



Biennial Report South Africa

2014 - 2015

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unite for children



Introduction

The work of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in South Africa remains important and necessary. South Africa is characterised by unique challenges and opportunities and UNICEF is acutely aware of both. A globally-admired Constitution, coupled with an array of laws, policies, budgets and programmes that are expanding critical services for children, especially the most disadvantaged, means that progress continues to be made in bettering the lives of children in this country.

Nevertheless, there remain deep-seated inequities in child well-being with racial disparities and gender gaps often apparent. In addition, levels of violence against children, both in the home and in communities, is an issue of concern to UNICEF, Government and civil society alike.

Over the course of 2014 and 2015, much was accomplished by UNICEF and our partners in advancing the child agenda in South Africa though this is an ongoing responsibility.

The strength of UNICEF's work and the success of its impact is dependent on our partnerships and in this regard the UNICEF South Africa Country Office continues to build new partnerships across all spectrums, while fostering existing ones. It is our work with Government, civil society, the corporate sector, academia, youth organisations and others that continue to better the lives of children.

UNICEF's work is aligned with the National Development Plan of South Africa and is guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). We were pleased to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the CRC in 2014 as we reflected on this significant document that, for the first time, placed children at the centre of global human rights discourse.

We have seen the consolidation of the three priorities for the UNICEF South Africa Country Office, namely: Violence against Children, Early Childhood Development and Results for Adolescents. This has allowed a clear focus on the programmes of the office as the critical issues of the day are dealt with.

As UNICEF turns 70 in 2016 there remains much to be done in our collective quest to leave no child behind.

Child Protection

The statistics around violence against children in South Africa are of great concern to UNICEF. In the 2013/2014 reporting period, the South African Police Services recorded a total of over 45,000 contact crimes against children of which almost half were sexual offences. It is these figures that are the primary purpose of the Child Protection Section of UNICEF South Africa, which is to reduce the high levels of violence against children that exist in South Africa.

South Africa's child homicide rate is double the global average of the World Health Organisation, and current data suggests that female homicide in South Africa is five times greater than the global rate. UNICEF recognises that preventing and reducing violence must be a key cross-cutting national priority, and the only way to do this is to diminish the factors which place children at risk.

Hence, the Child Protection Programme continues to work with our partners in government, civil society and academia to effectively implement South Africa's progressive laws. This data collection and analysis will allow UNICEF to pinpoint exactly which parts of the structures need to be reinforced – be it legislative, strategy development or the regulatory frameworks governing our work. The Section works closely with a number of government departments and agencies, as well as non-governmental organisations and academic institutes, and it has become increasingly clear that the effectiveness of prevention and response interventions depends upon the capacity of the system to implement important changes such as improving access to justice for child victims of violent crime, or reducing victimization.

A total of 3.85 million are orphaned in South Africa (with about 2 million of these cases due to HIV-AIDS), and over half a million children are accessing the Foster Care Grant. UNICEF continues to support Government to deal with policy analysis and to make recommendations for



reform wherever children deprived of parental care are placed at risk of abuse and neglect. Violence in schools continues to be of concern to UNICEF, both in South Africa and globally. South Africa's world class legislation does make a positive difference, as does the progress made by the Government to tackle high levels of violence, with a particular focus on vulnerable groups such as women and children. Violent crime reduction strategies and targets have been spelt out in the National Development Plan Vision 2030 and the Medium Term Strategic Framework 2014-2019, with the aim to reduce contact crimes by between 4 and 7 percent per annum. Combatting violent crime is not just about apprehending criminals as both these key documents are dedicated to tackling the root causes of criminality.

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Our work with the Government of South Africa includes technical assistance to accelerate the formulation and implementation of integrated strategies to address Violence against Children and Women (VACW). Over the course of 2014 and 2015, the Technical Task Team of the Inter-Ministerial Committee led by the Department of Social Development facilitated the following institutional analyses: 1) a Diagnostic Review to assess government's levels of readiness to address VACW led by the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation in the Presidency; 2) a Study to identify the structural determinants of VACW 3) a Mapping and Analysis of Information Management Systems utilized by different Government departments to monitor VACW.

SACO supported the development and testing of a School Safety Framework, which was finalized and approved for implementation by the Minister of Basic Education in April 2015. Thus far, 44 out of the 83 education districts have conducted workshops, thereby reaching over 1,500 master trainers (68 percent of them female) to support the implementation of the framework in schools.

Our collaboration with the University of Cape Town and the University of Oxford to develop a Randomised Controlled Trial programme to

prevent violence among teenagers expanded in 2014 and 2015, while we partnered with the South African Human Rights Commission to promote Child Rights and Business Principles and with Unilever to promote water, hygiene and sanitation in schools.

South Africa was once again the scene of disturbing xenophobic violence early in 2015. Assisting children displaced by the violence near the cities of Durban and Johannesburg, UNICEF, in partnership with Save the Children South Africa, directly reached a total of 437 children in KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng provinces. Support was in the form of the provision of toys, books, psycho-social support as well as learning activities in specially designated child-friendly spaces.

