



CHILD, YOUTH AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT

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The Child, Youth and Family Development (CYFD) Research Programme aims to promote social and human development through innovative research on issues that affect young people and family life.

The main focus of the programme is on children, youth and families affected by difficult circumstances, and on interventions to improve the conditions of, and services to, vulnerable groups. While CYFD conducts most of its research in South Africa, the programme is also active in several other countries in the southern and East African region. CYFD has many national and international collaborations, and CYFD staff act as consultants to a number of international organisations, including the World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).

CYFD has a multi-disciplinary team of 15 full-time, and seven part-time university-based senior researchers, working out of Durban, Pretoria and Cape Town. Many of the senior CYFD staff members have minor time and/or honorary appointments at universities. In addition, we employ interns and a large number of research assistants and associates on project work.

Current and recently completed projects

Early child development and the care environment

In collaboration with researchers and students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Professor Linda Richter produced a review on contract to the WHO on the importance of caregiver-child interactions for the survival and health development of young



children (2004) – see http://www.who.int/child-adolescent-health/publications/CHILD_HEALTH/ISBN_92_4_159134_X.htm.

The Director-General of the WHO, Dr LEE Jong-wook, writes in the foreword to this publication, "Our view of the importance of the child's relationship with a primary caregiver has been erroneously limited. In the area of child health, we have tended to focus on the caregiver's role in bringing the child to the attention of health services and in implementing treatment recommendations and follow up... Focusing on the quality of caregiver-child interactions as a critical aspect of the care of young children is a new direction for the World Health Organization, UNICEF, and their international and local partners. We need to marshal adequate organisational and financial support to promote effective caregiver-child interactions as a fundamental condition for ensuring that children survive and thrive. It is our wish that all will draw upon this rich evidence to rethink the meaning of our shared responsibility for the survival of children and a strategic investment in their future." CYFD is continuing to work in a consultative capacity with the Department of Child

and Adolescent Health and Development at WHO to implement recommendations from the review.

CYFD used baseline funding to initiate a series of activities to develop indicators for monitoring child and adolescent rights and well-being, including consultation with key players such as the Office on the Rights of the Child in the Presidency; a review of international literature on indicator domains and child monitoring; and the development of a system for application in South Africa. The project attracted external funding for complementary studies which included a report on the State of Children for the Office of the Premier in Gauteng, the development of psychosocial indicators for 0–9 years for UNICEF, and the development of a child-abuse monitoring system for Childline.

Education policy and learning

Since 1990 when schools were first opened to children of all race groups, researchers and film-makers in Johannesburg, under the direction of Professor Linda Chisholm and colleagues at the University of the Witwatersrand, interviewed a group of children every seven years – in their homes, schools and

Currently, CYFD has eight priority research areas, each intersected by a number of cross-cutting concerns:

Cross-cutting concerns	Priority research areas
Poverty	1. Early child development and the care environment , including nutrition; psychosocial development; health and illness; preschool education
HIV/AIDS	2. Educational policy and learning , including socialisation and learning, language and literacy; schools and neighbourhoods; social identity
Violence and abuse	3. Disability studies , including identity and representation; social exclusion; access to social security; HIV/AIDS
Gender	4. Child rights and protection , including violence and abuse; child labour; children and youth in care; law and justice as it affects children, youth and families
Media and dissemination	5. Youth development, risk and resilience , including civic engagement; work; livelihoods and life skills; subcultures and networks; risk behaviours; prevention and intervention to reduce high-risk conditions and behaviours
	6. Sexuality and reproductive health , including HIV/AIDS; teenage pregnancy and parenthood; sexual violence; gender and relationships
	7. Families and household structures and functions , including family formation and security; dissolution and coping; roles and responsibilities; culture and values; the impact of HIV/AIDS
	8. Child and adolescent mental health , including determinants; prevalence; evaluation of policy and programme options

Table B: CYFD research areas

communities. The most recent video, *7Phezulu*, screened on national television, illustrates that these young people's lives are testimony to the diverse and unequal trajectories that children have followed during the ten years of our new democracy. In 1991 these young people were in segregated primary schools; in 1997, in the documentary *Colouring in our Classrooms*, they were shown in integrated senior schools, struggling with issues of identity, differences and friendships across the colour line. In 2004, their fortunes dramatically diverge: some young people are at university, some still at school; and some already unemployed and hopeless.

