

# 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.



## **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. Before 1994, this grant did not exist. 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 150,000 children live in child headed households. We have 4.3 million 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

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. 83% of school-going age children attend schools, although the dropout rates are high, as they get older.



## **REFUGEE CHILDREN**

Refugee children from Mozambique, Zimbabwe and other African countries come to seek asylum from war and other forms of discrimination. The law states that these children have the same rights as any other child in South Africa. They may not be discriminated against or refused an education.



## **CRIME AND PUNISHMENT**

The Child Act that came into effect in 2010 states that children who have committed crimes should be given care and help. Imprisonment may only be the last resort and for the shortest time possible. South Africa constitutes the 4th largest imprisonment rate in the world and the second largest in Africa.



## **STREET CHILDREN**

You have the right to live in a safe environment, to school and medical care. Globally, there are around 100 million children who live on the streets. There are thousands of street children in South Africa, but it is difficult to state the number of homeless children as it grows every day. Many are orphaned as their parents' die of Aids and other causes. They take to the streets and live a life of abuse, crime and poverty. More than 2 million children live in backyards or shacks and 122 000 children live in child headed households.

