

Civil Society's role in addressing challenges faced by children during a pandemic



CENTRE FOR
CHILD LAW

FACULTY OF LAW, UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

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UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

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Civil Society in a Democratic South Africa

- Civil society: the wide array of non-governmental and not-for-profit organizations that have a presence in public life, expressing the interests and values of their members or others e.g community NGOs, advocacy groups, litigation organisations etc.
- South Africa is a constitutional democracy in which social movements, social justice activists and civil society have spaces in which to express their voices in respect to systemic challenges, barriers and concerns are expressed.
- Civil society takes on a number of causes that are relevant to the lived experiences of vulnerable groups of people in South Africa including children.
- They work collectively or individually to make use of platforms available to ensure change and make sustainable impacts.



- Civil society actors engage in awareness raising activities, lobbying and engagement of duty bearers, protest action, Parliamentary processes for law reform and the courts for judicial redress.
- This was seen in South Africa during the emergence and continuation of the Covid19 pandemic when civil society actors came to the fore as frontline responders and defenders of human rights.
- The role of civil society actors are more pronounced in a pandemic when the unknown arises and quick responses are required from duty bearers. Civil society in the midst of this ensures that the wellbeing and rights of the vulnerable, including children, are safeguarded.



PROVIDING BASIC NEEDS

- The Covid19 pandemic showed that pandemics of this nature often require emergency responses to prevent rising infections.
- Unfortunately these responses also have the risk of resulting in rising needs, particularly for vulnerable groups such as children, excluded groups and people left without their regular incomes.
- Civil society often plays the role of filling gaps left by the state or private sector. This is often times conducted in cooperation with the state and/or private sector.
- The emergence of the Covid19 pandemic saw civil society stepping forward to provide food, personal protective equipment (PPE) and essential sanitary items and other essential needs.



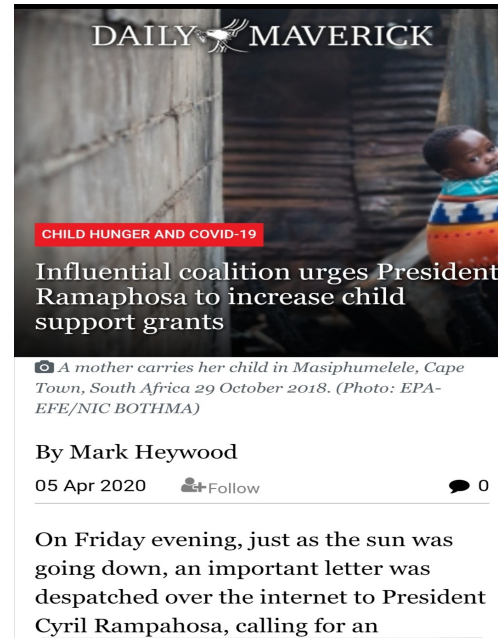
ADVOCACY

- Pandemics – such as the Covid19 pandemic – bring about changes to the world around us and our particular contexts which then result in:
 - shifting priorities
 - repurposing resources
 - accelerating policy development and more
- Civil society players are able to identify gaps in policy and service provision that could have a concerning impact on vulnerable groups such as children.
- Advocacy is used to address these challenges, barriers and gaps.



EXAMPLE

- Advocacy around an increased CSG to cater to children's basic needs during the height of the Covid19 pandemic and beyond



PROVIDING SERVICE REMOTELY

- Civil society actors have also had to increasingly provide ways in which they can provide their services remotely.
- They have had to expand “their provision of online and phone support, doing remotely what they could no longer do in person. These actions pointed to the growing use of online space by civil society to serve needs and deliver services directly.”



Are your rights being **violated** during the lockdown?

ACCESS TO JUSTICE AND SA LOCKDOWN

ACCESS TO JUSTICE CONTINUES!

Have you **observed a rights violation** during the lockdown?

CALL THE LEGAL SUPPORT HOTLINE:

+27 66 076 8845

Please note that this hotline is only for legal matters. We are unfortunately unable to assist with direct social relief.

CALS
Centre for Applied
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 **CENTRE FOR CHILD LAW**

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Advancing Environmental Rights in South Africa

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EELC EQUAL EDUCATION LAW CENTRE

LAWYERS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

LRC
Legal Resources Centre

NDIFUNA UKWAZI
DARE TO KNOW

 **ProBono.Org**

+SECTION27
catalysts for social justice

SERI
www.womensrightsjustice.org

 **WOMEN'S LEGAL CENTRE**

A public interest law organisation may be available to assist you, free of charge.



