

## SHiNE FACT SHEET: CHILDREN NEED ROLE MODELS CHILDREN'S RIGHTS UNIT



### INTRODUCTION

This fact sheet is developed to provide relevant information on issues affecting the situation of children's rights, within the context of cultivating a culture of Social Cohesion in their communities. The SHiNE project recognizes that children need a conducive environment, with positive role models, to have their developmental needs met and to ensure that they thrive. This fact sheet compliments the concept note developed by the Western Cape Provincial Office, in collaboration with the Children's Rights Unit, and is premised on the theme – 'children need role models'.



Social Harmony National Effort



@SAHRCommission

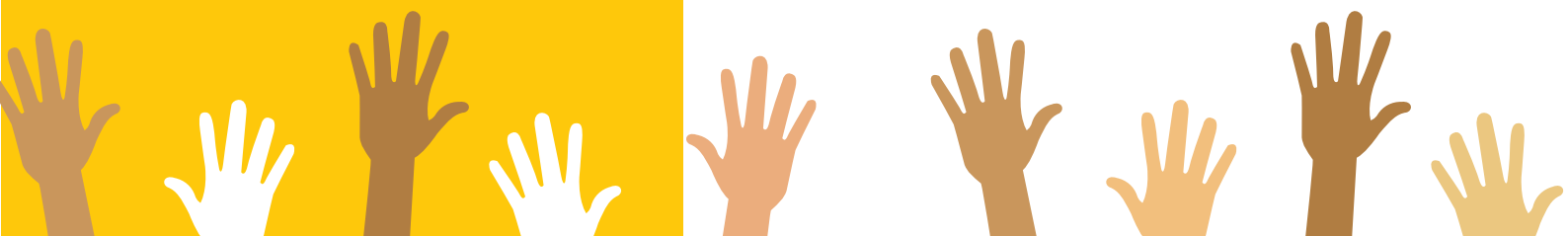


### Role models for children in the community

- ✓ A role model is a person who serves as an example by influencing others. For many children, the most important role models are their parents and caregivers<sup>1</sup>.
- ✓ Positive role models are people in the community that are widely admired. Children and youth may perceive the behaviours of positive role models as aspirational, safe, and acceptable.
- ✓ For many children, the most common and important role models are their parents, educators, community leaders and religious organization leaders (e.g. church leaders).
- ✓ There are Child Government Monitors in the Western Cape, which comprises of children who advocate for children's rights<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families\\_and\\_Youth/Facts\\_for\\_Families/FFF-Guide/Children-and-Role-Models-099.aspx#:~:text=A%20role%20model%20is%20a,or%20when%20making%20difficult%20decisions.](https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/FFF-Guide/Children-and-Role-Models-099.aspx#:~:text=A%20role%20model%20is%20a,or%20when%20making%20difficult%20decisions.)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.westerncape.gov.za/childrens-commissioner/child-government-monitors>





## The situation of communities and environments that children are exposed to

- ✓ It is estimated that approximately 3.4-million children aged 11–24 are not in education, employment, or training. In Cape Town that figure, at last count, was 317 000 (Gangs & Youth, 2023)<sup>3</sup>.
- ✓ According to the latest crime statistics, 319 children were murdered in South Africa between October 2022 and December 2022, and a further 488 survived attempted murder. A further 2,039 children were victims of physical assault.
- ✓ It is reported that a total of 215 children were killed in the Western Cape from January (2020) to March (2023), due to gang violence<sup>4</sup>.
- ✓ A survey conducted by the Canon Collins Educational and Legal Assistance Trust found that about 54% of boys and girls between 11 and 13 years of age in Hanover Park (Western Cape) admitted to having carried a knife or a gun every day<sup>5</sup>.
- ✓ Children growing up in the Cape Flats face injury, disability, orphanhood, imprisonment, and loss of life — their own, their friends and family.
- ✓ The South African Child Gauge indicates that gang warfare and interpersonal violence is the cause of death for 60% of boys aged 15 to 19 in South Africa<sup>6</sup>.
- ✓ Over 40% of young people have experienced some form sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse, or neglect at some point in their lives<sup>7</sup>.
- ✓ Between 1 April and 31 December 2021, more than 4 800 children were victims of abuse or violence in the Western Cape<sup>8</sup>.
- ✓ At least 1 762 children suffered from deliberate neglect, and 1 707 from sexual abuse. A total of 811 reported cases of physical abuse were received, 485 of emotional abuse, and at least 26 were abandoned<sup>9</sup>.