In *Changing Class: Education and Social Change in Post-Apartheid South Africa*, edited by Professor Linda Chisholm and published by the HSRC Press in 2004, leading writers in the field of education explore changes in education since 1994. A broad range of topics is explored including school fees, decentralisation, school integration, language policy, teacher education and unions, early childhood education and adult education.

Disability studies

The disability studies group was established in 2003 and began by networking extensively among the disability sector, researchers in other institutions and key users. One of the biggest projects completed during the year was the **development of an evaluation tool** for use by professional and non-professional assessment panels to award disability and care-dependency grants, on commission to the Department of Social Development. The tool extends the definition of disability from impairment to

include functional limitation, and is intended to increase access to social security among rural people in areas with few professional services. A related project for Rehabilitation International is underway, contributing to a global picture of social security provisions for disabled people.

Child rights and protection

Period	Proportion
In the past week	56 (11%)
In the past month	66 (12%)
Longer than a month ago (in past year)	189 (36%)
Never get beaten	220 (41%)
Total	531

Table C: Proportion of parents using beatings

In the first nationally representative study of partner violence to be conducted in South Africa, and the **first national survey on the use of physical punishment of children**, data on these issues was collected as part of the HSRC's South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS). The study ascertained prevalence of partner violence and corporal punishment and explored attitudinal and demographic predictors of these phenomena. Nineteen percent of respondents reported that they had experienced physical assault in their relationships. Women were twice as likely as their male partners to be victims of domestic assault, and younger, poorly educated



women were most at risk for domestic violence. Domestic violence was strongly correlated with low income. More than half of all parents (57%) reported using corporal punishment to discipline their children, with 33% beating their children with a belt or stick. The most common age at which children are smacked or beaten is three to four years of age. Parents who believe in the effectiveness of physical punishment and who are less aware of children's psychological needs, are most likely to use severe corporal punishment.

All southern Africans should be concerned by the appallingly high rates of sexual assault on young children. The problem generates a great deal of emotion, but relatively little balanced academic reflection. In order to gain a deeper understanding of the problem, a group of CYFD researchers pulled together a col-

lection of writings, *Sexual abuse of young children in southern Africa*. The publication includes contributions from a range of key players including legal and policy researchers, child rights activists, clinical practitioners, social anthropologists and child development research specialists. The opening section of the book confronts the reader with the realities of sexual abuse

		Lifetime prevalence	Past year prevalence
Couples		19,2%	12,5%
Perpetrators	Total	16,5%	10,4%
	Male	8,3%	4,8%
	Female	8,2%	5,6%
Victims	Total	14,9%	10%
	Male	5,4%	3,3%
	Female	9,5%	6,7%

Table D: Past year and lifetime prevalence of partner violence (unweighted data)



Chadley Gouws (left) and Nkosinathi Nkosi share their essays on their fathers with the audience at the opening of the Father Project Photographic Exhibition in Pretoria. In the middle is project leader and Executive Director of CYFD, Professor Linda Richter.

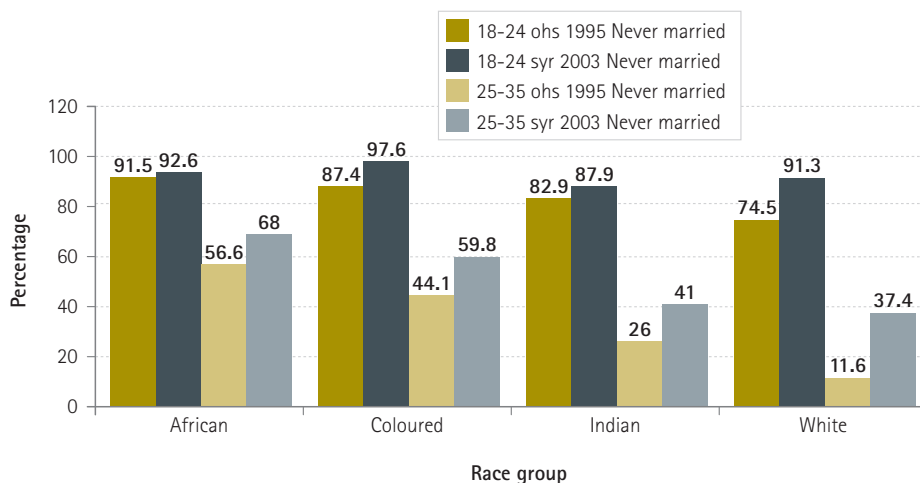


Figure A: Decline in marriage rates among young people over an 8 year period, from 1995 (October Household Survey) to 2003 (HSRC/Umsobomvu Youth Fund Status of the Youth Report)

in pre-pubertal children, and proceeds to a discussion of the way child abuse is represented in the press. The second section presents the main findings concerning the individual, socio-economic and socio-cultural correlates of child sexual abuse. The third section covers legal and policy responses to the problem, while the fourth presents accounts of interventions drawn from South Africa, Mozambique and Zimbabwe.