UNICEF commissioned an evaluation of the Safer South Africa Programme, a DFID-supported initiative focusing on ending violence against women and children. The overall purpose of the evaluation was to learn lessons and make recommendations for future programming in the country and region.

We partnered with the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) to convene a round-table on Child Rights and Business Principles (CRBP). UNICEF, together with the SAHRC, are advocating for a multi-party child rights caucus in the national Parliament, which is currently being



considered at a senior level in Parliament. In collaboration with the Office of the Presidency and the University of Cape Town, UNICEF completed a study on the structural determinants of Violence Against Women and Children (VAWC), and a diagnostic review of Government's response to VAWC across ten government departments and three spheres of government (local, provincial and national). Both studies were prepared to assist the work of the Inter-Ministerial Committee on VAWC.

In November 2015, UNICEF, in collaboration with the Children's Institute and the Presidency, launched the 2015 Child Gauge Report. This publication highlights the precarious situation of children as they transition into young adulthood and highlights the need for interventions that aim to support youth development. SACO continued to support the Inter-Ministerial Committee on VAWC and evidence generated at the request of the Inter-Ministerial Committee is being used to revise the Programme of Action.

Adopting a communication for development approach is one way to tackle violence against children and in 2015 a Strategic Plan for Communication for Development (C4D) implementation for VAC was drafted. A partnership was established with SABC television (Channels 1, 2 & 3) and with radio (28 radio stations), with

a viewership and listenership estimated at 70 percent of the adult population, 90 percent of the

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adolescent population and 60 percent of the child population, of South Africa. Communication support was also provided for Child Protection Week and for the 16 Days of No Violence Against Women and Children campaign.

Additionally, in 2012 the Government established the Inter-Ministerial Committee to Prevent and Respond to Violence against Women and Children (VACW), and great strides are being made in this area. UNICEF provides on-going assistance to ensure that prevention, early detection and response efforts are achieved through an integrated and cohesive approach by key departments. Key innovations continue to be made – such as the formulation of the

Programme of Action to Prevent and Respond to VACW 2013-2018, which was supported by the Cabinet in September 2013. This programme is currently being implemented. Further support was offered to conduct a study to identify the direct and indirect determinants of VACW, and to recommend adequate prevention strategies, all the while reviewing the effectiveness of government programmes to prevent, detect and respond to VACW.

UNICEF also supported the Department of Justice and Correctional Services in the formulation of the National Strategic Plan for the re-establishment of the Sexual Offences Courts. To date, a total of 22 Sexual Offences Courts are operational, and an additional 35 are expected to be established by 2017. UNICEF also provided support to the Department of Social Development to tackle critical implementation bottlenecks and gaps in managerial capacity, with efforts being directed at developing instruments and mechanisms to shift from a remedial to a preventative approach.

UNICEF currently supports the Department of Social Development at both national and provincial level as well as various non-governmental organisations in implementing interventions aimed at altering the environments and situations



that expose adolescents to violence and abuse. The programme hopes to reach a total of 20,500 vulnerable children and adolescents by 2017 and aims to offer parenting programmes to approximately 1,400 families, establish a drug abuse rehabilitation center focused on adolescents, and build the capacity of local government to plan and implement family and adolescent support programmes.

Moving forward, UNICEF will complete the on-going studies and sector analysis and support the Inter-Ministerial Committee to develop and implement clear strategies for their dissemination and utilization. UNICEF continues to support the Department of Social Development in implementing the Programme of Action 2013-2017 at both national and provincial level.

It is often said that nothing worth doing is ever easy. As we work together with our partners to combat the scourge of violence against children, we can be proud that every effort is being made to create a better world for the leaders of tomorrow.



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Communication and Partnerships

The success of UNICEF in meeting our mandate is to some extent based on our ability to communicate and work with others in serving the needs of children. In South Africa and globally, we partner with a range of sectors and organisations in different ways to make a difference.

In 2014 and 2015, we continued our work with Santam, in support of education, with Unilever, in support of sanitation and with the Westin in support of early childhood development.

We also began new partnerships with various corporates and foundations in order to fundraise, advocate for children's rights and leverage resources for children including Africa Rainbow Minerals, Titans Cricket, Ernest E. and Brendalyn Stempel Foundation, International Bank Vaults and Deutsche Bank. UNICEF also depends a great deal on the generosity and support of individuals – people living everyday lives who wish to contribute towards helping children. These 'individual pledge donors' as they are called, make a monthly contribution to UNICEF that goes a long way towards making our mandate a reality. 2015 saw a 71 percent increase from 2014, in the number of pledge donors to UNICEF as strong efforts were made to encourage people to support our work.

