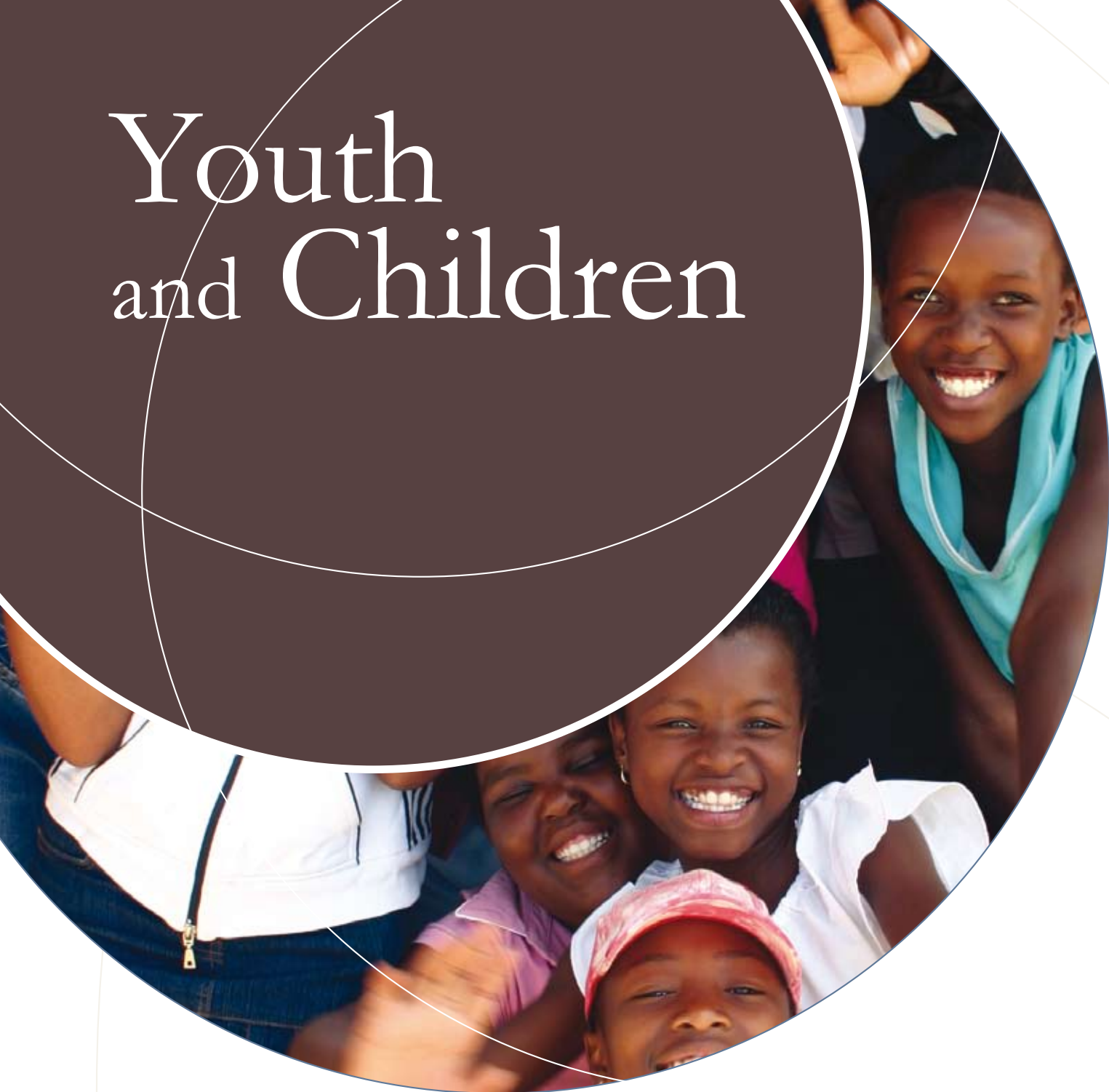


Youth and Children



We acknowledge the importance of
youth and children

Early childhood

HSRC studies on early childhood focus on data that demonstrates the importance of early childhood to individual and national development. We work tirelessly on developing and testing measures and interventions that contribute to the improvement of policy and programmes for early child development (ECD).

