

# Social Security in the time of Covid

EPWP vulnerability SASSA economic policy  
poverty Progress Social assistance Unemployment benefits  
social wage disability floors Social grants  
Indigence Inequality Social grants Destitution  
EXPOSURE TO RISKS Sustainability Social grants NDP Unemployment  
socio-economic security social Social protection  
rights institutional capacity policy



social development

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## Call for papers

### ***“Social Security Review Volume 2: Social Security in the time of Covid”***

The Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) on behalf of the National Department of Social Development (DSD) is actively seeking critical and analytic submissions on several thematic areas that will be considered for publication in the second edition of the Social Security Review. Priority will be given to high-quality submissions of interest to both a local and international readership that address crosscutting themes outlined in this call for papers.

#### **ABOUT THE *SOCIAL SECURITY REVIEW***

The inaugural edition of the ***Social Security Review 2021: An Agenda for Action*** was launched by the Minister for Social Development, Ms Lindiwe Zulu in February 2022. The DSD conceptualised the Social Security Review (SSR) aiming to address the significant gap in information and understanding of the state of the social security system in South Africa from a developing country context.

Although this publication was commissioned by the DSD, it intends to promote the generation of independent knowledge. In doing so, it will create space for robust public discourse and encourage the expression of diverse views and opinions. It is believed that the publication could provide helpful critique to the government and contribute to more responsive policymaking for the benefit of all South Africans.

By commissioning HSRC editors, the DSD wants to ensure that the SSR upholds principles of quality and integrity that characterise independent scholarly publications.

The ***SSR Volume 1*** (2021) included peer-reviewed articles from various authors, including civil society activists, academia, researchers, as well as local and international social security experts. The SSR Volume 1 serves as a flagship publication in terms of assessing the state of our social security system that the SSR Volume 2 now intends to build on.

#### **EDITORS**

- Ms Shirin Motala, Chief Research Manager, Inclusive Economic Development (IED) at the HSRC
- Mr Stewart Ngandu, Chief Research Manager, Inclusive Economic Development (IED) at the HSRC
- Dr Tim Hart, Senior Research Manager, Developmental, Capable and Ethical State (DCES) at the HSRC

**Project Manager:** Dr Jaqueline Harvey, Researcher, Inclusive Economic Development (IED) at the HSRC

## CONCEPTUAL RATIONALE

The *SSR Volume 1* was launched at a time when South Africa and other countries were confronted with the Covid-19 crisis and tasked with responding to unprecedented socio-economic challenges. The latter brought to the fore existing inequalities and the risks of exacerbating these.

This second edition, named *Social Security Review Volume 2: Social Security in the time of Covid*, seeks to inspire a deeper and richer interdisciplinary exploration of the intersection of the Covid-19 pandemic-induced crisis with that of pre-existing challenges of poverty, inequality and unemployment. It seeks to uncover what they offer in respect of a compelling narrative of **“building back better”** as espoused in South Africa’s Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Programme and the **“leaving no-one behind”** promise reflected in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with social security hailed as instrumental to its realisation.

This call focuses on the following thematic areas:

- 1. Competing priorities of social security, job creation, and economic growth:** South Africa is confronted with the triple challenges of unemployment, poverty, and inequality. The critical question is how to balance competing priorities of job creation, social security, and economic growth. This policy debate must be explored to present empirical evidence on the various arguments advanced on each aspect.
- 2. Social security coverage for atypical and informal sector workers:** Many people working in the sector had to stop their activities due to the imposed national lockdown measures. Some could not access relief measures from the government. This sub-theme looks to explore various social security coverage issues and vulnerabilities faced by these workers concerning retirement, risk, unemployment insurance, injuries, or disease-on-duty benefits. The focus should be on experiences during the Covid-19 crisis and beyond, exploring lessons learnt and providing insights into policy and legislative implications to address social coverage issues.
- 3. The role of digital technology in social security:** Social security institutions leveraged digital technology for enrolment and payment of social security benefits at the peak of the pandemic. This improved turnaround times and the quality of services offered. This sub-theme focuses on the innovations by social security entities in response to Covid-19, highlighting the role of technology in the delivery of social security benefits during a crisis and beyond. Challenges should also be explored. The analysis should also consider innovations in the context of the 4IR, universal access to the Internet, privacy and the protection of information.
- 4. Migrant workers and access to social security:** While some measures were opened to eligible migrants and migrant workers, many encountered challenges in accessing social security benefits during the lockdown despite being eligible. Some could not access these social security benefits despite being equally affected by the pandemic and lockdown measures. Host and sending countries have international obligations, responsibilities, challenges, and opportunities, which must be considered to address the plight of migrant workers and their families in times of crisis.
- 5. Towards a comprehensive social security system:** While providing a range of benefits, South Africa’s social security system is fragmented both at policymaking and implementation levels. South Africa does not have a public pension system that fosters risk pooling and social solidarity among all workers. Existing voluntary arrangements do not provide sufficient replacement rates and value for money to members and their beneficiaries. As a forward-looking sub-theme, this calls for a detailed analysis of current gaps and concretising linkages that will contribute towards a comprehensive social system that ensures that no one is left behind. It is critical to explore and show the linkages between non-contributory and contributory arrangements and the respective institutional frameworks.
- 6. The politics of the Covid-19 SRD R350 grant in the context of a national debate on basic income support in South Africa.** From the beginning of the pandemic, the government introduced the Covid-19 SRD R350 to provide relief to unemployed adults aged between 18–59. The government has subsequently extended the grant until March 2023. Many see it as an opportunity for the government to eventually roll out the basic income support (BIS) or basic income grant (BIG) as commonly referred to. Given the fiscal implications, critical questions are about the appropriate funding model for such a long-term intervention as well as whether it should be targeted or universal. This sub-theme, therefore, looks to contribute to the policy debate on income support.