Through a partnership with SABC television, an estimated 60 percent of children, 70 percent of adults and 90 percent of the adolescent population of South Africa was able to view UNICEF content which was broadcast at no cost to us. In 2015 we built up new partnerships with Ndalo Media, publishers of Destiny magazine and the South African Airways inflight magazine 'Sawubona', which now carries a regular column on UNICEF. Through our Celebrity Advocates, we are able to promote our work in different ways. Producer and musician Zakes Bantwini, television personality Joann Strauss and singer Tshedi Mholo are powerful voices for the rights of children in South Africa. In 2015, we recorded public service announcements that were broadcast in cinemas nationally and on television and radio. From ending violence against children to early childhood development, from maternal health to encouraging proper nutrition, the work of UNICEF was carried in all forms of media, including social media, as we increased our website and YouTube visitors as well as our Facebook, Twitter and Instagram followers. With the Children's Radio Foundation, we organised a children's media conference in Cape Town to provide young people with the skills to use media, and radio in particular, as a means to highlight issues in their communities and find solutions to the challenges faced by young people in South Africa today.



Working with our UNICEF Special Envoy, Graca Machel, we hosted a Panel Discussion on children's rights on the side-lines of the World Economic Forum Africa meeting in Cape Town in June and in October the annual UNICEF-Westin Charity Ball was held where R 280,000 was raised.

The right to an education is a priority of UNICEF and one way in which we highlighted this in 2015 was through a partnership with 20th Century Fox which arranged for us to screen the acclaimed documentary "He Named Me Malala". In Durban, Cape Town and Pretoria, hundreds of high school learners had the chance to watch the remarkable story of education activist and Nobel Peace Prize winner Malala Yousefzai.

To highlight the work of UNICEF globally, the 2015 UNICEF Equity Report was launched in Johannesburg in November with, Ndalo Media. In 2015, our global partner Unilever, launched a campaign whereby proceeds from the sale, over three months, of a local cleaning agent, Domestos, went towards UNICEF's efforts to promote sanitation in schools. As the year drew to a close, Cape Town harbour played host to two clipper boats painted in UNICEF branding which sail around the world to raise funds and awareness for the work of UNICEF.

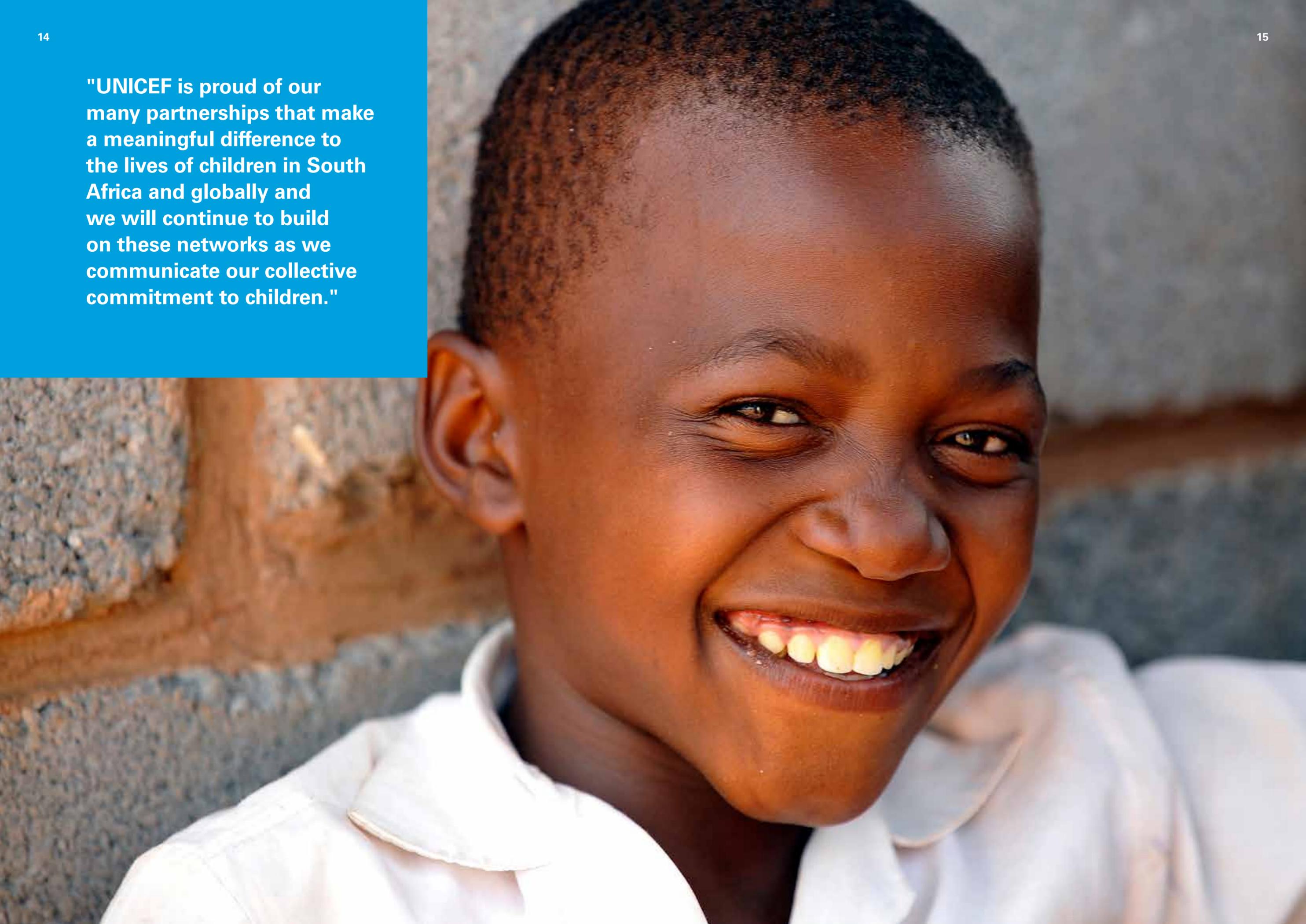
To say 'thank you' to our donors and partners in government, the corporate sector and media, we arranged a sailing morning and a sailing afternoon around Cape Town harbour on the two boats.

