



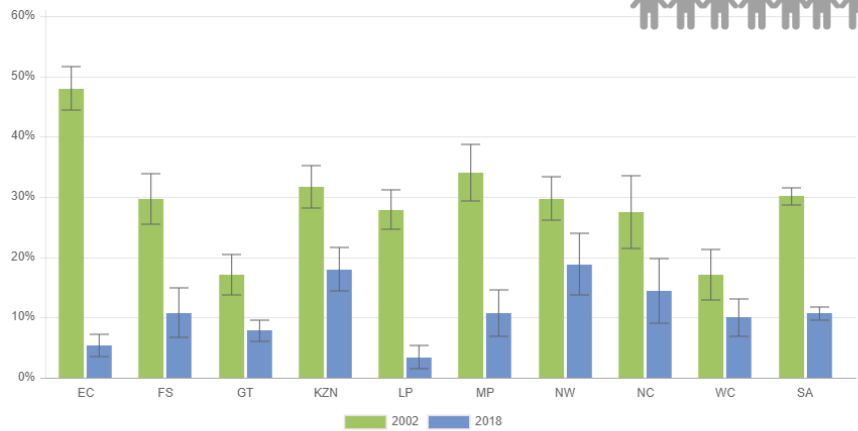
Nutrition and food security

Michael Hendricks, Katharine Hall, Hilary Goeiman, Nicolette Henney, Andrew Boraine, Jaco Murray, Lynn Hendricks and Lori Lake

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Child hunger

1 in 10 children
live in households where children go hungry

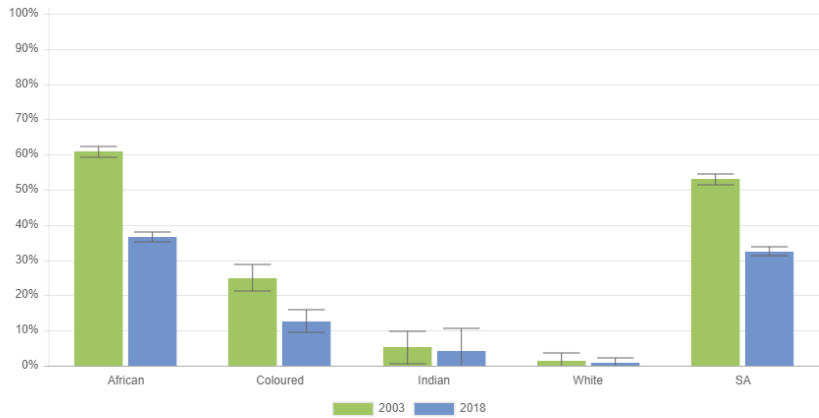


Data Statistics South Africa (2003 - 2019) General Household Survey 2002 - 2018. Pretoria: Stats SA.
Source Analysis by Katharine Hall & Winnie Sambu, Children's Institute, UCT.

2

Food poverty

1 in 3 children
live below the food poverty line

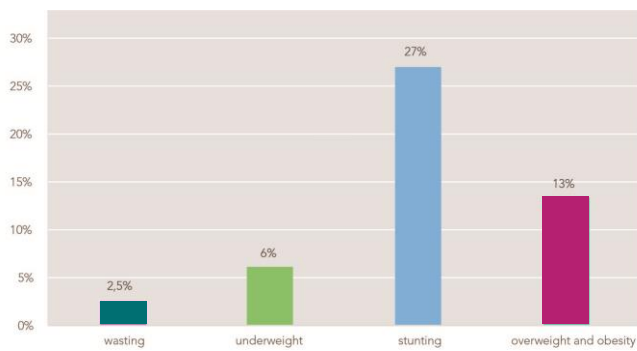


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Data Statistics South Africa (2004 - 2019) General Household Survey 2003 - 2018. Pretoria, Cape Town: Statistics South Africa.
Source Analysis by Katharine Hall & Winnie Sambu. Children's Institute. University of Cape Town.

