



children's  
institute  
child rights in focus  
Research • Advocacy • Education



25 May 2016

## **The *South African Child Gauge*<sup>®</sup> at UCT celebrates 10 years of tracking the state of SA children**

A look back at the past 10 annual issues of the *South African Child Gauge* has revealed both the progress made for SA children, as well as the obstacles they still face. In November 2016 the Children's Institute (CI) at the University of Cape Town will release the eleventh issue of the *South African Child Gauge*: the only publication to provide an annual snapshot on the situation of South Africa's children.

The CI has outlined massive challenges facing children today. For example, levels of violence against children are excessive: South Africa's child homicide rate is more than double the global average and most forms of violence are perpetrated by someone known to the child. At the same time, the CI says it is clear that an array of progressive laws and policies have translated into significant gains for children:

### **Gains for children in South Africa today:**

- Child poverty dropped from 74% in 2003 to 54% in 2013, driven primarily by the expansion of the Child Support Grant, which now reaches just under 12 million children.
- Children's access to formal housing has increased to 75%, with access to basic sanitation at 72%.
- Deaths of children under five years old have fallen following the rollout of the Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission programme.
- Access to early childhood development programmes increased from 55% in 2002 to 91% in 2013, and access to basic education is nearly universal, at 98%.

### **Challenges facing SA children today:**

- Poor quality schooling acts as a poverty trap starting in the foundation phase and culminating in high levels of high-school dropout.
- Just over one million learners started grade 1 in 2003, yet only 49% made it to matric in 2014 and only 8% qualified for a university exemption

- According to the CI's Children Count project, children remain disproportionately affected by child poverty. Over half of children live in households with a per capita monthly income of less than R671.
- One in five children live in overcrowded households, 1 in 3 are without water on site and 1 in 4 are without basic sanitation.
- [delete sentence about child homicide rate, as this is said earlier in the piece] Nearly half of child homicides take place in the context of child abuse and neglect, and of these, 75% are children under the age of five – where most violence is inflicted at home by a person known to the child.

“Although the South African constitution provides children with the right to be free from maltreatment, abuse and neglect, children continue to experience high levels of violence across multiple settings,” said Shanaaz Matthews, Director of the Children’s Institute.

“Experiences of violence have long-lasting negative effects on the health, social and psychological well-being of a child. It is therefore imperative that we find innovative ways to protect children from violence and to build children’s resilience so they are able to recover from negative experiences. In addition, it is vital that projects such as the *Child Gauge* continue to monitor the status of children, identifying critical gaps and opportunities to strengthen policy and programmes.”

For perspectives and interviews on the state of SA children today, contact details for CI experts are available below, as well as facts on the *South African Child Gauge* after 10 years of publication.

To set up interviews:

#### **Violence, child abuse and neglect**

- **Shanaaz Mathews**, Director, Children’s Institute, specialist in child homicide and the prevention of violence against children. [shanaaz.mathews@uct.ac.za](mailto:shanaaz.mathews@uct.ac.za). For an interview, contact Zelda Warrin on 082 359 4077.

#### **Child poverty and inequality**

- **Katharine Hall**, Senior Researcher, specialist in child poverty, inequality, social grants and child-centred indicators. [kath.hall@uct.ac.za](mailto:kath.hall@uct.ac.za) 082 678 5747
- **Aislinn Delany**, Senior Researcher, specialist in social grants, poverty and inequality. [aislinn.delany@uct.ac.za](mailto:aislinn.delany@uct.ac.za) 076 251 3079

#### **Child protection**

- **Lucy Jamieson**, Senior Research, specialist in child protection, advocacy and law reform. [lucy.jamieson@uct.ac.za](mailto:lucy.jamieson@uct.ac.za) 082 388 4815

#### **Early childhood development**

- **Lizette Berry**, Senior Researcher, specialist in Early Childhood Development policy and programmes. [lizette.berry@uct.ac.za](mailto:lizette.berry@uct.ac.za) 082 732 1500

#### **Youth**

- Ariane de Lannoy, Senior Research, Poverty and Inequality Initiative. [Ariane.delannoy@uct.ac.za](mailto:Ariane.delannoy@uct.ac.za) 072 947 7285

### ***South African Child Gauge***

- **Lori Lake**, Commissioning Editor [lori.lake@uct.ac.za](mailto:lori.lake@uct.ac.za) 082 558 0446
- For past issues of the *South African Child Gauge* visit [www.ci.org.za](http://www.ci.org.za)
- For child-centred indicators, visit [www.childrencount.ci.org.za](http://www.childrencount.ci.org.za)

### ***South African Child Gauge*<sup>®</sup> fact sheet**

First published by the Children's Institute, University of Cape Town in 2005, the *South African Child Gauge* is the only publication to provide an **annual snapshot** on the situation of South Africa's children.

Each year the *Child Gauge* focuses on a critical dimension of child well-being – collating the latest research evidence and critically analysing the position of children in order to inform – and enhance policy, programmes and practice.

#### **Previous issues** include:

1. Children and HIV/AIDS
2. Children and poverty
3. Children's right to social services
4. Meaningful access to basic education
5. Healthy children: from survival to optimal development
6. Children as citizen's: participating in social dialogue
7. Children and inequality: closing the gap
8. Prioritising essential services for young children
9. Preventing violence against children
10. Youth and the intergenerational transmission of poverty

The 2016 issue due in November will focus on *Children and social assistance*.

The *Child Gauge* aims to make academic research accessible to decision-makers in government and civil society who have the power to shape policies, programmes and services. It is also widely used by academics, university students, the donor community and news media, with a print run of 3500 copies.

#### **Key features** include:

- a review of legislative and policy developments affecting children;
- a collection of short essays focusing on a particular theme; and
- a set of child-centred indicators

In 2015 the book was accompanied by a pull-out poster, policy brief and youth bulletin which provided a platform for young South African's to share their views.

The *Child Gauge* started small showcasing the work of the Children's Institute, and has grown over the years to include contributions from over 150 academics across South Africa - drawing on economics, law, social science and statistics to offer a unique interdisciplinary perspective on children.

Other key contributors include thought leaders in government and civil society including Graça Machel, Desmond Tutu and Jonathan Jansen – while keynote speakers at the launch have included former Minister Trevor Manuel, Minister Bathabile Dlamini and Dr Mamphela Ramphele. Key partners include UNICEF South Africa, the Programme to Support Pro-poor Policy Development in the Presidency and the DST/NRF Centre of Excellence for Human Development, University of Witwatersrand.

***ENDS***

***Issued by: UCT Communication and Marketing Department***

**Azwi Mufamadi**

Media Liaison and Monitoring Officer  
Communication and Marketing Department  
University of Cape Town  
Rondebosch  
Tel: (021) 650 5427 Fax: (021) 650 3780  
Cell: (078) 528 6065  
Email: [azwi.mufamadi@uct.ac.za](mailto:azwi.mufamadi@uct.ac.za)  
Website: [www.uct.ac.za](http://www.uct.ac.za)