How Are South Africa's Children?

South Africa has ratified the United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child. You therefore have the legal right to demand respect for your rights. Which rights in your life are not respected - at home, in school or in your community? What can you do to change this and what assistance do you need to have this changed? Talk to your Life Skills teacher.

**Survive and Grow**

You have the right to life. Every country that has ratified the United Nations’ Convention on the Rights of the Child must do all it can to allow children to survive and develop. In South Africa we have 19.4 million children; this is 35% of the entire population of South Africa. About 12 million children still live in poverty. This is more than half of all children in South Africa.

**Health and Medical Care**

You have the right to clean water, adequate sanitation and medical care. In a few of our provinces, the governments have managed to deliver safe water to 85% of their child populations. However, more than 7 million children still rely on distant or unsafe water sources in South Africa’s rural provinces. 7 out of 10 children have access to adequate toilet facilities, while 6.8 million children are still using inadequate facilities. Around 320 000 children (aged 0-15) are HIV positive.

Africa work to earn a living or to support their families. At least 247 000 of these children perform work that are dangerous and illegal. More than 8 out of 10 children go to school, although the dropout rates are high, as they get older.

**A Home, Clothing, Food and Security**

More than 10 million children receive the government’s child support grant of R270 per month, while an estimated 1.4 million eligible children still has no access to their grant, because they do not know that they have this right or are not able to request the grant because they do not have birth certificates. More than 95,000 children in South Africa live in child headed households in our country, without adults to care for them. More than 2 million children live in backyards or shacks and thousands live on the street. Circa 4.3 million are orphans because their parents died of Aids-related illnesses.

**Protection Against Violence**

A teacher, a child or another learner at school may not beat children. Children suffer violence in their schools, on their way home, within their communities and frequently within their own families. It is your right to be protected from violence, and important that we all help each other to find help and stop violence and abuse.

**Child Labour**

You have the right to be protected from economic exploitation and work that prevents you from going to school and/or is harmful to your wellbeing. Over 2.6 million children between 5-14 in South

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Sources: The Child Institute, UCT & Unicef 2018.