



A New Kid on the Block: The Children's Institute at UCT

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Children and their rights are central to the fabric of our country. The biggest challenge that faces South African society is ensuring that these rights are upheld and fulfilled.

This challenge is being taken up by the Children's Institute that was established earlier this year at the University of Cape Town. It incorporates the former Child Health Policy Institute that focussed mainly on health policies for children.

Mission

The mission of the Children's Institute is to contribute knowledge and understanding to promotion of policies and interventions which govern improvement of child well-being and address their needs and rights. Special attention is given to children rendered vulnerable by a range of difficult circumstances, such as children orphaned by HIV/AIDS, children living in poverty, and children affected by violence

Primary activities

- ▶ Identifying significant problems confronting Southern African children;
- ▶ Contributing to policy and programme approaches to these problems at national, provincial and local levels;
- ▶ Making the impact of social policies on the well-being of children and their families more visible

Amongst many priority issues for children, the Institute's areas of focus for the first few years are child rights, HIV/AIDS, trauma and violence, social security, and social services for children.

A multi-disciplinary team

The Children's Institute has a dynamic staff with skills and experience from the fields of paediatrics, public health, psychology, social science, law, social development and administration. The Institute team works closely with other Departments and Faculties within the University to ensure meaningful trans-disciplinary emphasis of Institute activities. In addition the team has relationships with policy-makers and practitioners in governmental, non-governmental and community-based organisations, and with other academics, individuals or institutions which share the Institute's mission both in South Africa and internationally.

The Institute is managed by an executive team, which is supported by a University-based management committee led by Professor Francis Wilson. An international advisory board, chaired by Mrs Graca Machel in her capacity as a globally acknowledged children's advocate, guides and supports the work of the Institute.

For further information about the Institute and its activities, contact Professor Marian Jacobs, Director of the Children's Institute. Tel: 021-689 5404; marian@rmh.uct.ac.za