



**Child health in the spotlight:** The *South African Child Gauge 2009/2010* editorial team (from the left) Lori Lake, Charmaine Smith, Prof Maurice Kibel and Prof Shirley Pendlebury, with Malathi Pillai, Deputy Country Representative, UNICEF South Africa.



**Launch of the *South African Child Gauge 2009/2010*:** Dr Nathaniel Khaole, Acting Cluster Manager: Maternal, Child and Women's Health, Department of Health; and Jo Beall, Deputy Vice Chancellor, University of Cape Town.

## The year in review

At the end of another busy year, this review is an opportunity to reflect both on achievements and on the persistent challenges of a soft-funded university-based institute that strives to integrate socially-responsive research, advocacy and education for improving policies and services for children.

Without ongoing support from donors, the Children's Institute would be thwarted and its vision no more than a pipedream. In 2010, the Institute benefited from several generous grants, and from donors' encouragement and ideas for attracting new grants. The ELMA Foundation and the staff of ELMA Philanthropies remain steadfast champions of the Institute's work. Atlantic Philanthropies – the founding donor for the Institute – made a new two-year grant to support core capacity and develop child health-related work.

### Highlights

Highlights of the year include: the fifth issue of the *South African Child Gauge*; an expansion of the indicator project Children Count – *Abantwana Babalulekile*; new partnerships and a deepening of longstanding partnerships; and the preparation of practitioner guides on the Children's Act.

The *South African Child Gauge* is the Institute's most visible publication. It demands an enormous amount of time and energy from the editorial and production teams, and from the contributors. In 2010, a punishingly tight production schedule had to accommodate the disruptive excitements of the soccer World Cup. Published in partnership with UNICEF South Africa, the 2009/2010 *South African Child Gauge* focused on child health and was launched at a lively and packed symposium. Starting at the launch and for several subsequent weeks, the print and electronic media spread the *South African Child Gauge* messages on child health far and wide. This issue attracted the biggest media coverage ever, including national television discussions and radio talk shows. The

“[T]he *South African Child Gauge* is the only publication in South Africa that combines detailed empirical data presented in a user-friendly and accessible format, with insightful and thought-provoking research and commentary in the sphere of children's rights”<sup>4</sup> Justice Belinda van Heerden, Supreme Court judge



**Children's Institute publications at Parliament:** A National Children's Day exhibition at the library of the Western Cape legislature, organised by Anna-Marie Van Antwerpen (right) and Mariam Stuurman (left).

publication was also promoted at several large conferences, and in several journals (see p. 33). With Emeritus Professor Maurice Kibel as the main editor, and essays from a range of child and public health specialists, the 2009/2010 issue was also the first to build so strongly on partnerships with people outside of the Institute.

Work on the **Children Count – Abantwana Babalulekile project** expanded to include a National Child Poverty Monitor, which informs the Programme for Pro-Poor Policy Development, a partnership programme of the Presidency, Republic of South Africa, and the Delegation of the European Union. The project includes an internship programme for post-graduate students with a bent for statistical work (see pp. 25–26). This is an important move towards realising the vision of “increasing cadre of practitioners, scholars and researchers versed in evidence-based approaches to child-focused policies and practices”, described in the Institute's blueprint.

The **Children's Act** remains pivotal to the Institute's activities. For the fourth year in a row, in partnership with the Centre for Actuarial Research (CARE), the implementation of the Children's Act was monitored through analysis of social development budgets. With funding from UNICEF South Africa, complementary analyses were conducted with the Community Agency for Social Enquiry (CASE) of the budgets of national and provincial departments that deliver key services to children, namely, Justice, Health, Education and the Ministry for Women, Children and People with Disabilities. The National Treasury hosted a dialogue at which the research findings were presented to the stakeholders from government and civil society for discussion (see p. 27).

Various groups of practitioners have expressed the need for guidance in implementing the Children's Act. In response to this need, the Children's Institute has started developing practitioner guides. A **guide for health professionals** is complete; a **guide for child and youth care workers** will be published in early 2011 in partnership with the National Association for Child and Youth Care Workers; and a guide for early childhood development practitioners is in the pipeline.

Even with the best laid plan, changes in the political domain can delay or halt the work of advocacy networks. The **Social Service Practitioners Advocacy Network** is a case in point. The Children's Institute has been co-ordinating the network at the request of a group of social service providers to support practitioner engagement in the development of a new law that will regulate the sector – a critical development for the implementation of the Children's Act. Following from Cabinet's directive that all new Bills must be supported by a policy document that outlines the vision and intended impact of the legislation, the Social Services Professions and Occupations Bill will not be tabled until 2014 (see p. 32).