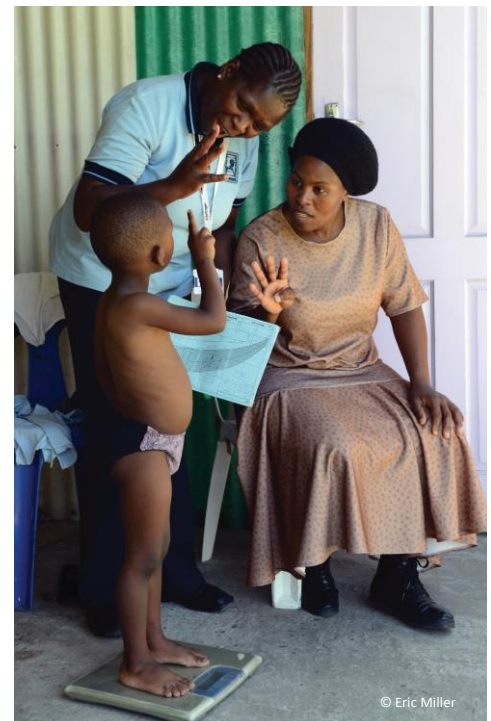
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A double burden of malnutrition



Department of Health, Statistics South Africa, Medical Research Council & ICF (2017) *South African Demographic Health Survey 2016. Key Indicator Report*. Pretoria: DOH, Stats SA, MRC & ICF

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

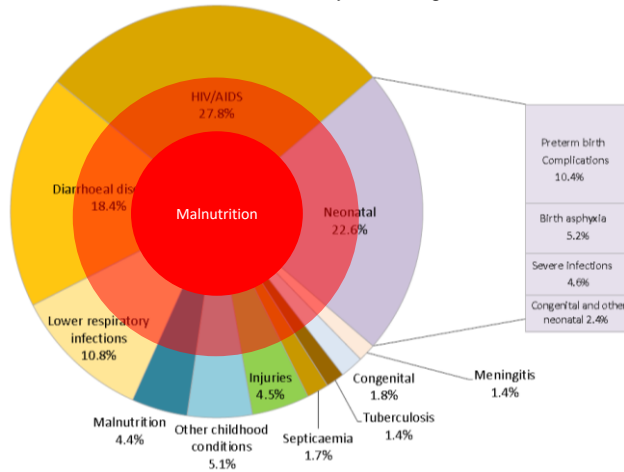


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Burden of Disease Study

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

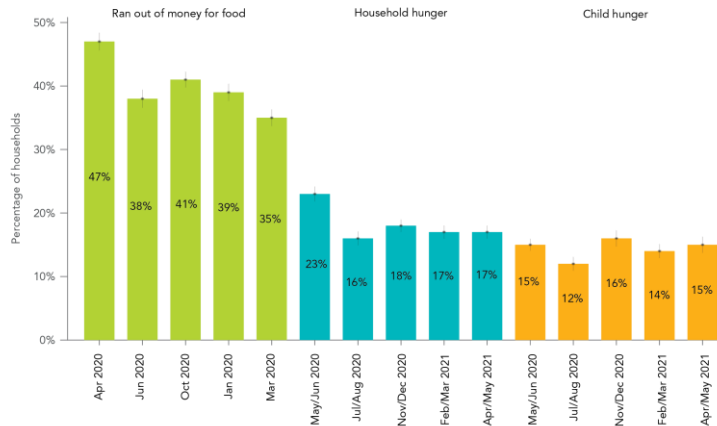


48% of child hospital deaths are associated with moderate or severe acute malnutrition

Child Health Problem Identification Programme (2018 data) Personal communication Cindy Stephen



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47% of households ran out of money to buy food during hard lockdown. **Child hunger** has remained unacceptably high with **1-in-7 households** reporting a child went hungry in April 2021.¹

¹ Van der Berg S, Zuze L, Bridgman G. The impact of the coronavirus and lockdown on children's welfare in South Africa: Evidence from NIDS-CRAM Wave 1, University of Stellenbosch, July 2020. Stellenbosch: Department of Economics, University of Stellenbosch, 2020.

