



DRAFT IDP 2005/2006

Submission by the Children's Institute, University of Cape Town
Edited: Kashifa Lagerdien

A FOCUS ON CHILDREN: ENABLING CHILD FRIENDLY POLICIES

Introduction

The principle of “*Children first*” refers to the prioritisation of children through the creation of enabling environments in which children’s civil, political and socio-economic rights are realised. Hence, as duty bearers, it is our responsibility to focus on children in all we do within different levels and spheres of civil society and government. Furthermore, mechanisms are needed to ensure that realisation of children’s Constitutional rights. The Draft Integrated Development Plan (2005/2006) for the City of Cape Town is one such opportunity to ensure that children’s rights are protected, promoted and actualised.

The key premise of this submission is to reinforce the principle of “*Children first*” within the Draft IDP by:

- emphasising the crucial role and responsibility of local government plans and services in contributing to children’s health and well-being
- indicating the value of using child impact assessments
- using child indicators as measures of our achievements
- using child indicators such as IMR in resource allocation formula to appropriately direct our resources (quote the equity gauge project)

Brief background of the Children’s Institute

The Children’s Institute (CI) is a policy research and advocacy institute based at the University of Cape Town. Our mission is to contribute to policies, laws and interventions that promote equity and realise the rights and improve the conditions of all children in South Africa, through research, advocacy, education and technical support. The Child Health Policy Institute was the predecessor to the CI and has a long standing history in the child policy and law reform arena e.g. direct involvement of the National Programme of Action (NPA) for children; to current projects which focus on law reform processes around the Children’s Bill. The core business of the CI is centred on children’s socio-economic rights and evidence based processes to enable this.

Hence we acknowledge that children are a priority for action in South Africa as resonated in the Constitution and National Programme of Action (NPA) for

children. Despite a commitment to child rights and significant progress achieved in the realm of child-focused policies, laws and programmes, much still has to be done to fulfil the promises made to children by both Government and civil society in the last decade. In so doing, we welcome the opportunity to comment on the Draft Integrated Development Plan (IDP) 2005/2006 for the city of Cape Town which according to our Executive Mayor, Nomaindia Mfeketo, “represents not only a plan for the municipality but a plan for the people of Cape Town”. Children are key stakeholders of this plan. It is for this reason, and given the CI’s core business that the focus of this written submission is in light of realising children’s socio-economic rights. Thus the document has been reviewed within in a child rights perspective.

The submission is structured in such a manner that it provides overall commentary on the IDP, specific comments on the five strategic themes and concludes with a set of recommendations.

Key issues

General

The Draft IDP (2005/2006) is commendable in its efforts to alleviate poverty and promote sustainable livelihoods for all people in the city. The five themes are innovative, cross-cutting and draws on lessons learnt from the previous IDP. However there are some alarming findings namely:

- The word children and or youth as an entity *appear fewer than 10 times* in the draft IDP.
- Children’s issues are not necessarily seen within a broad development perspective which cuts across all five themes of the current IDP. Instead, children’s issues are regarded as separate and addressed mostly within a tertiary prevention paradigm.
- The vision describes “a sustainable city that offers a future to our children and their children” which is honourable. However, equally important is to acknowledge children in their own right now. This means investing in children now to enable improved quality of life by acknowledging and addressing their current needs which would impact on their future needs.
- Where children and youth are mentioned, they are labelled as “orphaned” or “street children” bringing within it a set of inherent biases. Notwithstanding the challenges faced by children in especially difficult circumstances, like children living on the street, orphaned, heading households etc. there is no comprehensive approach within the current draft IDP that fosters their development and enables the realisation of children’s socio-economic rights, a Constitutional imperative.
- The draft IDP’s financial plan sheds *no* light on how to monitor, track and evaluate spending for the enablement of children’s socio-economic rights. It is extremely difficult at this stage to ascertain what will be spent in terms of service delivery for children.
- The IMR (Infant Mortality Rate) as a human development outcome indicator for the City appears as a stand alone, a goal for 2020 (100% improvement) with no link to any strategy or any of the 5 themes. One could argue and assume its relation to health issues but this would limit the overall purpose of achieving the MDG for child survival. The death

of a child cannot only be achieved through health measures alone. It requires a multi-pronged approach a basic premise of the IDP. However, this is not the case in the draft IDP 2005/2006.

- Appendix 2, the sector plans, HIV, AIDS and TB notes that “AIDS is the highest cause of death in women and children” however very little follows through as to child specific initiatives. PMTCT acknowledged however there are a myriad of other initiatives /considerations which need to be operationalised for children. Child centred statistics are necessary to monitor the effective and efficient ARV roll-out and ensure a truly comprehensive HIV/AIDS plan for the city.

Specific

Commentary on Chapter 1: Process overview

Reference has been made to the Municipal Systems Act (2000) and the IDP's compliance in relation to that which is necessary. However, it is imperative that this compliance is extended to include other key national legislation over and above the Constitution which clearly stipulated children's civil, political and socio-economic rights. Furthermore, the South African government has ratified international treaties and conventions such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which is legally binding. Local government too has to ensure that its mandate is carried out within these parameters.