## Recognition

Public recognition of the Institute's work comes in different ways – for example, in prizes, invitations to serve on important national committees and features in official publications of the University of Cape Town. This year, Maputaland Community Radio won an **International Children's Broadcast Day Award**, for the second year in a row, for work by the *Abaqophi bakwaZisize Abakhanyayo* – The Shining Recorders of Zisize – Children's Radio project (see p. 21). The Institute was invited to nominate a representative to serve on the **South African Human Rights Commission's** new committee on children's rights. The University's **Social Responsiveness Report 2009** featured a reflective article on the making of the *South African Child Gauge* as an example of academically rigorous and socially-responsive knowledge translation.

## Advisors

Friends and advisors play an important role in the life of the Institute. For example, in May 2010, at the invitation of the director, Emeritus Associate Professor Andy Dawes facilitated a strategic thinking workshop to assist the Institute to begin crafting a coherent research agenda for the next 4 – 5 years. Ideas from the workshop provided the basis for

**In 2009, just over 2 million of South Africa's children lived in informal dwellings<sup>5</sup>; in 2008, 5.8 million lived in overcrowded households<sup>6</sup>**

further discussion with the Institute’s International Board of Advisors. Every year the board gathers to review the activities and direction of the Institute. Convening in September 2010 for three days, board members and invited guests attended a one-day seminar on current research and advocacy, followed by a workshop with staff to begin charting a stronger research direction and to think about a systematic way of selecting themes for the annual *South African Child Gauge*.

### **Mission and activities**

The Children’s Institute retains its multi-disciplinary character, and its commitment to **research, evidence-based advocacy, policy development and education** to promote equality and realise the rights of all South Africa’s children. In 2010, the scope of work has expanded into the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region.

The Institute’s **academic presence** in the curriculum of the University of Cape Town continues to grow. In 2010, staff contributed to teaching (and in some instances postgraduate research supervision) in the Departments of Social Anthropology, Public Law, Sociology, and Social Development. Through their teaching, research staff bring the wealth of policy and “real world” research experience into the University curriculum, thus



**Art in the making:** Learners from the Walter Teka Higher Primary School in Cape Town participating in a Frank Joubert Art Centre workshop to make artwork for inclusion in the *South African Child Gauge 2009/2010*.

contributing to one of the University's strategic goals. Regrettably, academic departments can seldom cover the costs of teaching time of soft-funded researchers. (See pp. 37–39 for details on education and teaching activities.)

A short course on **Child Rights and Child Law for Health Professionals** is ready for delivery to health educators in January 2011. It was initiated through an international Child Rights Education for Professionals (CRED-PRO) collaboration led by Gerison Lansdown, an independent child rights consultant from the United Kingdom. As part of the collaboration, the Institute's was represented at a *Child rights education in East Africa* meeting in Tanzania, where the South African curriculum was presented (see p. 24).

Recent local media reports suggested an alarming increase in infants being abandoned in the Western Cape. Findings from the **Infants and HIV/AIDS project** may well illuminate the conditions and influence of decisions on infant care by different key figures in their lives (see p. 30).

**Work beyond South Africa** has focused primarily on policy review and the possibilities for using the South African experience to assist with law reform in the region. SADC now has committed to the development of a policy framework for Care and Support for Teaching and Learning – a notion that has its roots in South Africa's Caring Schools Network, in which the Children's Institute has played a notable role. In 2010, the Institute was commissioned to draft the policy framework. Other regional work, in Lesotho and Swaziland, has reviewed policies that focus on orphans and vulnerable children (see p. 35).

Although the Institute still has a way to go in establishing a stronger culture of **academic publication**, 2010 saw a pleasing growth in peer-reviewed books, chapters and journal articles. There is also greater recognition among academic peers that the *South African Child Gauge*, while aiming to make research accessible to a wide audience, nonetheless meets the criteria for a rigorously peer-reviewed publication.

## Collaborations and networking

Collaboration and networking are central to the work of the Children's Institute. In 2010, collaboration with local partners has continued and expanded. Funding from the Leverhulme Trust supported the last two meetings of the international **Network on Theorising Children's Participation**, and the Institute was represented at both the Brazil and India seminars. This has been a small but academically productive network, with a special issue

**“The Institute played a phenomenally important role in the Children's Bill process; the co-ordination of civil society participation was and continues to be a good practice model, without a doubt”<sup>7</sup>**

Dr Anne Skelton, University of Pretoria



**International collaborations:** Patricia Henderson (Children's Institute) and Udi Mandel Butler (CIESPI/Oxford University/University of Bristol) at the India meeting of the international Network on Theorising Children's Participation.

of an accredited journal in press, a book proposal accepted and new opportunities for cross-country research in Brazil, India, South Africa and the United Kingdom (see p. 34).

