

COVID-19 and Social Protection in Southern Africa: A note on reading

The IMF and World Bank have published regular forecasts of the direct and indirect impact of COVID-19 on economic growth. Diverse international organisations (including also the World Food Programme, International Labour Organisation, etc) put out statements and proposals on the general need for emergency social protection measures (see, for example, '[A Joint Statement on the Role of Social Protection in Responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)' by the Social Protection Interagency Cooperation Board, SPIAC-B). More recently, they have begun to publish evaluations of what they have achieved (see, for example, '[WFP Global Response to Covid-19: September 2020](#)').

For background on social protection in Africa, see: Beegle, K., Coudouel, A. & Monsalve, E. (eds, 2018), [*Realizing the full potential of safety nets in Africa*](#) (Washington DC: World Bank) and Hickey, Sam, Tom Lavers, Miguel Niño-Zarazúa & Jeremy Seekings (eds, 2019), [*The Politics of Social Protection in Eastern and Southern Africa*](#) (Oxford: Oxford University Press). Lena analyses pre-Covid payment systems in '[Social cash transfer payment systems in sub-Saharan Africa](#)', *CSSR Working Paper* 452 (2020).

On the background to the Zambian case, see Kate Pruce, 'Investigating the Politics of Global Policy Transfer: The case of social protection in Zambia', PhD thesis, University of Manchester (2019) and Hangala Siachiwena, 'The Politics of Welfare Policy Reforms: A comparative study of how and why changes of government affect policy-making on social cash transfer programmes in Zambia and Malawi', revised PhD thesis, University of Cape Town (October 2020). On the background to the Botswana case, see Seekings, 'Building a conservative welfare state in Botswana', in Hickey *et al.* (eds) [*The Politics of Social Protection in Eastern and Southern Africa*](#) and Isaac Chinyoka, '[Familial child welfare regimes: The case of Botswana, 1966-2017](#)', *CSSR Working Paper* 430 (2019).

Our analysis of social protection reforms is based largely on media and other online sources. A scholarly literature has begun to emerge for South Africa only. On South African reforms, see: Tim Köhler and Haroon Bhorat, '[Social assistance during South Africa's national lockdown: Examining the COVID-19 grant, changes to the Child Support Grant, and post-October policy options](#)', *DPRU Working Paper* 2020/09 (Cape Town: Development Policy Research Unit, University of Cape Town); Jeremy Seekings, '[Failure to feed: state, civil society and feeding schemes in South Africa in the first three months of Covid-19 lockdown, March to June 2020](#)', *CSSR Working Paper* 455, and '[Bold promises, constrained capacity, stumbling delivery: the expansion of social grants in response to the Covid-19 lockdown in South Africa](#)', *CSSR Working Paper* 456 (both 2020); and Seekings and Nicoli Nattrass (2020), '[South Africa's Lockdown Misfire](#)', *Journal of Democracy* 31,4: 106-121

The most useful online compendia of reforms are Ugo Gentilini et al.'s weekly 'living paper' on '[Social Protection and Jobs Responses to COVID-19: A Real-Time Review of Country Measures](#)', the [monthly newsletter from socialprotection.org](#), and the ILO's dedicated [platform](#) and [portal](#).

Lena gave a longer presentation on her work (for the IPC-IG) on mapping social protection responses across Africa at the [socialprotection.org](#) conference (available on [youtube](#), presentation starts at 39:30 min). The full country mapping will be made available on the [socialprotection.org](#) platform, hopefully in December.