

The Children's Institute 2021/22

ANNUAL REPORT



UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN
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child rights in focus
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Our vision and mission

We are a centre of excellence for interdisciplinary, child-centred research, advocacy and education, that is rooted in the African continent and proactively engaged in addressing the challenges facing children in South Africa.

We combine the rigour of academic enquiry and the energy of civil society activism to explore the tensions between policy, practice and children's lived realities; and to promote the design and implementation of laws and services that enable all children to thrive.

Strategy 2022 to 2024



Our GOALS

During 2021 our staff and governing board embarked on a strategic planning process to revisit our vision, goals and areas of work. The strategy guides our agenda into 2024.

In striving to meet our vision and mission, our main goals are to:

The Children's Institute (CI) at a glance

The Children's Institute (CI) was established in 2001 as a multidisciplinary policy research unit in the Department of Paediatrics and Child Health, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Cape Town (UCT).

Our research and advocacy agendas are aligned with the major challenges facing children in South Africa, and currently focus on four main interrelated themes:

- Alleviating child poverty and deprivation through well-designed and inclusive social protection strategies.
- Improving child protection systems by strengthening coordination, violence prevention and response strategies.
- Strengthening early childhood development through a comprehensive package of services and support for children and their caregivers.
- Strengthening the voice and agency of children.

Our staff – with backgrounds in public health, sociology, law, politics, social work, psychology and communications – pool our skills to investigate the complex social issues affecting children.

1

Conduct research that investigates and characterises the situation of children and their carers; contributes to the development of innovative models of practice; and identifies opportunities for strengthening law, policy and implementation.

2

Make academic research **relevant and accessible** to government, civil society and children.

3

Engage in **evidence-based advocacy** to ensure that programmes for children and their carers are contextually relevant, appropriately designed, reasonably implemented, prioritised for investment and protected from erosion.

4

Support children and their carers to **participate** in matters that affect them and to advocate for the realisation of their rights.

5

Provide **education and training** to build a cadre of researchers and practitioners equipped to contribute to the realisation of children's rights.

6

Contribute to **national and global discourses** on children, childhoods and evidence-based policymaking and practice.

Contributing to UCT's Vision 2030

UCT's Vision 2030 is to be "the top global university in Afrika – a university that is uncompromising in its transformative intent, deeply rooted in academic excellence, and one that strives for social, environmental and financial sustainability".

The vision is grounded in three pillars – excellence, transformation and sustainability. In line with UCT's transformative purpose it is envisaged that the university will contribute towards building a fair and just society by working collaboratively with local partners. The vision also promotes interdisciplinary research to address the complex societal problems to effect positive change in South African society.

We contribute to the vision of UCT in multiple ways.

Our vision is centred on the idea of the Children's Institute as a centre of excellence for child-centred research, advocacy and education in the global South, firmly rooted in the African continent and actively engaging with the pressing challenges facing South Africa's children, to ensure the realisation of children's rights. Our research approach strives to employ African epistemologies that are rooted in decoloniality.

As an applied research unit, our core purpose is to conduct research aimed at finding solutions for problems facing South Africa. We have a strong socially responsive research agenda that aims to contribute to the realisation of children's rights and to enhance the design and delivery of laws, policies and programmes that

support the realisation of these rights and the promotion of social justice.

We are committed to knowledge translation and have a well-established a communications programme focused on translating research evidence into accessible materials and popular formats.

A prime example of this is our flagship publication, the South African Child Gauge, which includes an overview of legislative developments affecting children, the latest statistical data on children (drawing on our Children Count project), and a series of easy-to-read essays on a specific theme.

We also actively engage in policy and legislative processes to facilitate law and policy reform. This takes place through a range of strategies including parliamentary submissions and meetings, government meetings and roundtables, and civil society forums (many of which are convened by us).

While advocacy and social engagement are not flagged as assessment criteria for accreditation as a research unit, the university has made a clear commitment to social responsiveness and engaged scholarship as part of its transformation agenda and through Vision 2030.

Our theory of change





PROFESSOR SHANAAZ MATHEWS

Letter from our Director

Dear colleagues and friends of the CI

After an incredible decade as its Director, I have decided to bid the CI farewell. Ten years is a good point at which to pass the baton – and my philosophy is that leadership change is important for the fresh perspectives and ideas that enable organisational growth.

As I reflect on my tenure, I am struck by the dedication of the researcher-advocates that I have worked alongside, who made a challenging job significantly easier.

The CI occupies a unique position within the University of Cape Town, and in many respects it is ahead of the curve. It was established as an interdisciplinary policy research unit with an explicit focus on ensuring that children's rights are realised. This interdisciplinarity enriches the work of the CI, and we are widely acknowledged for our contribution in shaping child policy. Within the university, there is recognition for our distinct model of engaged scholarship, using evidenced-based advocacy to enhance policy and practice. Yet balancing the demands of academia and our work towards a social justice agenda is not always easy – and achieving policy and legislative reform is often a slow and challenging process.

Among the many achievements of the CI I take this moment to celebrate is the work of our social assistance team in enhancing access to the Child Support Grant (CSG), which is the single biggest poverty alleviation programme targeted at children. Our research is strengthened by a team who have the capacity to combine quantitative

and legal analysis to monitor the implementation of the grant, uncover flaws in the system and put forward sustainable policy recommendations. The implementation of the CSG Top-Up in June 2022 marks the culmination of a decade of research, advocacy and technical support which will help alleviate pressure on the child protection system and enable relatives caring for orphaned children to access a CSG of R720 instead of R480.

Another highlight was our sustained efforts to prohibit corporal punishment in the home. The CI submitted evidence to court drawing on my research on childhood adversities to illustrate the effects of corporal punishment and this was supported by legal arguments from the Centre for Child Law, and evidence from Sonke Gender Justice and the Quaker Peace Centre. This resulted in a landmark judgment in 2019, in which the Constitutional Court declared the common law defence of "reasonable and moderate chastisement" unconstitutional. This judgment effectively prohibits corporal punishment in the home and lays the foundation for legal reform.

Influencing policy is not an easy process. An important win is the steady and deliberate work of the CI in the area of early childhood development (ECD). The 2013 *Child Gauge* tackled the importance of investing in early childhood – and what needs to be in place to build an effective State-led ECD system to ensure that every young child has a strong start in life. Through a consortium partnership with the Human Sciences Research Council, the CI contributed to the development of both the National Integrated ECD Policy and

the programme that were approved by Cabinet, an important milestone in putting in place a comprehensive package of services for young children. Another key achievement of the last decade is the publication of ten issues of the *South African Child Gauge* covering an array of topics from inequality, violence prevention and early childhood development to food security and mental health. The *Child Gauge* is a leading example of how academic research can be made accessible to a wider audience - from decision makers in government and civil society to children themselves – with the 2020 issue reaching over 20 million people through broadcast, print and online media. The success of the *Child Gauge* is also attributed to longstanding partnerships with UNICEF South Africa, the Standard Bank Tutuwa Community Foundation, and the DSI-NRF Centre of Excellence for Human Development, and I am deeply grateful for their support.

During my time as Director, I guided the CI to become an accredited research unit. Our accreditation by the university is formal recognition of the quality, scope and impact of our model of socially-engaged research – but it also requires us to sharpen our research outputs to match what is valued by the university, and ensure that this doesn't come at the expense of our socially responsive way of working.

I cannot write about my tenure without reflecting on the impact of COVID-19, both on our work and on our team. The significant economic and social disruption had devastating effects on millions of children and caregivers, and the government's response was inadequate in addressing their needs. We faced many challenges as all research and teaching activities were halted, and we needed to pivot toward the most pressing needs facing children and their families. Some grants allowed

us to remain responsive, and among other things we stepped up and campaigned for an increase to the CSG to offer temporary relief to children and families. We also worked with colleagues at UCT and the University of Stellenbosch to develop a series of advocacy briefs tracking the impact of COVID-19 on children's health, safety and nutrition and advocating for children to be prioritised in the State's pandemic response and

recovery plans. While our team was dedicated to improving the circumstances of the most vulnerable, they struggled with the loss and illness of family, friends and peers – impressing on me how crucial staff wellness is to organisational health.

Building a team that can endure shocks and stresses such as COVID-19 requires investment and is critical, but this is a slow process and requires careful facilitation. With the support of the Governing Board and the CI team, we invested in a three-year organisational development process to allow us to pause, reflect and consider

what a transformed CI might look like. This has allowed us to be more strategic in our appointments in line with the university's transformation goals. Through this process of deep reflection and visioning, we have crafted a path that will allow the CI to grow from strength to strength.

Moving forward, I hope that I can continue to contribute to the CI in other ways, as I remain within UCT's Department of Paediatrics and Child Health, deepening my research on violence against women and violence against children.

I wish the new Director, Associate Professor Wiedaad Slemming, all the best. I trust that her leadership will be a profoundly rewarding experience and that under her leadership the CI will continue to thrive.

**Our accreditation
by the university
is formal
recognition of
the quality, scope
and impact of
our model of
socially-engaged
research.**

Highlights of 2021 and 2022

- We have produced 16 editions of our flagship publication, the *South African Child Gauge*, since 2006. → See page 14
- Three research reports and three research briefs on violence against women and children were released in the past two years, as well as an evidence review on preventing violence through schools. → See page 22
- We intervened as amicus curiae in the court case concerning the sanctions applied by the South African Council of Educators (SACE) when teachers are found guilty of administering corporal punishment. The 2022 court judgment directs SACE to meaningfully engage us and the applicant (Centre for Child Law) in revising its sanctions. → See page 25
- The National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (NSP) theoretically targets both women and children but children are at its margins – which we lobbied to correct. In 2022, the South African Presidency convened a second GBV summit, and our staff successfully secured a pre-summit for child representatives as well as a children’s commission in the main plenary. → See page 26
- We established a fruitful partnership for early childhood development with a community partner, True North, in Vrygrond in the Western Cape. We are working with them and a local community advisory board to co-create research on the safety, participation and inclusion of children in early learning. → See page 20
- Our advocacy contributed to approximately two million caregivers becoming eligible to apply for the Social Relief of Distress Grant, when the eligibility criteria were amended in late 2021 to include the Child Support Grant caregivers who were below the income threshold of the food poverty line. → See page 29
- Our rapid intervention protected approximately 31,000 children from losing the Child Support Grant in 2021, by getting the South African Social Security Agency to keep in place its suspension of the cancellation of grants of children without birth certificates. → See page 31
- Our advocacy helped ensure that a budget was allocated for the Child Support Grant (CSG) Top-Up in the 2022/23 financial year, and its application process was better communicated. By December 2022, there were 28,000 orphans receiving the CSG Top-Up. → See page 34



