improving education and health outcomes while also lowering poverty levels and addressing food and nutrition security. Despite the covid pandemic, we can deduce that even before the pandemic, a significant percentage of households rely on different social grants for survival. The need for a social intervention was also evident when beneficiaries revealed that these interventions have assisted them in having enough and nutritious foods.

Covid-19 Assistance

This section contains survey results on covid-19 responses, as well as information on the food and nutrition security of vulnerable population groups in South Africa. The findings in this section are based on the experiences of people who received various covid-19-related interventions during the first two waves of the pandemic. The purpose of this section is to assess the impact of covid-related assistance as well as to identify the difficulties encountered during the implementation of various initiatives.

1. Findings

C.1. Type(s) of assistance received during the lockdown

Table 8: Type(s) of assistance received during the lockdown

	Food parcels		Food vouchers		Social grant		UIFTERS		Covid Relief Grant	
	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Eastern Cape	26,23	73,77	98,36	1,64	6,56	93,44	95,08	4,92	65,57	34,43
Free State	50	50	100	0	19,23	80,77	100	0	69,23	30,77
Gauteng	23,53	76,47	97,65	2,35	28,24	71,76	97,65	2,35	42,35	57,65
KwaZulu-Natal	36,29	63,71	62,9	37,1	9,68	90,32	96,77	3,23	39,52	60,48
Limpopo	1,52	98,48	90,91	9,09	12,12	87,88	90,91	9,09	71,21	28,79
Mpumalanga	14,58	85,42	97,92	2,08	29,17	70,83	85,42	14,58	62,5	37,5
North West	9,52	90,48	100	0	33,33	66,67	95,24	4,76	52,38	47,62
Northern Cape	64,52	35,48	83,87	16,13	19,35	80,65	100	0	74,19	25,81
Western Cape	60	40	100	0	25	75	95	5	82,5	17,5
SA	27,04	72,96	94,81	5,19	23,7	76,3	95,63	4,37	54,79	45,21

The table above (Table 8) depicts the various types of assistance provided to vulnerable households during the pandemic's first two waves. The graph shows that most vulnerable households received the food parcels (72.96%) and social grants (76.30%), followed by Covid-19 relief grant and food voucher, with 45.21% and 5.19%, respectively. Majority of those who received social grant are based in Eastern Cape,

KwaZulu-Natal, and Limpopo, with 93.44%, 90.32% and 87.88%, respectively. A small proportion of beneficiaries (4.37%) reported that they have received the UIF-TERS during the lockdown. Only 14.58% reported that they received UIF-TERS in Mpumalanga.

C.2. Percentage (approx.) spent on food

Beneficiaries who received assistance in the form of cash or grants were asked to estimate the percentage of their income spent on food. Most beneficiaries reported spending more than half of their cash assistance or grants on food. 37.13% of beneficiaries spent 91-100% of their cash assistance or grants on food, followed by those who spent 71-90% (21.59%) and 51-70% (19.03%), respectively. Gauteng showed over half (50.59%) of beneficiaries who spent 91-100% of cash relief on food, while a small (4.96%) of beneficiaries spent the same in North West. According to the survey results, only 2.5% of cash assistance recipients spent less than 1-10% of their income on food. 8.79% of beneficiaries in the sample said they did not spend any grant money they received on food.

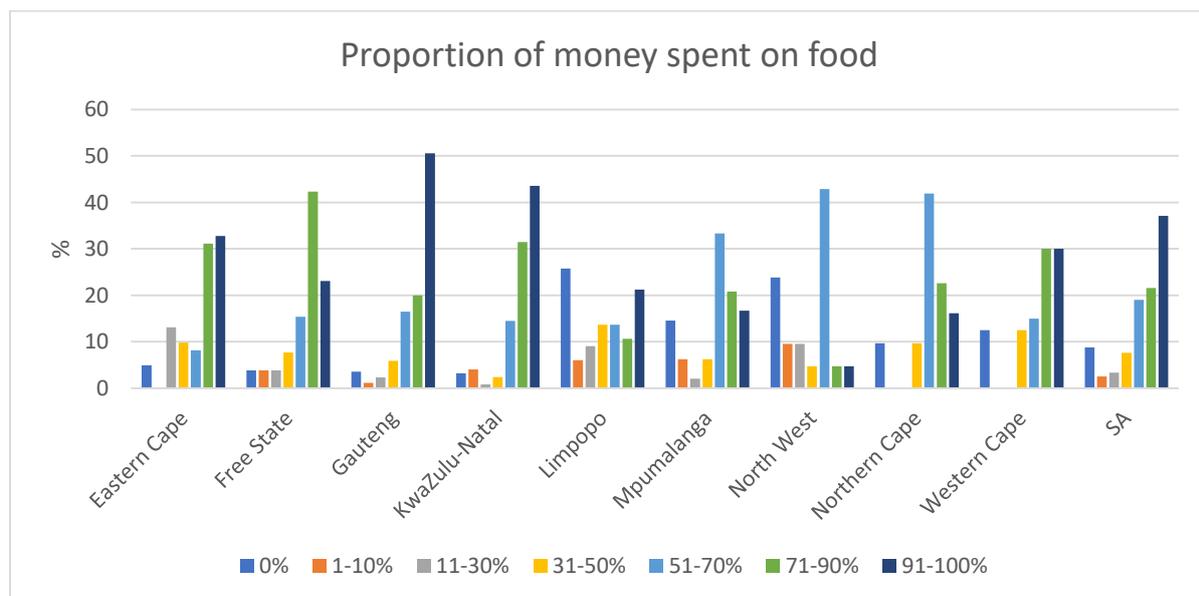


Figure 17: Percentage of money spent on food

C.3. Source(s) of the Covid-related assistance

Different institutions and organizations provided the Covid-related assistance to the vulnerable households during the lockdown. According to Table 9, most beneficiaries (84,18%) indicated that they received Covid-related assistance from SASSA, followed by those who received assistance from the local DSD CNDS office (37.24%). KwaZulu-Natal recorded a high proportion (100%) of beneficiaries who received support from SASSA, while North West recorded a lower proportion (61.90%) of beneficiaries who received covid-19 support from SASSA. Approximately 36.73% of respondents reported receiving Covid-related assistance from non-governmental organizations (NGOs), such as local churches and solidarity organizations.

Table 9: Source(s) of the Covid-related assistance

Province	NGO		Local DSD office		SASSA	
	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Eastern Cape	90,16	9,84	40,98	59,02	9,84	90,16
Free State	84,62	15,38	76,92	23,08	0	100
Gauteng	48,24	51,76	70,59	29,41	14,12	85,88
KwaZulu-Natal	75,81	24,19	51,61	48,39	1,61	98,39
Limpopo	50	50	51,52	48,48	36,36	63,64
Mpumalanga	95,83	4,17	14,58	85,42	14,58	85,42
North West	95,24	4,76	42,86	57,14	38,1	61,9
Northern Cape	100	0	64,52	35,48	9,68	90,32
Western Cape	75	25	92,5	7,5	15	85
SA	63,27	36,73	62,76	37,24	15,82	84,18

C.4. During which wave of the pandemic did you receive the Covid-related assistance?

As noted in the methodology, this study focuses on the dynamics and households experience in the first wave and second wave of the pandemic. According to the graph below (Figure 18), approximately 45.3% of beneficiaries reported receiving Covid-

related assistance during the first wave of the pandemic, followed by those who reported receiving assistance during the second waves of the pandemic (28.1%). The overwhelming majority (90.48%) of respondents of beneficiaries in North West received the covid-related support during the first wave of the pandemic, between March 2020 and October 2020, while only 20.16% received during the same wave in KwaZulu-Natal. It can be observed from the graph below that only 26.6% of respondents received the assistance during the two waves of pandemic, which lasted from March 2020 to March 2021, with only Limpopo recording only 2% of respondents who received during both periods.