UNICEF is proud of our many partnerships that make a meaningful difference to the lives of children in South Africa and globally and we will continue to build on these networks as we communicate our collective commitment to children.

"From ending violence against children to early childhood development, from maternal health to encouraging proper nutrition, the work of UNICEF was carried in all forms of media"



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Education and adolescent development

The right to basic education is fundamental and is a powerful tool in achieving the global Sustainable Development Goals and the vision set out in South Africa's National Development Plan 2030. Improving the quality of education is a priority for UNICEF's support to the Government of South Africa, while supporting children to stay in school and achieve their full potential.

Early childhood development (ECD) is a key priority for UNICEF and the Government of South Africa as children under five years of age represent 10.8 percent of South Africa's population ¹. In 2014, 1 in 3 children (33.8%) from birth to age 4 attended an early childhood development centre and 1 in 6 children (16%) from birth to age 4 received day care from a child minder ². Furthermore, 9 in 10 (90.8%) children between 5 and 6 years old attended Grade R or above in 2013 ³.

Despite significant progress in early childhood development in South Africa, some challenges remain for the youngest children in the country. These include uneven coverage of quality early childhood services as well as limited access to early childhood development services for infants and for young children with disabilities. This is compounded by a lack of early identification and support services.

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In December 2015, Cabinet approved the National Integrated Early Childhood Development Policy, which was the culmination of a three-year

¹ Statistics South Africa. 2015. Mid-Year Population Estimates 2015 (Statistical tables)
² Statistics South Africa. 2015. General Household Survey 2014. Pretoria: Stats SA. (p. 17)
³ Department of Basic Education. 2014. General Household Survey 2013 Report: Focus on schooling. Pretoria: DBE. (p. 12). Most recent data available on this category.

process, supported by UNICEF, of evidence-gathering, nationwide consultations and policy reviews. This policy provides the first-ever comprehensive integrated policy in the country, from conception to one year prior to entry into school. It is rooted in a rights-based approach, public provisioning of early childhood development services, play-based learning as well as understanding the long-term effect of investing in early childhood development as a public good.

UNICEF advocates for the importance of play in the early years and supports the Department of Basic Education and other government departments to advance play-based learning as the foundation of the South African National Curriculum Framework for Children from Birth to Four (NCF). Play is essential for children's growth, development, early learning experiences and well-being and this needs to be supported from the first day of life.

There are several challenges facing adolescents in South Africa today including the repetition of grades, and the impact of teenage pregnancies, as well as financial concerns and poor academic performance. Literacy and numeracy levels are at low levels in some parts of the country, and the



2014 Annual National Assessments (ANA) show that only 3 percent of Grade 9 learners achieved a 50 percent pass mark or more in Mathematics. The enrolment rate during the compulsory years of schooling (7-15 years) is very high, but the repetition of grades and the number of learners dropping-out of school remain a concern. However, the problems are not insurmountable. Consistent, targeted programmes can help solve "these" problems, allowing learners to have greater access to a quality education. UNICEF continues to support the Department of Basic Education's initiatives aimed at building the capacity of district, provincial and national, officials. We support the Department with evidence-based decision-making, aimed at improving educator content knowledge and teaching skills. This is achieved using ICT to improve the quality of education.

Inequalities based on gender, ethnicity, race, religion, and the distribution of opportunities are both drivers and outcomes of conflict. As such, UNICEF supported the Department of Basic Education to develop the "Guidelines on Social Cohesion", which were field-tested in Mpumalanga province and finalised in 2014. These Guidelines focus on embracing local heritage, positive cultural values and promoting parents' and caregivers' involvement in schooling. Training on these guidelines for more than 1,000 learners, through the Girls and Boys Empowerment Movement (GEM/BEM) in the Eastern Cape province provided them with knowledge and skills to disseminate

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information on the prevention of HIV and gender-based violence (GBV). Over 5,000 learners, 1,000 parents and 250 educators were reached through community dialogues focusing on these prevention messages in 2014.

UNICEF collaborated with the Department of Basic Education to provide training to school principals, teachers and district subject advisers to implement gender-based violence prevention programmes in schools using an existing manual for educators, which was updated in 2014, titled "Opening Our Eyes: Addressing gender-based violence in South African schools." The programme focuses on the development of knowledge on this issue while encouraging a collaborative approach to achieve better and safer environments for teaching and learning. In 2014 and 2015 a total of 2,685 master trainers had been trained to provide quality training and support to schools on the prevention of and response to GBV.

