



News-bytes on Children's Rights

Children's Rights Centre July 2008

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Universal Action Now! A unique opportunity to be part of the World AIDS Conference 2008 Mexico City August 3-8

"HUBS" have been set up all around the world where people can be part of the World AIDS conference through satellite links. One of these is in Durban, linked with the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

For information on all the Hub sessions see the website:

<http://www.aids2008.org/OfficialHub>.

The programme of the Durban Hub will consist of live broadcasts of the plenary sessions and the regional session on Sub-Saharan Africa, interactive sessions and pre-recorded thematic sessions. It will run on a daily basis from 4 - 9 August 2008 at the UKZN Medical school's Steve Biko lecture theatre. This venue can accommodate 200 participants and those who wish to attend must register on line at the above website. This Hub will feature around 30 sessions of the conference, some of them followed by a discussion moderated by some of the highest-level players in South Africa. In the Susser Stein lecture theatre near by there will be more sessions in a cinema style, running on a continuous basis. This venue has a capacity for 100 and admissions will be 'first-come, first-served'.

The 2008 International AIDS Conference

UNIVERSAL ACTION NOW! this conference is being held in Mexico City from the 3rd to the 8th of August. Sessions seek to share key research findings, lessons learned, gaps in knowledge and best practices as well as promoting dialogue and engaging with and linking people in an ongoing way, rather than focusing exclusively on five days of meetings. In addition to conference sessions, AIDS 2008 features satellite meetings, exhibitions, and skills building workshops, as well as a number of programme activities, such as the Global Village, and Cultural and Youth Programmes, which are integral to delegates' experience.

The Pre-Conference Symposium:

Children and HIV/AIDS: Action Now, Action How - is a two-day symposium with an urgent call to collective action on behalf of children affected by AIDS. It will bring together 450 of the world's leading professionals working with children affected by HIV/AIDS

There will be two sessions on children which will be presented on Tuesday 5th of August at 9:00 am. They will take place in the Susser Stein room and not in the Steve Biko auditorium. The topics of those two sessions are:

HIV and Children: key issues and challenges

Clinical issues in HIV infected children and those exposed to ARV in utero

Please refer to the registration website <http://www.aids2008.org/OfficialHub> for the complete programme guide. While there is no registration fee, participants will have to pay a small fee for a certificate of attendance (if required).

Mexico City Youth Partnerships Initiative!

Throughout the upcoming 2008 International AIDS Conference, the World AIDS Campaign and the Mexico Youth Force, will implement the Mexico City Youth Partnership Initiative (YPI). The YPI will pair youth leaders with established leaders of a wide-range of constituencies, in order to promote mutual understanding, facilitate networking, and enable a transfer of knowledge and skills between participants.

CHILDREN'S ACTS—Regulations – call for submissions

Poverty

"We only have R160 from the government, no other help. The child is an orphan and is sick, nobody helps. I stay at home, I'm tired. . . It's very difficult, I'm old. He doesn't like the food we eat like porridge but there is no money to buy other food . . . the right food for him.

" (Grandmother about child living with HIV quoted in *Voices & Visions: Rights & Realities CRC photo-documentary*)
Note that the grant has been increased since this interview

Places of Care

"Places of Safety are like parts of my life. I would go and stay there for two months, go back home. Things weren't right and then I'd have to go back again, that's how I grew up since I was little

(Marlene aged 15 quoted in *Voices & Visions: Rights & Realities CRC photo-documentary*)

The Department of Social Development has called for written comment on the draft regulations for the Children's Act and Children's Amendment Act.

Written comment is due by the 11th August. The document can be obtained from the government website,

www.info.gov.za/view/DownloadFileAction?id=83952 or from the Children's Rights Centre

info@crc-sa.co.za

Provincial Ministers of Social Development now have an obligation to provide and fund a comprehensive range of prevention and early intervention programmes for children and families. They should make sure there are programmes that empower parents to use positive discipline (i.e. non-violent discipline); that there are support groups for parents of disabled children; diversion programmes for children in trouble with the law; counselling for children and families who have suffered trauma or grief); home-based care and material support for families affected by HIV/AIDS and other chronic illnesses. They are also obliged to provide programmes that help children and families to access other government services (such as health care, social grants, school fee exemptions, water and sanitation, electricity).

CHECKING BUDGET ALLOCATIONS TO MONITOR IMPLEMENTATION

The Children's Institute, University of Cape Town, has published a document on the budget allocations by National and Provincial Government, with reference to implementing the Children's Act and Amendment Act.

What is very noticeable is that the state still relies on NGOs/NPOs to carry out many of its responsibilities under the Constitution, including

- *partial care facilities (crèches)*
- *early childhood development (ECD) programmes*
- *prevention and early intervention services*
- *drop-in centres*
- *protection services (including a support scheme for child-headed households)*
- *foster care and cluster foster care*
- *adoption*
- *child and youth care centres (children's homes, places of safety, schools of industry, reform schools, secure care facilities, and shelters for street children)*

But the subsidies provided to these NPOs are inadequate and this is particularly noticeable in the poor salaries they have to pay their staff!

[From the Children's Institute website:](#)

Overall, the budget documents suggest that there have been some real efforts to reflect the state's obligations as reflected in the Children's Act.

The efforts do not, however, as yet cover even a fraction of the road that needs to be travelled.

Further efforts will be needed to ensure that additional allocations include the full range of services – some of them requiring mandatory state financing – envisaged in the Act.