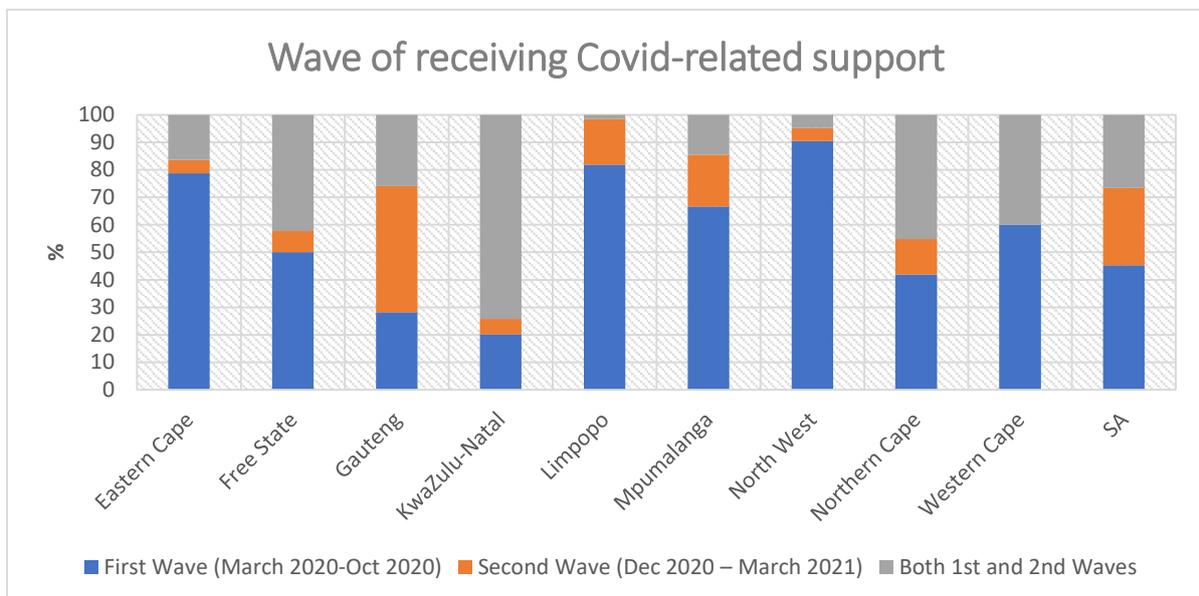


Figure 18: Wave of receiving Covid-related assistance

C.5. In which specific period(s) did you receive the Covid relief assistance?

Figure 19 shows the period(s) in which the beneficiaries received the Covid relief assistance. It can be observed from the results of the study that most (29.14) of the covid-19 relief beneficiaries received the support between March and June 2020. This was a very critical period because most people were vulnerable to hunger due to loss of income and jobs. Amongst those who received support between March and June

2020, 90.48% are North West beneficiaries, followed by Limpopo (63.64%) and Eastern Cape (60.66%), while Northern Cape received a lower proportion (3%). Approximately 25.79% of respondents received covid relief assistance during all time periods in question, followed by those who reported receiving assistance between January and March 2020.

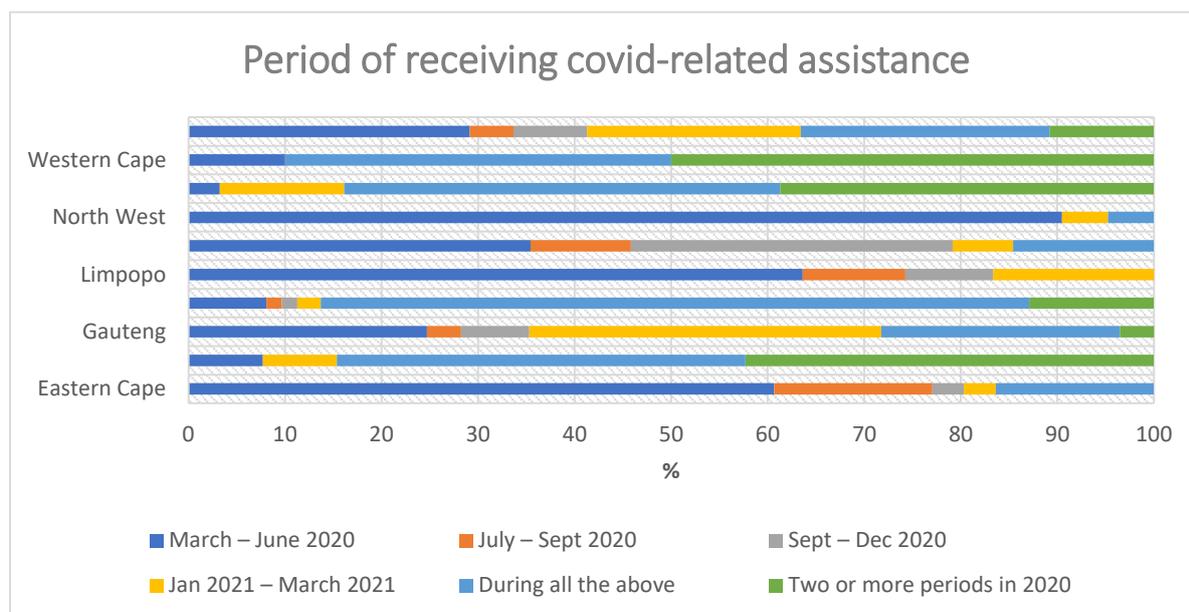


Figure 19: Period(s) of receiving Covid relief assistance

Table 10: FGT poverty shares (%) by Province, 2020 ADEQ Income (Povertyline = R585 pp/pm)

Province	a=0	a=1	a=2
Eastern Cape	65.57	27.54	15.25
Free State	57.69	22.87	10.62
Gauteng	65.88	29.41	16.97
KwaZulu-Natal	78.23	35.07	19.55
Limpopo	65.15	26.26	13.54
Mpumalanga	70.83	29.57	16.12
North West	57.14	27.81	18.47
Northern Cape	61.29	24.99	13.68
Western Cape	47.50	16.72	07.49
South Africa (National)	64.38	27.59	15.31

The study used the poverty lines to classify individuals in the sample based on their real monthly household per capita incomes (using April 2020 as the base month to be directly comparable to the national poverty lines). Table 10 shows that the living standard of most respondents worsen during the pandemic in 2020, with their ADEQ income falling below the poverty line across all the provinces. This demonstrates that social interventions during the pandemic were of high need the income of beneficiaries were below R585 per adult equivalent (ADEQ).

Table 11: FGT poverty shares (%) by Province, 2020 ADEQ Income (Povertyline = R585 pp/pm)

Province	Meanpoor	Mean gappoor
Eastern Cape	339.30	245.70
Free State	353.10	231.90
Gauteng	323.89	261.11
KwaZulu-Natal	322.72	262.28
Limpopo	349.21	235.79
Mpumalanga	340.78	244.22
North West	300.11	284.89
Northern Cape	346.47	238.53
Western Cape	379.12	205.87

Table 11 shows that there is a concentration of a lower living standard amongst beneficiaries of social relief package across all the provinces. Using the 2020 ADEQ income (Povertyline = R585 pp/pm) the standard of living for beneficiaries of Covid-19 social relief interventions is shown to be lower. In term of both poverty and the poverty gap, the income of beneficiaries is below R400 across all the provinces as shown in figure 25 below. This shows that the level of poverty is concentrated across the country, however, the western cape is showing a least poverty share in terms of the poverty gap.

C.7. Ran out of money to buy enough food

Beneficiaries of various covid-related assistance were asked if they ever ran out of money to buy enough food between March 2020 and March 2021. The vast majority (82.44%) stated that they ran out of money to buy food between March 2020 and March 2021, while only 17.56% stated that they did not run out of money to buy food. 97.50% of beneficiaries who ran out of money to buy food during the pandemic were recorded in Western Cape, while North West recorded a lower proportion (57.14%).

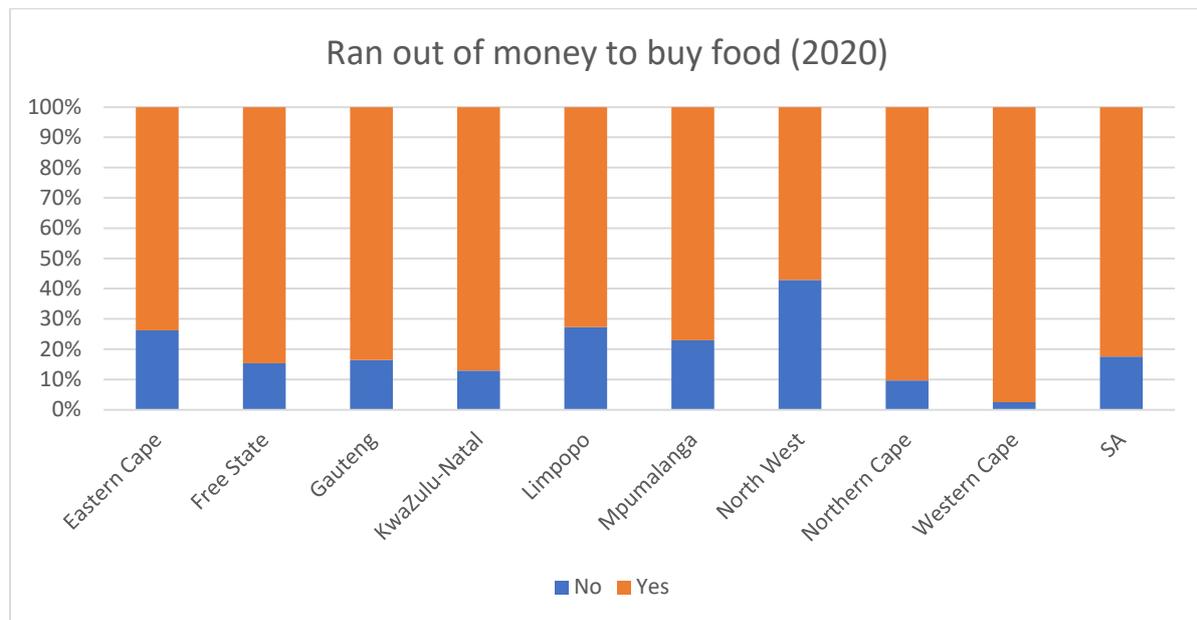


Figure 20: Runout of money to buy food 2020/21

C.8. How many weeks (approx.) were you without enough money in that period to buy enough food?