16 EDITIONS

*South African
Child Gauge*



COURT CASE

Meaningful
engagement
on sanctions for
administering
corporal
punishment

**PROTECTED
31,000**

children from losing
the CSG



Campaign for inclusion
of children in
**NATIONAL STRATEGIC
PLAN ON GBV**

Contributed to

R350

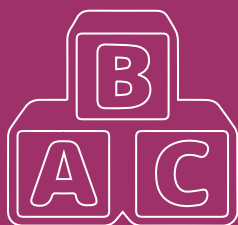
SRD GRANT ELIGIBILITY FOR

**2 MILLION
CARGIVERS**



**3 RESEARCH REPORTS
3 RESEARCH BRIEFS
1 EVIDENCE REVIEW**

violence against women and children



ECD RESEARCH

community partnership

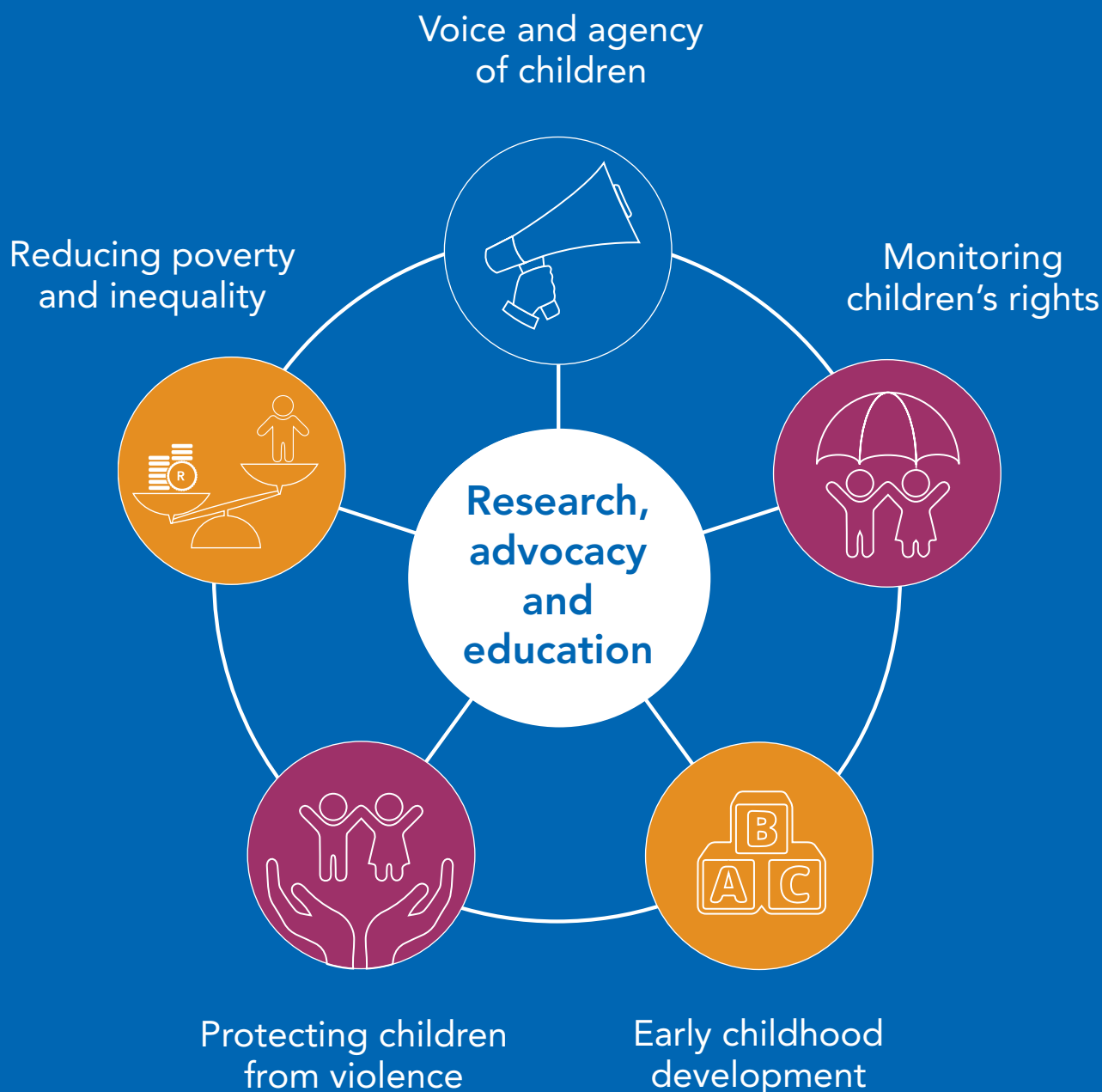
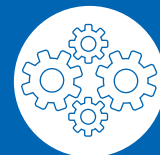
CSG TOP-UP

budget allocation for 2022/23





Our work in context



Monitoring children's rights



Our Children Count project draws on large national surveys and administrative data to monitor the realisation of children's rights by analysing trends in child indicators.

- Focuses on children's socio-economic, care and protection rights.
- 40 Indicators in six domains.

The South African Child Gauge, our annual flagship publication, tracks progress towards the realisation of children's rights.

- Collates the latest research evidence and makes it accessible to key decision makers.
- Catalyses a process of engagement between researchers, government and civil society.
- The sixteenth issue focuses on child and adolescent mental health.

Monitoring children's rights

From our inception, one of our core objectives was to create and maintain an annual review of South Africa's progress in realising children's rights to guide the development of a suite of progressive policies, laws and programmes for children – and both the [Children Count](#) project and the [South African Child Gauge](#) were established to support this objective.

Children Count

Our [Children Count](#) project draws on large national surveys and administrative data to monitor the realisation of children's rights by analysing trends in child indicators. We focus on children's socio-economic, care and protection rights – covering 40 indicators in six domains. The indicators are updated annually, allowing for trend analysis, and are published on the [Children Count website](#) and in the [South African Child Gauge](#). They are used in civil society's shadow reports to human rights treaty bodies, are frequently quoted in government strategy and planning documents, and are essential tools for advocacy campaigns. The Children Count website recorded over 12,000 unique users in 2021 and over 15,000 in 2022, with nearly 60,000 page views over the two years.

Children Count has monitored statistics on children since 2002. These long-term trends have revealed persistent racial and spatial inequalities for children on many of the indicators, with the exception of education and early learning attendance, where the inequalities have narrowed over time.

More recent data analysis in the Children Count project points to some of the impacts of COVID-19 and lockdown. Contrary to widespread concerns, biological orphaning rates did not spike in 2020 and 2021, probably because COVID-19 related mortality disproportionately affected older

generations rather than the parent generation. Given that many children are already cared for by grandparents (for example when parents migrate for work or when parents have died), it is likely that the main effect of COVID-19 was felt in the loss of family members and the disruption of care arrangements rather than a substantial increase in biological orphaning.

The trend of declining child poverty rates was reversed sharply in the lockdown year of 2020, when millions of jobs were lost and the expanded unemployment rate exceeded 40%. The lowest of the official poverty lines is the food poverty line – this is linked to the minimum cost of food to meet daily energy needs (R663 per person per month in 2022 Rands). In 2019, 33% of all children in South Africa (6.6 million) were below the food poverty line and at risk of malnutrition. The poverty analysis for 2020 had to be conducted for two scenarios: one excluding the temporary disaster relief grants and grant top-ups, and one including them.

From this analysis it is clear that child poverty rates increased dramatically during 2020, with the child food poverty headcount rising to nearly 40% (over eight million children) in the absence of disaster relief. It is also clear that, during the months in which the disaster relief grants and top-ups were in place, children were protected against rising poverty. The disaster relief measures fell away in October 2020, with the exception of the COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress (SRD) Grant of R350 per month for unemployed adults. The child poverty rates declined slightly again in 2021 as adult employment increased, but poverty still remained substantially above the pre-COVID levels. We presented these analyses to the Department of Social Development, the South African Social Security Agency and the National Treasury, bolstering arguments to protect

children from austerity budgeting and to expand income support for children and their households.

Alongside rising poverty, the Children Count analyses identified an increase in reported child hunger in the poorest two income quintiles (the poorest 40% of the population).

Another clear impact of lockdown was evident in the plummeting attendance rates at early learning facilities. As with the poverty trend, there was a sharp change in 2020 when the number of 3 – 5-year-olds attending an early learning programme dropped by 20 percentage points. Although there was some improvement the following year, attendance rates had not regained their pre-COVID levels.

These analyses suggest that the pandemic and lockdown had significant and potentially far-reaching impacts for children, setting the country back on its development path. We eagerly await the results of Statistics South Africa's 2022 General Household Survey so that we can see the extent to which recovery continued. We also await the 2021 Population Census data, which will allow for more detailed analysis at small area level.

We plan to expand the set of Children Count indicators in 2023 and 2024, with a particular focus on developing indicators to track completeness of birth registration, and to provide a more nuanced set of indicators related to food security and teenage pregnancy.

The South African Child Gauge

Our annual flagship publication tracks progress towards the realisation of children's rights. The publication collates the latest research evidence and makes it accessible to key decision makers. A series of chapters provide an in-depth analysis of a particular dimension of child wellbeing, and are accompanied by a review of legislative developments affecting children, and an analysis of child-centred indicators from the *Children Count* project.

The *Child Gauge* is not simply a product – it is also a process of engagement that aims to mobilise the resources of the university to better understand and address the challenges faced by South Africa's children. It makes research evidence accessible to those in government who are responsible for the design and delivery of services, and supports the efforts of civil society to hold the government accountable. This process of **dialogue and engagement between researchers, government and civil society** helps deepen government's appreciation of evidence, and ensures researchers are more attuned to the complex nature of the policy-making environment.

The sixteenth issue of the *South African Child Gauge* focused attention on child and adolescent mental health and how early experiences of adversity ripple out across the life course and generations, at great cost to individuals and society. It calls on society to put children at the centre of all policies in order to protect children from harm, build their capacity to cope with stress and adversity, and provide them with opportunities to thrive.

This issue was led by Professor Mark Tomlinson (Institute for Life Course Health Research, Stellenbosch University) and Professor Sharon Kleintjes (Professor of Intellectual Disability, Department of Psychiatry and Mental Health, UCT). It was published in partnership with UNICEF South Africa; the DSI-NRF Centre for Excellence in Human Development, University of the Witwatersrand; the Standard Bank Tutuwa Community Foundation; and the LEGO Foundation.

The book, launched on the eve of South Africa's Youth Day, highlights how children and adolescents continue to face multiple adversities that erode their mental health. An estimated 10 - 20% of South Africa's children will develop a

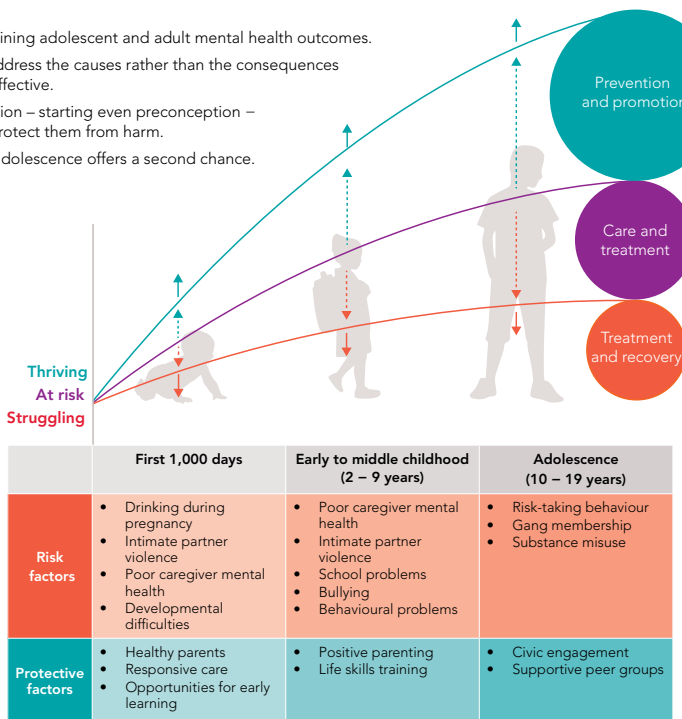
Child and adolescent mental health: Building an ecosystem of support

A life-course approach

- The early years of life are critical in determining adolescent and adult mental health outcomes.
- Timely investment in mental health – to address the causes rather than the consequences of ill health – is essential and is also cost-effective.
- This includes early and sustained intervention – starting even preconception – to promote children's mental health and protect them from harm.
- But it is never too late to intervene – and adolescence offers a second chance.