Belonging to the **Chapin Hall Network of Child Policy Research Centres** has been immensely valuable. The Institute has been an active network member for the past nine years, along with similar child policy centres from South America, Europe, the Middle East and Asia. The centres share the goal of generating

knowledge through research to improve policies and practices for children. A plenary meeting every 18 months provides opportunities for members to work through issues of common concern and discuss topics that may lead to useful cross-national research. In 2010, the meeting gathered at Trinity College, Dublin, where the Institute's director gave an overview of South Africa's youth policy. Two case studies of the Institute's methodology were also presented at a symposium on evaluating complex change initiatives, attended by senior staff from Atlantic Philanthropies in Ireland and Northern Ireland, and academics and government officials involved in policy development for children.

Over the past three years, the Children's Institute has been represented in the **Leadership and Innovation Network for the Collaboration in the Children's Sector** (LINC), an innovation that brings together leaders from civil society, donors, business and government. Shirley Pendlebury has been a LINC fellow since its inception. In 2010, Charmaine Smith and Paula Proudlock joined LINC as "third generation" fellows.

## Conferences

Conferences are an important space for critical knowledge exchange. During 2010, the Children's Institute presented at a range of international and local conferences and seminars. International events included: the *Changing families in a changing world* conference at the University of Edinburgh; the *India–Brazil–South Africa academic forum* in Brazil; a *World early childhood care and education* conference in Russia; the *31st Congress of the Fédération Internationale des Communautés Educatives (FICE)*; and three presentations to the Network on Theorising Children's Participation, in Brazil and India.

Highlights of regional and local events included: a *Child rights education in East Africa* meeting in Tanzania, a SADC regional steering committee meeting, a gathering of the South African National Commission for UNESCO, the conference on *Overcoming inequality and structural poverty in South Africa*, and the joint conference of the Nursing Education Association and the Forum of University Nursing Deans in South Africa.

## Staffing

This has been a year for babies at the Children's Institute. Helen Meintjes and Ariane De Lannoy gave birth to daughters; Bee Williams and Anthea Maree to sons.

Sue Moses completed her honours degree in clinical psychology. She is leaving the Institute to prepare for a career as a clinical psychologist. In 2011 Patricia Henderson will be lecturing full time in the Department of Social Anthropology. She remains a good friend of the Institute. Karl Groenewald, the Institute's ever helpful IT officer, has left to take up a position in the private sector.

Heidi Sauls, a visiting doctoral candidate at the University of Amsterdam, is working towards completing her thesis.

## Governance

The **International Board of Advisors** and cross-faculty **Governing Board** continue to offer invaluable guidance to the Institute. In 2010 Prof Crain Soudien, a longstanding member of the Governing Board, was appointed as a deputy vice-chancellor at the University. The Children's Institute is most grateful to him for remaining on the board, despite the demands of his new position. The Institute's work falls directly within his domain of responsibility, namely, the social responsiveness portfolio of the University.

Under the leadership of Prof Larry Aber, the International Advisory Board plays a crucial role in monitoring the quality and direction of the Institute's research, advocacy and publications. In addition to chairing the annual board meeting in 2010, Larry paid a short visit to the Institute during May. Once again, the Institute has benefited from his clarity, insight and capacity for sharp, unsettling questions. Board member Dr Jon Rohde also participated in several of the Institute's discussions and workshops in 2010, bringing a wealth of experience from the field of child health as former global advisor on health and nutrition to a former UNICEF chief. Although Adv Tseliso Thipanyane has moved to New

One out of every 20 children born in South Africa dies before the age of five<sup>8</sup>





**Dialoguing the impact of government budgets on children:** Budget analyses were presented at an event hosted by the National Treasury.

York, he has agreed to remain on the Advisory Board; his energetic and insightful interventions are much appreciated.

## **Finances and plans**

At the start of 2010, the Children's Institute entered a new and more stringent financial era. The last of the very generous core grants that had funded the founding and development of the Institute came to an end. In response to this change, the Institute has over the past two years adopted a more **systematic approach to fundraising, donor development, partnerships and income generation**. The ELMA Foundation, the University's Department of Alumni and Development, the UCT Foundations (UK and Canada) and UCT Trust (USA), and senior finance staff in the Faculty of Health Sciences have all played a crucial part in supporting the Institute to achieve long-term financial health.

**There is much to look forward to in 2011.** Plans are underway for the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the Children's Institute. The next issue of the *Child Gauge*, focusing on children's participation, will be launched in mid-2011; the first cohort of interns will join the Institute in February; and a group of paediatricians and nurse educators from across the country will participate in the Institute's first offering of a short course on child rights and law for health professionals. The Institute also plans to expand the Advisory Board to include more South (or southern) African members.

Children, and the conditions for realising their constitutional rights, stay at the heart of the Children's Institute and its work.