Amongst those who indicated that they run out of money to buy food between March 2020 and March 2021, 35.99% of them indicated that they were with no money to buy food for approximately 2 weeks, followed by those who cited a week (25,31%) and more than 5 week (17.76%), without money to buy food respectively (Figure 21). Amongst those who indicated that they ran out of money for food in Western Cape, 66.67% revealed that they spent more than 5 weeks without money for food, while

5.13% highlighted that they spend 1-3 weeks without money for food in the same province.

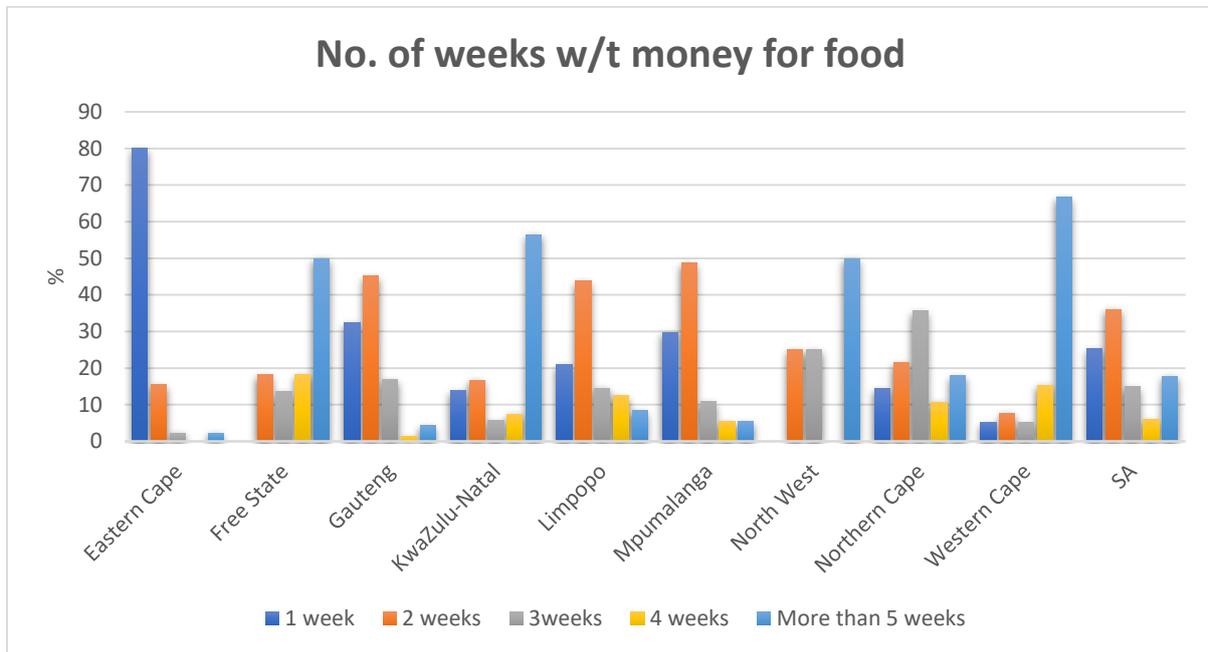


Figure 21: No of weeks without money to buy food

C.9.a Usefulness of Covid-related assistance in 2020 and 2021

The Covid-related assistance were found to be very useful during the first wave of the pandemic in 2020 as cited by over 68% of beneficiaries, followed by those who indicated that the support was somewhat useful (20.24%). Amongst those who reported that the support was useful, majority were recorded in Limpopo (90.91%), followed by North West, and Eastern Cape, with 85.71% and 83.61%, respectively. The survey results further revealed that only 4.69% of beneficiaries found the Covid-related assistance to be ineffective during the second wave of the pandemic.

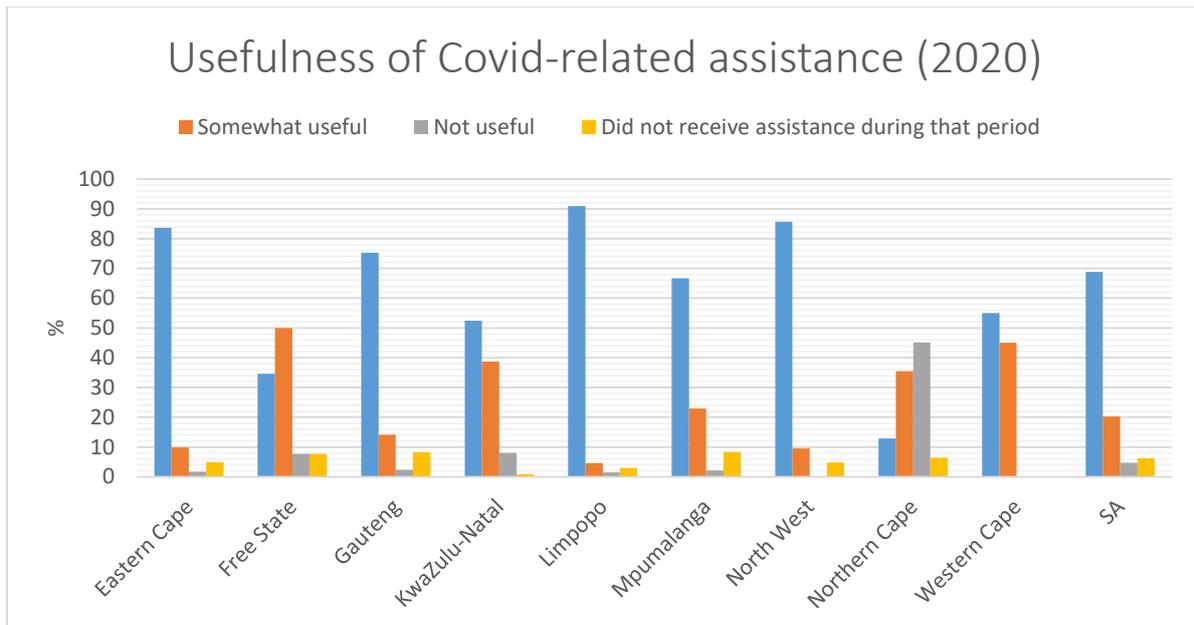


Figure 22: Usefulness of Covid-related support (2020)

C.9.b Usefulness of Covid-related assistance in 2021

It can be observed from the results of the survey that as the level of the lockdown were changing, the effectiveness of the covid-related support dropped. According to the result of the survey, 51% of beneficiaries represented in the sample indicated that the covid-related support was very useful during the second wave of the pandemic, with Gauteng reporting a higher proportion (71.43%), while North West reporting a least (4.76%). Only 15.19% beneficiaries across all the province indicated that the support was somewhat useful. The decline in effectiveness of the support can be attributed to the opening of the economy, which allowed some of the economic activities to resume.