Environment matters

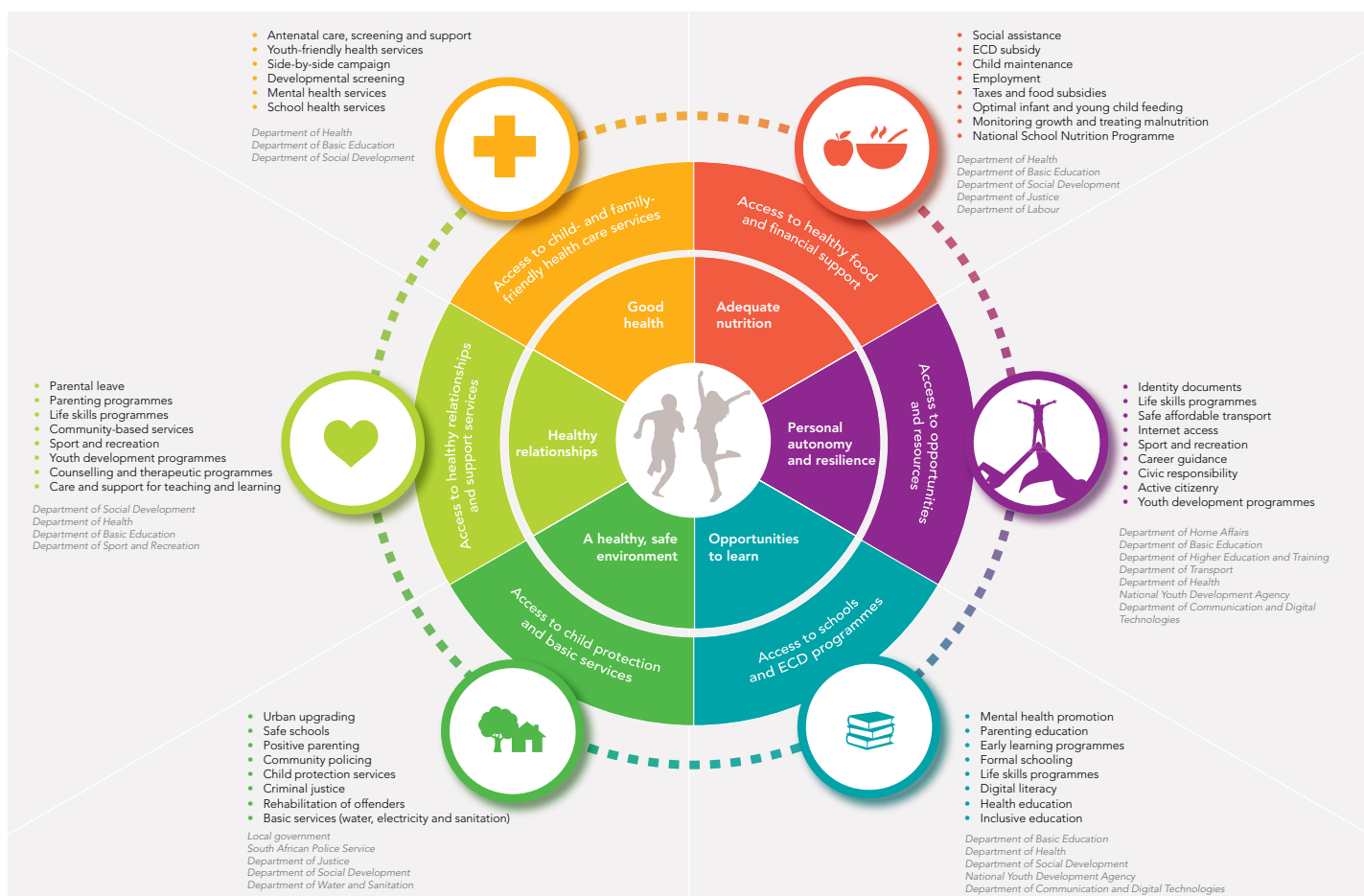
- Mental health is shaped in powerful ways by children's relationships and living conditions.
- Poverty, violence and discrimination compromise the development and mental health of South Africa's children and increase their risk of developing anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder.
- These risk factors frequently co-occur, with many children facing multiple adversities that accumulate across the life course.



A continuum of mental health



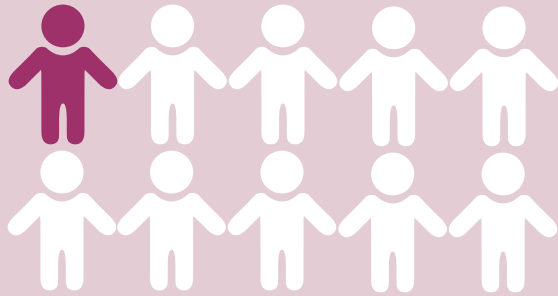
- Children may move along a continuum of mental health in response to changing life circumstances.
- Most children are mentally healthy and have the confidence to meet life's challenges. But all children may experience periods of worry and distress due to challenges ranging from starting at a new school or the pressures of exams, to the loss of a loved one.
- Children's mental health is at risk when their feelings of anxiety and distress start to interfere with their relationships, school work and everyday routines. With additional support, these children are able to cope with life's challenges and return to mental health.
- But about 1 in 10 children will develop a diagnosable mental disorder and/or psychosocial disability that will require professional support and/or psychiatric care.
- Children need different things at different points on the mental health continuum. For most children, responsive parents and supportive communities are enough. Others need additional care and the most severely affected need treatment for recovery.



An ecosystem of support

- Families are important, as young people who feel loved, supported and accepted by adult caregivers are less likely to experience mental health problems.
- But the burden of protecting children's mental health should not rest with families alone. Many adversities such as chronic exposure to violence and crime, poverty and inadequate healthcare are the responsibility of society.
- Governments should adopt a 'whole-of-society' approach to promote children's mental health and resilience.
- These investments need to extend beyond mental health services, to create an ecosystem of support that protects children from harm, builds their capacity to cope with stress and adversity, and provides them with opportunities to thrive.
- This includes engaging with children as active citizens and as key stakeholders to ensure their insights and experiences inform and enhance policymaking and service delivery - with a strong focus on equity and inclusion to prioritise the most vulnerable and ensure no child is left behind.

diagnosable and treatable mental disorder and/or a neurodevelopmental disability, yet only one in every 10 of these children are able to access care. Strengthening child and adolescent mental health services is essential, it is equally critical to address violence, poverty, discrimination and other social determinants of poor mental health.



Only 1 in 10 children can access care for treatable mental disorders

Families and schools have a critical role to play in protecting children from harm, nurturing them physically and emotionally and ensuring that children have opportunities to realise their own unique potential. These investments in mental health need to start early in life and be sustained through adolescence, to ensure that the benefits of early intervention are not lost or eroded over time.

The World Health Organisation defines mental health as people's ability to act with agency in supportive environments that enable them to reach their potential, build meaningful relationships, cope with adversity and contribute to their communities. As such, early investments in child and adolescent mental health have the potential to build a strong, vibrant and more caring society that is more resilient and better equipped to cope with the multiple shocks and stresses of climate change.

The book comprises three sections:

1. Part one outlines recent legislative developments that affect the lives and rights of children. These include the National Health Insurance Bill, Draft Admission Policy for Ordinary Public Schools and Draft Firearms Control Amendment Bill, together with a ruling by the Constitutional Court that declared Section 10 of the Births and Deaths Registration Act unconstitutional;
2. Part two presents a set of 10 chapters that examine current challenges and identify critical points for intervention to promote children's mental health and well-being across the life course and across a range of settings; and
3. Part three updates a set of key indicators on children's socio-economic rights and provides commentary on the extent to which these rights have been realised. The indicators are a select subset taken from the [Children Count](#) project.

The launch of the *Gauge* was followed by a series of strategic engagements with policy makers and professionals including presentations to the National Child Care and Protection Forum, National Child Rights Intersectoral Coordinating Committee, Child Trauma Conference, Child Health Priorities Conference, and UNICEF's Roundtable on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support.

In October 2022, we partnered with [RX Radio](#), a children's radio station based at the Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital in Cape Town, to share the key findings with young people themselves through our "[Let's talk mental health](#)" social media campaign. This culminated in a [Daily Maverick webinar](#) where Lilah Davies, a young reporter from RX Radio, interviewed the lead editor of the *Child Gauge* to explore what families, schools and communities can do to better support young people's mental health.

Shadow reports to the United Nations and the African Union

We have played a leading role in writing and shaping civil society's shadow reports to the United Nations (UN) and African Union human rights treaty supervisory committees.

The content areas we lead include birth registration; inequality, poverty and the role of social assistance; health and nutrition; and support for orphans.

These reports have had a significant impact on the concluding observations issued by the committees, which we and partners can then use as advocacy tools to hold the government accountable in a variety of forums.

In late 2020, we made a submission to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) focussed on child health and nutrition.

A number of our concerns were then included by the UNCRC in its List of Issues that it issued to the South African government in March 2021 to provide guidance to the government on responding to questions when it submitted its next State report (which was due in early 2022). For example, the UNCRC has asked the government to report

on the steps it has taken to "to increase the child support grant in view of growing unemployment and poverty and ensure that children without birth certificates can access it" and to "eradicate under-5 mortality caused by preventable diseases and malnutrition and eliminate stunting caused by inadequate nutrition".

In 2021 we made two submissions to the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the government's progress on the Committee's four priority recommendations.

The first was a joint submission with the Centre for Child Law, pointing to a delay in budgeting for the top-up to the Child Support Grant (CSG). This resulted in the Committee declaring that the government had made "insufficient progress" on the CSG Top-Up reform.

The second submission – with SECTION27, the Legal Resources Centre, Centre for Child Law, Equal Education Law Centre and Lawyers for Human Rights – focussed on the access of undocumented learners to school, and provided evidence to the Committee that despite the 2019 "Phakamisa case" court order, many schools were still refusing access or education related services to undocumented learners, mainly due to a lack of communication between the provincial basic education departments and schools.

This resulted in the Committee recommending that communication with schools be improved to ensure they are aware of the changes to the law brought about by the Phakamisa case.



Early childhood development

Quality programmes that support and promote early development, from conception through the early years, are essential for South Africa to realise its development goals, at individual and societal levels.

GOALS

- Through the Group Care project, contributing to the knowledge base on the implementation of a group-based model for antenatal care services with a focus on health promotion and women empowerment.
- Through the **Safe, Inclusive, Participative Pedagogy (SIPP)** project, contributing to the knowledge base on safe, inclusive participative pedagogy that is implementable in vulnerable contexts and that could be sustainable for governments, communities, and families.

Early childhood development

Early childhood is a critical life phase, with recent scientific evidence highlighting the importance of the first 1000 days of life, and the value of quality adult-child interactions and nurturing environments that promote care, protection and learning during the early years.

Intervention as early as possible is promoted as the most effective response to prevent compromised development – attention to maternal health care is therefore critical. The provision of

quality programmes that support and promote early development, from conception through the early years, is essential if South Africa is to realise its development goals, both at individual and societal levels.

We are implementing two projects, running from 2020 to 2024, that address quality programming with a focus on the early childhood development (ECD) phase.

Group Care for the first 1000 days

We continued implementation research centering on the delivery of group antenatal care during 2021 and 2022. Group Care is the provision of antenatal care in a group setting, with a strong focus on health promotion, self-care and empowerment. It has been shown to transform the delivery of maternal, newborn and child health care, and to make a positive impact on the health and well-being of mothers and children. The approach has been tested and shows beneficial outcomes for women. However, implementation of the model in low-and-middle income settings is limited and requires further research.

This local study is part of a larger European Commission-funded multi-country research project with a focus on establishing implementation site/s in settings that serve vulnerable women. Implementation research is being conducted in local research sites in Belgium, Ghana, Kosova, the Netherlands, Suriname, and the United Kingdom.

We are currently conducting research to test the feasibility of delivering group antenatal care in the South African context.

Over 2021 and 2022 we conducted a rapid assessment of antenatal services in the Western Cape in

partnership with the Vrije University of Belgium and Leiden University in the Netherlands. This included a rapid review of the context through a document review and key stakeholder interviews. The aim was to identify context-specific needs of service users, and implementation barriers and facilitators. This informed our understanding of the context for antenatal care to inform the implementation research on the Group Care model.

We secured a maternity hospital site in Cape Town as the implementation research partner and started the process of planning for the implementation research. We also held training at the hospital for Group Care facilitators in partnership with [Group Care Global](#).