LITIGATION

- The need to ensure access to justice for the vulnerable is key in ensuring oversight and accountability by duty bearers and securing the rights of those “left behind” during a crisis such as a pandemic.
- Litigation organisations in South Africa play a role in ensuring that the rights and wellbeing of children in South Africa are protected and advanced.
- This is no different during a pandemic as will be seen in examples of litigation in 2020 during the height of the Covid19 pandemic.



PROTECTING THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES IN SPECIAL SCHOOLS

THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION MUST PROVIDE SPECIFIC

HEALTH & SAFETY MEASURES

FOR ALL LEARNERS WITH DISABILITIES

#SafeSpecialSchools

CENTRE FOR CHILD LAW EELC EQUAL EDUCATION LAW CENTRE

An infographic with a teal background. At the top, it says 'THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION MUST PROVIDE SPECIFIC HEALTH & SAFETY MEASURES FOR ALL LEARNERS WITH DISABILITIES'. Below this is a central shield icon with a red 'X' over a gear and a person, held by two hands. To the right is the hashtag '#SafeSpecialSchools'. At the bottom are the logos for 'CENTRE FOR CHILD LAW' and 'EELC EQUAL EDUCATION LAW CENTRE'. The background is decorated with various icons representing different types of disabilities and safety measures.

THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION MUST PROVIDE

COVID-19 GUIDELINES

FOR ALL LEARNERS WITH DISABILITIES

#LeftBehindAgain

CENTRE FOR CHILD LAW EELC EQUAL EDUCATION LAW CENTRE

An infographic with an orange background. At the top, it says 'THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION MUST PROVIDE COVID-19 GUIDELINES FOR ALL LEARNERS WITH DISABILITIES'. Below this is a central shield icon with a red 'X' over a virus, held by two hands. To the right is the hashtag '#LeftBehindAgain'. At the bottom are the logos for 'CENTRE FOR CHILD LAW' and 'EELC EQUAL EDUCATION LAW CENTRE'. The background is decorated with various icons representing different types of disabilities and COVID-19 safety measures.

THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION MUST PROVIDE

ADJUSTED PPE & OTHER MEASURES

TO ENSURE LEARNERS WITH DIFFERENT TYPES OF DISABILITIES ARE PROTECTED WHEN THEY RETURN TO SCHOOL

“Each disability has its own specific challenges and needs... each disability should be treated independently of one another in order to provide specific focus and attention to learners' needs and challenges.”

- CEO of an Organisation for Persons with Disabilities

#ProtectDisabledLearners

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An infographic with a teal background. At the top, it says 'THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION MUST PROVIDE ADJUSTED PPE & OTHER MEASURES TO ENSURE LEARNERS WITH DIFFERENT TYPES OF DISABILITIES ARE PROTECTED WHEN THEY RETURN TO SCHOOL'. Below this is a central shield icon with a red 'X' over a person wearing a mask, held by two hands. To the right is the hashtag '#ProtectDisabledLearners'. At the bottom are the logos for 'CENTRE FOR CHILD LAW' and 'EELC EQUAL EDUCATION LAW CENTRE'. The background is decorated with various icons representing different types of disabilities and PPE measures.

THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION MUST PROVIDE CLEAR PLANS FOR THE PROVISION OF ADDITIONAL

HOSTEL INFRASTRUCTURE

FOR SPECIAL SCHOOLS

“Our learners share beds in the hostel. Now with social distancing we can only take two grades back in the hostel. We have no other accommodation for more learners.”

- Principal of a special school in Limpopo

#SafeSpecialSchools

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An infographic with a teal background. At the top, it says 'THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION MUST PROVIDE CLEAR PLANS FOR THE PROVISION OF ADDITIONAL HOSTEL INFRASTRUCTURE FOR SPECIAL SCHOOLS'. Below this is a central shield icon with a red 'X' over a bed, held by two hands. To the right is the hashtag '#SafeSpecialSchools'. At the bottom are the logos for 'CENTRE FOR CHILD LAW' and 'EELC EQUAL EDUCATION LAW CENTRE'. The background is decorated with various icons representing different types of disabilities and hostel infrastructure.

ENSURING THAT LEARNERS HAVE ACCESS TO THE NATIONAL SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAMME





Thank You

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