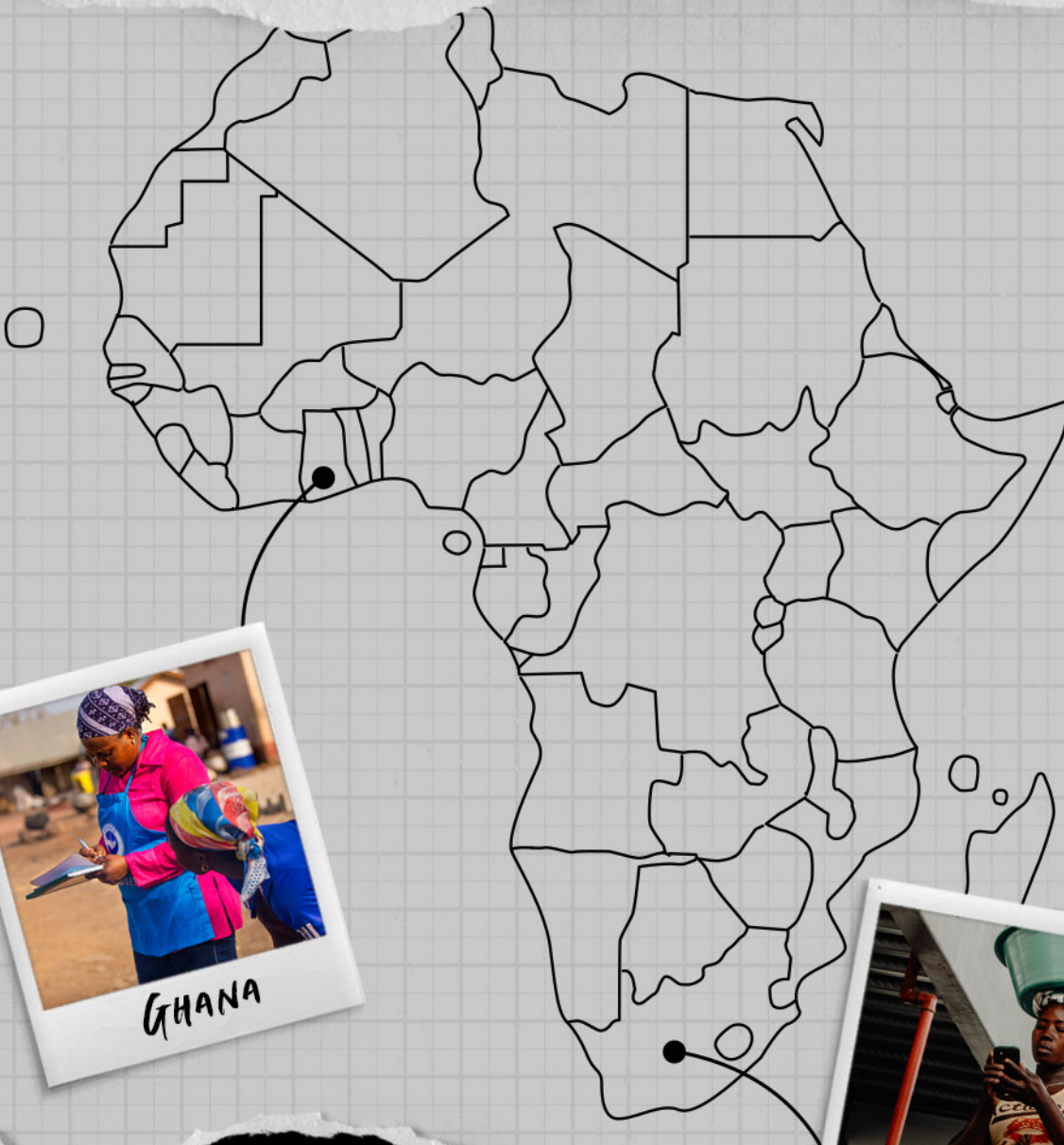


POLICY TRANSFORMATIONS

IN TIMES OF COVID-19



GHANA

SOUTH AFRICA

REGION

AFRICA



GHANA



- 1.** The study analyses the closure of schools, the discontinuation of the School Feeding Programme (GSFP), and the continuous austerity in a pandemic context.
- 2.** The GSFP serves over three million children in about 9,000 public schools to guarantee food security, school enrolment, and student retention.
- 3.** The government widened the programme's goals by linking farmers to school feeding caterers in order to increase the consumption of locally produced food. However, delayed payments caused local farmers to bear the brunt of austerity measures.
- 4.** Budgetary cuts meant that the programme was discontinued, thus increasing women's and children's unpaid care workloads and exacerbating already existing precarity in female-headed households.
- 5.** The policy responses implemented by the government were temporary, and unsustainable. The GSFP's budget was used to feed older school children during the COVID-19 crisis. While contributing to alleviate a need, it left younger children unprotected.
- 6.** Old policies and practices (austerity and corruption) were kept in place instead of developing transformative approaches in social policy implementation during the pandemic.
- 7.** It is essential to implement government policies that lessen the burden of care and economic fallouts on women's already fragile livelihoods.



SOUTH AFRICA



- 1.** Before the pandemic, existing social grants had historically excluded people between 18 and 59 years of age. This exclusion was compounded by structural discrimination against black and coloured women and youth, which severely limited their ability to meet the basic needs of their households and individuals.
- 2.** In response to the pandemic, the government introduced special grants targeting unemployed individuals of the 18-59 age group, thus overcoming that historical concern through the Special COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress (SRD) Grant and a Caregiver grant. This was a welcome change that, after civil society mobilization, also included migrants. However, the amounts provided were insufficient to cover for household food intake and other basic needs. It also excluded people who were beneficiaries of other grants, such as women who received the child support grant, even if they were unemployed and had no other sources of income.
- 3.** Pre-pandemic austerity measures to contain debt levels are well ingrained in parts of the public sector in South Africa. These views have had a strong impact during the COVID-19 crisis, endangered the temporary expansion of social security and limited the transformative potential of these new social protection policies.
- 4.** Nearly half of the policy responses to the pandemic went to rescue the business sector.
- 5.** Despite implementing some important emergency measures, they were insufficient. However, some hope that there are opportunities for positive transformations ahead, considering that the caregiver grant represents a step forward to discussing a potential Universal Basic Income Grant (UBIG).

POLICY TRANSFORMATIONS

IN TIMES OF COVID-19

Using a feminist intersectional and interlinkages approach, this project closely examines policy changes that have taken place during the period of exceptionality produced by the pandemic, exploring how they may impact the future.