In 2023 we will continue to work in partnership with the research site to test the implementation of Group Care, including data collection on the experiences of pregnant women and health care workers who are engaging with Group Care. Over the next two years we're seeking to conclude analysis and provide feedback for input from stakeholders.

The [research protocol](#) was published in the international journal for implementation research, *Implementation Science*.

Safe, inclusive and participatory early learning

One of the biggest challenges in the early learning sector is how to reach the most vulnerable children while ensuring high quality services.

Many countries around the world are moving to compulsory preschool and early education programmes: this creates a pivotal moment for understanding the opportunities and challenges for early learning in different contexts.

In South Africa we are embarking on a leadership shift for early learning/education from the Department of Social Development, to the Department of Basic Education, which creates an opportunity for understanding and supporting the development of quality early learning programmes in our unique context.

In 2020 we were awarded a research grant in collaboration with the University of Edinburgh, as part of a multi-country study including Palestine, Brazil and Eswatini. The project focuses on early learning in vulnerable settings with children below the age of compulsory primary schooling. It aims to explore the concepts of safe, inclusive and participatory learning practices in early learning settings, and to support local and cross national ECD programme development and capacity building. It has a strong emphasis on community engagement, through a community case study that applies participatory methodologies

While we began with community engagement activities in 2020 in the local case study site in Cape Town, communication with community partners and stakeholders was severely hampered by the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns.

In 2021 we were able to proceed with initiating a community advisory board, consisting of representatives from ECD organisations, community structures and community leaders. The research team developed the research plan with input from the advisory board and community partners, and initial conversations with ECD stakeholders shed light on the impacts of COVID-19 and its implications for the research.

We conducted research in 2022 that included stakeholder interviews, focus group discussions with adults in the community (parents, teachers, principals), and participatory sessions with groups of children. We conducted focus group discussions with the community advisory group to elicit knowledge as part of the research process, held feedback meetings to share research findings, and we are in the process of co-creating potential local level actions that the ECD community can take forward in light of the findings.

We presented findings of the research at a local academic conference and at two international academic conferences in 2022. Two journal articles were submitted, one of these to a special issue of the *British Educational Research Journal* on the topic of “constructing quality in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) from children’s perspectives”, and the other submitted on the “best interests of the young child” to the *South African Journal on Human Rights*.

In 2023, we will continue to engage with the ECD community, analyse data, present findings for feedback and input, as well as produce dissemination outputs for the local ECD community and relevant government departments.



Protecting children from violence



Policies, programmes and research on violence against women (VAW) and violence against children (VAC) must consider the interconnections – including the linked risks, vulnerabilities and consequences across the lifespan.

GOALS

- Building an evidence base to influence contextually relevant prevention programming.
- Strengthening the capacity of NGOs and community-based organisations to deliver evidence-based prevention programmes.
- Influencing national policy processes.

Strengthening prevention and responses to violence

Violence against women and children are interconnected problems that have lasting intergenerational consequences. Policies, programmes and research focusing on violence against women (VAW) and violence against children (VAC) have traditionally been siloed, and bodies of evidence have been developed in parallel but without considering the interconnections between the two – including the linked risks, vulnerabilities and consequences across the lifespan.

We have increasingly become involved in global partnerships, discussions and debates on VAW and VAC. The global movement to prevent violence against women and children is rapidly advancing but northern institutions tend to dominate the research agenda and discourse, especially on violence prevention for children. This has implications for setting the research agenda

and limits the understanding of prevention. Challenges facing the Global South need to be investigated from a southern, decolonial perspective and led by a southern research agenda – as this will yield new answers.

We have multiple streams of work that focus at the global level to contribute to the discussions and shaping of a global agenda, as well as at the national level with an emphasis on:

- building an evidence base to influence contextually relevant violence prevention programming;
- strengthening the capacity of NGOs and community-based organisations to deliver evidence-based prevention programmes; and
- influencing national policy processes.

Focussing on the intersections of VAC and VAW

We conducted primary research in two communities in the Western Cape to understand the social norms that drive VAW and VAC, with our community partner MOSAIC.

This study sought to explore how community members conceptualise men's violence against women, and the use of violence by caregivers against children in families and communities.

The lessons that emerged from this study formed the basis of the following recommendations:

1. There is an urgent need to address the normalisation of VAW and VAC in communities, through participatory engagement processes that tackle the patriarchal social norms that drive violence.

2. Unresolved trauma as a driver of violence is highlighted and requires services to recognise the need to address both the trauma of victims of violence as well as the broader need to tackle trauma at a wider scale.
3. Structural factors such as poverty and unemployment increase the risk for conflict in the home. There is a need for universal economic empowerment and poverty alleviation programmes that integrate a gender transformative element to reduce violence in the home.
4. Parenting programmes that integrate a gender transformative element and focus on positive parenting are crucial to reduce harmful forms of parenting and promote responsive parenting practices.

5. Gender transformative programmes with men and boys – but that also include women and girls – need to be prioritised to shift gendered practices to reduce violence in the home.

We used the study findings to inform a two-day capacity building workshop for VAC and VAW practitioners held in March 2022. The workshop aimed to deepen practitioner understanding of VAC and VAW, in particular to grapple with the concept of gender transformative approaches, and how this might influence their delivery of programmes. The workshop was held in partnership with Sonke Gender Justice to draw on their experience of gender transformative programming and assessing organisational readiness.

During Women's Month in 2022, we publicly launched our report: *Bridging the divide: Unpacking the intersections of violence against women and violence against children in two communities in the Western Cape, South Africa*, at a roundtable with practitioners, researchers and government officials.

We have also worked with MOSAIC to consider the research findings and how these could inform the design of a violence prevention programme that is contextually relevant and targets those intersections.

Using a co-design approach, alongside MOSAIC as practitioners, we used the research findings to consider how it resonated with their current programming and what adaptations were required. A community advisory board consisting of practitioners guided both the research and programme adaptation. The adaptation involved also considering the experiences and opinions of community members affected by violence.

1. A programme mapping exercise to determine which of MOSAIC's current prevention programmes could be adapted to incorporate an intersections prevention focus.
2. Building MOSAIC's capacity to understand the nature of programme adaptation using an implementation science lens, as well as a focus on conceptual understanding of models such as a life course approach and gender transformation.
3. A co-created and research-informed programme theory of change.
4. Co-designing an adapted violence prevention intervention informed by the research findings and practitioner experience.

We plan to host a regional workshop in 2023 bringing together researchers and practitioners to draw lessons from across the region.

Improving the provision of integrated and acceptable services that respond to VAC and VAW in South Africa

Our research aimed at closing the gaps in services that respond to violence against women and children, was co-produced using a transformative approach with community partners Masimanyane Women's Rights International and the Women's Inkwelo Network.

Little is known about what African women and

children want from services or how they experience them, especially in rural communities.

The rationale behind this study was to 1) begin to understand how services are delivered in two communities in the Eastern Cape (Buffalo City and Gcuwa), where the legacy of apartheid has left professional services chronically

under resourced; and 2) start a dialogue about what needs to be in place to deliver culturally appropriate services for victims of violence. A decolonial and African-situated framework helped us understand how culture and language influence the experience and delivery of services. Women and children are expected to resolve issues using traditional authorities (family, chiefs, traditional courts) but reject these bastions of patriarchy in favour of professional services, and when these services fail to deliver justice or to protect the vulnerable, the local communities take the law into their own hands.

Our report – *Closing the gaps in services that respond to violence against women and children* – concludes that while it will take a longer time

to address the injustices of the past and to build responsive services, there are immediate steps that could be taken that would improve both the experience and effectiveness of services. Such steps include ending the compulsory use of English in the criminal justice system.

Using a participatory engagement technique to present it, the report was launched in the Eastern Cape, alongside our two partner organisations. It was attended by representatives of the Department of Social Development, the Department of Health, the South African Police Services, and the National Prosecuting Authority. It was also attended by students, researchers and representatives of various non-governmental organisations.

Promoting prevention of violence against children, in and through schools

Corporal punishment

In the second half of 2021, represented by the Equal Education Law Centre, we intervened as amicus curiae in the matter *Centre for Child Law and Others v South African Council of Educators and Others*.

The case concerned the sanctions applied by the South African Council of Educators (SACE) to teachers found guilty of administering corporal punishment to learners. SACE is the custodian of the teaching profession and has a duty to take effective and transparent disciplinary action against teachers who commit acts of violence against learners in schools. We provided evidence to support mandatory removal from the register of educators in serious cases, and the use of alternatives in less severe cases.

We presented evidence to the court on the prevalence of corporal punishment in schools,

the impact of corporal punishment on the well-being of learners and on children's rights, the alternatives to corporal punishment available to educators, and examples of effective programmes to improve classroom management.

In the judgment delivered in October 2022, the court directs SACE to reconsider and revise its "Mandatory Sanctions on the Contravention of Professional Code of Ethics", and to meaningfully engage both us and the Centre for Child Law in this process.

Violence prevention in schools

The nature and scale of VAC is different in the Global South, where physical and sexual violence is a common experience in schools, home and community. In 2020, we partnered with Raising Voices, Breakthrough (India); ICRW (India) and HakiElimu (Tanzania) to establish the Global Coalition for Good Schools. The coali-

tion has been formed to influence the global agenda on prevention of VAC in and through schools. Its goal is to amplify experiences, learning and priorities of the Global South so as to influence the global agenda and donor environment. In partnership with Raising Voices Uganda, we conducted an evidence review of school-based violence prevention programmes that have been implemented and evaluated in the Global South, to identify lessons learnt and promote the scale-up of interventions that work.

As a founding member of the Global Coalition for Good Schools we partnered with the

Sub-Saharan Africa hub of the coalition to host a [three-part seminar series](#) to unpack the findings of the evidence review on violence prevention in and through schools. [The seminars](#) brought together a range of leading voices from the field, including the African Child Policy Forum, the Global Partnership to End VAC, Safe to Learn, Raising Voices, HakiElimu, Child Protection Network, and Aulas en Paz (Classrooms in Peace). The seminars engaged with practitioners, academics, and development agencies to discuss how this work can be carried forward across the Global South and in partnership with Global North-led initiatives.

Engaging in the implementation of the National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and law reform related to its implementation

The National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (NSP) sets out the legislative and policy framework to respond to gender-based violence (GBV) in South Africa. Theoretically the NSP targets both women and children, but detailed analysis by the Centre for Child Law in 2022 revealed that children are a subsidiary focus, and this is a missed opportunity to provide an integrated framework at the highest level. We have been lobbying to correct these gaps.

In 2022, the South African Presidency organised a second summit on the NSP, with our staff on the organising committee campaigning for the inclusion of children alongside other children sector representatives, to ensure that children's issues were brought to the fore. As a

result of these interventions the Presidency organised a pre-summit for children where they learned about the NSP – child representatives were given time to present to the plenary of over 2,000 representatives from government and civil society.

We were invited to run the children's sector caucus to hear the challenges to implementation, and a children's clinic to identify key priorities for action. The top priority was for children's needs to be given greater priority in the NSP and for their voices to be heard in the coordinating structures. The clinic recommendations included a call for a seventh pillar to be added to the NSP. The Presidency has responded to say that they will meet with children's sector representatives in early 2023.



Protecting and expanding key programmes to address poverty and inequality



The Child Support Grant (CSG) is South Africa's most impactful child poverty reduction programme.

GOALS

- Promoting annual increases to the CSG that are linked to food inflation.
- Promoting the increase of the CSG value to the food poverty line.
- Grant application and payment processes that are accessible to the most vulnerable caregivers.
- Increasing the uptake of the CSG for children who are eligible but excluded because of the absence of a birth certificate.
- Promoting the take-up of the CSG Top-Up for orphans in the care of relatives.

Protecting and expanding key programmes to address poverty and inequality

With South Africa's persistently high rate of unemployment and no imminent solution to structural inequality, the proven role of social assistance as a mechanism to redistribute wealth, reduce poverty and promote child well-being needs to be maximised.

