



## **Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation**

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# **Report on the Assessment of Government Evaluations**

**The South African Child Support Grant Impact Assessment:  
Evidence from a survey of children, adolescents and their households**

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**Date Evaluation was completed:** 01 May 2012

**Name of assessor:** Kevin Kelly

**Evaluation Number:** 136

**Date Assessment Completed:** 10 December 2012

## Evaluation Assessment Details

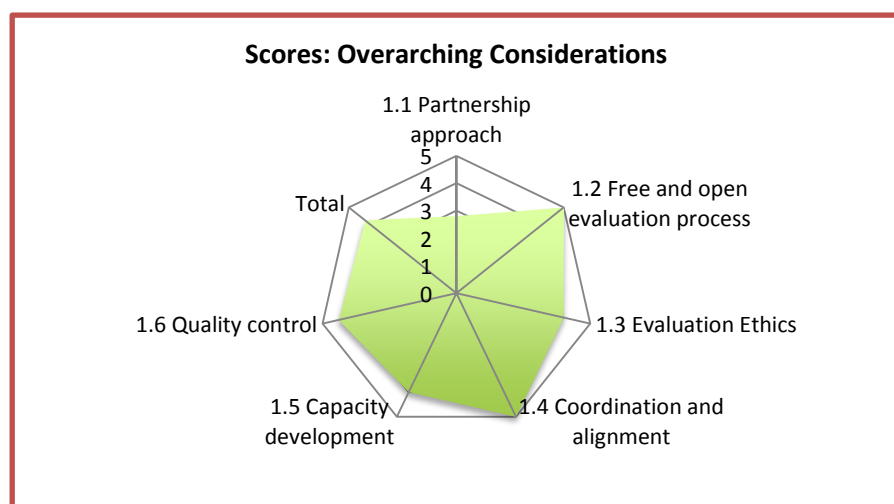
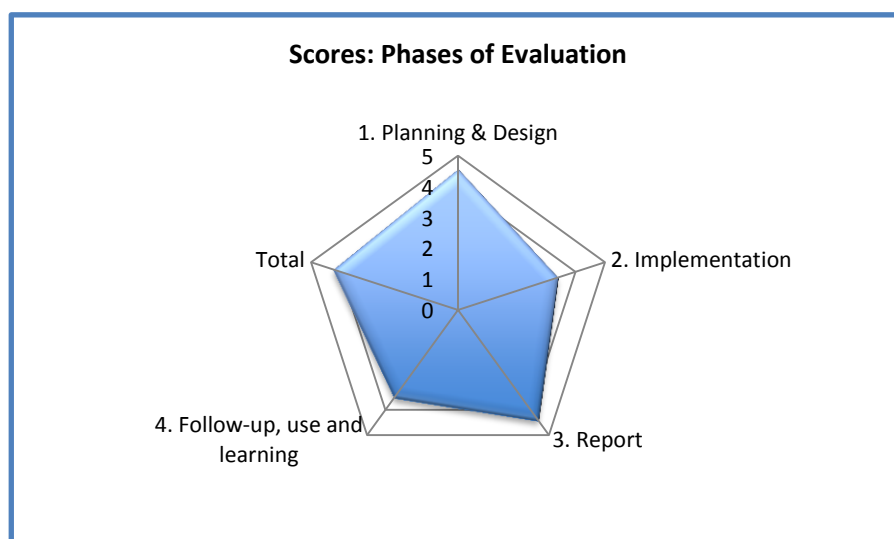
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Title of evaluation report	The South African Child Support Grant Impact Assessment: Evidence from a survey of children, adolescents and their households
Completion Date of Evaluation	01 May 2012
Name of Assessor	Kevin Kelly
Evaluation Number	15 May 1900
Completion Date of Assessment	10 December 2012
Initiated by	Department of Social Development, South African Social Security Agency, UNICEF South Africa
Evaluation undertaken by	Economic Policy Research Institute (EPRI), International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI).
Evaluation area / sector	Social Security / Social Protection
	Additional
National Outcome	Outcome 2
	Additional
Type of Evaluation	Impact
	Additional
What is being evaluated	The Child Support Grant
	Additional
Geographic Scope	5 provinces: Eastern Cape, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo and Western Cape
Period of Evaluation	2009 - May 2012
Known Cost of Evaluation	R13 million