One of the preconditions for quality learning and positive educational outcomes is that learners and educators feel safe in schools. UNICEF supported the Department of Basic Education to develop the National Schools Safety Framework which was approved by the Minister of Basic Education on 18 April 2015. This framework provides a standard national approach to assist all provinces to develop and implement customized detailed plans relating to school safety, including standardised school safety indicators. It also provides guidance to schools on the development of school safety plans

as well as the promotion of active engagement with key partners within the school and the community to ensure safety inside the school and in surrounding areas. The implementation of this framework was supported through 44 district training workshops where more than 1,500 master trainers received training to provide support, information and capacity development to schools in their areas. The information to be collected through the implementation of this framework will in the near future be included in the Department of Basic Education's National Education Management Information System (EMIS). This will in turn assist schools to identify security threats and guide schools on how to report and manage such threats.

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UNICEF and the Department of Basic Education forged a partnership with the iSchool Africa Trust which is an educational initiative aimed at addressing the contextual challenges that exist especially in most previously disadvantaged schools (i.e. township, rural or schools for learners with disabilities). This partnership ensures that the iSchoolAfrica Youth Press uses the iSchoolAfrica network to increase awareness on GBV and the promotion of social cohesion among learners across South Africa. Over 750 learners from 131 schools have been equipped with touch screen tablets and computers, which are sponsored by iSchoolAfrica, to engage and actively participate in the development and airing of messages and videos with a focus on GBV. The key aim was to use various media platforms to call upon other young people to act against GBV. The top 17

videos with GBV messages received exposure on Facebook where it was viewed by 3,500 people, whilst it was also tweeted on Twitter by 600 followers from June to December 2015. Other media partners such as Mindset, Soweto TV, Bay TV, and 1KZN have come on board to increase the visibility of the campaign. By the end of 2015, over 2 million people had viewed the winning video, which focuses on speaking out and calling for action against GBV.

More progress was made in 2014 as a strategy was developed for the TechnoGirl programme. This innovative initiative identifies 15 to 18 year-old school girls from disadvantaged communities and places them in corporate mentorship and job shadowing programmes. By participating in a structured job-shadowing process, girls improve their knowledge of science, technology, engineering and mathematics while enhancing their skills for careers in these fields. By the end of 2015, over 2,000 girls had benefited from the programme.

Sport and physical activities in schools play an important role to counter negative behaviour, create a sense of belonging, enhance a spirit of learning and promote the development of schools as safe areas. Team spirit, having fun, and providing an area where children can meet and safely play whilst properly coached can make a meaningful difference. Nevertheless, there remains a relatively low level of participation in school sports due, in part, to a lack of facilities and equipment, limited technical knowledge of coaches, lack of transportation and insufficient support from school governing bodies and management.

The Sports for Development programme (S4D) was initiated in 2007 as part of the Safe and Caring Child-Friendly School Framework (now known as the Care and Support for Teaching and Learning Programme). UNICEF worked with the Department of Basic Education to provide capacity development and practical support to 300 sports coaches in schools throughout South Africa between 2013 and 2014. This was followed by the training of 700 Physical Education teachers from approximately 300 schools reaching 300,000 children on a daily basis.

The S4D Youth Leadership programme has supported 8,850 learners and 295 educators focusing on self-awareness, substance abuse, sexuality education, reproductive health, and organising intra-school sports programmes, from 602 schools. The Youth Leadership programme has extended to 173 farm schools reaching 147 educators. This programme is impacting positively on learners' resilience, self-awareness and participation in school activities.

"Team spirit, having fun, and providing an area where children can meet and safely play whilst properly coached can make a meaningful difference."

In 2015 UNICEF, in collaboration with Department of Basic Education organised and hosted three round table discussions with stakeholders for the progressive implementation of physical education (PE) in all schools in South Africa. This included the Department of Basic Education, 22 higher education institutions, Nike, GIZ (German Technical Cooperation), Sports and Recreation South Africa, Super Sport (media and sports broadcaster) and a number of non-governmental organisations. A key achievement of these discussions is that a



representative body, the South African University's Physical Education Association (SAUPEA) was constituted in November 2015. A national study will be conducted by SAUPEA in 2016, supported by UNICEF, to gain a situation analysis of PE in the country together with a policy review in partnership with UNESCO.

In light of HIV being a reality among adolescents, UNICEF hosted a roundtable discussion with government, civil society, academia and young people to generate support and input for the Department of Basic Education's Draft National Policy on HIV, STIs and TB that was gazetted for public comment on 5 May 2015. This open and informative forum allowed for a diversity of views to be heard on the areas covered by the draft policy, with overwhelming support for the policy and robust debate on the provision of condoms in schools. The Department of Basic Education is in the process of considering all the comments received and will publish a revised policy shortly.