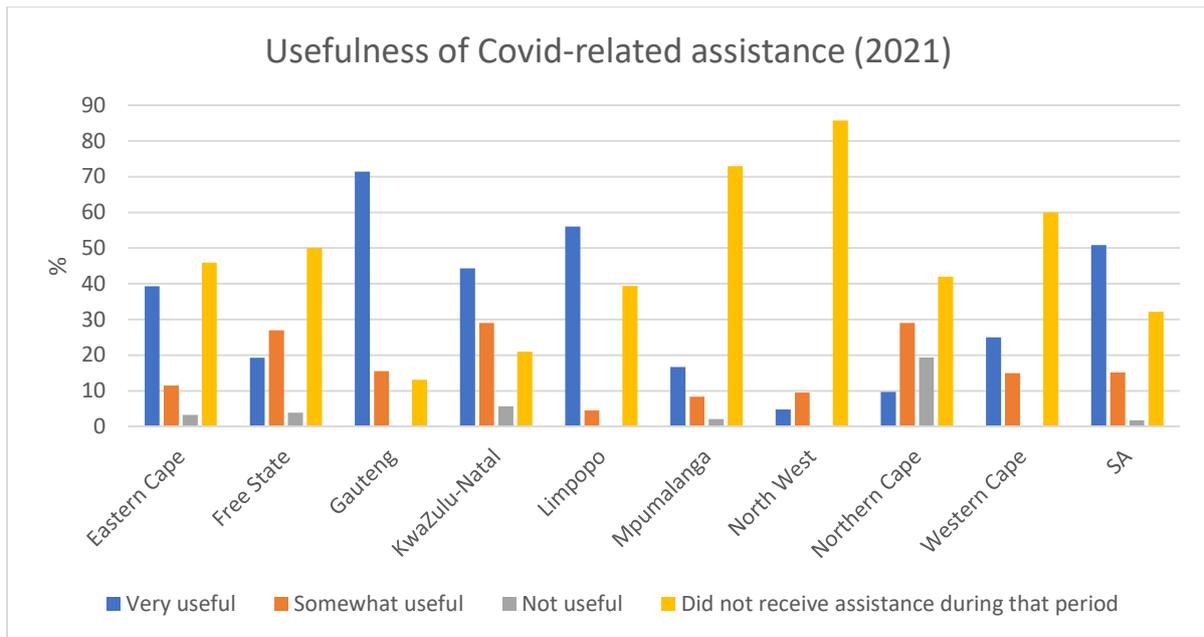


Figure 23: Usefulness of Covid-related assistance (2021)

C.10 Intervention(s) assist in the availing of enough food in 2020

Over half (55.28%) of respondents said the interventions they received helped them have enough food to a large extent in their households in 2020, while 28.13% said the support was somewhat useful. Eastern Cape recorded a highest proportion (80.33%) of beneficiaries who indicated that the support assisted their households to have enough food. Only 11.16% of respondents said the interventions did not help them have enough food in 2020.

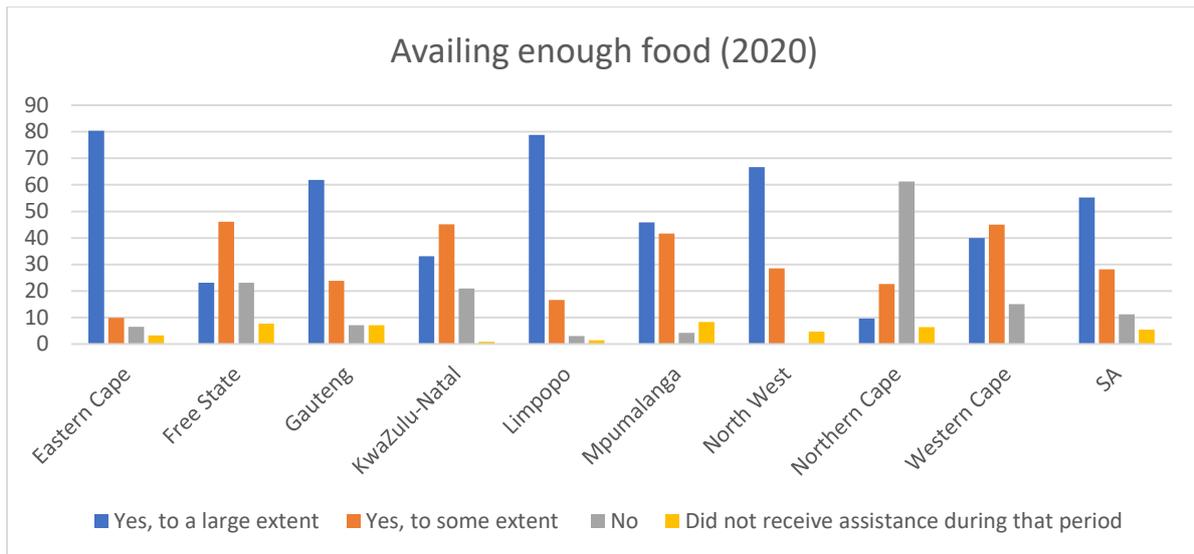


Figure 24: Interventions Availing enough food (2020)

C.10.a Intervention(s) assist in the availing of enough food in 2021

During the second wave of the pandemic, less than half (43.49%) of the beneficiaries reported that the support they received help their households to have enough food, while only 6.79% indicated that the support they received did not assist their household to have enough food. Gauteng recorded a high proportion (63.10%) of beneficiaries who indicated that the covid-related support assisted their households to have enough food, while only 4.76% recorded the same in North West.

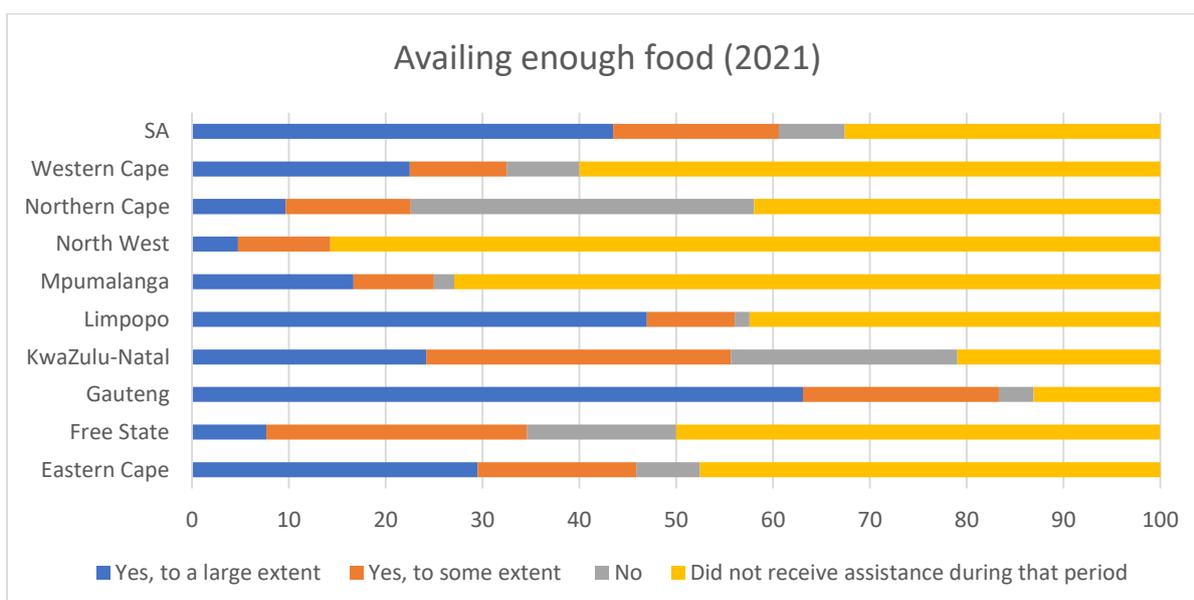


Figure 25: Availing enough food (2021)

C.11.a Intervention(s) assist in the availing of Nutritious food in 2020

10.62% of beneficiaries reported that the interventions did not help them have nutritious food in 2020 (Figure 26). However, most respondents indicated that the provision of social assistance during the pandemic assisted their households to have nutritious food in 2020, as cited by 49.38% and 33.61% of recipients, respectively. 77.27% of beneficiaries in Limpopo revealed that the covid-related support assisted their household to have nutritious food in their household, while 19.23% in Free State reported the same.