### CALL FOR SUBMISSION OF ABSTRACTS

All abstracts must be submitted by **Friday, 27 January 2023** at **16:00** to:

[SSRvol2@hsrc.ac.za](mailto:SSRvol2@hsrc.ac.za).

Any submissions received after that time will be excluded. Queries can be addressed to this email address as well.

## GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF ABSTRACTS FOR THE *SOCIAL SECURITY REVIEW VOLUME 2: SOCIAL SECURITY IN THE TIME OF COVID*

The following guidelines are intended to assist authors in preparing their abstracts.

### General

The HSRC invites contributions from scholars, researchers, policymakers, implementors, regulatory bodies, civil society, the private sector, professionals and other educators, community activists and others interested in and concerned with social security issues. Submissions should contribute to developing new thinking and fresh debate on social security and social protection within the context of Africa and other developing countries in a time of Covid-19 as per the thematic focus areas outlined.

Submissions should address pertinent issues and be guided by the themes indicated in this concept note. However, we also encourage abstract submissions that address pertinent issues and speaking to the overall theme.

### Format of abstract submission

Those wishing to submit a paper should **submit an abstract** of between 250 and 350 words written in English in MS Word or PDF. Abstracts must contain the following information:

#### A. Cover page

which provides the following information:

- *Title of paper;*
- *Author name(s) and affiliation(s);*
- *Indication of the most relevant thematic focus area of the paper (as indicated in the call);*
- *Key words (3-5);*
- *Contact details, including email addresses and cell phone numbers of all authors; and*
- *Details of the corresponding author.*

We encourage you to send an abstract that summarises the envisaged/drafted paper's substance, including the background, objective(s), research question, methods/approach, results/findings and conclusion(s) (including its contribution to the field of social protection).

#### A. Submitted abstract(s)

should provide a summary of the envisaged paper's substance and should concisely cover the following:

- *Background/rationale for the research (introduction);*
- *Objectives of the paper and research question;*
- *Methodology/approach employed;*
- *Cogent research findings;*
- *Conclusions (including contribution to the field of social security);*
- *The policy implication of findings, if any; and*
- *Implementable policy recommendations.*

**Failure to follow these guidelines will disqualify your submission from consideration.**

### Disclosures

We regard the submission of a paper as your implied commitment not to submit it to another publication while it is under consideration by the SSR Volume 2. Authors are required to indicate if the submitted abstract is based on a published journal article or working paper.

Authors are expected to disclose in their cover letter any potential conflicts of interest that may arise from their employment, consulting or political activities, financial interests, or other affiliations.

### Formats of paper contributions:

For the *SSR Volume 2*, we invite manuscripts of between 6,000 to 8000 words which could focus on:

- New research with analysis and argument;
- Theorised articles;
- Review pieces on a policy or programme;
- Intervention designs;
- A difference of opinion on a subject/issue as a vehicle for debate and argument; or
- Case studies.

### Submission of the full paper

A full version of the selected paper (or manuscript) is expected to be submitted by the author(s) only **once your abstract has been approved** for inclusion in the *SSR Volume 2*. The due date for the submission will be within 6 weeks of receiving confirmation of acceptance of your abstract.

### Authors will need to:

- Write in a clear and accessible style;
- Inform, educate or raise debate;
- Provide analysis and an argument; and
- Ensure the introduction encapsulates the contents of the piece and that it attracts the readers' attention.

### Copyright

Authors are responsible for obtaining written permission to publish any material for which they do not own the copyright.

Please direct further queries to [SSRvol2@hsrc.ac.za](mailto:SSRvol2@hsrc.ac.za)

### Important dates:

Submission of abstracts: 27 January 2023  
Notification of applicants: 10 February 2023  
Submission of full papers: 24 March 2023

EPWP  
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