At a governmental level, UNICEF supported an exchange visit to Washington DC by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) which focused on inclusive education and drop-out prevention. Leading the delegation was the Minister of Basic Education. She was accompanied by senior government officials representing teacher development, curriculum, care and support, and strategic planning. This potential partnership and collaboration is invaluable in terms of strengthening the quality of inclusive education in South Africa based on lessons learnt in the United States over 40 years since the implementation of inclusive education.

Learning is lifelong. The inspiration and love for learning starts at birth by supporting children to discover their world and satisfy their natural curiosity as they proceed into more formal learning environments that are safe, caring and supportive towards learning. Every child has the right to experience quality learning that lays the foundation for their future and the prosperity of society as a whole.



Health and Nutrition

A healthy body and mind is the first step to a happy and successful life. That is why UNICEF works towards improving the health of South Africa's children.

The implementation of various programmes has seen us make considerable strides in 2014 and 2015. We have, with our partners in Government and in the non-governmental organisation sector, continued to reduce the under-five mortality rate. We have contributed to this through the support of interventions such as vaccinations, increasing access to quality health care, promoting healthy behaviours and habits and strengthening health systems, and we continue to play a crucial role in the elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV.

Improving the quality and use of data for decision-making is critical to our work in health as is improving the integration of health services for mothers, new-borns and children.

Take the "3 Feet Model" as a good example. First implemented in August 2014 in the Nelson Mandela Bay Health District, the model centres on the development and use of facility level dashboard charts for indicators across the continuum of care. The dashboards provide the facilities with the opportunity to understand their data, track trends, identify gaps and bottlenecks and to then develop actions to address these bottlenecks. Implementation is tracked by means of an Action Dashboard which enables the facility manager to evaluate whether or not the actions were implemented, and whether or not they delivered the desired results. This engagement of staff as well as key stakeholders and partners, has resulted in those that matter taking ownership, and striving to reach and exceed their targets.

The 3-feet approach is also being used to plan for reaching the 90-90-90 targets for HIV. By 2020, the aim is for 90 percent of people living with HIV to know their status; 90 percent of people living with HIV to have access to sustained ARV

therapy; and 90 percent of people receiving ARV therapy to have optimal viral suppression. The 90-90-90 targets will help guide action, promote accountability, and demand progress in closing the treatment gap for all affected populations. These targets and actions require rapid and effective implementation by means of decentralized evidence-based planning, monitoring and identification of priority actions at all levels, and UNICEF is committed to make this a reality.

UNICEF is supporting the 90-90-90 District Improvement Planning process with a focus on pregnant women, children and adolescent HIV-testing, treatment, care and support.

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Since its inception there have been substantial improvements across the board. Common goals for teams to work towards are engaging partners and facility staff in the process of setting targets, tracking performance, and identifying actions. This has improved teamwork both at a facility and district level. There is a greater ownership of work and accountability for data and quality of care has been fostered at facility level. This resulted in the 3 feet Model having an impact across all priority programs. Attention to detail and following up on actions have become key priorities. It may seem like a simple solution, but it has been incredibly effective. It also shows the magnitude of change that we, with our partners in government and civil society, will have to effect in order to have a lasting impact on the healthcare system of South Africa.

Issues that cannot be resolved at a facility level are escalated to the district management level. These are reviewed monthly, so that experiences can be shared, and lessons learned.

This mechanism of support, as well as acknowledging success has had a positive effect on motivation and morale in the district.

District-level support, leadership and commitment are essential for success at the facility level. UNICEF believes that to fast-track results, we need coordination and synergy in our response to health issues. Indeed, the past two years have shown that partner support and community involvement are essential to address gaps and reach targets. This is a step-by-step approach of keeping implementation stages manageable and tools simple and logical. This ensures that facility managers feel empowered to reach targets.

"UNICEF worked with the Government and other partners to roll out the National HPV Vaccination Program, reaching nearly 400,000 girls aged 9 to 14"

In partnership with Rhodes University, UNICEF is supporting a three-year project to innovate on mobile test strips making it possible to assess a person's HIV status and CD4 count within 20 minutes, using a smart phone. The technology also aims to test for different strains of malaria as well as to detect chromosomal birth defects in pregnant mothers.

UNICEF contributed towards the implementation of the National Plan for Improving New Born Care outcomes by supporting capacity development initiatives including training for health care providers. A total of 12,922 health care workers (facility and community-based) were trained through direct UNICEF support during 2015. Capacity-building was focused on STIs, HIV, family-planning, antenatal care, the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV (PMTCT), paediatric HIV and breastfeeding. UNICEF is the lead agency supporting the

implementation of Option B+ for PMTCT, which promotes the provision of ARVs for all women living with HIV, irrespective of their CD4 count.

Another victory is Mom Connect, a mobile health project that focuses on SMS text alerts and messaging. The programme sends vital health messages to pregnant women's mobile phones, and ensures that health workers know where and when to follow up if patients miss important appointments and check-ups. It also updates medical records digitally, ensuring that women can be tracked even if they do not return to the same facility where they signed up.