We play a leading role in advancing children's right to social assistance and basic nutrition, with a particular focus on the Child Support Grant (CSG) and additional income support for unemployed women.

Expanding social assistance for children and their caregivers

The CSG is South Africa's most impactful child poverty reduction programme. This has been proven by numerous studies conducted since it was first introduced in 1998. We have identified three areas that need attention if this positive impact is to be sustained.

Firstly, the monetary value of the grant is below the food poverty line, which means it is not enough to cover the basic nutritional needs of a child. As food inflation continues to rise, the gap between the grant amount and the food poverty line is increasing. Our short-term objective is to reduce this gap by promoting annual increases to the grant that are linked to food inflation, and in the medium-term we are aiming for an increase to the food poverty line.

Secondly, whole households are relying on the social grants that are targeted at children, the elderly and people with disabilities. The COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress (SRD) Grant has provid-

ed temporary income support, albeit at a very low value, to unemployed adults to address this gap in coverage. Our objectives in this area have been to ensure unemployed women in receipt of the CSG for their children are also eligible for the SRD Grant; that the application and payment processes are accessible to the most vulnerable caregivers; and to contribute to the calls for permanent and adequate income support for unemployed adults.

Thirdly, while the rate at which the CSG is taken up is high, approximately two million eligible children are not accessing it, with the absence of a birth certificate often cited as a barrier. Our objective is to increase the uptake of the CSG for excluded but eligible children, by promoting the use of an option in the law which allows for access to social grants without an identity document or birth certificate, and by advocating for the barriers to the late registration of birth to be removed.

Promoting food inflation linked annual increases to the CSG amount

The 2021 and 2022 national budgets revealed cuts to the real value of the CSG, even as unemployment and child food poverty continued to rise. Despite the grant being intended to cover the costs of feeding a child, the annual inflation increases announced for 2021 and 2022 (and projected for 2023) were below headline inflation and significantly below food inflation.

We analysed these trends and presented our evidence and recommendations in a [submission](#) and [presentation](#) to the Parliament of South Africa, made a written [submission to the National Treasury](#), and provided technical support to the Department of Social Development for budget bids. We also contributed our evidence and recommendations to the Budget Justice Coalition's submissions to Parliament, and ensured that the worrying regressive trend received media attention via [opinion editorials](#) and a [press statement](#).

Our advocacy has been aimed at reversing the trend of below inflation increases, by the time of the tabling of the 2023/24 national budget when the lowest of all the increases (R10) is predicted. We calculate that the CSG should be increased by at least R40 in the 2023/24 budget to keep pace with food inflation. When the national budget is tabled in February 2023, it will reveal whether our research and advocacy have been successful.

Promoting the increase of the CSG value to the food poverty line

While protecting the CSG value from erosion, we have simultaneously worked on creating an evidence base to enable us to motivate for increasing the CSG value, at least to the level of the food poverty line. In late 2021 we were commissioned by the Department of Social Development to review the monetary value of the CSG in the context of child poverty trends, and to simulate the impact and cost of increasing the value. We finalised the research during 2022, and presented the pre-final

draft to a forum comprised of the Department of Social Development, the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) and the National Treasury.

The research report includes chapters on the history of the birth and growth of the CSG, and its positive impact on children's well-being across a range of indicators. The chapter on child poverty reveals that while child poverty declined significantly over the period of rapid growth of the CSG (2003 to 2013), child poverty has increased since 2019 and the take-up of the CSG has slowed down, especially for infants under one. The options for increasing the value show that increasing the value to the upper bound poverty line could eradicate child food poverty while the more affordable option of pegging it to the food poverty line would halve the child food poverty rate. The cost to the fiscus depends on the poverty line used and whether the value increase is phased in or is implemented immediately. We have analysed each option against the international and constitutional child rights framework, emphasising that continuing on the trajectory of the status quo (a low value CSG and below inflation annual increases) poses a risk to millions of children and to the government. The final report is set to be launched by the Department of Social Development in early 2023.

Expanding social assistance for caregivers of children

Together with partner organisations Black Sash and Pay the Grants, we continued to advocate for unemployed women who receive the CSG for their children, to be eligible for social assistance for themselves. When the government announced its intention to halt the disbursement of the R350 SRD Grant by April 2021, we worked with the [Budget Justice Coalition](#) on submissions and press statements calling for this grant to be continued. We emphasised that unemployed women should not continue to be excluded based on receiving the (low value) CSG for their children's basic needs.

'The proposal to end the R350 COVID social relief of distress grant at the end of April 2021 in the context of greater than 40 percent unemployment, and a likely third wave of COVID in May or June, will lead to increasing hunger, uncertainty, vulnerability and the breaking down of our social fabric. This ignores civil societies' strong submissions to extend the grant while the details of a Basic Income Grant are being finalised; increasing the COVID grant to the Food Poverty Line of R585; and the inclusion of caregivers in the grant. The continued exclusion of unemployed women from the COVID social relief of distress grant, simply because they receive a small R450 CSG for their child's basic needs, represents unjustifiable discrimination against women - especially given that women have borne two thirds of the COVID-19 job losses and bear a greater care burden when schools are closed.'

– Extract from the Budget Justice Coalition submission to Parliament's Standing Committee on Finance, March 2021

We contributed to a Budget Justice Coalition press statement that was in response to the July 2021 civil unrest in South Africa, motivating again for the SRD Grant to be restored and for it to include caregivers who are beneficiaries of the CSG. The SRD Grant was reinstated for the period August 2021 to March 2022, and for the first time it included unemployed women receiving the CSG.

We have been monitoring the application, approval and payment systems, and providing feedback to civil society partners, SASSA and the Department of Social Development on barriers being experienced by the most vulnerable caregivers – such as mothers who are undocumented,

live in rural parts of the country, and cannot afford the mobile data costs required to apply.

We made a [submission](#) on the proposed amendments to the regulations relating to the SRD Grant (March 2022), which ensured that 10,000 caregivers accessing the CSG without having identity documents could continue to also apply for the SRD. These caregivers were already on the SASSA system, and had SASSA generated customer numbers (instead of identity numbers).

We are continuing to engage in policy debates for income support for adults, that includes caregivers in their own right.

Including children without birth certificates

Of the approximately 500,000 children in South Africa without birth certificates, most of whom are entitled to South African citizenship, only 30,000 were accessing a social grant in 2020. By the end of December 2022, this had increased to 50,000 children. The small increase is mainly attributable to the Department of Social Development and SASSA agreeing in 2020, after legal advocacy by us and the Legal Resources Centre, to temporarily stop their unlawful practice of cancelling the grants of unregistered children after only three months of receiving the grant. This moratorium on the three-month cancellation practice was extended into 2021 and 2022. There was an unfortunate gap in December 2020 which resulted in many children's grants being cancelled in January and February 2021. Through legal advocacy we ensured that the cancelled grants were reinstated with back pay.

We have continued to monitor the implementation of grants for caregivers without identity documents and children without birth certificates through our legal services project which provides legal assistance to caregivers who are struggling to register the births of their children, and to access social grants and school. Our clients are based in remote rural areas (Eastern Cape) and

marginalised informal settlements (Western Cape and Gauteng). Through this project we are assisting 200 children and caregivers to access birth certificates, identity documents and social grants; we are recording their experiences and our own interactions with frontline government officials at SASSA and Department of Home Affairs offices; and identifying common systemic barriers that block access for thousands more children.

Once a systemic barrier is identified, we collate case studies of the experiences of caregivers to illustrate in detail how these barriers occur, analyse national data sets where possible to determine how many children the barrier affects, and then advocate for systemic and sustainable solutions via letters of demand, meaningful engagement and litigation where necessary.

An example of one of our successful systemic interventions is described below:

Once we have ensured that an unregistered child's family has secured a social grant, we assist the family to negotiate the difficult late registration of

birth procedures. The categories of children that struggle most to have their births registered are:

- ☐ children in the care of unmarried fathers whose mothers have died or abandoned them;
- ☐ orphaned or abandoned children in the care of relatives;
- ☐ children of young mothers who do not yet have their own identity documents;
- ☐ children whose parents are residing in another province;
- ☐ children whose mother's identity document has been placed "under investigation" by the Department of Home Affairs; and
- ☐ children with one or both parents who are foreign nationals.

There are numerous barriers facing each category, and we adopt a different advocacy strategy based on the nature of the barrier. For example, for children in the care of unmarried fathers, we have drafted detailed affidavits based on the ex-

An example of one of our successful systemic interventions

Approximately 20,000 child support grants were not paid out by the Postbank in the September 2022 pay run. We were alerted to the problem by four of our clients who were stranded at paypoints without any money to travel back home. We analysed the cases and determined that the caregivers affected were young mothers who did not yet have their own identity documents. We then analysed data from the SASSA database to determine how many children were affected across the country (approximately 20,000).

The caregivers of these children had successfully been registered as CSG beneficiaries, but the Postbank (which disburses grants on behalf of SASSA), suspended their payments

without any warning and without consulting SASSA. We sent a letter of demand to SASSA and the Postbank (with the Legal Resources Centre representing us), which included descriptions of the cases of our clients and the total number of children affected. Our letter demonstrated the hardship being faced and why what the Postbank had done was unlawful and had to urgently be reversed.

Postbank agreed to restore the grants of the majority of affected caregivers within three days and requested to engage further on the challenges they were facing in supporting clients without identity documents while remaining compliant with the Financial Intelligence Centre Act.

periences of our clients, and are working together with the Legal Resources Centre and the Centre for Child Law on litigation. We also drafted a position paper and made a submission to the South African Parliament on the Children's Amendment Bill. We described the struggles facing children of unmarried fathers and supported the Bill's proposals aimed at enabling unmarried fathers to obtain certificates from the Family Advocate (Department of Justice) that recognise that they have full parental responsibilities and rights in terms of section 21 of the Act. Such certificates would serve as proof of their paternity for birth registration applications, in place of costly DNA paternity tests. We further recommended that section 21 be strengthened to include families where the mother is deceased or has abandoned the family, and to enable the Children's Court to also issue section 21 certificates to make this option more accessible to the majority of fathers who are unlikely to have access to the Family Advocate.

Our recommendations were supported by many partner organisations who used our position paper to draft their submissions to Parliament. When Parliament decided to proceed only with the 14 foster care related clauses in the Amendment Bill (which contained 120 clauses), they did not include the amendments to section 21. The amendments may proceed later in 2023 in a dif-

ferent Amendment Bill and we will then engage with it again.

We also made a written submission to Parliament on the Basic Education Law Amendment Bill, to provide it with updated data on the number of children without birth certificates to contextualise and strengthen the calls of our partner organisations for amendments aimed at ensuring that undocumented children are not excluded. Despite the 2019 "Phakamisa court case" obliging the provincial departments of education to admit and fund undocumented learners, we and our partners (SECTION27, Legal Resources Centre, Centre for Child Law, and Equal Education Law Centre) continued to receive complaints from caregivers of undocumented children who had been refused admission to school or refused an education service such as writing the final Grade 12 exams. We worked on a coordinated strategy to hold the national and provincial education departments accountable for informing all schools about the implications of the judgment. This resulted in the national Department of Basic Education re-issuing their circular to the provincial education departments, and in the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights advising the government to ensure that all schools were fully informed about the implications of the Phakamisa case judgment.

Comprehensive legal solution to the foster care crisis

In 2011, an order of the North Gauteng High Court required the Minister of Social Development to design and implement a comprehensive legal solution to the crisis in the foster care system. The crisis came to a head when the Foster Care Grant (FCG) for approximately 120,000 children stopped being paid in 2010 and 2011 because the Children's Court orders that had placed the children in foster care had expired. A further 300,000 grants were at risk of being halted. It became clear that

there were not enough social workers to extend the court orders in time, and that there were too many children in the foster care system who did not need to be in foster care. The majority of the children on the FCG had been placed into the foster care system so that they could access the FCG because it was three times the value of the CSG at the time. There was a need to design a system that provided an adequate social grant to relatives caring for orphans that was not dependent on social

workers or the courts. This required amendments to two laws, the Social Assistance Act which regulates social grants, and the Children's Act which clarifies when a child needs to be placed in foster care.