### Quality Assessment Scores

Phase of Evaluation	Score
Planning & Design	4.56
Implementation	3.40
Report	4.41
Follow-up, use and learning	3.50
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.03</b>

Overarching Consideration	Score
Partnership approach	2.80
Free and open evaluation process	5.00
Evaluation Ethics	4.00
Coordination and alignment	5.00
Capacity Development	4.00
Quality control	4.39



## 1. Planning & Design

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### 1.1. Clarity of Purpose and Scope in TOR

**STANDARD:** *The evaluation was guided by a TOR with at least the following sections explicit: purpose, scope and objectives; expectations regarding design and methodology; resources and time allocated; reporting requirements; expectations regarding evaluation process and products.*

#### Comment and Analysis

Not available in report.

**Rating** N/A

**STANDARD:** *The purpose of the evaluation was clear and explicit in the TOR*

#### Comment and Analysis

Not available in report.

**Rating** N/A

**STANDARD:** *The evaluation questions were clearly stated in the TOR and appropriate to addressing the evaluation purpose*

#### Comment and Analysis

Not available in report.

**Rating** N/A

***STANDARD: The approach and type of evaluation was suited to the purpose and scope of the evaluation TOR*****Comment and Analysis**

Not available in report.

**Rating** N/A

***STANDARD: Intended users and their information needs were identified in the TOR*****Comment and Analysis**

Not available in report.

**Rating** N/A

***STANDARD: Key stakeholders were involved in the scoping of the TOR and determining the purpose of the evaluation*****Comment and Analysis**

Not available in report.

**Rating** N/A

## 1.2. Evaluation was adequately resourced

**STANDARD: The evaluation was adequately resourced in terms of time allocated**

### **Comment and Analysis**

There appeared to be large problems with funding the evaluation. "During the process, the whole of the SA Government and the financing Department in particular hit a financial crunch that impacted seriously on the project and caused the service provider and the client tremendous stress" (Presentation, DSD).

**Rating** 1

**STANDARD: The evaluation was adequately resourced in terms of original budget**

### **Comment and Analysis**

Not clear from report. Needs to be established with further interviewees not available at short notice.

**Rating** N/A

**STANDARD: The evaluation was adequately resourced in terms of staffing and skills sets**

### **Comment and Analysis**

The evaluation team was made of a strong group of international experts in social assistance and evaluation. The quantitative team collaborated with the qualitative team that produced a separate but connected report which greatly improved the quality of findings.

**Rating** 5

**STANDARD:** *Where appropriate, the evaluation planned to incorporate an element of capacity building of partners/staff responsible for the evaluand*

**Comment and Analysis**

It appears that the DSD was actively involved in the evaluation and have learnt and reflected on their learnings about the process, but the extent to which capacity building was actually built into the process is unclear.

**Rating** N/A

### 1.3. Alignment to Policy Context and Background Literature

**STANDARD:** *There was evidence that a review of the relevant policy and programme environments had been conducted and used in the planning of the evaluation by the evaluators*

**Comment and Analysis**

Yes, there was evidence that a review of relevant policy and programme environments took place and informed the planning of the evaluation.

**Rating** 5

**STANDARD:** *There was evidence of a review of appropriate literature having been conducted and used in the planning of the evaluation by the evaluators*

**Comment and Analysis**

Review evident and the preceeding qualitative study was also used to plan the quantitative impact assessment.