Our initiatives have resulted in:

- Identifying ways of overcoming obstacles to scale up the quality of ECD services to small children;
- Participating in a long-term study project (Birth to 20) to understand how the environment influences child and adolescent health and development; and
- Providing a set of recommendations on how childcare forums can better assist orphaned and vulnerable children.

Scaling up the quality of ECD services to small children

Social development programmes offer the biggest opportunity to simultaneously create jobs and career paths for semi-skilled workers and to meet social delivery objectives. Over two-thirds of children in the 0-4 years age group live in poverty and are exposed to conditions which compromise their development.

The biggest service delivery gap, and therefore the main potential for job creation, lies in ECD (0-4 years of age) delivery. Estimates show that approximately 350 000 net new jobs could be created through this programme, which is

approximately 7% of the jobs needed to halve unemployment in South Africa.

Phase 1 of the HSRC programme analysed the state of ECD (children 0-4 years of age) so as to identify lessons learnt and challenges to be addressed to support scaling up. This phase has been completed.

Phase 2 focused on identifying and testing innovations in the approach to implementation that can enable a more rapid scaling up of quality services that improve child development.

In 2008/9, this project worked with the director-generals' Social Cluster aimed at scoping baseline information available on ECD for children under five. The research covers quality indicators, programme governance, budgeting, institutional delivery models and international case studies. The work is funded by the HSRC, the WK Kellogg Foundation and the Department of Education.

In another study, the HSRC is estimating the cost of different models of centre-based ECD. Some of the findings have already been presented at a workshop for key stakeholders.

The work offers key insights into associated costs, how ECD centres raise funding, and the conditions under which they operate. It also offers a financial model to be used for public



budgeting and for centre budgeting. This ongoing study is funded by the Second Economy Project at TIPS/ComMark.

Centre for Poverty, Employment and Growth

Birth to Twenty

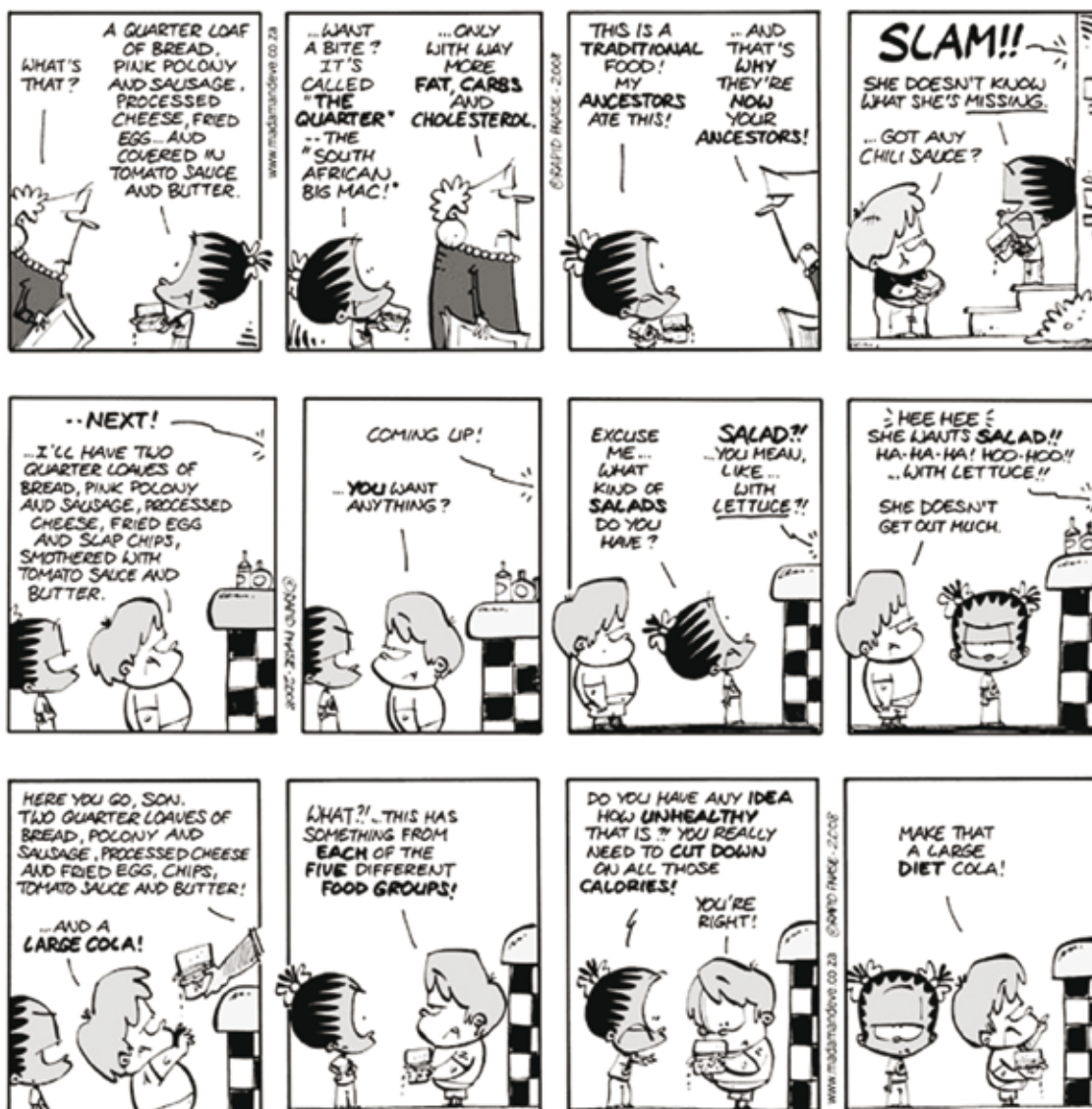
The Birth to Twenty (Bt20) study began in early 1990 when women in their third trimester of pregnancy in Soweto and Johannesburg were recruited into a long-term birth cohort study of children's health and wellbeing.