UNICEF concluded its pilot of Mom Connect in 2014 in select sites across two districts in KwaZulu-Natal Province. 3,500 pregnant women were enrolled in the pilot, servicing two districts and dozens of healthcare facilities. By using lessons learned from the UNICEF-supported pilot, the National Department of Health scaled up the Mom Connect programme to make it assessable to women across South Africa and by the end of 2015, approximately 500,000 women were reached. This is a notable achievement by the Government and UNICEF as it breaks down the communication barrier that so often limits accessibility.

In the areas of greatest need, UNICEF continues to reach many lives:

- We supported the Integrated School Health Programme which offers a comprehensive package of health services to learners throughout the country. The programme, which is one of the three streams of South Africa's primary health care system, aims to strengthen and expand existing school health services.
- At a governmental level, we are supporting the Presidency to finalise the multi-sectoral Food and Nutrition Security Plan.
- Alongside the development and finalization of the National Newborn Care Implementation Plan, UNICEF was also the lead agency for the first ever National Integrated Mid-term Review of the Maternal, New-born, Women's and Adolescent Health and Nutrition Strategy in 2014.

- UNICEF worked with the Government and other partners to roll out the National Human Papilloma Virus Vaccination Program, reaching nearly 400,000 girls aged 9 to 14.

- Over the course of 2014 and 2015, 13,469 community health workers and 1,244 master trainers were trained across three provinces to promote hand washing and the practice of exclusive breast feeding for the initial 6 months for all infants. Approximately 1,500 health care workers at facility level and 1,000 managers at district and provincial level and partners participated in using data for action and monitoring results using different entry points, including immunization, PMTCT and new born care. In addition, district clinical specialist teams and district management teams from Kwa-Zulu Natal were supported with leadership and mentoring skills towards improving maternal and child health outcomes.

We face a number of key challenges going forward. Not having access to the healthcare you or your family need simply because of where you live, or what you earn is the reality for many. And when you do have access, sometimes it is insufficient because the system is buckling under the strain placed on it.



However, despite these hurdles, our collective achievements have reached over 5 million children under 5 years of age, with 2 million under 2 years of age. They also reached over a million pregnant women, and 10 million young people between the ages of 15 and 24 across South Africa. We have seen progress in all indicators tracking maternal and child health outcomes. Neonatal mortality has also been reduced and mother to child transmission of HIV was down to 2,6 percent in 2012/2013. Routine data shows a further reduction of infant HIV-positive rates to 1,5 percent in 2015.

Looking forward, we expect 80 percent of pregnant women, newborns and under 5's to have access to quality treatment, with a particular focus on the most disadvantaged districts and communities. We want to contribute to increasing the percentage of HIV-positive children on ARV treatment to at least 90 percent and we are aiming to see at least 50 percent of infants and young children being optimally fed.

We also want to reach the target of providing access to various services to those affected. This will include the prevention of mother-to-child transmission, paediatric and adolescent HIV-prevention, treatment as well as care and support services across all districts. Over the course of the country programme plan, UNICEF will seek to mobilize US\$ 10 million for work on children's health and nutrition in South Africa.

Meanwhile, UNICEF continues to support government efforts in the healthcare arena. Millions of children in South Africa deserve to have the same chance to access quality healthcare, and the peace of mind and strength of body that comes with it. It is a big step forward, but we must recognise that the right to access ARVs, to have a safe and healthy pregnancy, or even just to be able to go to a place of care and know that it is properly staffed, well-managed and correctly supplied – all of these should be seen as inalienable rights. And whilst we may be some way off from seeing the system as completely 'fixed', thanks to the collective efforts of UNICEF and our partners in Government and civil society, it is better today than it has ever been.

Social Policy

Work on social policy forms an important part of UNICEF's mandate. A child-focused social policy helps address the factors that prevent children from reaching their full potential. It also helps combat the negative cycle of disadvantages that can conspire to keep them in a situation of extreme vulnerability for their entire lifetime.

Despite being a middle-income country with relatively well-developed policies and institutions, South Africa is beset with high levels of child poverty and a persistently high level of inequality across regions, races and people of different socioeconomic backgrounds. While significant progress has been made over the last two decades, we still see more than half of South Africa's children living in poverty. Indeed, the poverty figure is higher amongst those under the age of 18 than amongst any other age group.

"I never used to have nice school uniforms."

Statistics show that around 40 percent of children are trapped in long-term structural poverty. This means that without a significant change in their living circumstances, they will remain locked in a complex web of deprivations. This will ultimately compromise their life chances from an early age. As they grow, they could transmit these disadvantages to their own offspring.

Mary is a single mother and works as a domestic worker. In addition to her daughter, she is also raising all three of her sister's children (who passed away from HIV a few years previously). She says that "it is very hard sometimes, but it is a lot easier now that we get the Foster Child Grant. I was worried that one of the older children might have to stop going to school and start working so that we could afford food because I don't make very much. But now they are all still in school thanks to the grant, and things are going to be okay."

