**WHY?**

Across South Africa, too many children are growing up in disadvantaged circumstances characterized by poverty, violence and abuse. While social assistance grants help to cover basic material needs, their need for care and protection is often unmet. The lack of quality caregiving and safe spaces is hindering these children from fulfilling their potential.

**WHAT? ISIBINDI AND SAFE PARKS**

 Initiated in response to the HIV epidemic, which left many children orphaned or vulnerable, Isibindi is a community-based programme that strengthens families and helps to protect children from abuse, neglect and violence. Endorsed by the Government, Isibindi focuses on the psychosocial well-being of children and adolescents by supporting positive caregiving in the most disadvantaged households and assisting families to access key services. Combined with Safe Parks, which are spaces for recreation and learning created especially for at-risk children, Isibindi is driving positive change in many disadvantaged communities and offering hope and opportunity for children across the country.

“I have gained so many skills and so much more, I would be nothing without Isibindi” - Siphokazi Adams, 17, East London, Eastern Cape

**HOW? HOME VISITS AND SAFE SPACES**

Led by the Department of Social Development (DSD), and coordinated by the National Association of Child Care Workers (NACCW), child and youth care workers are drawn from unemployed members of the community and receive accredited training to deliver home visits to vulnerable children and their families. They provide supervision, life-space counseling, and psychosocial support in the lives of children and refer to other services such as social grants, health care, education and child protection, as needed. The child and youth care workers also work in Safe Parks, where children come after school and on weekends for a meal, to play, read, garden, sing and dance, do homework or simply receive love, care and support. Safe Parks offer educational and counselling support, nutrition and life skills, and deliver empowerment programmes for victims of violence and/or substance abuse. Isibindi has integrated the Sinovuyo teen parenting programme, specifically designed and proven to reduce maltreatment and violence among adolescents, and the MenCare programme to engage fathers and other male family members to support children. Through these efforts, as well as more teen-focused activities in Safe Parks, adolescent participation and outcomes have been strengthened.
WHO? GOVERNMENT, DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS AND CIVIL SOCIETY

With oversight of the Department for Social Development (DSD) and NACCW, and technical and financial support from partners such as UNICEF and USAID, Isibindi projects are implemented by some 400 local organisations and communities, in the social service equivalent of a franchise. They are collaborative initiatives that combine the strengths of each partner to foster community cohesion in the poorest areas of the country.

“I like the Safe Park because it is there that I receive a lot of love” – Sonele, 19, King Williams, Eastern Cape

WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE?

There are currently over 400 Safe Parks across all nine provinces of South Africa and over 6500 child and youth care workers who have supported more than 400,000 children. Children’s resilience has been bolstered; their access to social grants, school, and health services has improved; and cases of substance abuse and violence have decreased. At the same time, local organizations have grown and accessed resources, communities have been strengthened through the injection of skills and resources, and previously unemployed South Africans are set on real career path as child and youth care workers, mentors and coordinators of programmes.

UNICEF is directly supporting 13 Safe Parks in eastern Cape and has reached over 25,000 children through Safe Parks, home visits and other programmes, such as adolescent life skills. Beyond this direct support, UNICEF is working with the Government and NACCW to strengthen and scale up the programme across the country by raising funds, finding new partners, supporting innovations and documenting the programme’s results and impact.

“You can change and make your future… Isibindi has been with me every step of the way” - Vuyo, 19, King Williams, Eastern Cape

WHAT NEXT? SCALING FOR THE FUTURE THROUGH SOCIAL COMPACTS

In addition to its benefits for children and families, Isibindi contributes directly to the national priorities of poverty reduction and employment creation. Government aims for 2018 are to expand the cadre of care workers to 10,000 to support children and adolescents though home visits and Safe Parks. Through its franchise model, Isibindi is well suited to innovative social compacts across South Africa whereby local business and community leaders can join forces to strengthen family relations and community cohesion. UNICEF is committed to engaging in such innovative partnerships to promote community-led action and create sustainable circles of care and protection for children.

“Isibindi made me realize that I was not the only one having difficulties, there were others in my position as well and it was possible to make the future better”
– Nolunsindiso, 26, East London, Eastern Cape

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

By supporting Isibindi and Safe Parks, companies have the opportunity to demonstrate private sector leadership and contribute to concrete, positive change in the lives of children across the country. In doing so, you directly support the objectives of the Sustainable Development Goals as well as the National Development Plan in South Africa.

RESULTS

o Over 400,000 children have benefited from the Isibindi programme since its inception

o Over 25,000 children have benefited from UNICEF-supported Safe Parks and home visits

o Over 6500 women and men have been recruited and trained as child and youth care workers and are no longer unemployed

“There can be no keener revelation of society’s soul than the way in which it treats its children.”
- Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, May 1995

CONTACT US
To explore concrete and tailored partnership opportunities, please contact:

Sandra Bisin
Chief, Communications and Partnerships
Email: sbisin@unicef.org

Carine Munting
Parnterships Manager
Email: cmunting@unicef.org

Mayke Huijbregts
Chief Social Policy and Child Protection
Email: mhuijbregts@unicef.org

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