More than 2 300 families (74% of the original cohort) have been tracked for almost 19 years

and interviewed twice a year, every year, for the last five years.

A widely publicised set of findings regarding fast-food consumption among 17-year-olds is among the latest findings.

In a Bt20 sub-sample of 655 young people, it was found that most boys and girls ate fast foods several times a week. The most popular food is an *ikota*, followed by fried chips and *vetkoek*. A typical *ikota* consists of a quarter loaf of white bread, chips, a slice of cheese, Russian or Vienna sausages, polony, fried egg and sauces. *Ikota*, containing high amounts of fat, protein, carbohydrate and salt, contributes about 5 185 kJ



Madam & Eve, The Star, 20, 21 and 22 October, aptly illustrates the findings of the Birth to Twenty study

of the average 10 000kJ estimated daily energy requirement of a 17-year-old.

Starting five years ago, the programme began to enrol the children of Bt20 children, when the first Bt20 participant gave birth to her baby at the age of 14 years. Called 3G (the third generation), this new cohort of children is being enrolled into an intensive study of early growth as a determinant of adult health and wellbeing.

Child, Youth, Family and Social Development (CYFSD) programme

Long-term consequences of poor health in early childhood

The Consortium on Health Orientated Research in Transitioning Societies (COHORTS) is a joint project to pool the data from the five largest birth cohort studies in low- and middle-income countries. The studies are based in Pelotas in Brazil, Guatemala, Cebu in the Philippines, New Delhi in India and our local Birth to 20 study.

A paper from the group, outlining the long-term consequences of poor growth in the first two years of childhood as a determinant of adult wellbeing and human capital development, was published in the leading medical journal *The Lancet's* special issue on Maternal and Child Under-nutrition.

Among others, the findings suggest that the effect of under nutrition spans at least three generations as suggested by the small but significant association between grandmothers' height and birth weight of children born to women from the five cohorts.

Birth to Twenty and COHORTS is funded principally by the Wellcome Trust.

Child, Youth, Family and Social Development programme

A national audit of childcare forums

In 2008, the HSRC and EduAction were commissioned and funded by the National Department of Social Development and the United Nations Children's Fund to conduct a national audit of childcare forums (CCFs).