Commentary on Chapter 2: Situational Analysis & Development Challenges

Population growth

Understanding population growth of the city is useful and important. However demographic data needs to be disaggregated to adequately reflect not just trends of an adult population but that of children too, i.e. changes in demographic profiles need to be relative to that of the younger population (in terms of birth rate, death rate, prospects for survival etc.)

Key development challenges

Health conditions addressed are primarily HIV/AIDS and TB which are of paramount importance. However, diseases of poverty can not be ruled out of this equation or its relation to disability. There are numerous diseases of poverty which have been written and researched about in the Western Cape, Cape Flats region for decades due cognisance needs to be given to this. For example the incidence of diarrhoeal disease and prevalence within informal settlements has much to do with adequate nutrition and access to health care as it does with adequate and accessible water and sanitation and housing. So too the links can be made with Acute Respiratory Infection rates and its relation to the need for adequate housing. Childhood disability too needs to be understood in broad access terms not just to health care but services and amenities in general e.g. transport, roads, housing. The spatial planning framework has no link to impact on children's health status, yet the design and creation of accessible, safe spaces would have a direct impact on their health status.

Commentary on Chapter 11: Enabling Institutional Framework

Co-operative governance

The city of Cape Town has identified, Co-operative governance as one of its flagship programmes which is once again commendable as it addresses the importance of inter-governmental co-operation and co-ordination. There is recognition by the City to “work closely with national and provincial partners in a range of important projects”. Children need to be acknowledged as a priority area of local government and nested in the projects, aims, strategies and programmes derived at.

Recommendation:

- Creation of local government plan of action for children of which there are many examples, the city of Johannesburg being one of them.

Commentary on Themes

The next section focuses on the 5 themes of the draft IDP. The first four themes focus on socio-economic development; Integrated Human Settlement, Economic Growth and Job creation, Access and Mobility, Building Strong Communities. The fifth theme is concerned with Equitable and effective service delivery.

1. Integrated human settlements

- Children are members of households too, and their needs must be considered in integrated human settlement planning.
- Statistics on the distribution of children and adults in formal, informal and rural areas suggest that children are less likely to live in informal settlements, but are often brought from rural areas to cities when their parents can provide formal housing in a more “appropriate” environment. Settlement planning should therefore be cognisant of the fact that the formalisation of informal settlements is likely to be accompanied by a significant influx of children, and that this will require scaling up the availability of facilities such as crèches, schools, and clinics, as well as providing suitable open spaces, security and safe transportation systems,

Recommendations

- Create child sensitive statistics which reflect the situation of integrated human settlements and monitor the housing conditions of children.
- Children have a stronger Constitutional right to housing, and their housing situation should be amongst the factors informing the prioritisation of housing development and upgrading projects.
- Ensure that women who are co-beneficiaries are registered on title deeds, to safeguard their property rights and guarantee accommodation for their children
- At present, the Housing Subsidy Scheme excludes single mothers under the age of 21. Alternatives to home-ownership models should be prioritised, so that young mothers can access adequate housing.

- Social Housing initiatives need to cater to the needs of children, for instance by including plans for recreational areas, crèches, etc.
- Conduct child impact assessments, particularly where there large housing development initiatives such as the N2 corridor pilot project.

Why the need for child impact assessments?

The Constitution protects the principle that the best interest of the child must be of *paramount* importance *in any matter* affecting the child – see section 28 (2). This principle originates from international law, but the Constitution adopted a stricter test than that of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Commentators have said that the principle dictates that the interests of children require *active* consideration- hence an independent child impact assessment is mandated whenever an issue may have an effect on the child. Note that because children form more than half of our society there is almost no issue that has no effect on children. The duty to collect and collate child specific data is implicit in the obligation created by the principle because without data an effective impact assessment is not possible. Commentators have also said that this right is strongly linked to the right to equality, which incidentally is one of the corner stones of our democracy.

2. Economic growth and Job creation
 - The youth development initiatives and council learnership programmes are welcomed.
3. Access and Mobility
 - Much effort is underway to improve the transport system in the city and ensure safety of commuters.
 - Children once again do not feature directly in the strategies described, yet there are thousands of children who commute to school on a daily basis using public transport. Child friendly initiatives would almost seem self-evident, though it is not as apparent in this theme.
4. Building strong communities
 - The principle of “investing in human and social capital” is fundamental in building strong communities and healthy environments for children to live and develop. Care should be taken that subsidised housing development does not divide existing communities and reduce social capital.
 - Reference has been made to youth and childhood development strategies, hereby acknowledging its importance. However it would be a pity if such strategies are considered as separate entities which they appear to be at this stage.
 - One can only assume that children would benefit from the targeted social support initiatives described.
 - The location of children as beneficiaries of the initiatives described in 6.6-6.11 is not that easily identifiable, hence extremely difficult to monitor and or evaluate.