**Rating** 5

**1.4. The evaluation methods planned were appropriate to the project**

***STANDARD: There was explicit reference to the intervention logic or the theory of change of the evaluand in the planning of the evaluation***

***Comment and Analysis***

There is both a narrative and verbal explanation of the theory of change which is explicitly used in the evaluation to test the impact of the CSG.

**Rating** 5

***STANDARD: Key stakeholders were consulted on the design and methodology of the evaluation***

***Comment and Analysis***

Not clear.

**Rating** N/A

***STANDARD: The planned methodology was appropriate to the questions being asked***

***Comment and Analysis***

The evaluation sought to test causal pathways of impact and the methodology was designed to establish this statistically; so to this extent the data collection and analysis were appropriate.

**Rating** 4



***STANDARD: Planned sampling was appropriate and adequate given the focus and purpose of evaluation******Comment and Analysis***

Variable sampling was used.

**Rating** N/A

***STANDARD: There was a planned process for using the findings of the evaluation prior to undertaking the evaluation******Comment and Analysis***

There was dissemination but it is not evident that there was a planned or ongoing process. However, this requires further investigation as key people who might answer this question were not available for interview.

**Rating** N/A

**1.5. Inception phase*****STANDARD: The inception phase was used to develop a common agreement on how the evaluation would be implemented******Comment and Analysis***

Not clear from the report - it seemed that the qualitative and quantitative team worked together.

**Rating** 4

## 2. Implementation

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### 2.1. Ethical Review and Considerations

**STANDARD:** *Where data was gathered in contexts where ethical sensitivity is high, appropriate clearance was obtained through an ethics review board; e.g. in evaluation involving minors, institutions where access usually requires ethical or bureaucratic clearance, and situations where assurances of confidentiality was offered to participants*

**Comment and Analysis**

Not clear from the report. This standard would need to be established with interviewees.

**Rating** N/A

### 2.2. Evaluator independence

**STANDARD:** *Where external, evaluation team was able to work freely without significant interference*

**Comment and Analysis**

Not clear from the report.

**Rating** N/A

***STANDARD: The evaluation team was impartial and there was no evidence of conflict of interest******Comment and Analysis***

Not clear from the report.

**Rating** N/A

**2.3. Key stakeholder involvement*****STANDARD: Key stakeholders were consulted through a formalised mechanism or institutional arrangement during the evaluation******Comment and Analysis***

There was a steering group which held many workshops, but these were largely of a technical nature; and the actual design of the study was determined largely by a key figure at UNICEF and strongly influenced by perceived preferences for technical impact evaluation.

**Rating** 3

***STANDARD: Where appropriate, an element of capacity building of partners responsible for the evaluand was incorporated into the evaluation******Comment and Analysis***

It appears that the DSD was actively involved in the evaluation and have learnt and reflected on their learnings about the process, but the extent to which capacity building was actually built into the process is unclear (see planning and design section).

**Rating** 4

## 2.4. Methodology

**STANDARD: The methods employed in the process of the evaluation were consistent with those planned**

### **Comment and Analysis**

There was development of the methods but not necessarily deviation. The service provider was asked to develop the design, and for this reason there was not a context where deviation could really happen. The design did, however, directly address the impact evaluation questions at stake.

**Rating** 5

**STANDARD: Data collection was not compromised by fieldwork-level problems or unplanned diversions from original intentions**

### **Comment and Analysis**

The sample for this study was very small and relied for its validity on the finding of very particular individuals who met certain specific criteria with the expectation being that the administrative data set would enable and support the finding of such individuals. The administrative data used to sample respondents (SOCPEN) turned out to be very hard to access and completely unreliable, especially in terms of address data which made locating individuals very hard. New strategies for finding respondents had to be found (at paypoints).

**Rating** 2

**STANDARD: Forms of data gathering were appropriate given the scope of evaluation**

### **Comment and Analysis**

Not clear at this time.