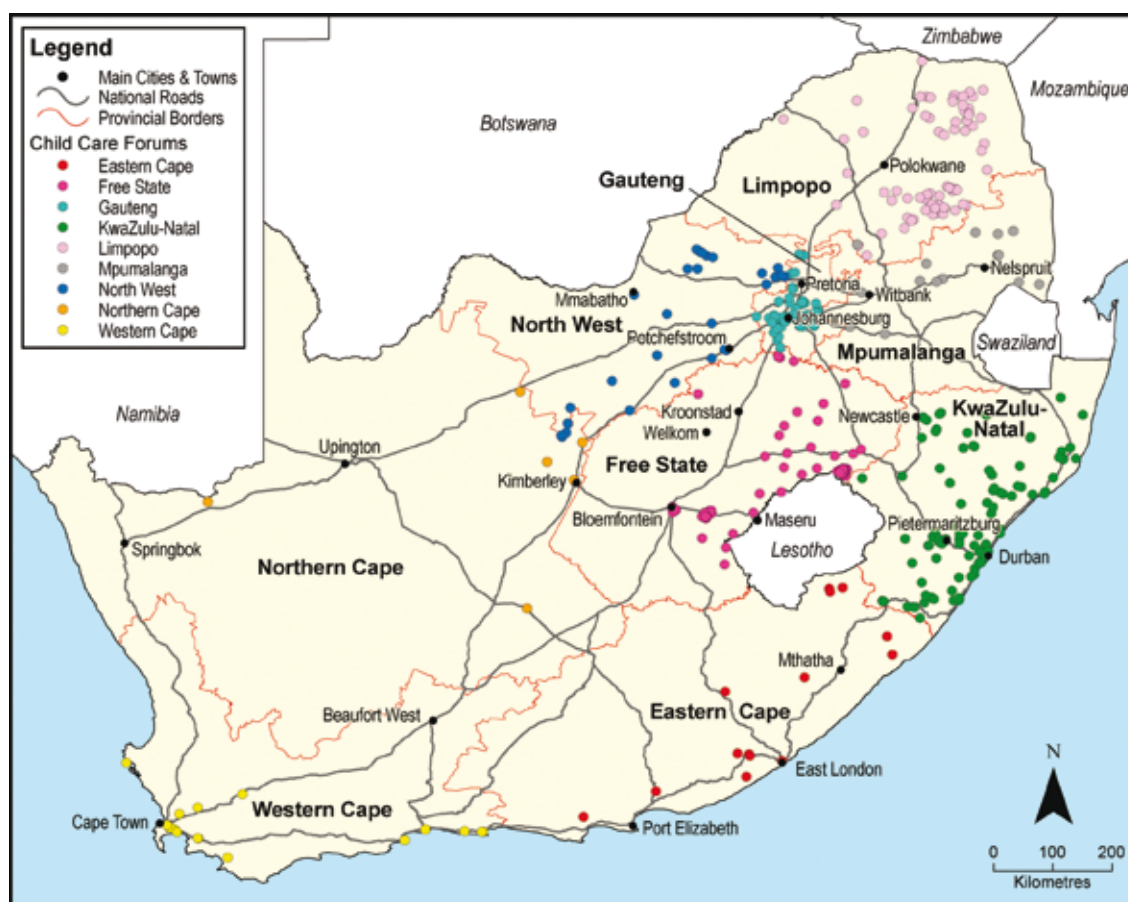
The audit aimed to provide a comprehensive picture of these community-based structures facilitating access of vulnerable children to services in the community.

The audit involved the geographical location and distribution of CCFs, the range and reach of their services, the categories of children they provided services to, their human resource capacity and constraints, service providers they worked closely with, and the problems they encountered. The information was to broadly inform the strengthening and scaling up of community-based responses.

A total of 400 CCFs were visited and mapped across the country, the majority of which were found to be located in the provinces of KwaZulu-Natal (99), Limpopo (76), Free State (75) and Gauteng (63). Figure 3 shows that CCFs were more evenly distributed in KwaZulu-Natal than in other provinces, where they tended to be clustered in certain areas.

