

The Intended Outcomes of Social Grants in South Africa: A Case Study of Ngqushwa Local Municipality in the Eastern Cape Province

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ABSTRACT This paper emanated from a broader study conducted on the use of social grants in the Ngqushwa Local Municipality in the Eastern Cape Province in South Africa. The survey used a sample of 541 recipients who were either administered questionnaires, interviewed or participated in focus group discussions. The purpose of this report is to explore whether the intended outcomes of the social grants are being reached among the poor rural population. The findings of the survey have identified social grants as effectively targeted. It emerged that social grants improve both the welfare of recipients and their entire families. Furthermore, there is evidence of the investment in productive assets, both human and capital. The grant money is further utilized for education expenditure among children. The money is applied even to upgrade or build houses, and payment of water, electricity and other bills. Therefore, the grant money is used by recipients in a number of ways, some urban, some less so. The study confirms that the poor are well aware of their individual needs and some of the intended outcomes of the social grants are remarkable. Nevertheless, the idea of reduction of poverty through social grants still persists as questionable.