



ChildGauge

Budget Council Room



The Children's Institute is a leader in child policy research and advocacy in South Africa. Its activities focus on four areas that are critical to children's well-being: child rights, child poverty, child health services, and care in the context of HIV/AIDS.

The Institute provides evidence to assist policy-makers and practitioners to create laws, policies, programmes and institutions that support the best interests of children in South Africa.

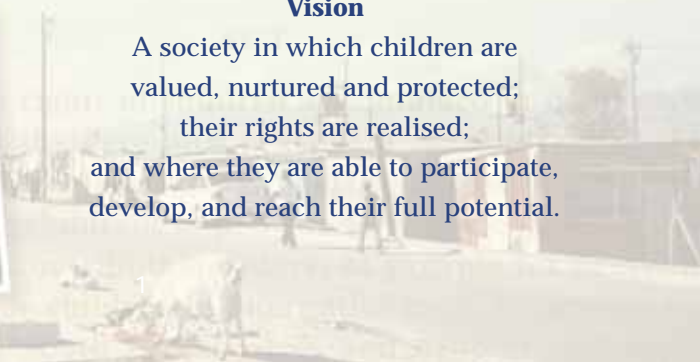


Mission

To contribute to policies, laws and interventions that promote equality and realise the rights and improve the conditions of all children in South Africa through research, advocacy, education and technical support.

Vision

A society in which children are valued, nurtured and protected; their rights are realised; and where they are able to participate, develop, and reach their full potential.



About the Children's Institute

The Children's Institute was established at the University of Cape Town in 2001 to harness the collective institutional capabilities related to child-focused research, teaching and development. The essence of the Institute is to bring primary and secondary research and information to bear on the development of laws, policies, programmes and service interventions for children across a number of disciplines. Evidence-based advocacy forms a continuum with research, teaching and development activities, and is the vehicle by which the Institute maximises the impact of academic endeavours on policy and practice.

The Institute's focus areas are in line with major issues that impact significantly on children's lives, namely poverty, HIV/AIDS and child health services. These are addressed within a rights framework underpinned by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the South African Constitution.

The Children's Institute over the past 10 years has established itself as a credible policy research institute both within and outside the University. Within the University, the Institute is regarded as a model for a socially-responsive academic unit.¹ Outside the University, the Institute has contributed significantly to a number of policy and legislative processes, and has participated in numerous – or sometimes initiated – collaborations and networks with both government and civil society duty-bearers for children's rights.

The Institute has a strong foundation of work in the field of children's policy that is widely acknowledged by the academic, civil society, government and news media sectors. Its communication products are used extensively in the South African children's sector, and the Institute is gaining a strong reputation in Africa, as well as globally.

The Children's Institute has a pool of donors who believe in its mission and who invest in its work. Highly competent, multi-disciplinary staff represent a vast collective experience and are all passionate advocates for children and their rights. This combination of resources continues to make it possible for the Institute to contribute to alleviating the plight of South Africa's children by advancing policies and strategies that are in their best interests.

The Institute's focus areas are in line with major issues that impact significantly on children's lives: poverty, HIV/AIDS and child health services; these are addressed within a rights framework.



Advisory Board meeting with staff: Prof Tokozile Mayekiso (Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University); Adv Tseliso Thipanyane (independent, formerly with the Human Rights Commission); Dr Jon E. Rohde (international consultant, formerly with UNICEF).

The objectives of the Institute are to:

- characterise the major challenges facing children in South Africa;
- conduct policy research, analysis and commentary;
- provide evidence-based information and technical assistance to all relevant role-players in the policy-making process;
- undertake training and teaching;
- promote and impact on policy-making decisions that affect children's well-being;
- monitor and evaluate the impact of policy on child well-being; and
- undertake knowledge translation for multiple audiences, and communicate information and research findings to all interested, involved and affected role-players.

The Institute in all its work strives to achieve excellence, promote interdisciplinary research, develop indigenous models of policy and intervention, and respect diversity. The work of the Institute operates at international, regional, national, provincial and local levels and focuses on all phases of policy development and implementation. The Institute collaborates with interested role-players including academics, policy-makers and practitioners in government and in non-governmental and community-based organisations.

The functions of the Institute are:

- **Research**
 - Defining research questions in specific child policy areas.
 - Conducting quality policy research and clarification.
 - Stimulating inter-disciplinary research.
 - Collating and analysing secondary research and data sets.

- **Teaching**
 - Conducting policy research training for graduate students from different disciplines.
 - Contributing child policy modules to existing programmes.
 - Delivering short courses and other appropriate training to child practitioners and policy-makers.
- **Technical assistance and support**
 - Providing technical assistance to policy-makers and practitioners.
 - Supporting child policy role-players with information, training and practice guidelines.
- **Advocacy**
 - Communicating with government decision-makers.
 - Producing publications directed at the policy, service provider, academic and popular fields.
 - Disseminating information on children's rights and their situation in South Africa.
 - Participating in and supporting social movements that prioritise and promote children's well-being.
 - Increasing the cadre of practitioners, scholars and researchers versed in evidence-based approaches to child-focused policies and practices.

The research areas in the Institute have been carefully selected, based on priorities areas for children:

- Child health services
- Child poverty
- Child rights
- HIV/AIDS

The multi-faceted nature of these priorities for children and the multi-disciplinary approaches needed to address them require continuous collaboration between the researchers. Major projects often involve teams of staff from all the research areas. Cross-cutting support areas are general and financial administration, human resources, communication and knowledge management.

Of the nearly 19 million children in South Africa, 35% of children lived in 2008 in households where no adult was employed²