



children first.



# UNICEF SOUTH AFRICA

*For Every Child: A Fair Chance, A Better Future*

**A PROPOSAL PREPARED FOR UNICEF NEXT GENERATION**

**MAY 2018**

## Situation Overview



*Among 154 countries surveyed by the World Bank in 2017, South Africa is the most unequal.<sup>1</sup>*

Nokuthula Hung, 27, lives in Everson Village, Amsterdam, South Africa. Because Nokuthula is HIV positive, she was afraid to find out she was pregnant. But by continuing her antiretroviral treatment and breastfeeding her son Knowledge, who is now three months old, Nokuthula hopes that her son will grow up to be HIV free.

From 1948 to 1994, South Africa's apartheid system of legal segregation and institutionalized inequity imposed extreme disadvantages on non-white people. Borrowing principles from the colonial period, South Africa's apartheid was characterized by the rural dispossession and dislocation of the non-white majority. It caused chronic poverty, lack of opportunity and violence that persists today and negatively impacts the lives of millions of South African children.

All children deserve to be happy and healthy, explore their world safely, and reach their full potential. Yet in South Africa, too many children are barred from access to resources that are essential to basic wellbeing due to the country's pervasive income disparity and apartheid's lasting imbalances. **Compared to a child growing up in the richest 20 percent of households, a child in the poorest 20 percent of households is 22 times more likely to experience hunger, 3 times more likely to be malnourished or stunted, 3 times more likely to lack access to basic sanitation, 5 times more likely to be deprived of parental care and up to 9 times more likely to repeat a year in school.**

**Households living below the poverty line, with roughly only \$70 per person per month, are often ill equipped to give young children the best start in life, especially in the first 1,000 days,** when quality healthcare, good nutrition, early stimulation and play-based learning lay the foundation for future success. 63 percent of children from 0 to 6 years live in poor households in South Africa. Too many of these children have HIV or have been exposed to violence or neglect. Early childhood development programs can improve future earnings by almost 25 percent, proof that investing in young children will help close the gap of income disparity in South Africa.

**South African adolescents are also especially vulnerable.** They contend with exposure to HIV, teenage pregnancy, poor quality education and social exclusion. Adolescence is a critical period of emotional, physical, social and educational development. During adolescence, lifelong values, behaviors and skills develop. Yet, many South African teenagers lack access to the attention, protection and guidance they need to thrive. Over one in 10 teenage secondary school students are still in primary school because they entered school late or repeated grades. These setbacks often occur due to disruptions at home, the death of a parent, exposure to violence, crime or HIV.

**From birth through adolescence, children are disproportionately exposed to violence.** One in three of all adolescents in South Africa reported having experienced some form of sexual abuse in their lifetime. Boys and girls are equally vulnerable to sexual abuse. Widespread fear of crime restricts children's physical mobility and social interactions outside their homes. Nearly a quarter of children, disproportionately those from low-income backgrounds, have been exposed to violence within their own families. Every child should feel safe at home, school and in their community.

**Inequitable access to nutrition, health care, safe water, sanitation, good education and safety has lifelong impact.** UNICEF South Africa works to address poverty and concomitant problems at all stages of childhood.

<sup>1</sup> Based on the 2017 surveys by the World Bank, South Africa had the world's highest Gini coefficient, a common measure of income inequality.

## Situation in Numbers

Statistics are from the 2016  
UNICEF South Africa Global  
Goals for Every Child and 2017  
Case for Investment



70% of children live below the national poverty line (about \$70 per person per month)



90% of the country uses a mobile phone



29% of schools have an unimproved pit or no toilet at all



61% of the poorest children have no employed parent

## UNICEF in Action

South Africa is known throughout the world as the thriving business hub of the African continent. Yet **the urgent needs of South Africa's poorest and most marginalized children are often unacknowledged**. UNICEF develops programs to respond holistically to the many needs that impact a South African child's wellbeing throughout his/her life. With smart investments and targeted actions, every child can have a fair chance in life.

### A SOLID START FOR EVERY CHILD

UNICEF works to ensure that every child has a strong start by focusing on access to quality healthcare, prevention of mother to child transmission of HIV, good nutrition, early stimulation, play-based learning and inclusive quality learning in the foundation school years. Hand washing programs are implemented across primary schools to combat preventable deaths caused by communicable diseases. Leveraging South Africa's 90% mobile phone penetration, UNICEF South Africa is developing a *Road to Health* app, which helps mothers and health workers to record and monitor a child's growth, development and care. Such simple interventions can mean a happy, healthy start for South Africa's youngest children.

### ADDRESSING THE RISING NEEDS OF ADOLESCENTS

To ensure adolescence is a time of opportunity, UNICEF strives to prevent HIV, improve HIV testing, provide quality reproductive health services, keep girls in schools, promote skill development, and increase adolescent participation in their communities. These programs leverage unique partnerships at the local, regional and national levels as well as across sectors. Programs like U-Report or Alex FM (more details on these programs to follow) amplify youth voices and give them the tools they need to address the issues that impact them.