**Rating** N/A

***STANDARD: The data analysis approach and methods were appropriate and sufficient given the purposes of the evaluation******Comment and Analysis***

Propensity Score Matching was used to facilitate comparison between beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries. This is considered a reliable and low-bias method provided (i) the same data source is used for participants and non-participants, (ii) the data include meaningful variables capable of identifying programme participation and outcomes, and (iii) participants and non-participants have access to the same markets. All criteria were met by using the same survey across groups and ensuring that beneficiary and comparison group were from the same locality and differences between localities were controlled for.

**Rating** 5***STANDARD: Key stakeholders were significantly engaged as part of the methodology******Comment and Analysis***

There was strong influence of external partners, with both UNICEF and Ford Foundation influencing the design and scope of the study. This appears to have alienated some of the partners and there was also limited involvement of interested civil society organisations directly involved in the issues at hand, even to the extent of not knowing about the study prior to its release.

**Rating** 2***STANDARD: The methodology included engaging beneficiaries appropriately as a key source of data and information******Comment and Analysis***

All data was gathered from beneficiaries and their primary caregivers.

**Rating** 5

## 2.5. Project management

**STANDARD: The evaluation was conducted without shifts to scheduled project milestones and timeframes**

### Comment and Analysis

The project was extended from 18 months to 3 years. This had both positive outcomes (qualitative data could be used to shape quantitative study) and better quality product was produced but had implications for usefulness of data.

**Rating** 1

## 3. Report

**3.1. Report was well-structured and presentation was clear and complete in each of these areas**

**STANDARD: Executive summary captured key components of the report appropriately**

### Comment and Analysis

Covers: background; methodology; research design, questionnaires and data; findings (divided by theme); conclusions.

**Rating** 4

**STANDARD: The context of the development intervention was explicit and presented as relevant to the evaluation**

### Comment and Analysis

A good background is given and the theory of change is well explained using an appropriate diagram.

**Rating** 5

**STANDARD: There was a clear rationale for the evaluation questions****Comment and Analysis**

The evaluation questions are not well contextualised or justified.

**Rating** 3

**STANDARD: The scope or focus of the evaluation was apparent in the report****Comment and Analysis**

It appears this was struggled with (in executive summary too).

**Rating** 3

**STANDARD: A detailed methodology was outlined in the relevant section of a report (full report or 1/3/25) to the point that a reader could understand the data collection, analysis and interpretation****Comment and Analysis**

The methodology and statistical methods used are explained in great detail and the particular equations used for the propensity score matching method used are included in the appendices.

**Rating** 5

**STANDARD: Key findings were presented in a clear way; they were made distinct from uncertain or speculative findings; and unused data was not presented in the body of the report**

**Comment and Analysis**

Findings were broken up into three main sections 1) issues around access, 2) impacts on children and 3) impacts on adolescents. Impacts on children and adolescents were clearly broken down according to developmental impact such as schooling, health, child labour, etc.

**Rating** 4

**STANDARD: Conclusions and recommendations were clear and succinctly articulated**

**Comment and Analysis**

Conclusions were simply and succinctly communicated.

**Rating** 5

**STANDARD: Acknowledgement of limitations of all aspects of the methodology and findings were clearly and succinctly articulated**

**Comment and Analysis**

The actual design of the study is compared to the "gold standard" of impact evaluations (double difference methods with randomisation) and deviations are explained and accounted for. Limitations of the approach are also indicated at some points in the report along with ways in which these limitations or weaknesses were addressed but there is no clear section reflecting on study limitations in terms of findings.

**Rating** 3



### 3.2. Writing and presentation

**STANDARD:** *Quality of writing and presentation was adequate for publication including: adequate layout and consistent formatting; complete sentences and no widespread grammatical or typographical errors; consistency of style and writing conventions (e.g. tense, perspective (first person, third person); levels of formality; references complete and consistent with cited references in reference list and vice versa; etc)*

#### Comment and Analysis

The report is well presented and edited.