In addition, vigilant management and monitoring will be needed to ensure that monies are utilised as planned.

Skweyiya: Progress in providing services to orphans and vulnerable children

The Minister said:

During the last financial year, we managed to reach the following beneficiaries through the programme:

- The number of orphans and vulnerable children who were identified and have received services was 206 889.
- Number of families that benefited from the programme: 356 073.
- Number of food parcels distributed: 155 754.
- Number of child headed households assisted: 34 025.
- Number of children who benefited from cooked meals provided from the various community multi-purpose centres: 102 723.
- Number of school uniforms distributed: 47 607.
- Number of caregivers receiving stipends: 11 059.
- Funded non-governmental, faith-based and community organisations: 750.

Drop in centres

The department has established a number of multi-purpose or drop-in centres. Children from child-headed households are provided with meals here before they go to school and are also given lunch boxes. The caregivers also assist children with homework and life skills training. The intention is to have the centres in every district in the country.

http://www.polity.org.za/article.php?a_id=121050

WHILE WE CONGRATULATE THE MINISTER ON PROGRESS HE DESCRIBES, AND ALSO ON THE INCREASE OF 34% IN SOCIAL ASSISTANCE GRANTS THIS PAST YEAR, HIS FIGURES NEED TO BE SEEN IN CONTEXT:

- The total number of 'maternal orphans' 2006 was 619,000, and that of 'double orphans' (both parents dead) 668,000—that is over 1 million of these vulnerable children—of which only 206,889 received services.
- The number of child-headed households in 2006 was 122,000 and only 34,025 were assisted
- The number of children living in 'income poverty' with a combined household income of less than R1,200 per month in 2006 was 12,342,000.
- We also re-iterate that the 750 NGO/NPO organisations the Minister mentions are INADEQUATELY funded considering that they carry the burden of many state responsibilities

(Figures from *South African Child Gauge 2007/2008* published by the Children's Institute, University of Cape Town)

Good Practice Standards in Children's Participation

1. Safety and protection of children must be ensured.
2. The programme and process must be child-friendly and accommodating of children's needs and capacities.
3. A serious and meaningful child participation process should be practiced, with due weight being given to their opinions.
4. Dignity of children to be upheld, and inclusion and diversity should be practiced
5. Informed participation and consent by children and caregivers/parents
6. Adult partners (facilitators, chaperones) and duty bearers in child participation dialogue need orientation and training on children's rights and on what child participation is and how it could be applied.
7. The process promotes child participation as part of life and in all communities that a child lives in.
8. Ensure that there is follow up and responsiveness to issues raised in child participation processes.

A PAGE FOR CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

CHILDREN should learn about peace!

The child should be fully prepared to live an individual life and be brought up in the spirit of peace, dignity, tolerance, freedom, equality and solidarity.

(From the preamble to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.)

THE RIGHT TO PLAY

ARTICLE 31

The child has a right to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to his or her age, and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts

From the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

You can download other games from the following website of Equitas, the International Human Rights Centre, formerly the Canadian Human Rights Foundation:

<http://www.equitas.org/toolkit/>

CO-OPERATIVE GAMES

WHERE EVERYONE IS A WINNER & NO-ONE LOSES!

CAT AND MOUSE GAME

The children sit in a circle. They pass along a ball (or a rolled-up sock or similar item) that represents the mouse from person to person. The leader then brings into the circle a second item representing the cat. The children must pass along the cat in the same direction as the mouse, until the cat catches up with the mouse! When the cat succeeds in doing so, switch directions and have the cat chase the mouse the opposite way around the circle. If there are enough children in the group, a third item can be added, representing another mouse. The leader can make the game more challenging by having the children switch directions at his or her request.

Reflection:

- Did you like this game? Why or why not? • Is it easy for the cat to catch the mouse? Why? • In your opinion, does this game have a winner and a loser? Why or why not? • What do you have to do to succeed in this game?

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

How to play

The children sit in a circle. One child begins miming a particular action (for example, playing tennis).

His or her neighbour asks: "What are you doing?"

The first child must respond to the question by naming a completely different action from the one he or she is miming (for instance, "I'm eating an apple.")

The child who asked the question must then mime that action until the next child asks what he or she is doing.

This child must then name a different action from the one he or she is miming, and so on.

Reflection

- Did you like this game? Why or why not?
- Is it difficult to mime an action whilst naming another action?
- Do you like it when your friends are interested in what you are doing? Do you like it when they ask about what you are doing?
- What are the activities you enjoy doing? Do your friends like doing the same things?
- Do we all like and dislike the same things? Why or why not?

CONTACT POINTS

How to play

Form several teams with an equal number of children in each team. The counsellor calls out a number. Each team must find a way to touch the ground with their legs, fingers, or any other part of their body so as to create the same number of contact points as the number the counsellor has called out. All teams that succeed in doing so win a point. For instance, if the number selected is 12, a group of 5 children can place their feet on the ground (which makes 10) and two children can each put 1 finger on the ground (which makes 12 contact points).

The counsellor should select numbers that are realistic given the number of children in each team.

The level of difficulty of the game can be increased by choosing very small numbers or by adding constraints: for instance, only one foot per child may touch the ground; only one hand per child, etc.

Reflection

- Did you like this game? Why or why not?
- Is it difficult to work as a team to correctly represent the number asked for? Why?
- Can you describe some strategies or tricks that you used to succeed more easily at this game?
- What are the advantages of working as a group?