

# Overview

Part 2 draws on a child poverty and inequality roundtable co-hosted by the Programme to Support Pro-Poor Policy Development in the Presidency, UNICEF South Africa and the Children's Institute, University of Cape Town. Focusing on the theme of *Children and inequality: Closing the gap*, a series of 10 essays outlines the extent and impact of income inequality on children's living conditions, care arrangements, health and education, and identifies interventions that have the potential to break the cycle of poverty and reduce inequality.

## 1. Equality rights and children: Moving beyond a one-size-fits-all approach

(pages 24 – 31)

Equality is both a founding value of the Constitution, and a fundamental right, but what kind of equality counts? This essay introduces the concepts of formal versus substantive equality and explores how the law can be used to achieve equality and advance social justice. It outlines children's rights to equality and non-discrimination in international and national law and evaluates the extent to which the Constitutional Court has championed children's socio-economic and equality rights in South Africa.

## 2. Children and inequality: An introduction and overview

(pages 32 – 37)

Children who grow up in poor households are likely to remain poor. In this way the inequalities of apartheid are reproduced. This essay

draws on child-centred data to illustrate how income inequality shapes children's living conditions, access to services, education and health outcomes. It also highlights the urgent need to identify the key drivers of inequality and intervene for children now to reduce inequalities in the next generation.

## 3. Spatial inequality: Persistent patterns of child deprivation

(pages 38 – 42)

The Centre for Analysis of South African Social Policy, University of Oxford, has developed the South African Index of Multidimensional Deprivation for Children to map the spatial dimensions of inequality across South Africa. Drawing on the 2001 Census and 2007 Community Survey, the essay shows little change in the patterns of relative deprivation over time – with the most severe deprivation concentrated in the former homelands.

## 4. Inequalities in children's household contexts: Place, parental presence and migration

(pages 43 – 47)

Where children live and who they live with has a significant impact on children's current and future prospects. This essay considers the relationships between income inequality and the characteristics of children's households, care arrangements and living environments. It also examines how families respond to spatial inequalities through a range of migration and care arrangements?



## 5. Income inequality and social grants: Ensuring social assistance for children most in need

(pages 48 – 51)

Social grants are the main source of income in poor households and are associated with improved nutrition, health and education outcomes for children. This essay examines the potential of the grants to address current and future income inequality and identifies current gaps in social assistance policy for children that must be addressed.

## 6. Early childhood development services: Increasing access to benefit the most vulnerable children

(pages 52 – 57)

Early childhood development services not only support children's health, well-being and early learning; they are increasingly recognised as a sound economic investment and a key strategy for reducing inequality. This essay explores young children's access to services, current gaps and constraints, and what is needed to ensure access for the poorest and most vulnerable children.

## 7. Inequities in child health: Challenges and opportunities

(pages 58 – 64)

Poverty and inequality have a significant influence on children's health, living environments and access to health care services. This essay raises concerns around the coverage and quality of health care services for children, and critically examines recent initiatives (such as the National Health Insurance and re-engineering of primary health care) to promote health equity and improve health outcomes for children.

## 8. Children and HIV: Monitoring equitable access to services

(pages 65 – 68)

The prevention of mother-to-child-transmission (PMTCT) programme has the potential to virtually eliminate paediatric HIV. This essay examines progress in achieving equity at three critical points along the PMTCT continuum: HIV testing for pregnant women, early infant diagnosis, and access to treatment.

## 9. Education, the great equaliser: Improving access to quality education

(pages 69 – 74)

Education has the potential to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty; yet learners in rich schools continue to have an edge over the poor. This essay explores current trends in educational access and attainment, identifies critical inequalities in both learning inputs and outputs, and considers critical areas for improving the quality of education.

## 10. Children and inequality: Closing the gap

(pages 75 – 77)

The National Development Plan outlines government's plan to reduce poverty and inequality by 2030. It is vital to take action to address the deep-rooted patterns of inequality that shape children's lives and life trajectories. This concluding essay identifies emerging trends, cross-cutting themes, opportunities and challenges, and the implications for policy and practice.

