



PART THREE

Children Count – The numbers

Part three updates a set of key indicators on children's socio-economic rights and provides commentary on the extent to which progress has been made in their realisation. This year the indicators have been expanded to reflect on five years of data. They track the demographics of children, care arrangements, and their access to social assistance, education, housing, health care services, water, sanitation and electricity. The indicators are a special sub-set selected from the Children's Institute website www.childrencount.ci.org.za.

Introducing Children Count – *Abantwana Babalulekile*

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The need to describe, analyse, and monitor children's well-being and the realisation of their rights is increasingly being recognised across the globe.

For example, the International Society for Child Indicators is an initiative to generate debate and share knowledge in this area (www.childindicators.org). The ISCI seeks to, among others, improve data sources, foster diversity in methodological approaches, and enhance information dissemination on the status of children. The Children's Institute recently participated in ISCI's inaugural conference.

A rights-based approach

The Constitution specifies that everyone in South Africa has a right to have access to adequate housing, health care services, sufficient food and water, social security and the right to basic education. Children are specifically mentioned, and every child has the right to basic nutrition, shelter, basic health care services and social services. These form part of what are collectively known as socio-economic rights. While these rights are guaranteed by the Constitution, the question is: *How well is South Africa doing in realising these rights for all children?* The only way to answer that question is by monitoring the situation of children.

There are a number of initiatives in South Africa to monitor progress in children's well-being and the realisation of their rights. A recent outcome of work in the child indicators field is the tremendously rich volume published by the Human Sciences Research Council: *Monitoring child well-being. A South African rights-based approach*, edited by Dawes A, Bray R & Van der Merwe A (2007). The publication provides the conceptual underpinnings and the necessary ingredients for the effective monitoring of children's well-being within a rights-based framework (see www.hsrc.ac.za).

Tracking progress in the development and implementation of child policies is at the heart of the Children's Institute's work. An important tool for monitoring is the project *Children Count – Abantwana Babalulekile* (Xhosa for 'children are important'). The project advocates for the improvement of children's socio-economic conditions in South Africa by monitoring progress in the realisation of their socio-economic rights.

This is done by tracking available, accurate and reliable data on children's socio-economic conditions, accompanied by rights-based commentary. By raising awareness of children's socio-economic status, the project aims to contribute to improved decision-making by government and civil society in the best interests of children.

Counting South Africa's children

Children Count – Abantwana Babalulekile presents child-centred data on many of the areas covered under socio-economic rights. The data sets are made available on the project's web site at www.childrencount.ci.org.za. As new data becomes available with the release of national surveys and other data sources, it is possible to track changes in the conditions of children and their access to services over time. For 2007, three additional years of analysed data from the *General Household Surveys* were added. Therefore, five years' data (2002 – 2006) are presented for most of the indicators included in this publication. Confidence intervals* for the five years of data have been indicated in the data tables and in commentaries where applicable.

The indicators in the *South African Child Gauge 2007/2008* are a sub-set of the *Children Count – Abantwana Babalulekile* indicators on demographics and socio-economic rights. The tables on the following pages give basic information about demographics, care arrangements, health status, housing, water and basic services, social security, and education. Each table is accompanied by commentary that provides context and gives a brief interpretation of the data. The data are presented for all children in South Africa where possible, and by province. More detailed information and a wider range of data – disaggregated by age, sex and race – and accompanying web links, documents and interpretation are available on the web site.

Data sources

The project uses a number of data sources. Some are administrative databases used by government departments (Health, Education, and Social Development) to monitor the services they deliver. Some of the HIV/AIDS data are from the ASSA

* A confidence interval is a statistical range into which the true value is estimated to fall 95% of the time. It is therefore important to refer to when interpreting the data.

model, a statistical model developed by the Actuarial Society of South Africa, which uses many different types of data sources to derive estimates of the incidence of HIV and treatment needs. Most of the indicators presented are unique to the project, and have been developed by using the *General Household Survey* of Statistics South Africa. The technical notes and definitions for the indicators can be found beneath the respective data tables, while information about data sources is displayed on pages 94 – 95.

The theme of this *South African Child Gauge* is children's right to social services. Children have multiple, inter-related needs that require a holistic approach to programming and service provision. Although the indicators presented here do not directly reflect on social services provisioning, in some instances, such as data on orphaning and child-headed households, a direct link between demographic data and social services is apparent. Data on the socio-economic conditions of children provide a framework with which to view and interpret children's need for social services.

Each of the domains are introduced below and key information is highlighted.

Demography of South Africa's children (pages 64 – 70)

This section gives a profile of South Africa's children by using the indicators of number and proportion of children in South Africa; orphans, children living in child-headed households; children living in income poverty; and children living in a household with an employed adult. There were just over 18.2 million children in South Africa in 2006. Sixty-eight percent of children lived in households with an income of less than R1,200 per month, and about 40% of children lived in a household where no adult was employed.

Children's access to social assistance (pages 71 – 73)

Social assistance grants are an important source of income for caregivers to meet children's basic needs. This section shows the dramatic increases in the numbers of children in 2007 who accessed the Child Support Grant (up 34% from 2006), the Care Dependency Grant (up 7% from 2006), and the Foster Child Grant (up by 20% from 2006).

Children's access to education (pages 74 – 77)

This section uses the indicators of number and proportion of children at an educational institution; the learner-to-educator ratio; and the distances travelled to school to monitor children's access to education. Although a 96% attendance rate is relatively high, the number of school-aged children who do

not attend an educational facility is a serious concern, particularly as 75% of these were aged 13 – 17 years.

Child health: the general context (pages 78 – 81)

This section monitors child health through the indicators of infant mortality and under-five mortality rates; the number and proportion of children living in households experiencing child hunger, and the leading causes of child death. The leading indicator on the level of child health in a country, the IMR, shows that the infant mortality rate increased from almost 29 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2001 to 43 per 1,000 live births in 2005.

Child health: HIV/AIDS (pages 82 – 85)

This section looks at indicators on HIV prevalence in children and in pregnant mothers; the number of child deaths due to AIDS; children receiving antiretroviral therapy (ART); and the proportion of children starting ART. 2006 data show that close to one-third of pregnant women who accessed antenatal clinics were infected with HIV. The Actuarial Society of South Africa model suggests that HIV prevalence in children has almost doubled to 2.1% in 2006. The model projects a small reversal of child deaths due to AIDS from 2004 that is consistent with the roll out of ART. It also shows that there has been a large increase in the number of children accessing ART (from 4% in 2001 to 30.4% in 2005).

Children's access to housing (pages 86 – 89)

This section presents data on children living in urban or rural areas; in formal, informal or traditional dwellings; and those living in overcrowded dwellings. More than half of children (54%) lived in rural areas in 2004 and it appears that the number of children living in informal housing has increased across most of the provinces from 2002 to 2006. Twenty-eight percent of children lived in overcrowded households in 2006.

Children's access to sanitation, water and electricity (pages 91 – 93)

Without water and sanitation, children face substantial health risks. This section presents data on children's access to drinking water on site, sanitation and electricity. In 2006, only 61% of children had access to drinking water on site, while children's access to adequate toilet facilities rose to about 55%, and 77% of children lived in households with electricity connections.

For more data, visit www.childrencount.ci.org.za