

From unpaid care work to public job guarantee: the case of South Africa

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Abstract:

There is widespread recognition that in most countries private sector investment has not been able to absorb surplus labor. This is all the more the case for poor people residing in low income countries. Ironically, while unemployment and enforced “idleness” persist, existing Time Use Survey data reveal that people around the world- and especially women and children in developing countries- spend long hours performing unpaid work. This work includes household maintenance and care provisioning for families and communities. To investigate the economic effects of such an active labor market policy for the case of South Africa, the paper uses a Social Accounting Matrix (SAM) methodology. Bringing together public job creation on the one hand, and unpaid work on the other, this paper suggests that job creation in early childhood development and home based care can promote socioeconomic stability, gender equality and pro-poor development.