

# Implementation and Impact Evaluation of the Limpopo Foster Care Programme



Around 2003, the South African government began to encourage South African families caring for orphans to apply for foster care (including the foster care grant). This much needed assistance was accessed by tens of thousands of Limpopo families, prompting a tripling of the number of foster care cases within a decade. The increased caseload as well as changes in the law created a backlog for the Limpopo departments mandated to implement the programme over the period 2010 to 2017.

PDG was commissioned to conduct an implementation and impact evaluation of the foster care programme of the Limpopo Provincial Government. The purpose was to assess the extent of adherence to the law as well as to assess the contribution of the foster care programme and the foster care grant towards the well-being of fostered children. PDG was tasked with answering evaluation questions about the programme's efficiency, effectiveness and impact. Ikapadata was subcontracted to conduct the survey.

PDG conducted a mixed-methods evaluation. Data collection included a provincially representative face-to-face survey of foster caregivers, as well as interviews and focus groups with key government officials and social workers. Data from the SOCPEN database and National Income Dynamics Survey were also analysed. PDG combined implementation data and data about children's outcomes in a way that produced new insights and arrived at important evaluative findings for the provincial government.

The evaluation found that the programme plays an important role in providing care and stability for Limpopo's foster children. The consistently delivered foster care grant reduces the number of foster households living in poverty.



Most foster children are cared for by kin with whom they have relatively good relationships. However, foster children lag behind in educational attainment. It was therefore recommended that a management information system be introduced and that the commendable increase in social workers be met with sufficient supervision and operational resources. This will help reduce the persistent case renewal backlog and ensure more extensive support to families that need it. The Limpopo experience supports policy discussions about differentiating kinship care and foster care services.

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