### PROTECTING THE MOST MARGINALIZED

By working to prevent violence against children, UNICEF builds resilience in children who have experienced traumatizing life events. UNICEF programs focus on positive parenting, social protection, caregiver support, home visits for vulnerable children, safe spaces and community mobilization. UNICEF administers a Sports for Development initiative that uses physical education to teach key values such as fair play and adherence to rules and coping mechanisms for bullying or violence. UNICEF also supports government-endorsed Safe Parks that give victims of violence, marginalized youth and children at risk a safe place to play. A refuge from abuse or neglect, Safe Parks offer critical services, food, learning and support.

**Children in low-income communities in South Africa are exposed and vulnerable to stresses and shocks that force them to grow up far too fast.** UNICEF's portfolio of programs in South Africa helps improve the lives of many children, but there is much more to do. Stark opportunity gaps between rich and poor, urban and rural and different racial groups perpetuate intergenerational cycles of deprivation. **UNICEF's objective is to improve access to basic needs and opportunities for the most marginalized populations, so every South African child can survive and thrive.**



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# The Way Forward



*"I have gained so many skills... I would be nothing without Isibindi."*

*- Siphokazi Adams, 17*

NextGen Steering Committee members, Carlton DeWoody and Carly Segal join in on a Sports for Development exercise at the Thomas Nhlabathi Secondary School in Imbalenhle Township in Mpumalanga.

UNICEF South Africa's work is closing resource gaps and reversing inequity for **the most marginalized children at every stage of childhood**. To improve the present and the future of over 18 million children living in South Africa, UNICEF South Africa is guided by four core principles:

- **Children deserve a voice and the tools they need to actively participate in addressing issues that affect them.** Children are disproportionately affected by the most pressing economic, social and health issues in South Africa and have no seat at the table when it comes to changing policy. UNICEF invests in empowering youth to make real changes for their communities and provides the resources they need to improve their environment.
- **Children are hardest hit by one of the largest HIV-AIDS epidemics of any country in the world.** In South Africa, nearly 30% of pregnant women and an estimated 235,000 children under the age of 15 are living with HIV. Adolescent girls and young women are especially vulnerable, often contracting HIV during sexual abuse. Only 14% of eligible HIV positive adolescents in South Africa are accessing antiretroviral treatment, compared to the very high antiretroviral intake of their adult counterparts.
- **Building resilient children and creating child-friendly spaces is critical to childhood development, self-sufficiency and wellbeing.** UNICEF works to both prevent and protect children from stresses and shocks that can impact their psychological and physical wellbeing. By working at the community, district and national levels in South Africa, UNICEF helps to implement both programs and policies that safeguard children.
- **Gender equity must be built into every conversation to provide the best results for every child and create durable peace in South Africa.** Gender inequity is a proven impediment to successful development. When girls have a fair chance, everyone benefits. Girls remain the most affected by inequity in South Africa, which includes the lack of access to safe water and sanitation facilities. Almost 30% of schools have inadequate facilities, forcing girls to stay home from school while menstruating.

In November 2017, South African activist Lathitha Beyile, 14, spoke at the UN saying, **"I understand what missing school feels like. I have been a victim of discrimination. You feel powerless, voiceless and deprived of the opportunity to reach your full potential."** Inequality in South Africa robs children like Lathitha of their childhood, forcing them to weather incomparable burdens, and slows critical development that will benefit them and society.

# Program Highlights

UNICEF in South Africa has developed innovative and forward-thinking programs that address the needs of children by leveraging local resources and technologies. These programs aim to build a resilient and equitable generation, giving children in South Africa the support they need from their early days through their adolescent years.

**U-REPORT:** UNICEF South Africa invests in innovation to deliver essential services and information to the hardest-to-reach children and communities more efficiently and cost-effectively. With 90% of the population using mobile phones, even in the lowest income households, South Africa is a prime country to leverage phone technologies towards social good. This year, UNICEF South Africa is piloting U-Report, an innovative, user-centered social monitoring tool for community participation. It is designed to learn from and provide information to young people about the social issues they care about. U-Report amplifies young people's voices through local and national media, using data to inform decision making and conversations with UNICEF partners across every sector. Information is updated in real time and adolescents are a voice for their communities and peers and make actionable change on social issues like violence and psychosocial harm.

**M-HEALTH:** The use of mobile and other technologies for health represents a huge opportunity for strengthening service access and delivery across South Africa and the world. Mobile phone ownership and usage is widespread among all age groups in the country, and internet accessibility is increasing. Working closely with Government and partners, UNICEF has been involved in piloting Health initiatives that leverage mobile phone use and aim to understand and address challenges in access, delivery and uptake of services. Such programs include an app to connect with HIV positive adolescents to ensure they have all of the information they need to thrive or a mobile based system to track infant health for mothers.