The audit and the database of CCFs will provide relevant role players with baseline and comprehensive information on community-based groups and organisations that are identifying and assisting orphaned and vulnerable children across South Africa. It can be used to target provinces and areas where CCF activity was found to be low, for instance, in the Eastern Cape, Mpumalanga, Northern Cape, North West and Western Cape.

Figure 3: Geographical location and distribution of CCFs in South Africa



According to the study, CCFs facilitate and provide much needed services (see Table 4), particularly where the more formal services are lacking. Services facilitated and provided by CCFs shed light on the challenges that communities face such as poverty, AIDS and poor access to services.

Table 4: Services facilitated and provided by CCFs

Services facilitated	N	%	Services provided	N	%
Grant access	356	89,0	Home visits	379	94,8
Service access	323	80,8	Feeding scheme	315	78,8
Treatment access	246	61,5	Education support	285	71,3
Psychosocial support	137	34,2	Sports and physical activities	208	52,0
Fostering	122	30,5	Psychosocial support	179	44,8
Feeding scheme	113	28,3	Home-based care	177	44,2
Child protection	100	25,0	Trauma counselling	137	34,2
Religious orientation	80	20,0	Child protection	125	31,2

The majority (95,1%) of child beneficiaries visited indicated they were happy with the services they were receiving from CCFs, and they seemed to have used CCFs as safe spaces to hang out.

The total number of child beneficiaries reached by the 400 CCFs (189 191) seemed small when

seen in countrywide context where children in many communities are highly affected by the co-occurring crises of the AIDS epidemic and poverty. It seems that the level of community-based services needs to be scaled-up intensively.

Child, Youth, Family and Social Development programme

Focus on the youth

Research on youth development provides the evidence-base for an integrated and coherent response to the needs of the young through policies and programmes. Studies are conducted on the resources and assets of youth, including their demographic presence, capacity to cope with rapid change, their openness to the future, as well as the challenges facing them. These include quality work-oriented education, employment, civic participation, and health and well-being.

Our initiatives have resulted in:

- Compiling a policy framework on prevention, early intervention, protection and reintegration of children living and working on the streets; and
- Assessing how peer-led programmes for orphaned and vulnerable children can fill the gap between adult support and formal educational interventions.



Children living and working on the streets

Commissioned by the Department of Social Development's sub-directorate for street children, the HSRC conducted a desktop review and compiled a draft policy framework for children living and working on the streets.

The purpose of the policy framework is to provide different stakeholders at national, provincial, and local levels with a guideline to develop their own policies for the management of children living and working on the streets.

We reviewed existing policies, laws, regulations, programmes and activities related to the protection, empowerment, and care of children

at risk for the violation of their rights.

The final policy framework recommends key strategies on prevention, early intervention, protection and reintegration. Each strategy sets out a broad range of recommended actions to guide and assist stakeholders in formulating and implementing responses to children living and working on the streets. The framework is based on the development approach of the rights-based framework of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.



Mechanisms for coordinating, implementing, monitoring and evaluating the key recommendations of the policy framework are outlined, as well as a discussion of necessary resource commitments.

Child, Youth, Family and Social Development programme

Peer-led groups for orphaned and vulnerable children in South Africa

Working with the Harvard School of Public Health, the overall purpose of this study was to assess the feasibility and impact of a peer-led socioeducational support group for poverty-stricken orphaned and vulnerable children in the 10-13 year-old group.

A peer approach attempts to rethink how psychosocial supports might be made available to

these children in the growing absence of parents and primary caregivers. The primary impact of the programme on children in this situation was measured, as well as the impact it had on peer educators between 15 and 19 years old, and on implementing organisations.

The HSRC study found that while peer education seems to be an appropriate health promoting strategy when working with orphaned and vulnerable children, peer educators face practical obstacles (such as school work and transport) and struggle to implement interactive materials conducive to social learning. If these areas can be attended to, peer-led programmes such as the one evaluated in this study, can go a long way towards filling the gap between adult support and formal educational interventions.

Child, Youth, Family and Social Development programme