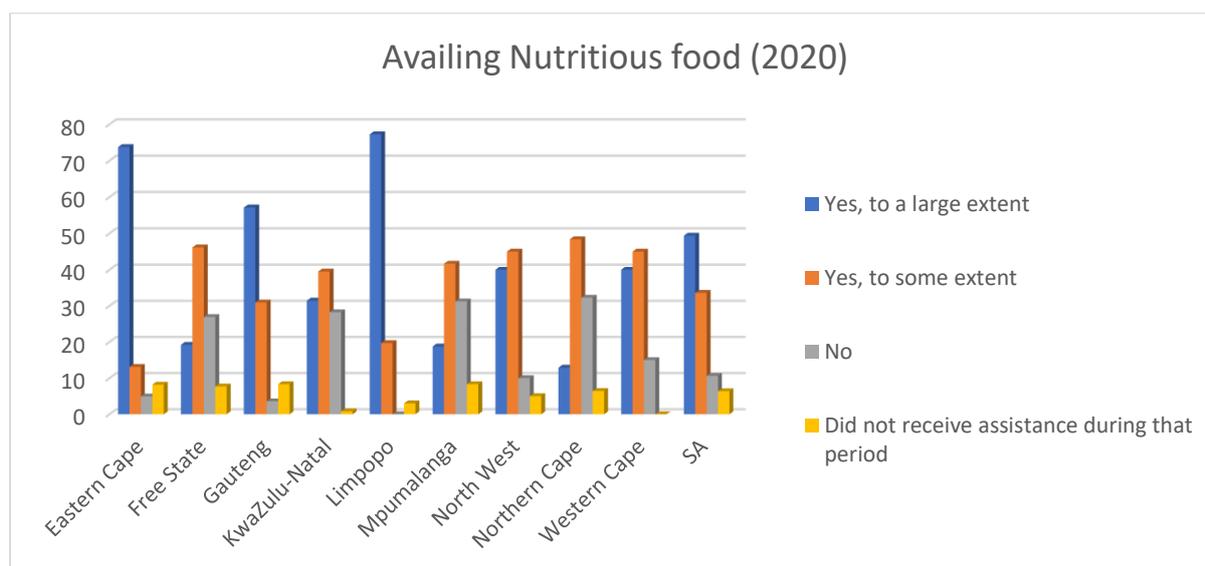


Figure 26: Availing nutritious food (2020)

C.11.b Intervention(s) assist in the availing of Nutritious food in 2021

Figure 27 shows that Gauteng and Limpopo have the most beneficiaries who reported that the covid-related support they received assisted their households to have nutritious food during the second wave of the pandemic with 62.65% and 48.48%, respectively. Only less than 3% of beneficiaries in both provinces indicated that the support was ineffective.

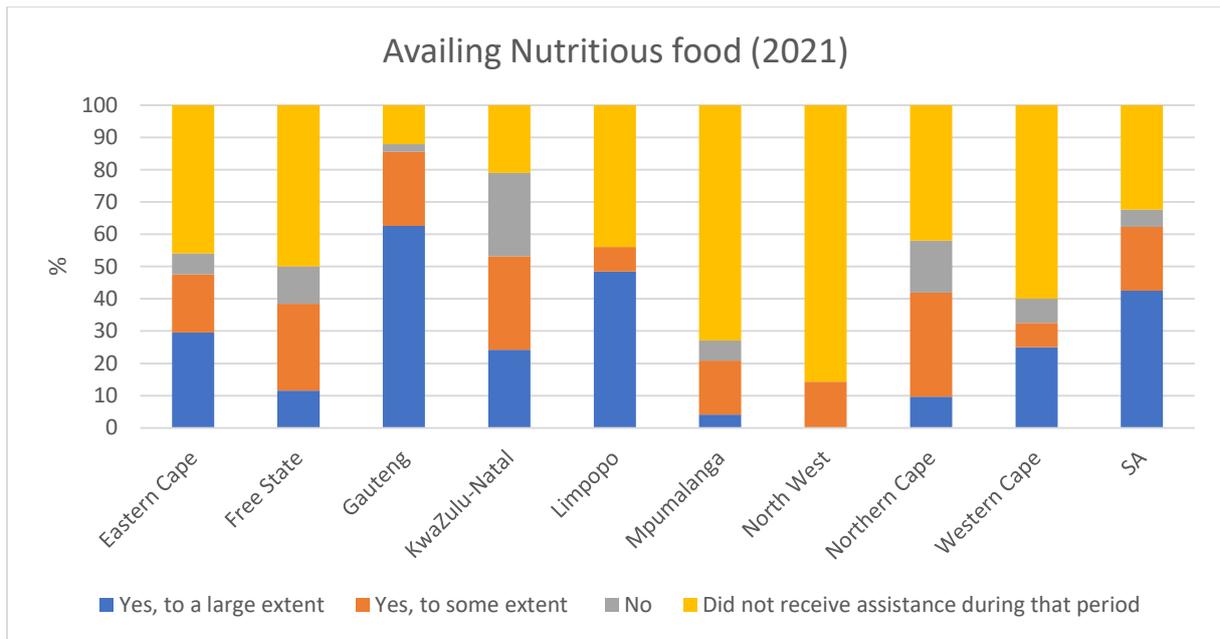


Figure 27: Interventions Availing nutritious food (2021)

C.12.a What is the MAIN difficulty faced accessing the assistance 2020

Figure 29 shows the main difficulty faced by beneficiaries while accessing the assistance between 2020 and 2021. It can be observed from the graph below that more than 60% of respondents indicated that they did not experience any difficulty in accessing the assistance in 2020, with 83.87% and 72.92% citing the same in Northern Cape and Mpumalanga, respectively. Some respondents cited long queue (6.56%) delays applications processes (15.41%) and uncertainty in the release of relief packages (9.71%) as the main difficulties faced while accessing the assistance in 2020.

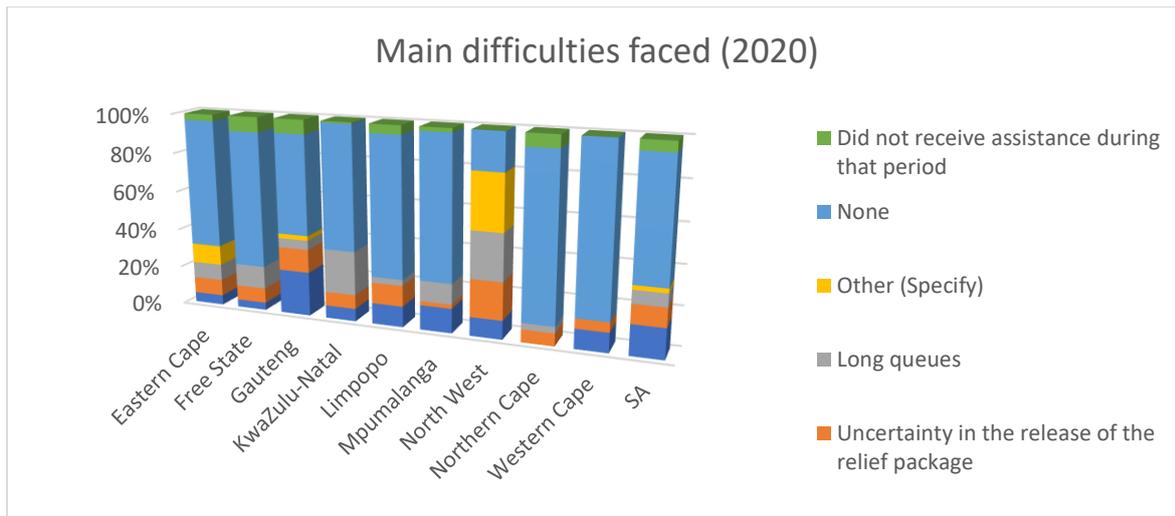


Figure 28: Main difficulties faced (2020)

C.12.b What is the MAIN difficulty faced accessing the assistance 2021

The figure below (Figure 29) shows that 11.84% of beneficiaries indicated that the delay in application process for covid-related support was their main difficulty faced during the second wave of the pandemic, followed by 8.17% of those who indicated that the long queues when accessing the assistance was their main challenges.

