

Government lends a hand to young needy mothers

Analysis

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WITH more than 12 million beneficiaries of the child support grant in South Africa, a study by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), Attitudes to Work and Social Security in South Africa, reveals that most people receiving grants desperately need the help.

However, media reports says that many young mothers between 18 and 35 years receiving social grants on behalf of their children, use it for their personal needs such as buying beauty products.

It is in this repute that 24 years later into democracy, the government continues to commit itself towards implementing poverty alleviation measures like the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) and the Community Works Programme (CWP), with social assistance being the largest intervention.

But then again, a worrying factor remains that many children in South Africa are suffering in the care of their negligent parents.

In Gauteng, more than 1 million people are receiving child support grants.

A large proportion of those being young women, many of which are people from households where tertiary education is not considered due to poverty levels.

Therefore, the skills level among young mothers is very low and relevant work experience is needed.

In response to these overwhelming social challenges, Gauteng government social development MEC Nandi Mayathula-Khoza launched the Welfare-to-Work Programme (W2WP) in 2014 to address the economic challenges facing young women in the province.

The W2WP aims to either transition youths who are on welfare into decent employment or provide further education opportunities.

Since then, the programme has restored the dignity of thousands of young women who were dependent on child support grants as their only source of income and has reduced their dependency on the welfare system.

The department of social development has committed to expand the programme to reach more than 12 000 beneficiaries by next year.

The department provides accredited skills training programmes through partnerships with various NGOs and accredited training partners in the fields of hospitality, real estate, photography, beauty therapy and hair dressing.

While acknowledging the role that social security, particularly the child support grant plays in alleviating poverty, a lot needs to be done working together with civil society to ensure that poor and vulnerable households do not depend on grants as their only source of income.

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