We have been contributing to the design and implementation of the solution since 2011. In 2021 and 2022 we focussed on the implementation of the CSG Top-Up, which is the grant that is replacing the FCG for orphans in the care of relatives; as well as on the parliamentary process to amend the Children's Act to clarify which children needed to be placed in foster care.

The CSG Top-Up

In early 2021, the Department of Social Development published draft regulations to the Social Assistance Amendment Act for comment. We made a written [submission](#) and provided legal advice to the drafters to ensure the prescribed requirements did not result in excluding a significant segment of the target audience. On request, we costed the budget required to implement the top-up in the 2021/22 national budget. The costing was done in consultation with officials from the SASSA, the Department of Social Development and the National Treasury, and was submitted to the latter two entities in January 2021. The costing demonstrated that the CSG Top-Up was affordable.

During 2021 it became apparent that the budget for the CSG Top-Up for orphans was not being prioritised amid competing demands on the overall social assistance budget. We presented a joint submission on the 2021/22 budget, alongside the Centre for Child Law, to Parliament's Appropriations Committee highlighting the delay in introducing the CSG Top-Up budget. We also made a joint submission with the Centre for Child Law to the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in 2021, which resulted in the Committee declaring that the South Africa government had made 'insufficient prog-

ress' on the CSG Top-Up reform which had been identified by the Committee as a priority.

**In February 2022 we were
pleased to see that the budget
for the implementation of
the CSG Top-Up had finally
been allocated. This enabled
implementation from
1 June 2022.**

Relatives caring for orphaned children can now quickly access a CSG of R750 directly from SASSA, instead of having to wait many years to access the FCG via the child protection system. During 2022 we monitored the first few months of implementation of the top-up at SASSA office level, presented the evidence to SASSA and the Department of Social Development at an implementation forum, and provided technical support to the Department for improved implementation and communication. Together with the Centre for Child Law and the Children in Distress Network (CINDI) we drafted a [guide to the CSG Top-Up](#) for NPOs to use. The guide will be regularly adapted based on questions arising from practitioners and the public.

By August 2022, the number of new CSG Top-Up payments had already surpassed the number of new FCG payments (albeit by a narrow margin), indicating that the top-up was more accessible. This occurred despite social workers continuing to prefer the FCG for orphans because the Children's Amendment Bill, which removes the FCG as the preferred grant for orphans living with relatives, had not yet been passed by Parliament. By December 2022, approximately 28,000 orphans were receiving the top-up and if the Children's Amendment Bill is put into effect in early 2023 and social workers are trained on the new law, it

could reach 300,000 orphaned children over the next three years.

Children's Amendment Act

The second part of the solution to the foster care system crisis lies in the Children's Amendment Act, which was finalised by Parliament in December 2022. We made a submission to both houses of Parliament to support and strengthen the amendments. We then monitored the deliberations and provided legal and strategic advice to members of Parliament.

As a result of our advocacy: a) The section in the Amendment Act which regulates placement in foster care (section 150) was reworded to make it clearer that orphaned or abandoned children who are in the care of family should not be placed in foster care; and b) A transitional section – section 159 (2)A – was inserted to protect orphans already in foster care from losing their FCG when their cases came back to the Children's Court for extension because the new section 150 may prevent Magistrates from extending their foster care placements.

Once the Children's Amendment Act is in effect, social workers will be directed to refer the majority of orphans who are in the care of relatives

to the CSG Top-Up for quick and easy access to income support.

In November 2022, the North Gauteng High Court had to decide whether its 2011 order protecting children with expired foster care orders from losing their FCG, would need to be extended for a fifth time.

Following input by the Centre for Child Law and the CI, the court decided to extend its order for a further 12 months until November 2023, to provide the Minister of Social Development with time to implement the Children's Amendment Bill. We assisted the Centre for Child Law to craft the terms of the court order to ensure:

- regular supervision by the Centre for Child law and the court of the Department of Social Development's progress reports;
- increased use of section 186 to extend children's foster care placements to age 18 and thereby reduce the backlog of court orders in need of two yearly extensions; and
- continued accountability for the Department of Social Development to prioritise the implementation of the Children's Amendment Act.



One in three children lived in households below the food poverty line



27% of young children were stunted due to chronic malnutrition



50% of child deaths in hospitals were associated with malnutrition

In a submission to Parliament, on the 2021/22 national budget, made alongside the Centre for Child Law, we highlighted the high rates of child poverty and hunger that existed even prior to COVID-19.

Children's voice and agency



Supporting children and youth to participate meaningfully in decision-making processes that affect their rights.

GOALS

- Enabling children to participate in law reform and policy making.
- Strengthening intergenerational partnerships to realise children's rights.
- Developing methodologies and relational ethics to support participatory action research on child and youth activism.

Strengthening the voice and agency of children

While children cannot vote, they enjoy other political rights in the Constitution, including the rights to information, freedom of expression, and to participate in governance processes such as public hearings in the Parliament of South Africa.

Despite these legal imperatives, governance

processes are extremely challenging for children to navigate without support. We aim to promote child and youth activism by supporting children and youth to participate meaningfully in decision making processes that affect their rights to family or alternative care, education, and protection from abuse and neglect.

Enable children to participate meaningfully in Parliament's public hearings

We are working with the South African Parliament to create an environment that is safe and respectful, to enable children to participate meaningfully in public hearings.

In 2021 we partnered with the [Western Cape Children's Commissioner](#), the Parliamentary Public Education Office, and the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Social Development to create a dedicated day of public hearings on the Children's Amendment Bill, for children and youth. The partnership is aimed at ensuring that lessons learnt will shape future public hearings and build Parliament's capacity to create an enabling environment for

child and youth participation in its processes. The children and young people led a debate about transitional support for young adults in alternative care and called on the Committee to examine the treatment of child refugees.

Children found the meeting minutes and general notices sent to adult members of civil society to be too dense and impenetrable. We thus used social media to give feedback to children and young people on the impact of their inputs and the changes to the Children's Act. We also hosted workshops with two of the groups involved to help the children to raise awareness within their own networks and communities.

Strengthening children's participation in child rights governance bodies

In 2021 we started working to strengthen child rights governance bodies, and children's participation in their processes, as part of a seven-year global research initiative that is in turn part of the [International Canadian Child Rights Partnership](#) (ICCRP).

We aim to study two initiatives mandated to promote children's rights and support participation in governance: the Western Cape Province Children's Commissioner, and the Office of the Rights of the Child in the Presidency of South Africa. We are examining how these

bodies foster relationships with children, and are capacitating children to assess whether such relationships make public policy more responsive to children's needs.

Over 2022 to 2025, children will learn how to analyse government policy and budgets, and conduct social audits in three communities to test

progress in the realisations of children's rights.

The first step at the end of 2022 was the establishment of an intergenerational advisory committee that will comment on the proposed activities and give advice on the goals of the project.

Participatory action research on youth activism

We are supporting young South African activists from the [Nelson Mandela Fund's Legacy Academy](#) to work with an international group of activists, scholars and practitioners from Brazil, Scotland, Hungary and Canada. The partnership is examining innovative social justice strategies of young activists and human rights defenders advocating for social change, to reflect on and analyse how young people's social innovations are creating positive change across the world.

**Together, we are considering
how development scholars
and practitioners can most
effectively promote solidarity
with today's young social
justice movements.**

We have been collaborating with Queen's University Belfast, and practitioners, children and young people from two grassroots organisations ([Mamelani Projects](#) in Cape Town and [Voices of Young People in Care](#) in Belfast), to build the capacity of young care leavers to advocate for children's rights. When children who have grown up in State institutions leave the care of the State and transition into adulthood, they face a number of barriers. Amplifying the voi-

ces of young people in care is an important step towards addressing those barriers - the goal was to create a knowledge exchange where everyone could learn together.

In a series of hybrid workshops, we co-created a safe space in which young people could reflect on the challenges they face in respect of poverty, security, and care. Youth discovered that despite the geographical distance between them, they are connected by common experiences and community. In both countries, racial and religious segregation is still prevalent, and community violence by gangs and paramilitaries invades their daily lives. Branded as "marginalised" and "delinquent" these youth are actively campaigning to improve the lives of all children in alternative care with their local communities, and have taken their proposals to the South African Legislature and the Northern Ireland Assembly. The two groups exchanged lessons about how to campaign effectively, make an impact with decision makers, relate their messaging to rights, and what the best ways are of reaching other young people.

Moving forward, the children and young people want to conduct a joint advocacy campaign on the need to combat prejudice against children in care, and ensure that a package of care and support is available to all young people leaving care.



Education and teaching

Teaching in the Department of Paediatrics and Child Health

Lori Lake (Education and Communications Specialist) and Lucy Jamieson (Senior Researcher) continue to teach on the Postgraduate Diploma in General and Community Paediatrics, which aims to build leadership for child health at district and facility level – where they convene the child rights and advocacy (CRA) course.

The CRA course aims to deepen health professionals' understanding of children's rights. The course draws on a mix of child law, children's voices, child-centred data, examples of good practice and standards for child-friendly care, in order to transform the ways in which health and allied professionals think about their individual practice, the healthcare system, and the broader social determinants of child health – with an emphasis on upholding children's rights and enhancing the quality of care. The course culminates in an advocacy project that builds students' capacity and confidence to advocate for change.

CI staff also teach on the undergraduate programme, with Lori delivering the child in context lecture to fourth year medical students and working with the course convenors to strengthen the emphasis on child health and primary health care.

Development of an MSc in Global Health Ethics

We are part of a cross-faculty team that was awarded a grant by the National Institute for Health (USA) to create a new programme in Global Health Ethics. This team is focussing on the decolonisation of ethics scholarship. We propose to revolutionise ethics teaching in African

health research by foregrounding African experiences, needs and worldviews.

Our role is to ensure that children feature as a golden thread in the curriculum; to develop classes on participatory methods and institutional ethics requirements when doing research with children; and to convene a dedicated course on ethics and children where students will examine issues such as best interest, capacity and consent, end of life decision-making, saviour siblings, gender dysphoria, puberty blockers and gender realignment surgery in childhood.

We've developed a concept paper and a high-level resource plan, and are working our way through various other documents that are required for accreditation with the Council for Higher Education and the Qualifications Authority.

Student supervision

Our Director Professor Mathews is supervising four PhD students focussing on a range of topics including the evaluation of a teen parenting programme; the intergenerational impact of child sexual abuse on mothers; sudden unexpected infant deaths in a peri-urban setting; and the spatial distribution of injury mortality of children in the Western Cape. Professor Mathews has also supervised two master's students. The first student used data from the Child Death Review to explore health service utilisation of at-home natural deaths among children younger than five, and was awarded a distinction. The second student is exploring the perceptions and experiences of Malawian nurses managing child abuse victims.

Marsha Orgill (Senior Researcher) is supervising two Public Health master's students, and Dr Neziswa Titi (Researcher) supervised a master's student examining the lived experience of student support officers who offer counselling services to college students in the Western Cape.



Partnerships

We were founded to foster interdisciplinary research within the University of Cape Town, and with other academic and research bodies, growing our academic footprint through local and international partnerships, with a focus on building South-South collaborations. We also work closely and engage with government and civil society to strengthen our work, extend our reach, and allow us to influence policy and practice. We work

in partnership with other social justice organisations to support more broad-based civil society campaigns and to ensure that the momentum for advocacy and policy work can be sustained and amplified. Through these partnerships and collaborations, we contribute to knowledge generation about the problems that face South Africa's children and the region at large, and to the development of evidence-based solutions.

National partnerships

The Department of Social Development (DSD) and the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) remain close partners and our relationship was further strengthened during 2021/22 through our research for the DSD on the value of the Child Support Grant (CSG) and technical support for the implementation of the CSG Top-Up. We are increasingly providing technical support to both DSD and SASSA.

