

Policy options to tackle poverty and inequality

Wiseman Magasela
Department of Social Development

Understanding poverty and inequality

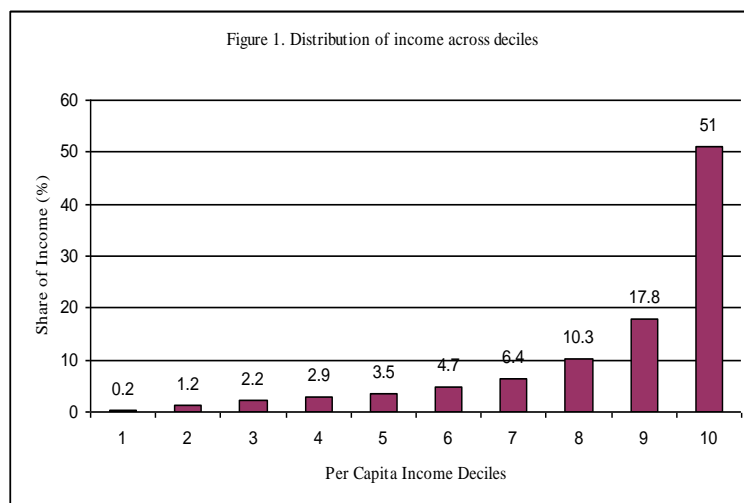
Peter Townsend (1979)

Individuals, families and groups in the population can be said to be in poverty when they lack the resources to obtain the types of diet, participate in the activities and have the living conditions which are customary, or at least widely encouraged or approved, in societies to which they belong. Their resources are so seriously below those commanded by the average family or individual that they are in effect excluded from ordinary living patterns, customs and activities’.

Key issues

- Poverty and inequality
- Social protection floor
 - (set of set of basic social rights, services and facilities that the citizens should enjoy)
- Social exclusion
- Income inequality vs substantive social and economic inequality

Income Distribution in SA (CS 2007)



Policy options

- Do we expect the apartheid legacy to have disappeared ... the social investment dividend to tackle multi-dimensional poverty and inequality?
- To what extent do macro-economic policies and other policies reinforce racial and class inequality?
- Workless households (too few South Africans work)
- The working poor (earnings below social grants income threshold)
- Investment in people – minimum social protection floor (social assistance, education, training and skills, health, early childhood development, etc)