Youth development, risk and resilience

As part of a baseline study of youth development, CYFD surveyed aspects of civic participation among 1 818 learners in 42 secondary schools in Gauteng. Interest in youth civic engagement has its roots in concern about the marginalisation and social exclusion of youth in the context of high rates of global youth unemployment, escalating crime rates and young people's withdrawal from political and civic participation. While young South Africans voted in large numbers in the first democratic election of 1994, their commitment had dissipated by the next general election in 1999 and only about a quarter of people in the age range 18 to 29 years voted in the local government elections in December 2000.

The results of the survey indicated that altruistic attitudes prevailed amongst youth (nearly three-quarters of the sample felt that people should help one another without expecting payment or reward), and that they had a good sense of community cohesion and support. Nearly 80% of respondents believed there were people they could ask for help when they needed it and 75% felt that there were adults they could talk to about something important. On the down side, young people expressed high rates of mistrust in Government, community

leadership and the police services – 63% said leaders could not be trusted to tell the truth; 43% felt that Government did not really care what one thought; and 66% doubted that the police were fair to everyone.

Sexuality and reproductive health

Over the past year, the social and community dynamics of infant feeding and their impact on prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) of HIV/AIDS have been a key focus in CYFD. Sponsored by the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), these studies in KwaZulu-Natal and Free State provinces have used a unique combination of ethnographic narrative and survey methods to capture the complex and situated nature of **infant feeding practices and decision-making within households**. The results of these studies have informed the Department of Health's national PMTCT programme and they have also served as an empirical basis for the national development of communication strategies for educating communities about safe infant feeding practices in relation to PMTCT. An additional grant from CDC has recently been made to CYFD to conduct a study into the economic implications of the PMTCT programme in KwaZulu-Natal. This project examines the costs of implementing the PMTCT intervention in its current form, and models the cost implications of delivery adaptations. This work in KwaZulu-Natal builds on research conducted earlier in the year in collaboration with SAHA in the Eastern Cape.

Families and household structures and functions

The Department of Social Development contracted CYFD to work closely with it to provide secondary data to **inform the development of a Family Policy**. During the latter part of the year, the



Department, with the assistance of CYFD, presented a draft policy document, supported by a research report, to provinces for discussion. CYFD is also participating, with the Department, in activities related to the once-a-decade United Nations International Year of the Family (IYF). CYFD has positioned the Fatherhood Project as a key focus for the IYF, in collaboration with a wide range of partners and stakeholders in Government, international agencies, the private sector, media and programmes for children. The Fatherhood Project promotes men's care and protection of children in a multi-year programme supported by the Ford Foundation, UNICEF and others.

Future developments

CYFD went into the new year with several large multi-year projects, including Birth to Twenty and a number of other studies on youth risk. In addition, several new projects have been started.

The Family Studies group in CYFD is developing a proposal for a multi-disciplinary study together with colleagues in six African countries (South Africa, Botswana, Uganda, Senegal, Ghana and Morocco), representing four regions of the continent

(Southern, Eastern, Western and Northern Africa), to examine some aspects of governance by looking at the role of certain elite families in the political economies of African states.

Work on the aged has begun with a contract for the Mpumalanga Government to look at the needs of older people. A conference, Ageing in Africa, jointly hosted by the HSRC, the Union for African Population Sciences and the national Department of Social Development is to be held in August 2004.

Gender will be a key focus of research activities in 2004. CYFD already has a number of activities in this field such as the Fatherhood Project, masculinity and identity, and a grant from the Foundation for Human Rights for a study on gender, culture and rights. With the addition of Professor Cheryl Potgieter, gender research will be considerably strengthened and additional staff taken on board to supplement our existing capacity.

Executive Director
Professor Linda Richter
 Tel: +27 31 242 5544
 E-mail: lrlichter@hsrc.ac.za