The Legal Resources Centre, Centre for Child Law, and the Equal Education Law Centre represent us on systemic litigation cases. The Centre for Child Law and the Children in Distress Network (CINDI) are our key partners on the foster care crisis and CSG Top-Up campaign. We are active members of the Budget Justice Coalition (BJC), the Civil Society Coalition on Social Assistance and the Violence Prevention Forum. The Black Sash and Pay the Grants have been our partners in advocating for unemployed women who receive the CSG for their children, to be eligible for social assistance for themselves.

We continue to play an active role within the Child Health Priorities Association and Departmental Advocacy Committee raising awareness of the COVID-19 pandemic on child health, and have

been working with the Food Justice Coalition and the Infant and Young Child Advocacy Project at the University of the Western Cape, to address the commercial determinants of child malnutrition.

For the 2021/22 issue of the *South African Child Gauge*, we partnered with UNICEF South Africa, the Lego Foundation, the Standard Bank Tutuwa Community Foundation and the DSI-NRF Centre of Excellence Human Development at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), as well as Professor Mark Tomlinson (Institute for Life Course Health Research, University of Stellenbosch) and Professor Sharon Kleintjes (Department of Psychiatry and Mental Health, University of Cape Town). In addition, we also worked closely with RX Radio (a children's radio station based at the Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital in Cape Town) and with the news publication *Daily Maverick* to share the key findings through a child and youth-centred social media campaign and webinar.

Our research partners have included the South Africa Medical Research Council, the DSI-NRF Centre of Excellence in Human Development at Wits University, the University of Cape Town Division of Forensic Pathology, and we are increasingly working alongside civil society organisations in

the co-creation of research and interventions. To this end, our collaborators have included MOSA-IC, Masimanyane Women's Rights International, Sonke Gender Justice, Ikwezi Women's Movement, and True North. We also have a range of government research partners such as the Department of Health, Department of Justice, the National Prosecuting Authority (Thuthuzela Care Centres) and the South African Police Service. For our research on a model of group care for pregnant women, the project is implemented alongside the Mowbray Maternity Hospital, Western Cape Department of Health.

International partnerships

We are one of the founding members of the International and Canadian Child Rights Partnership (ICCRP), which now spans over 30 international universities and children's rights organisations on five continents around the globe. The partnership supports our research on participation and activism but has also fostered collaborative funding applications creating new projects.

We are also a founding member of the Global Coalition for Good Schools, and through this coalition we continue to contribute a Southern voice to the global discourse on violence prevention using schools as a site for change. We partnered with Raising Voices, Uganda, and the International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW), India, to produce the flagship evidence review for the Coalition.

Professor Mathews serves as a commissioner on the Lancet Commission for Gender-Based Violence and Child Maltreatment. As part of

For our work related to children's voice and agency, we partnered with the Western Cape Children's Commissioner, the Parliamentary Public Education Office, and the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Social Development on public hearings on the Children's Amendment Bill, for children and youth.

Finally, we are the academic partner to the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund Legacy Academy Programme, supporting individual children to plan and evaluate their own advocacy projects.

this work we have continued to partner with the Global Women's Institute at George Washington University on a South African country case to explore how social movements, in particular women's movements, impact policy on violence against women and children in South Africa.

We have a multi-country partnership with Edinburgh University that aims to deepen our work on participatory methodologies, as the research will include young children, their caregivers, early childhood development practitioners and community stakeholders.

We have been collaborating with Queen's University Belfast, and practitioners, children and young people from two grassroots organisations (Mamelani Projects in Cape Town and Voices of Young People in Care in Belfast), to build the capacity of young care leavers to advocate for children's rights.





Publications and presentations

2021

Journal articles

- **Berry L, Mathews S**, Reis R & Crone M (2021) Mental health effects on adolescent parents of young children: Reflections on outcomes of an adolescent parenting programme in South Africa. *Vulnerable Children and Youth Studies*, 17:1, 38-54.
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- **Jamieson L** & van Blerk L (2021) Responding to COVID-19 in South Africa – social solidarity and social assistance. *Children's Geographies*, 20:4, 427-436.
- Wigdorowitz M, Rajab P, Hassem T & **Titi, N** (2021) The impact of COVID-19 on psychometric assessment across industry and academia in South Africa. *African Journal of Psychological Assessment*, 3(0), a38.

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- Chopra M, **Hall K** & Westwood T (2021) Poverty, social inequity and child health. In: Shung-King MA, Westwood A & Hendricks M (eds) *Child Health for All: A manual for Southern Africa 6th edition*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.
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pack for research practitioners. Edinburgh: Global Partnership Knowledge Network, End Violence Lab and Save the Children.

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- Hendricks M, **Hall K**, Goeiman H, Henney N, Boraine A, Murray J, Hendricks L & **Lake L** (2021) *Children and COVID-19 Advocacy Brief: Nutrition and Food Security*. In: **Lake L**, Shung-King M, Delany A & Hendricks H (eds) *Children and COVID-19 advocacy brief series*. Cape Town: Children's Institute, University of Cape Town.
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- **Proudlock P** (2021) *Children's Institute's submission to the Department of Social Development on the Draft Regulations to the Social Assistance Act on the Child Support Grant Top-Up*.
- **Proudlock P** & Hansungule-Nefale Z (2021) *Children's Institute and Centre for Child Law submission to the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the Child Support Grant Top-Up for orphans in the care of relatives*. 30 August 2021.
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- **Titi N** (2021) Apartheid laws created the misery that SA's children and their caregivers find themselves in. *Independent Online*. 2 June 2021.
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- **Lake L** (2021) *The slow violence of malnutrition: Gauging progress/a process of engagement*. Critical Food Studies Virtual Humanities Conference. University of the Western Cape. 18 November 2021.
- **Mathews S** (2021) *Bridging the divide between VAC and VAW. Ending violence against children during COVID-19 and beyond*. Virtual regional conference to strengthen implementation of the INSPIRE strategies in East Asia and the Pacific. Bangkok. 2-5 November 2021.
- **Mathews S & Achuyt P** (2021) *Prevention of violence against children through schools in the Global South*. Seminar one: Evidence matters - Taking stock of the evidence on preventing and responding to violence against children (Solutions Summit Series). UNICEF Innocenti – Global Office of Research. Florence, Italy. 14 September 2021.
- **May J, Witten C & Lake L** (2021) *The South African Child Gauge 2020*. Online. International Congress of Dietetics. 1-3 September 2021.

National

- **Berry L**, **Molliqaj V** & **Hoxha I** (2021) *Planning for the development of country-specific scaling-up strategies (blueprints)*. Work package six. GC_1000 Consortium executive board meeting. 24 June 2021.
- **Berry L**, **Gwele M**, **Slemming W** & **Mathews S** (2021) *Group Care_1000: Implementation in South Africa*. Progress update. GC_1000 Consortium Executive Board meeting. 25 June 2021.
- **Hall K** (2021) *Family Connections: Linking maternal migration and child mobility in South African surveys*. Presented at the National Conference on Migration and Urbanisation hosted by Statistics South Africa and the Department of Social Development. 26-30 July 2021
- **Hall K** (2021) *Budget austerity: The below-inflation grant increases in a time of COVID*. Presented at the South African Human Rights Commission think tank: The impact of COVID-19 on children's rights. 15 June 2021.
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 - **Jamieson L & Feinstein C** (2021) *Working together: The ethics of doing research with children*. University of Cape Town Department of Paediatrics and Child Health research day. Online. 10 November 2021.
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 - **Lake L** (2021) *Children and COVID-19: Prioritising children in response and recovery*. Presentation to the National Child Care and Protection Forum. 22 September 2021.
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 - **Lake L** (2021) *Impact of COVID-19 on child nutrition*. South African Human Rights Commission think tank roundtable on the impact of COVID-19 on children's rights. 15 June 2021.
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 - **Titi N** (2021) *Managing the effects of absent fathers: "How can I live my life without my father in it?"* National Association of Child Care Workers 10th Youth Leadership Conference. Online. 5–6 October 2021.
 - **Titi N** (2021) *Closing the gaps in services that respond to violence against women and children*. Presentation to local partner roundtable. Cape Town. 21 October 2021.

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- Hendricks L, Dierckx C, Carolus G, Vrebos H, Tolmos L, Williams-Bruinders L, Taliep N, **Titi N**, Julies R, Segers R, Idrees S & Hannes K (2022) *Doing fieldwork in challenging circumstances: Summoning participatory methods*. 6th European Congress of Qualitative Inquiry. Online. 18 November 2022.
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- **Mathews S** (2022) *Moving forward together: What needs to happen and who should lead the work?* Webinar series on the prevention of violence against children in and through schools in the Global South, hosted by the Sub-Saharan Africa Regional Hub of the Global Coalition for Good Schools, in collaboration with the Children’s Institute at the University of Cape Town, the International Centre for Research on Women, and Raising Voices. 5 May 2022.
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- **Titi N** (2022) *Decolonising child psychology praxis*. Expert panel: Decolonisation and human rights. Annual International Council of Psychologists Conference. Online. 9-11 December.

National

- Biersteker L, **Gwele M** & **Orgill, M** (2022) *Child perceptions of safety, inclusion and participation*. Sesame workshop curriculum seminar. Cape Town. 28 October 2022.
- **Gwele M**, Biersteker L, **Berry L** & **Orgill M** (2022) *Participation in early learning (0-5 years): Learning from local communities to inform Early Childhood Development policy*. Department of Paediatrics and Child Health Research Day, University of Cape Town. Cape Town.
- **Hall K**, **Proudlock P** & Budlender D (2022) *Child poverty and the CSG: A review with scenarios for increasing the grant and its impacts*. Inter-departmental workshop convened by the Department of Social Development. Pretoria. 21 July 2022.
- **Jamieson L** (2022) *Children’s participation in sexual violence research: An overview of the field*. Sexual Violence Research Initiative. Online. 23 February 2022.
- **Jamieson L** & **Mathews S** (2022) *Children and the National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide*. National Association of Child Care Workers mini-conference. Online. 26 October 2022.
- **Juta S**, **Nyathi M** & **Proudlock P** (2022) *Experiences of caregivers in applying for the CSG Top-Up*. Presented to the South African Social Security Agency and the Department of Social Development. Pretoria. August 2022.
- **Lake L** (2022) *Child and adolescent mental health – a catalyst for development*. UNICEF, National Department of Health & Foundation for Professional Development Roundtable on Mental Health and Psycho-Social Support

Services for Children, Adolescents Young People in South Africa. 16 October 2022.

- **Lake L** (2022) *Child and adolescent mental health – a catalyst for development*. Child Trauma Conference. Keynote address. 5 October 2022.
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- **Lake L** (2022) *Children and COVID-19 Advocacy Briefs: Prioritising children in response and recovery*. Presentation to the Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, University of Cape Town. 29 April 2022
- **Lake L** (2022) *Children and COVID-19 Advocacy Briefs: Prioritising children in response and recovery*. Presentation to Western Cape Ad-hoc Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on COVID-19. 1 March 2022.
- **Mathews S** (2022) *Respondent to Centre for Child Law's research study: An assessment of the National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide – a child rights perspective*. Launch of Centre for Child Law's research reports on addressing violence against children. Pretoria. 28 March 2022.
- **Mathews S** (2022) *The impact of violence on children: "What does school-based violence prevention look like?"* Violence Prevention Forum workshop. Cape Town. 11 April 2022.
- **Mathews S** (2022) *Intersections of violence against women and children – what does this mean for practice?* Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry seminar series. 3 June 2022.
- **Mathews S, Delany A & October L** (2022) *Bridging the divide: Understanding the intersections of violence against women and children*. Roundtable discussion. Cape Town. 23 August 2022.
- **Mathews S** (2022) *Children's experience and exposure to violence: What are we learning about prevention?* Bt30: Exposure to violence and adverse childhood experiences webinar series. University of the Witwatersrand,

Johannesburg. 25 October 2022.