Rating **5**

**STANDARD:** *Appropriate conventions were used in presentation of data (e.g. use of appropriate statistical language; reporting of p-values where appropriate; not reporting statistically insignificant findings as significant; clarifying disaggregation categories in constructing percentages; not using quantitative language in reporting qualitative data, etc.)*

#### Comment and Analysis

Data is very well presented.

Rating **5**

### 3.3. Presentation of findings

**STANDARD:** *The use of figures and tables was such that it supported communication and comprehension of results; and data reported in figures and tables was readily discernible and useful to a reader familiar with data presentation conventions*

**Comment and Analysis**

The report is very technical but figures and tables are clear and add value to the report.

**Rating** 5

**STANDARD: Data analysis appeared to have been well executed**

**Comment and Analysis**

The technical details of the data analysis are provided in detail in the report and in the appendices.

**Rating** 5

**STANDARD: Findings were supported by available evidence**

**Comment and Analysis**

All findings are based on statistical analysis of the data as well as findings referenced from the qualitative report.

**Rating** 5

***STANDARD: The evidence gathered was sufficiently and appropriately analysed to support the argument***

**Comment and Analysis**

Evidence was sufficiently and appropriately analysed.

**Rating** 5

***STANDARD: There was appropriate recognition of the possibility of alternative interpretations***

**Comment and Analysis**

There are no obvious mentions of alternative explanations in the report.

**Rating** 2

***STANDARD: The report appeared free of significant methodological and analytic flaws***

**Comment and Analysis**

The statistical methods involved were advanced appear free of significant methodological or analytic flaws.

**Rating** 5

### 3.4. Conclusions

***STANDARD: Conclusions were derived from evidence***

**Comment and Analysis**

Conclusions are justified with references to the findings.

**Rating** 5

***STANDARD: Conclusions took into account relevant empirical and/or analytic work from related research studies and evaluations***

**Comment and Analysis**

Comparisons were made to other studies and data on sampled beneficiaries was compared to two other representative surveys. Three studies were found to be largely consistent in household demographics, structure, size and wealth. The differences between the three studies were small, indicating that the study sample is largely representative of the corresponding national populations.

**Rating** 5

***STANDARD: Conclusions addressed the original evaluation purpose and questions***

**Comment and Analysis**

This appears to be the case.

**Rating** 5

***STANDARD: Conclusions were drawn with explicit reference to the intervention logic or theory of change*****Comment and Analysis**

The evaluation set out to explicitly test the TOC and conclusions are laid out according to the premises made in the TOC.

**Rating** 5

**3.5. Recommendations*****STANDARD: Recommendations were made in consultation with appropriate sectoral partners or experts*****Comment and Analysis**

No recommendations are made in the published study. This shows that the study was more of an impact study than an evaluation of the programme as such. There were certainly a number of high-level international experts in the study, but it became dominated by technical concerns that eclipsed what this may mean for the CSG programme of the DSD, except in a very broad sense.

**Rating** N/A

***STANDARD: Recommendations were shaped following input or review by relevant government officials and other relevant stakeholders*****Comment and Analysis**

No recommendations are made in the published study. This shows that the study was more of an impact study than an evaluation of the programme as such. There was very limited discussion with partners or civil society organisations at the point of interpreting the findings, and whereas the findings are strong and have recommendation potential, this has not happened to any strong degree.

**Rating** N/A

**STANDARD: Recommendations were relevant to the policy context****Comment and Analysis**

No recommendations are made.

**Rating** N/A

**STANDARD: Recommendations were targetted to a specific audience sufficiently - were specific, feasible, affordable and acceptable****Comment and Analysis**

No recommendations are made.

**Rating** N/A

**3.6. Relevant limitations of the evaluation have been noted****STANDARD: Relevant limitations of the evaluation were noted****Comment and Analysis**

Limitations of the study are not mentioned in this section.