The SAPS Annual Crime statistics for 2019/2020 indicate that 24 000 children were sexually assaulted in South Africa<sup>10</sup>.

Two out of five male learners say they have been raped. One out of five children are victims of sexual abuse in South Africa<sup>11</sup>.



## Available community programmes for children

- ✓ Waves for Change is an organization that provides mental health services, builds social connections, mentoring for children from disadvantaged backgrounds, in coastal communities worldwide<sup>12</sup>.
- ✓ The National Youth Commission (NYC) provides a database of approximately 135 non-profit organizations, faith-based organizations, government sponsored initiatives and community-based initiatives, to assist children with various human rights needs<sup>13</sup>.
- ✓ The Charter Company is an NGO with a mentorship mandate to raise boy children to be good men and address the challenges children face due to absent fathers, in the Western Cape<sup>14</sup>.



## Popular media hashtags for children's rights

Some of the most widely used social media hashtags in support of child rights advocacy include the following:

- ✓ #childrights, #children, #childabuse, #humanrights, #childprotection, #education, #stopchildabuse, #childabuseawareness<sup>15</sup>, #safeguarding, #childabuseawareness.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.saferspaces.org.za/understand/entry/gangs-and-youth-insights-from-cape-town>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.iol.co.za/capeargus/news/215-children-killed-in-western-cape-over-14-month-period-0f13aa09-19c3-465d-955a-17ef9cef2c40>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.saferspaces.org.za/understand/entry/gangs-and-youth-insights-from-cape-town>

<sup>6</sup> <https://mg.co.za/news/2021-01-10-under-the-power-of-the-gun/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.saferspaces.org.za/understand/entry/child-maltreatment-in-south-africa>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.citizen.co.za/news/south-africa/crime/close-to-5000-children-abused-last-year-western-cape/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.citizen.co.za/news/south-africa/crime/close-to-5000-children-abused-last-year-western-cape/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://health-e.org.za/2021/12/09/rape-childhood-sexual-abuse-continues-to-plague-sa/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.iol.co.za/saturday-star/news/where-have-the-children-gone-shocking-statistics-a-concern-for-experts-30092c7b-44a8-406d-ab40-4e18dbf6a876>

<sup>12</sup> <https://waves-for-change.org/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.westerncape.gov.za/service/finding-south-african-youth-organisations>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.thecharactercompany.co.za/what-we-do>

<sup>15</sup> <https://best-hashtags.com/hashtag/childrights/>

## Children as role models

In as much as children need role models and can be positively influenced by them, some children are role models themselves. In June 2019, Eveready (PTY) LTD published a list of six young South Africans doing great things, and that can serve as role models for other young people. These young people are:



### 1 **Michaela Mycroft:**

An ability activist and co-founder of The Chaeli Campaign, a non-profit organization dedicated to assisting disabled children throughout the country.



### 2 **Michelle Nkamankeng:**

A youngest author in South Africa in 2019. Her book is titled *Waiting for the Waves* and it earned her a spot as one of the top ten youngest writers in the world. It was published when she was only seven years old.



### 3 **Xuza:**

A young South African Harvard graduate who, while still at school, developed his own rocket fuel and rocket called *The Phoenix*. Siyabulela is currently working on addressing Africa's need for sustainable energy solutions through his company, Galactic Energy Ventures.



### 4 **Sandile Kubheka:**

The youngest doctor to graduate with a Bachelor of Medicine at the age of 20 by 2019. Dr Kubheka currently works in one of the hospitals in KwaZulu Natal and has interests in rural health.



### 5 **Douglas Hoernle:**

Focusing mostly on business that makes a difference, Douglas Hoernle founded Karri payments and his passion is on improving education globally using mobile technology. Taking the country's data expenses into account, the mobile learning platform designed by Douglas is specifically designed to use minimal data.



### 6 **Ludwick Marishane:**

At the age of 17 Ludwick invented DryBath – the world's first water-less bath. 15ml of Ludwick's DryBath Gel is enough to clean an average adult body. On average his invention saves about 80 litres of water with every use and is estimated to have saved over 8 million litres of water by 2019.