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- The **disruption of routine health services** made it harder to identify and support children at risk of acute malnutrition.
- Despite the rise in child hunger, there was a decrease in the incidence of **severe acute malnutrition** cases presenting to facilities and in hospital admissions in the WC.
- Yet there may have been an increase in malnutrition and stunting at community level that was **not reflected in administrative data** because the cases were not seen, recorded or treated.
- *And in recent months, facilities in the WC have started to see an more severe cases of acute malnutrition.*

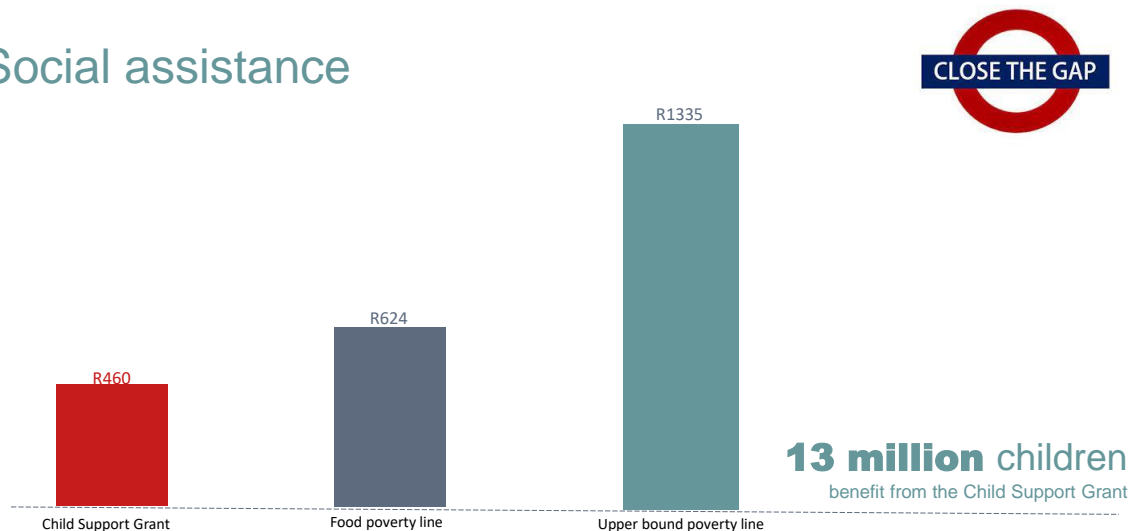
Table 1: Key nutrition indicators, Western Cape, 2019 & 2020

Indicators	2019	2020
Primary health care headcount for children under five	2 072 002	1 588 727
Coverage Vitamin A 12-59 months	51%	44%
Incidence of severe acute malnutrition*	21	13
Coverage of food supplementation*	109	85
Exclusive breastfeeding at 14 weeks	39%	38%

Source: District Health Information System * per 1000 children under five years old

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Social assistance



Child hunger is expected to intensify in the coming months due to a decrease in the real value of the **Child Support Grant** (valued at R460 a month or R15 a day) which has failed to keep pace with food price inflation – and continues to fall way below the food poverty line (6)

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

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

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Malnutrition casts a long shadow across the life course.

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

Rob Nixon, 2011

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Specific recommendations

- **Increase the CSG** to the food poverty line and address barriers to early uptake through Regulation 11(1) of the Social Assistance Act
- Use taxes, subsidies and price controls to **limit food price inflation**.
- Sustain and enhance the quality of **ECD and school feeding**
- Strengthen **surveillance and referral systems** to identify and support children at risk of nutrition.
- Ensure measures introduced to alleviate hunger (such as school meals and food parcels) are **nutritionally balanced** and do not increase the burden of overnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies
- Use licencing and zoning regulations to ensure a more equitable spatial distribution of healthy food retailers and **limit the number of unhealthy food outlets**.

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