Worrying as they are, these figures could have been far worse if it had not been for the success of various government initiatives implemented over the last 10 to 15 years. The extraordinary expansion of social grants since the early 2000's has helped mitigate the plight of countless poor children. Coverage of the Child Dependency Grant (CSG) has risen from zero to 12 million children, while the Foster Child Grant (FCG) and the Care Dependency Grant now each reach slightly more than half a million children. The FCG has seen a quantum leap in the number of grant recipients since 2002, when children in the care of relatives were able to receive the grant. In a short time span, FCG coverage increased twelve-fold, even though this has also placed strain on an overstretched child welfare and court system due to the fact that the award of the grant requires two-yearly social worker reports and court orders.

Siphokazi is stuck in a cycle like this. He stopped going to school at the age of 8. It was too far to travel, and he was always hungry. He now works on a local farm, getting paid a low wage to perform manual labour. He started smoking at age 12, and drinking a year after that. There can be no solution to his problems without ongoing changes at a policy and structural level in South Africa.



Faniswe explains: "I never used to have nice school uniforms. The other children used to make fun of me because we were poor, and I would wear the same shirt every day. But now my daddy gets the grant, and they don't laugh at me at school anymore."

Still, there continues to be a need to keep on improving the social assistance system. There is substantial coverage of eligible children, but exclusion from the grant remains stubbornly high among infants. When originally designed, the child grants (especially the CSG) were meant to be part of a package of social policy interventions targeting the most vulnerable households. This integration has not always taken place as intended, and has resulted in missed opportunities in some cases. There are also indications that the CSG may be reaching its limit in its capacity to further impact on key child outcomes. This calls for the need to explore how to forge better linkages among government interventions, particularly in a context where there is deep, structural unemployment, particularly among youth, which makes it difficult for families to devise a sustained pathway out of poverty.

UNICEF plays an instrumental and valuable role in informing advocacy, policy as well as programme

"UNICEF has contributed to a report on Poverty Traps and Social Exclusion among Children, in collaboration with the South African Human Rights Commission."



design and implementation to further reduce child poverty and exclusion. A study is underway to gauge the extent to which outreach programmes have succeeded in reducing exclusion from the child grants by removing existing barriers to accessing them. The aim is to help introduce the necessary revisions to ensure that all eligible children are reached by the grants to which they are entitled.

Over the course of 2014 and 2015, UNICEF has contributed to a report on Poverty Traps and Social Exclusion among Children, in collaboration with the South African Human Rights Commission. This work has brought new light to the plight of vulnerable groups of children, such as those with disabilities.

Another significant achievement was the *African Union Expert Consultation on Children and Social Protection Systems*, held in Cape Town in April 2014. This was an initiative of the South African government, supported by UNICEF (in close collaboration with the Regional Offices for Eastern and Southern Africa, and for West and Central Africa). The meeting culminated in a document that was later endorsed at the 4th African Union Conference of Ministers of Social Development and the AU Summit of Heads of State that took place in July 2014.

In addition, UNICEF assisted in the preparation of the Combined 2nd, 3rd and 4th Country Report

and a number of child-focused reports on various themes (equity, child survival, early childhood development) by the Children's Institute at the University of Cape Town.

UNICEF organized a three-day training for the Department of Social Development (DSD) and the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA). The training focused on the use of tax-benefit microsimulation modelling tools to assess the impact of policy reforms on household and child poverty as well as on public revenues and expenditures.

"In addition, UNICEF assisted in the preparation of the Combined 2nd, 3rd and 4th Country Report and a number of child-focused reports on various themes (equity, child survival, early childhood development) by the Children's Institute at the University of Cape Town."

A policy roundtable was held with the DSD, the South African Human Rights Commission and the Human Sciences Research Council, where five policy briefs were presented and discussed to identify measures to tackle chronic poverty affecting one in four of South Africa's children. Analysis on the private economic and financial costs of disability to households generated fresh evidence on how to promote the social inclusion of the most disadvantaged groups of children in South Africa.

The 5th International Conference on Child Indicators took place in Cape Town in September 2015, under the theme: *"From Welfare to Well-being: Child indicators in research, policy and*

practice" and UNICEF was one of the conference partners.

The UNICEF South Africa Country Office also supported the development of the Botswana, Namibia, Lesotho, South Africa, Swaziland (BNLSS) sub-regional Joint Programming Framework and technical meetings on the Joint Programmes.

Worth highlighting, too, is our work around budgets and public expenditure analysis. UNICEF sits on the steering committee of a project led by the National Treasury, which seeks to address the impending financing crisis in the social welfare sector. The longer term goal is to help develop an efficient and sustainable financing and service delivery model for the sector, now largely dependent on non-profit organisations for the provision of welfare services on behalf of the government.

UNICEF has a partnership with the Human Sciences Research Council called the Policy Action Network for Children (PAN) which is a knowledge hub on child rights, targeting policy-makers, parliamentarians and child rights advocates. It is a partnership that saw growth and development in 2014 and 2015.

Finally, UNICEF partnered with the South African Monitoring and Evaluation Association (SAMEA) to build capacity of over 60 participants on results-based-programming.

As we move forward, UNICEF will continue to support the development of knowledge monitoring systems and products on child poverty and inequality reduction in South Africa. We continue to support the inclusion of destitute children who are outside the social safety net, and the development of options for the expansion and consolidation of the social assistance system.



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