- In Chapter 12, 12.4 (Programme 2 ECD), a children’s rights programme has been identified as a component to be monitored within “poor areas”.
 - Firstly, it will be helpful to understand what constitutes such a programme. It is essential that the rights and entitlements of the right holders are clearly identified to ensure the implementation of such rights materialize.
 - Secondly, awareness raising and advocacy of such a nature should surely form the basis of all the themes of the draft IDP 2005/2006 so that people are adequately skilled to understand what working within a child rights perspective means and how then to incorporate such principles within the implementation of programmes and services. As indicated in the point above, likewise the duty bearers must also be clearly identified.
 - Thirdly, where programmes have failed or have not been delivered at all, reports need to indicate reasons for failure, lessons learnt and alternatives provided.

Recommendations

- Develop a comprehensive strategy for the wellbeing and development of the city’s children.
- A strategy that is comprehensive needs to ensure a continuum of services and not only be focused on crisis intervention of children in dire need of care, support and protection through tertiary prevention programmes. The four levels of intervention (i.e. preventative, protective, curative/ rehabilitative and services for special needs) are not merely requirements of the UNCRC but correspond with our Constitution and therefore are binding.

5. Equitable and effective service delivery.

- Children are referred to within a health domain which is important. However more so, causes of many child deaths are related to diseases of poverty e.g. diarrhoea, respiratory infections. Addressing the social determinants of health is essential if we are serious about enhancing child survival prospects and reaching targets for the Millennium Development Goals (reduce IMR and U5MR by two-thirds by the year 2015). Yet, the IMR as an outcome indicator noted in Appendix 2 is not linked to any strategy in Chapter 8 or any other chapter for this matter.

Recommendations

- Develop child centred statistics that would enable to the monitoring and evaluation of equitable and effective service delivery strategies identified.
- Incorporate IMR and U5MR reduction to the 5 draft IDP themes and appropriate strategies.

Conclusion

We welcome the opportunity to engage in such an important endeavour that is intended to alleviate poverty in the city. Follows through with the sentiments of “the development context is such that role of local government is now better placed that at any stage in the post-apartheid era to rise to this challenge” (IDP 2005/6, p 14), but how is local government enabling the realisation of children’s socio-economic rights through their planning and implementation of service delivery. How is the city enabling “a sustainable city that offers a future to our children and their children” through the current IDP 2005/6 under review?

Summary of Recommendations

Children first

- Children should be prioritised from the onset, right up front.

Guiding principles

- To derive at a set of uniform principles which are child centred that should be considered/incorporated when designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluation strategies for the IDP of the city.
- Set of guiding principles to be developed, incorporated throughout the IDP that integrates a child rights perspective. Within each theme identified how are children being catered for, prioritised, how will this realisation be practically implemented and evaluated what are the key outputs and outcomes? Medium term and Long term measurable goals/objectives that would hold duty bearers accountable.
- Creating child friendly policy.
- Determine the feasibility of the strategies of the IDP by undertaking child impact assessments as is the practice internationally e.g. Lambeth Borough of London.
- Strategies, programmes and services targeted for the city’s people should be marked within a child rights framework
- Emphasise the need for appropriate strategies for different age groupings. E.g. within ECD, due consideration to the youngest of children, that is those under two or three, for whom centre-based ECD services may not necessarily appropriate.
- Where possible incorporate child participation as a means of engaging the city’s children in the development and delivery of the IDP (via strategies and services) for the fulfilment of their civil, political and socio-economic rights.

Capacity building

- Creating opportunity to engage with Municipality, town planners, decision makers to undertake child impact assessments.
- Educating councillors, policy-makers on child rights perspective, what to consider when ensuring that services are created for the benefit of children e.g. at sub-council and ward committee level where flagship programmes already exist.

- A primary strategy for an action-oriented rights based approach, is extending this education and awareness to civil society, including helping citizens to understand the complex pattern of duty bearers and how to engage in the dialogue which can remove or resolve barriers to effective service delivery.
- A possibility - An important mechanism for implementing child rights and integrated service delivery is the establishment of multi-skilled teams, with paraprofessionals working under the supervision of more expert team members. This could move us away from an unrealistic reliance on volunteers, to a situation where people with limited skills or competence can be set on a career path accompanied by appropriate remuneration as their competence increases (e.g. family and community motivators etc). The IDP is an excellent vehicle for this.

The Children's Institute welcomes any opportunity to engage with local government around matters pertaining to the Draft IDP 2005/2006 to local at further discussions around our submission and bringing into action the recommendations set here forth.

For more information feel free to contact the author of this submission:

Kashifa Lagerdien

Kashifa@rmh.uct.ac.za

Tel: 685 7441 ext 102

Fax: 685 1496

Due acknowledgement to the contributors (within the Children's Institute) of this submission namely;

Prof. Marian Jacobs – Director, Children's Institute

Dr Maylene Shung-King – Deputy Director, Child Health Programme Manager

Norma Rudolf – Senior Researcher, HIV/AIDS Programme

Mira Dutschke – Researcher, Child Rights Programme

Katherine Hall – Senior Researcher, Child Poverty Programme