**Rating** 2

### 3.7 Protection of participants and risk considerations

**STANDARD:** *The full report documented procedures intended to ensure confidentiality and to secure informed consent where this was needed (in some cases this is not needed - e.g. evaluation synthesis - in which case N/A should be recorded)*

#### Comment and Analysis

This is not mentioned at all in the report.

**Rating** N/A

**STANDARD:** *There were no risks to participants in disseminating the original report on a public website*

#### Comment and Analysis

There were no apparent risks to participants in disseminating the original report on a public website.

**Rating** 4

**STANDARD:** *There were no unfair risks to institutions in disseminating the original report on a public website*

#### Comment and Analysis

There were no apparent risks to institutions in disseminating the original report on a public website.

**Rating** 4

## 4. Follow-up, use and learning

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### 4.1. Presentation to stakeholders

**STANDARD:** *Results were presented to all relevant stakeholders*

#### Comment and Analysis

Unclear from the report. There was a big launch with civil society invited that has been corroborated.

**Rating** 3

### 4.2. Resource utilisation

**STANDARD:** *The evaluation was completed within the planned timeframes*

#### Comment and Analysis

This was not the case, the evaluation ran much longer than was originally planned.

**Rating** 1

**STANDARD:** *The evaluation was completed within the agreed budget*

#### Comment and Analysis

This was unclear from the report.

**Rating** N/A



### 4.3. Transparency

**STANDARD:** *The report was publicly available (website or otherwise published document), except where there were legitimate security concerns*

#### Comment and Analysis

Yes, it is available on UNICEF South Africa's website and DSD's website but not on SASSA's.

**Rating** 5

### 4.4. Lessons learnt

**STANDARD:** *After completion of the evaluation, a reflective process was undertaken by staff responsible for the evaluation to reflect on what could be done to strengthen future evaluations*

#### Comment and Analysis

Not available in report.

**Rating** N/A

### 4.5. Symbolic and conceptual value

**STANDARD:** *The evaluation study was seen by interviewed stakeholders as having added significant symbolic value to the policy or programme (eg raised its profile)*

#### Comment and Analysis

It depends from whose perspective one looks at this. From the perspective of technical experts it was certainly the case. There is international interest in the technical impact evaluation, but this has not added significant value in terms of the issues that need to be addressed. On the contrary the entire process led to frustration and the technical analysis has not lent itself to interesting take up.

**Rating** 4

**STANDARD: *The evaluation study was of conceptual value in understanding what has happened and possibly in shaping policy and practice***

**Comment and Analysis**

It finally laid to rest the assumption of various negative impacts of the child support grant and has created conceptual space for the prospect of the grant being awarded during pregnancy; although this is not yet on the policy table. An interviewed respondent felt that the study was quite divorced from the policy environment.

**Rating** **2**

#### **4.6. Utilisation of findings and recommendations**

**STANDARD: *There was clear evidence of instrumental use - that the recommendations of the evaluation were implemented to a significant extent***

**Comment and Analysis**

Too early to tell. No significant policy shifts appear to have taken place.

**Rating** **N/A**

**STANDARD: *There was clear evidence that the evaluation has had a positive influence on the evaluand, its stakeholders and beneficiaries over the medium to long term***

**Comment and Analysis**

The DSD appeared to have learnt valuable lessons from both the data and the evaluation process but the impact on beneficiaries is less clear from the report and there was not enough evidence to substantiate a rating on this standard.

**Rating** **N/A**

## **References**

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Economic Policy Research Institute and International Food Policy Research Institute, 2012. South Africa's Child Support Grant: Overall findings from an integrated qualitative-quantitative evaluation

Presentation: Impact Evaluation of the Child Support Grant in South Africa. Department of Social Development. Pretoria, 19 July 2011.

## **List of Interviewees**

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No interviews were conducted for this assessment.