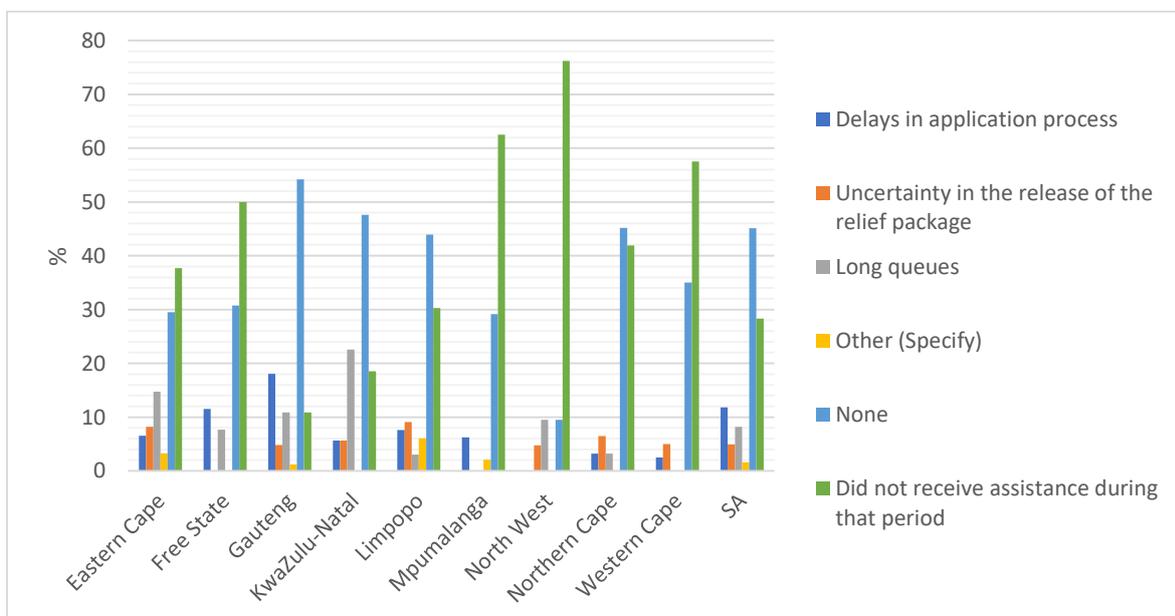


Figure 29: MAIN difficulty faced accessing the assistance 2020/21

C.13a Difficulty/difficulties resolved (as of March 2021)

Amongst those who experienced difficulties in accessing the assistance, over half (57.22%) of the respondents indicated that the challenges that they encountered were not solved, while 42.78% cited that the main difficulties were resolved (Figure 30). Western Cape recorded over 66% of beneficiaries who cited that the main difficulties were solved, followed by Free State and Gauteng, with 62.50% and 56.76%, respectively.

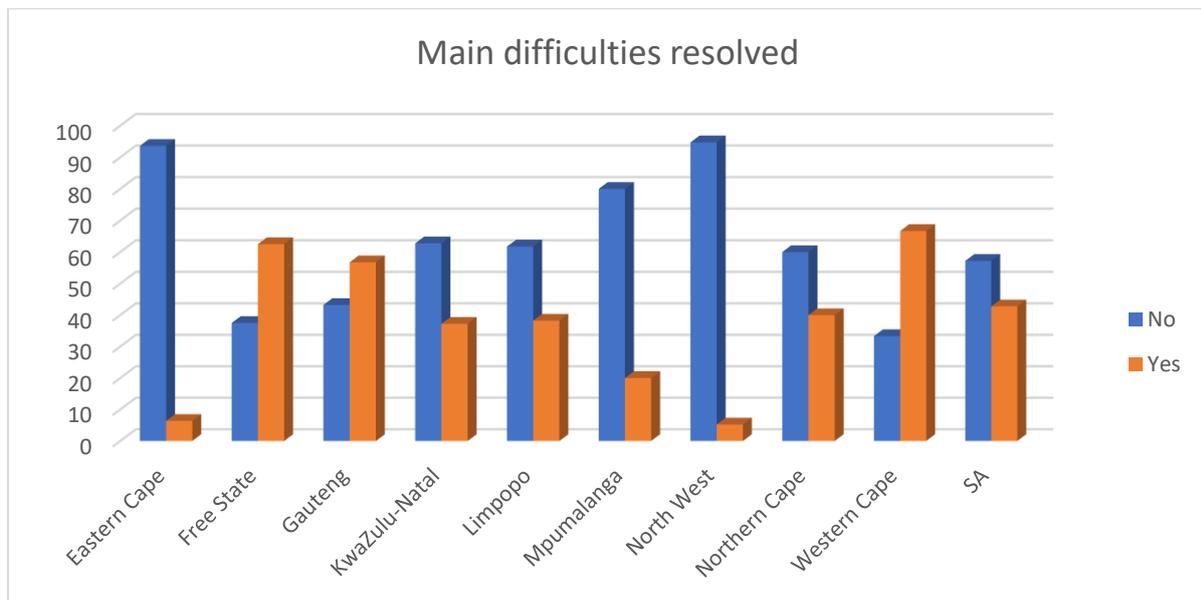


Figure 30: Difficulties resolved

C.13b Satisfaction with the speed with which this main difficulty was resolved

Respondents who indicated that the main difficulties faced while accessing the assistance were resolved, were asked if they were satisfied with the speed with which this main difficulty was resolved. 49.34% indicated that they were satisfied to some extent, followed by those who were satisfied (48.53%) to a large extent. Amongst those who were satisfied to a large extent, 100% were from North West and Western Cape, respectively. Only 2.13% cited that they were not satisfied with the speed with which this main difficulty was resolved.

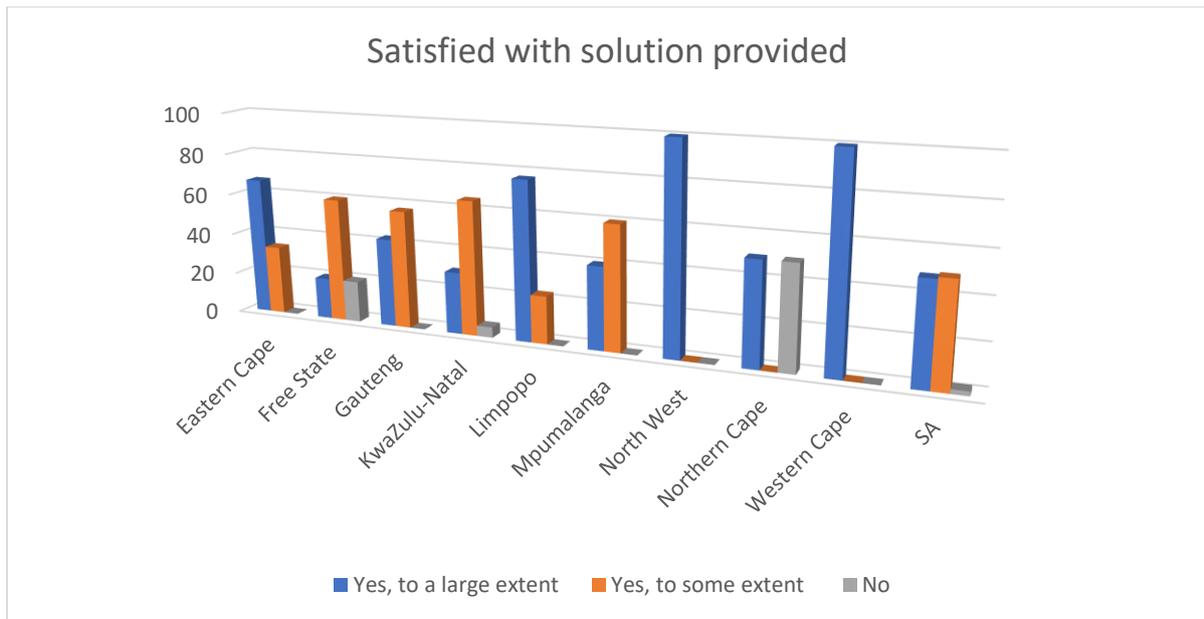


Figure 31: Satisfaction with the speed

C.14a Awareness of the Covid-19 relief assistance before benefiting

It can be observed from the chart below (Figure 32), that majority of respondents were aware of Covid-related support before benefiting as cited by 83.8%, while 16.2% were not aware. Western Cape, Free State and Gauteng recorded the highest proportion of beneficiaries who were aware of the covid-related support, with 97.50%, 92.31% and 90.59%, respectively.