- **Mathews S** (2022) *Violence against women and children: What are we learning about prevention?* British Consulate, Pretoria. 31 October 2022.
- **Mathews S** (2022) *Exposure of violence in childhood and its pathways to both victimisation and perpetration*. Presidential Summit on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide. 1 November 2022.
- **Mathews S** (2022) *Violence against children: a situational analysis*. UNICEF SA year-end review and reflection. 30 November 2022. Pretoria.
- **Titi N** (2022) *Closing the gap in services that respond to violence against women and children*. Fieldwork training: protocol and data collection. Online. 14-16 March 2022.
- **Titi N** (2022) *Power, trust, and community – Feminist perspectives and participatory arts-based research in challenging environments*. A collaborative, co-creative, participatory workshop. Stellenbosch University. 4-8 April 2022.
- **Titi N** (2022) *A readdress to the challenges of absent fatherhood: Beyond social justice work to decolonisation*. African Studies Association of Africa 4th Biennial Conference. Cape Town. 11-16 April 2022.
- **Titi N** (2022) *Presentation of preliminary findings: Closing the gaps in services that respond to violence against women and children*. East London and Butterworth, Eastern Cape. 29-30 June 2022.
- **Titi N** (2022) *Accessing higher education in marginalised communities*. Ndlambe Municipality, Port Alfred. July 2022.
- **Titi N** (2022) *Child sexual violence and trauma: Towards decolonised African-centred child-centric psychological interventions*. 13th Child Trauma Conference. Cape Town. 5-6 October 2022.
- **Titi N** (2022) *Findings: Closing the gaps in services that respond to violence against women and children*. Presentation at launch of report. East London, Eastern Cape. 29 November 2022.



Meet our team

DIRECTOR



Professor Shanaaz Mathews

Expertise: Children and violence, child protection, child abuse, gender policy, gender-based violence, evidence-based programming

SENIOR RESEARCHERS



Lizette Berry

Expertise: Social policy, early childhood development, child protection, child poverty (Until end March 2022)



Dr Katharine Hall

Expertise: Social policy, child poverty and inequality, social grants, households and mobility, child indicators



Lucy Jamieson

Expertise: Child rights, participatory democracy, governance, law reform and policy development, child protection



Marsha Orgill

Expertise: Health policy research, health systems research, management and leadership in health systems, implementation research



Paula Proudlock

Expertise: Child rights, legislative review, law reform, democracy and governance, socio-economic rights for children

RESEARCHERS



Malibongwe Gwele

Expertise: Early childhood development (ECD), ECD policy and programming, local and indigenous knowledge, perspectives and practices in the early years, monitoring and evaluation research



Lehlogonolo Makhola

Expertise: Intersections of violence against women and children (Until end May 2021)



Mbonisi Nyathi

Expertise: Administrative law and constitutional law



Lauren October

Expertise: Intersections of violence against women and children, school violence, gender-based violence, violence prevention and community safety.



Dr Neziswa Titi

Expertise: African-centred psychology, child-centric research, children's rights and advocacy



Research Assistant

Sinozuko Juta

Expertise: Constitutional law and social justice

Communications



Communications and Education Specialist

Lori Lake

Expertise: Knowledge translation, materials development, teaching and children's rights



Communications Specialist

Leanne Jansen-Thomas

Expertise: Media relations, social media management, knowledge translation, materials
(As of December 2022)

Administration



Senior Administrator

Zelda Warrin



Administrator

Zerina Matthews



Support Finance Officer

Isabbel Cooper



IT Liaison Officer

Kevin Ernsten

Honorary staff



Honorary Associate Professor

Tara Collins

School of Child and Youth Care, Faculty of Community Services, Toronto Metropolitan University
Expertise: Child rights, human rights, child and youth participation, monitoring



Honorary Professor

Ria Reis

Medical University of Leiden and University of Amsterdam
Expertise: Children and violence, child protection, child abuse, gender policy, gender-based violence, evidence-based programming



Honorary Professor

Lorriane van Blerk

School of Humanities, Social Sciences and Law at the University of Dundee
Expertise: Geographies of children and youth, young people's participation in research and knowledge exchange, equality and rights, street-connected children and youth, refugees and protracted displacement

Two longtime staff members moved on in 2022: Lizette Berry and Isabbel Cooper. Isabbel retired at the end of 2022, being with the CI since the start in 2001 as our Finance Officer. We have appreciated Isabbel's dedication and will miss her dearly. Lizette left the CI to pursue her PhD, after being with the CI for 20 years. She contributed significantly to the ECD portfolio of work and her thoughtful contributions will be missed.

Governance

Our director is accountable to the Head of the Department of Paediatrics and Child Health and to a governing board, chaired by the Dean of Health Sciences or his/her representative.

The governing board provides independent guidance to strengthen ongoing work and approaches; promotes interdisciplinary collaboration between us and other academic and research entities; ensures our operations and governance comply with UCT's academic and organisational imperatives (such as transformation); and ensures our financial accountability through the review and approval of annual budgets, and financial income and expenditure reports, and through guiding our fundraising strategy.



Andrew Argent
(Chairperson until June 2021)
Professor and Head of Paediatrics
and Child Health, UCT



Karabo Ozah
Director: Centre for Child Law
Lecturer: Faculty of Law, University of
Pretoria



Tracey Naledi
(Chairperson from July 2021)
Deputy Dean: Health Services,
Faculty of Health Sciences, UCT



Jeremy Seekings
Professor of Political Studies and
Sociology, UCT
Director: Centre for Social Science
Research, UCT



Zane Dangor
Special Adviser: South African
Minister of International Relations and
Cooperation
(Governing board member until 2022)



Crain Soudien
Emeritus Professor, UCT
Honorary Professor, Nelson Mandela
University



Matlhodi Angelina Makwetla
Commissioner: South African Human
Rights Commission (Child Rights)
(Governing board member until 2022)



Ingrid Woolard
Professor and Dean: Faculty of Eco-
nomic and Management Sciences,
Stellenbosch University
(Governing board member until 2021)



Benyam Dawit Mezmur
Head: Children's Rights Project, Dullah
Omar Institute
Deputy Dean: Research and Post-
graduate Studies, Law Faculty, Uni-
versity of the Western Cape
Member: UN Committee on the Rights
of the Child



Shanaaz Mathews
Director (ex officio)



Katharine Hall
Finance portfolio (ex officio)



Rudzani Muloiwa
Professor and Head of Paediatrics
and Child Health, UCT



Paula Proudlock
Staff representative (ex officio)



Finances

The Children's Institute is a soft-funded accredited research unit and covers the costs of staff, operations, equipment and project expenditure from grants and donations. The Faculty of Health Sciences contributes a third of the Director's salary from its general operating budget, and a small amount of income is generated from teaching and publications. The university also supports us by providing full access to its academic and administrative infrastructure, including the finance management system. Grant income is levied by the Faculty of Health Sciences and we also pay for the support of the finance officers and purchasing services. The finance team checks all income and expenditure transactions every month to ensure accuracy and meets at least quarterly to review the global income-expenditure and sustainability assessments. Our governing board reviews the finances twice a year and approves the organisational budget.

As a unit that must continuously strive to ensure our financial sustainability, we are fortunate to benefit from core grants. The ELMA Foundation has provided core support to us since 2006, and the Constitutionalism Fund has been a core funder from 2019 with the specific aim of supporting our organisational development, succession and transformation agenda.

The Raith Foundation has continued to support our evidence-based advocacy work to advance social assistance reform and strengthen the child protection system, and has also contributed to our core funding since 2022.

Our work on the intersections of violence against women and children is funded by the Ford Foundation. We were awarded a substantial European Union grant as part of a multi-country consortium to test the feasibility of a group care model for pregnant parents. The Millennium Trust supports

our "invisible children" project to address systemic barriers to late birth registration, grants, education and health services.

Our long term partners in the South African Child Gauge continued to support this flagship publication. They are UNICEF South Africa, the DSI-NRF Centre of Excellence in Human Development at the University of the Witwatersrand, and the Standard Bank Tutuwa Community Foundation. The LEGO Foundation joined the Child Gauge 2021/22 partnership as a co-funder.

2021 Income and expenditure

Total income for the year 1 January to 31 December 2021 was R11.7 million. Of this, R10.4 million came from grants and donations. Income from university support, teaching and publications amounted to R1.1 million. This included a once-off contribution of over R600,000 to help offset losses as a result of lockdown and project delays, as part of the university's COVID-19 financial relief programme for soft-funded units. A further R183 742 was generated from interest on investments.

Expenditure was R10.8 million, of which R7.7 million was spent on staff salaries, R2.5 million on direct project activity costs and R295 347 on university levies.

2022 Income and expenditure

Total income for the year 1 January to 31 December 2022 was R13.6 million. Of this, R12.6 million came from grants and donations. Income from university support, teaching and publications amounted to R652 440. A further R348 751 was generated from interest on investments.

Expenditure was R12.8 million, of which R8.4 million was spent on staff salaries, R3.8 million on direct project activity costs and R392 636 on uni-

versity levies. Project activity costs were unusually high in 2022 as projects with large fieldwork components caught up after delays following two years of intermittent lockdown.

	2021	2022
INCOME BY FUNDING SOURCE	11 734 259	13 603 923
Grants and donations	10 407 850	12 602 731
The Elma Foundation	1 000 000	2 400 000
Raith Foundation	2 339 199	1 800 000
Constitutionalism Fund	1 666 668	1 666 666
Ford Foundation	1 396 225	1 464 468
Global Challenges Research Fund - UKRI	853 815	1 637 260
The Millennium Trust	800 000	1 000 000
DST-NRF Centre of Excellence in Human Development	250 000	250 000
UNICEF South Africa	354 570	23 180
National Department of Social Development	86 957	344 760
George Washington University	195 009	204 077
Queens University Belfast	63 187	95 812
Open Society Foundation	750 000	
Standard Bank Tutuwa Community Foundation	500 000	
Raising Voices	162 225	
African Child Policy Forum (reimbursement)	(16 958)	
Lego Foundation		1 133 950
Ryerson University		548 007
Miscellaneous / small private donations	6 955	34 551
Other sources of income	1 326 409	1 001 191
University support, teaching and publications	1 142 666	652 440
Interest on investment	183 742	348 751
EXPENDITURE	10 830 416	12 885 097
Personnel	7 693 124	8 413 277
Regular operating expenses	98 241	112 499
IT Equipment and maintenance	3 976	35 755
Organisational development	172 204	55 407
Communication products	24 761	7 982
Travel, fundraising and networking	(1 169)	14 490
Contingency (temps, buildings, discretionary)	3 900	27 257
Direct project activity costs	2 540 031	3 825 796
UCT overheads (levies on contracts)	295 347	392 636

Balances and reserves

The opening balances in January 2021 stood at R7.97 million, with R3.6 million held in unrestricted funds, and R4.3 million in project balances for funded projects continuing into 2021. These balances were unusually large because of COVID-19 and the deferral of substantial project work to the following year.

The opening balances in January 2022 stood at R8.87 million, with R5.1 million held in unrestricted funds, and R3.7 million in project balances for funded projects continuing into 2022. The growth in unrestricted funds was the result of resuming projects and associated cost-recovery of staff time.

Reserves are important because the funds are unrestricted and can be used to protect the CI's sustainability in times of financial pressure.

Our sustainability outlook continues to improve, and as at end December 2022 we held over seven months of operating costs in reserve. This exceeds our minimum target of six months, and we plan gradually to extend this target to 12 months.

BALANCES	Opening (1 Jan 2021)	Closing (31 Dec 2021)	Closing (31 Dec 2022)
Unrestricted funds and reserves	3 618 025	5 118 775	5 995 554
Project funds carried forward	4 345 649	3 748 742	4 754 318
TOTAL	7 963 674	8 867 517	10 749 872

We are deeply grateful to our funders for the financial support that makes our work possible.



**Advancing
children's rights
through research,
advocacy and education.**