**ALEX FM:** The Alex FM program mobilizes adolescent reporters to speak on behalf of their communities and peers about social issues such as violence, crime or HIV over 12 radio stations. Alex FM prepares young people for leadership and inspires action. UNICEF is helping propel the next generation of income earners towards success by working with these young leaders to become public advocates for change and teaching them communication skills and advocacy.

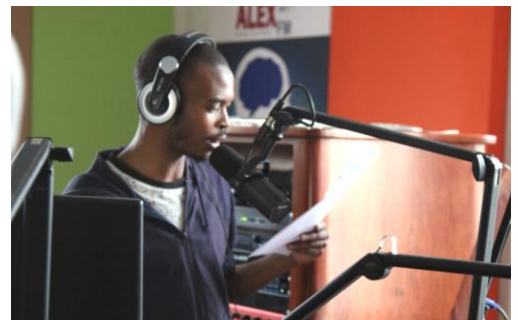
**TECHNOGIRLS:** Every year, thousands of South African schoolgirls are introduced to careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics — the STEM fields — via a job-shadowing and mentoring initiative called TechnoGirl. "TechnoGirl was a mind opener," says student Kgonotso Gumede. Created by UNICEF and partners, the TechnoGirl program places academically gifted high school girls from disadvantaged rural and urban communities in one of more than 200 companies over a three-year period. The TechnoGirl initiative is helping to close gender gaps by combining technical learning and mentorship with life skills education, empowering girls to make informed choices to prevent HIV, teenage pregnancy and gender-based violence.



*NextGen LA Steering Committee member, Carlton DeWoody learning the latest South African dance moves at the UNICEF supported Lekazi Primary School.*



*NextGen Founder, Casey Rotter at a UNICEF supported Early Childhood Education program in Johannesburg.*



*Youth reporter in action at Alex FM in Alexandra, South Africa.*



*NextGener Kendra Simon at the Techno Girls program at Unity Secondary School.*

# The Impact of Your Investment

It is possible to drastically reduce inequities in opportunity among children within a generation. UNICEF is broadening and deepening its work to advance childhood equity in South Africa. By forging new partnerships with the private sector and government, UNICEF will take its work to scale and invest in innovative, results-driven programming. NextGen's generous gift of \$150,000 or more will increase the number of children UNICEF is able to help to positively steer the course of their own lives.

UNICEF South Africa will allocate your support where it is needed most. **Cross-sectoral funding**, or the funding across development or humanitarian sectors, allows UNICEF to develop innovations that consider the holistic needs of children to generate greater results. Your contributions give UNICEF South Africa the ability to fill funding gaps quickly and efficiently, ensuring sustainable results and allowing for longer term planning for their innovations.

With your support, UNICEF will continue to build on lessons learned to improve institutional systems and make sustainable changes in the lives of South African children.

**THANK YOU FOR JOINING US IN PUTTING CHILDREN FIRST!**



*NextGen Steering Committee members, Iliana Alvarenga and Carly Segal with new friends at the UNICEF-supported Early Childhood Development program at Mother's Touch pre-primary school in Johannesburg.*





# The Impact of Your Support

UNICEF South Africa's programs adapt to the country's unique landscape, with over 11 official languages, 90% mobile phone penetration and the highest Gini coefficient measuring inequality of any nation as of 2017. Your support is vital to ensure that UNICEF South Africa can continue to provide a brighter future for children. Below are examples of the impact your gift can make towards meeting the needs of children:

**\$10,000** could fund a 30-minute educational video in all 11 of the country's 11 official languages to **train healthcare workers on post-natal nutrition and breastfeeding.**

**\$15,000** could ensure a year of Pregnancy Tracking (via SMS), a way to **connect 1500 mothers-to-be with support, medication and appointment reminders.**

**\$52,100** could **enable 100 young girls from underresourced families to undertake 3 years of STEM job training.**

**\$75,000** could **support the pilot of a program in three healthcare facilities** that connects adolescents with critical information about HIV treatment with plans to scale nationally.

**\$100,000** could **fund all of U-Report**, giving adolescents a platform to address the social issues that impact them, for 2018.

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**The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)** works in more than 190 countries and territories to put children first. UNICEF has helped save more children's lives than any other humanitarian organization, by providing health care and immunizations, safe water and sanitation, nutrition, education, emergency relief and more. UNICEF USA supports UNICEF's work through fundraising, advocacy and education in the United States. Together, we are working toward the day when no children die from preventable causes and every child has a safe and healthy childhood. For more information, visit [www.unicefusa.org](http://www.unicefusa.org).

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