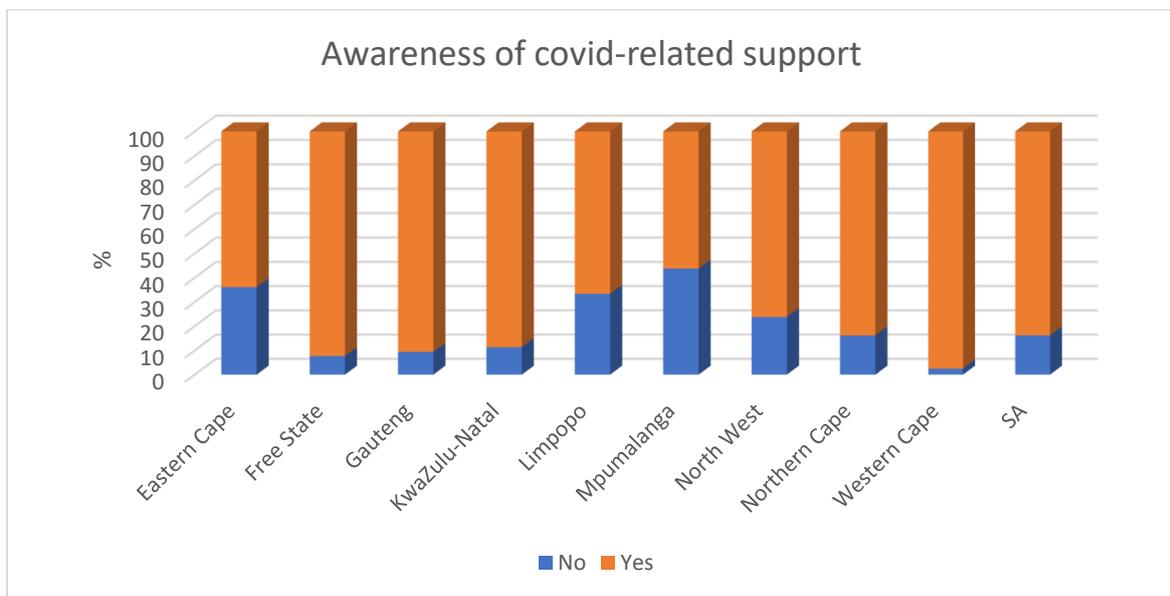


Figure 32: Awareness of the Covid-19 relief assistance

C.14b Source of information

Friend and Neighbors (23.82%), government representatives (22.71%) and Radio (16.9%) were cited as the main source of information regarding the covid-related assistance provided by the government, respectively. Mpumalanga recorded a high proportion (44.44%) of beneficiaries who got the news about government interventions from TV, while Eastern Cape recorded a least (2.56%). Only 2.58% indicated that they received information about the government interventions from social media and other sources such as NGOs.

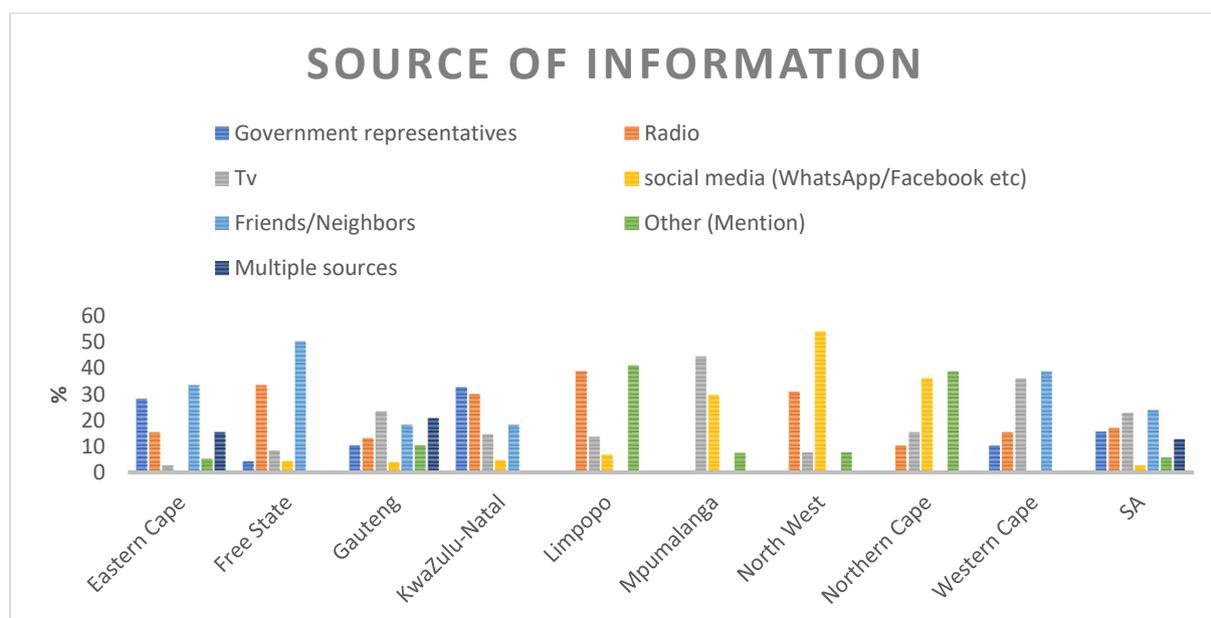


Figure 33: Source of information

2. Conclusion

It is possible to conclude that food parcels and social grants were the main interventions that benefited most respondents, as the vast majority stated that they received this type of intervention. UIF TERS was received by a small percentage of beneficiaries. Most beneficiaries stated that the covid-related assistance they received was extremely beneficial and helped them to have enough food in their households.

Recommendations

There is need to establish full-scale digitalised grant processing and payment systems in the context of lessons learnt during the Covid-19 period. This may include introducing biometrics for clients and the availing of free sim-cards to beneficiaries so as to widen access of services in the context of digitalised systems

There is need for serious mobilisation of resources from outside government to complement enough and nutritious food parcel allocations during times of such emergencies as Covid-19

Government (with assistance of international organisations such as the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations) should out together a strong early warning and surveillance systems for more precise forecasting of such FNS-related emergencies as Covid-19. This will assist in better planning and responses

The issue of undocumented foreign nationals should be handled more humanely in situations of such emergencies as Covid-19. In fact, as highlighted by one DSD official, there must be a clear conversation and policy position around migration and food security. This is in the context of unclear policy positions on dealing with undocumented foreign nationals particularly vis-à-vis food aid and social assistance especially during the hard lockdown period. With many undocumented foreign nationals losing their (mostly informal) sources of livelihoods during this period, it was not clear whether they were also eligible for food aid and other social assistance. Subsequently, as already noted, they were initially left out of government sponsored food aid and social assistance programmes, although they were receiving assistance from various NGOs.

There is a gap in the social protection framework, with social protection measures not reaching a huge proportion of population yet. The COVID-19 special grants of R350 should therefore be implemented as a long-term mechanism, and processes and modalities around the Basic Income Grant (BIG) should be accelerated, so that it be introduced as soon as possible.

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Appendix

DSD administrative data suggests that by the third quarter of 2020, nearly a million households (999 047) have received food parcels through DSD distribution systems and mechanisms. Compared to the data for March 2020, this means that the number of households who have received food parcels from DSD have almost doubled. To calculate the total number of people reached, the DSD uses an average household size of 4 (March) or 5 (September) as a multiplicative constant. Clearly, multiplying the number of beneficiary households with this constant does not influence uneven provincial distribution of food parcels.

Table A.1: Food Parcels Distributed, March & September 2020 (DSD Admin Data)

PROVINCE	Food Parcels Distributed- September 2020			Food Parcels Distributed- March 2020		
	Number of Households	Provincial Share (%)	Number of People (N.Est.)	Number of Households	Provincial Share (%)	Number of People (N.Est.)
Eastern Cape	32 329	3,24	161 645	20 328	3,89	81 312
Free State	50 698	5,08	253 490	11 512	2,2	46 048
Gauteng	498 516	49,9	2 492 580	153 493	29,33	613 972
Kwa Zulu Natal	50 460	5,06	252 300	32 276	6,17	129 104
Limpopo	119 229	11,94	596 145	83 818	16,02	335 272
Mpumalanga	84 889	8,5	424 445	82 791	15,82	331 164
Northern Cape	51 086	5,12	255 430	45 940	8,78	183 760
North West	26 894	2,7	134 470	26 034	4,98	104 136
Western Cape	84 946	8,51	424 730	67 298	12,86	269 192
Total	999 047	100	4 995 235	523 490	100	2 093 960

Given the intention of the programme to target the most vulnerable households, with poverty gaps and social grants as good proxies, this will be an important factor in the subnational sampling stratification. As illustrated in Table A.2., provinces with the highest poverty gaps are not the main recipients of child support and pension grants, with the exception of KwaZulu-Natal.

