

# Technical notes on the data sources

## General Household Survey:<sup>1</sup>

The GHS is a multi-purpose annual survey conducted by the national statistical agency, Statistics South Africa (Stats SA), to collect information on a range of topics from households in the country's nine provinces. The survey uses a sample of approximately 30,000 households. These are drawn from census enumeration areas using a two-stage stratified design with probability proportional to size sampling of primary sampling units (PSUs) and systematic sampling of dwelling units from the sampled PSUs. The resulting weighted estimates are representative of all households in South Africa.

The GHS sample consists of households and does not cover other collective institutionalised living-quarters such as boarding schools, orphanages, students' hostels, old-age homes, hospitals, prisons, military barracks and workers' hostels. These exclusions should not have a noticeable impact on the findings in respect of children.

### *Changes in sample frame and stratification*

The sample design for the 2013 GHS was based on a master sample that was originally designed for the Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) and was used for the GHS for the first time in 2008. The same master sample is shared by the GHS, the QLFS, the Living Conditions Survey and the Income and Expenditure Survey. The previous master sample for the GHS was used for the first time in 2004. This again differed from the master sample used in the first two years of the GHS: 2002 and 2003. Thus there have been three different sampling frames during the 12-year history of the annual GHS, with the changes occurring in 2004 and 2008. In addition, there have been changes in the method of stratification over the years. These changes could compromise comparability across iterations of the survey to some extent, although it is common practice to use the GHS for longitudinal monitoring and many of the official trend analyses are drawn from this survey.

### *Weights*

Person and household weights are provided by Stats SA and are applied in Children Count analyses to give estimates at the provincial and national levels.

The GHS weights are derived from Stats SA's mid-year population estimates. The population estimates are revised retrospectively from time to time when it is possible to calibrate the population model to larger population surveys (such as the Community Survey) or to Census data. In 2013, Stats SA revised the population model to produce mid-year population estimates in light of the Census 2011 results. The new data were used to adjust the benchmarking for all previous GHS data

sets, which were re-released with the revised population weights by Stats SA.<sup>2</sup> All the Children Count indicators have been re-analysed retrospectively, using the revised weights provided by Statistics South Africa. The estimates are therefore comparable over the period 2002 to 2013. The revised weights particularly affected estimates for the years 2002 – 2007. Users may find that the baseline estimates reported here are different from those reported in previous editions of the *South African Child Gauge*.

The revised indicators for all the intervening years are available on the website: [www.childrencount.ci.org.za](http://www.childrencount.ci.org.za).

### *Reporting error*

Error may be present due to the methodology used, i.e. the questionnaire is administered to only one respondent in the household who is expected to provide information about all other members of the household. Not all respondents will have accurate information about all children in the household. In instances where the respondent did not or could not provide an answer, this was recorded as "unspecified" (no response) or "don't know" (the respondent stated that they didn't know the answer).

### **SOCPEN database:<sup>3</sup>**

Information on social grants is derived from the Social Pensions (SOCPEN) national database maintained by the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA), which was established in 2004 to disburse social grants for the Department of Social Development. Prior to this, the administration of social grants and maintenance of the SOCPEN database was managed directly by the department and its provincial counterparts.

There has never been a published, systematic review of the social grants database, and the limitations in terms of validity or reliability of the data have not been quantified. However, this database is regularly used by the department and other government bodies to monitor grant take-up, and the computerised system, which records every application and grant payment, minimises the possibility of human error. Take-up data and selected reports are available from the department on request throughout the year. Children Count provides grant take-up figures as at the end of March.

## References

- 1 Statistics South Africa (2003 – 2014) *General Household Survey Metadata 2002 – 2013*. Pretoria: Stats SA. Available: <http://interactive.statssa.gov.za:8282/webview/>.
- 2 Statistics South Africa (2014) *General Household Survey 2013. Statistical Release P0318*. Pretoria: Statistics South Africa.
- 3 South African Social Security Agency (2004 – 2014) *SOCPEN social grants data*. Pretoria: SASSA.