Table A.2: Social Grants and Poverty Gaps by Province, December 2020

Province	Major Social Grants (Dec 2020)					
	Child Grant	Support	Provincial Share (%)	Old Age Pension Grant	Provincial Share (%)	Poverty Gap (2015)
Eastern Cape	1 946 517		15,04	594 896	15,96	41,3
Free State	709 294		5,48	213 278	5,72	25,1
Gauteng	1 983 144		15,32	677 310	18,17	13,2
Kwazulu Natal	2 941 807		22,73	735 139	19,72	36,1
Limpopo	1 935 064		14,95	489 683	13,14	40,3
Mpumalanga	1 154 254		8,92	268 167	7,2	29
North West	893 662		6,91	278 518	7,47	28
Northern Cape	325 775		2,52	93 116	2,5	32,2
Western Cape	1 055 940		8,16	378 996	10,17	14,7
Total	12 945 457		100	3 729 103	100	27,7

Categories for analysis framework	Food parcels	SRD-R350	TERS- UIF	Comprehensive social security (OAG, CSG, DG, WVG, FCG, CDG)
Objective/purpose of intervention	Seeks to eliminate hunger among the most vulnerable population and to assist households living below the food poverty line and households who experience inadequate access to food ¹	Assists those who are unable to meet their basic needs and aims to assist those living in poverty and without income protection, unemployed and who do not access any other grant or payments from the Unemployment Insurance Fund ²	TERS is technically a wage subsidy which aims to prevent retrenchments amongst the employed by providing wage support to employers who have fully or partially closed their operations in response to the pandemic ³	Aims to provide support to those living in poverty and in need ⁴
Types of benefits -nutritious food – direct/indirect -cash transfer/voucher	Direct food parcels containing rice, sugar, maize meal, soya mince, milk, tea bags, cooking oil, bread flour, peanut butter, sugar beans, tea bags and nutritional supplements ¹	Cash transfer at the value of R350 once a month ²	Provides cash transfer as source of income relief for vulnerable firms and workers in South Africa ³	Cash transfer every month, value depends on the type of grant ⁴
Beneficiary criteria -conditional access criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South African citizens, permanent residents of South Africa and refugees • Poor and vulnerable households with no income • Households that have lost income due to COVID-19 lockdown or isolation • Households on the municipal indigent register 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South African Citizen, Permanent Resident or Refugee; • Above the age of 18 and below the age of 60 • unemployed; • Not receiving any social grant in respect of himself or herself; • Not receiving an unemployment insurance benefit; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workers registered and contributing to the UIF • Workers who operate in an industry which is not permitted to commence operations either partially or in full due to the lockdown regulations • Workers who are over the age of 60 years and/or have 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South African citizens with People with disabilities • Children who are South African citizens up to the age of 18 years, living with a single caregiver not earning more than R52 800pa or married caregivers with a combined income not more than R105 600pa

¹ Vermeulen et al., 2020

² DSD, 2021

³ Kohler & Hill, 2021

⁴ NPC, 2012

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Households identified through profiling by recognised government agencies Beneficiaries identified by DSD officials (Social workers and/or Community Development Practitioners)⁵. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not a resident in a government funded or subsidised institution; Not receiving a stipend from the National Student Financial Aid Scheme and other financial aid; Not receiving any other government COVID-19 response support² 	<p>comorbidities and are not able to implement alternative working arrangements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Those who are required to remain in COVID-19-related isolation or quarantine – are also eligible for benefits in this period³ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Persons older than 60 years, South African citizen, permanent resident or refugee. Not receiving any other government grant or cared for in any state institution. If single must not earn more than R86 280pa or have assets more than R1 227 600 or married not earn more than R172 560 or assets more than R2 455 200⁶
Implementing agency	SASSA/DSD/NGOs	SASSA	Department of labour	SASSA
Duration of intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From April⁷ 2020 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> April – October 2020 Extended to January 2021 August 2021 – March 2022² (DSD, 2021) New applications open again⁸ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> April – June 2020 Extended to 1 July – 15 August 2020 Extended 16 August – 15 September Extended 16 September – 15 October 2020 16 October – 15 March 2021³ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May – October 2020⁶
Recipient numbers	3.2m ⁹	10.5m ⁷	5.7m ¹⁰	18.4m ¹¹

⁵ Budlender, 2020:3

⁶ World Bank, 2021

⁷ PMG, 2020

⁸ PMG, 2022

⁹ Mokoane et al., 2021

¹⁰ South African Government, 2022

¹¹ SASSA, 2021

Implementation issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inadequate planning, record keeping and guidelines resulting in inconsistencies in the delivery of food parcels, including people receiving food parcels multiple times. • Inadequate controls over the distribution of food parcels¹² 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • slow-rollout of the COVID-19 SRD grant, attributable to limited administrative capacity • Non-qualifying applicants approved and received the special R350 grant¹² 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of verification of employee salaries submitted during benefit claims • Incorrect system calculations of TERS benefit payment in first lockdown period • Inadequate verification of employer details • Lack of consideration of salary portion paid by employer in calculation of payout in first lockdown period • Lack of verification of employee salaries submitted during benefit claims¹² 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duplicate payments and non-payment not detected¹²
FNS outcomes for targeted beneficiaries	<p>The parcels provided support for three weeks and were not consistently available every month. They also lacking in dietary diversity¹</p>	<p>The grant is mostly used to purchase food. However, the amount is below the minimum poverty line which is R624¹³, it cannot be able to pull people beyond the poverty line. The increase in food basket to R4,542.93¹⁴ makes it impossible for the grant to improve the food and nutrition status of the people.</p>	<p>Households with an individual that received Ters are likely to have not run out of money to buy food because they received the grant³ However, there is insufficient evidence to prove whether the Ters directly improved the food and nutrition security of households.</p>	<p>Even though the top-ups improved the financial situation of households with no income, however they were inadequate to keep households above the food poverty line¹³</p>
<p>¹ Vermeulen et al., 2020 ² DSD, 2021 ³ Kohler & Hill, 2021 ⁴ NPC, 2012</p>				

⁵ Budlender, 2020:3
⁶ World Bank, 2021
⁷ PMG, 2020
⁸ PMG, 2022
⁹ Mokoane et al., 2021
¹⁰ South African Government, 2022
¹¹ SASSA, 2021
¹² Auditor General, 2020
¹³ Stats SA, 2021
¹⁴ BusinessTech, 2022
¹⁵ Van der Berg et al., 2021

Table A4: Access to food by income quintile per province, 2019

Province	Variable	Bottom Quintile	Qnl2	Qnl3	Qnl4	Top Quintile
Eastern Cape	Income, R.pm (ADEQ Avg.) 2019	148.17	225.6	383.63	453.69	737.26
	Food Spend, pm 2019 (ADEQ)	116.4	156.39	215.52	213.84	305.54
	Food Spend Share (%)	.71527	.61115	.5133	.43743	.363
Free State	Income, pm (ADEQ Avg.) 2019	186.58	336.19	593.67	789.48	-
	Food Spend, pm 2019 (ADEQ)	170	197.93	324.01	410.91	-
	Food Spend Share (%)	.87986	.61364	.56689	.5313	-
Gauteng	Income, pm (ADEQ Avg.) 2019	155.68	409.33	598.64	572.56	1229.8
	Food Spend, pm 2019 (ADEQ)	142.2	297.06	365.39	233.84	375.39
	Food Spend Share (%)	.86426	.69146	.5752	.38434	.35339
KwaZulu-Natal	Income, pm (ADEQ Avg.) 2019	135.02	261.86	410.4	337.93	709.47
	Food Spend, pm 2019 (ADEQ)	162.12	192.67	237.07	219.72	337.27
	Food Spend Share (%)	1.1304	.70124	.59253	.60462	.43961
Limpopo	Income, pm (ADEQ Avg.) 2019	146.38	223.66	440.42	586.77	786.84
	Food Spend, pm 2019 (ADEQ)	120.73	191.79	225.01	269.4	376.38
	Food Spend Share (%)	.75809	.77199	.50477	.46316	.46083
Mpumalanga	Income, pm (ADEQ Avg.) 2019	234.13	476.56	644.63	394.39	816.33
	Food Spend, pm 2019 (ADEQ)	147.02	320.45	352.03	220.2	343.81
	Food Spend Share (%)	.6254	.69825	.54078	.46072	.46205
North West Province	Income, pm (ADEQ Avg.) 2019	146	319.14	524.17	705.56	1060
	Food Spend, pm 2019 (ADEQ)	133.37	213.11	237.98	320.4	478.98
	Food Spend Share (%)	.85185	.59645	.43095	.47222	.42484
Northern Cape	Income, pm (ADEQ Avg.) 2019	232.5	229.5	407.54	616.67	1312.1
	Food Spend, pm 2019 (ADEQ)	183.29	249.45	280.32	251.3	630.7
	Food Spend Share (%)	.75736	.90476	.59143	.41353	.45206
Western Cape	Income, pm (ADEQ Avg.) 2019	190	265.51	563.75	646.61	1095.4
	Food Spend, pm 2019 (ADEQ)	150.76	218.04	382.06	434.41	531.72
	Food Spend Share (%)	.76852	.71043	.62776	.62455	.48733