

# Taking stock of the INSPIRE framework

How South Africa is using the INSPIRE framework to prevent violence against children



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# Acronyms

CINDI	Children in Distress Network
CWB	Clowns Without Borders
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DSD	Department of Social Development
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
ISS	The Institute for Security Studies
MOOC	Massive Open Online Course
NGOs	Non-governmental organisations
VAC	Violence against children
WCGOV	Western Cape Government
WHO	World Health Organization



# Introduction

On 23 November 2022, the Institute for Security Studies (ISS), Save the Children South Africa, and UNICEF SA co-hosted a workshop to assess how South Africa is implementing the [INSPIRE framework](#) to prevent violence against children (VAC).

Several government departments, researchers and civil society organisations attended the multisectoral workshop. The convening aimed to revive discussion about INSPIRE and to take stock of developments since the introduction of the INSPIRE framework in 2019, which was the basis for the country's report to the Global Partnership to End Violence against Children.

This report outlines the developments in the VAC ecosystem in South Africa and showcases how organisations working to prevent violence against children use the INSPIRE framework. It concludes with recommendations for improving the use of the INSPIRE framework.

The objectives of the workshop were to:

- Remind participants about the 2019 workshop and map out the future of INSPIRE implementation in South Africa
- Take stock of INSPIRE implementation and adaptation journey since 2019
- Reflect on the national strategies to prevent violence against children and women including the Comprehensive National Violence Prevention Strategy
- Reflect on the journey of South Africa as a Pathfinder country



# New developments

ISS became co-chair of the global INSPIRE Working Group in 2021, alongside the World Health Organization (WHO). The two organisations are part of the [INSPIRE Secretariat](#), which includes the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children, the Center for Disease Control (CDC), and the CPC Learning Network

The INSPIRE [Working Group](#) consists of 20 agencies and functions as the voice and decision-making arm of the community of practice while providing strategic guidance in the implementation of INSPIRE-related interventions. The objective of the Working Group is to advance the uptake and scale-up of evidence based prevention and responses to violence against children. The [Community of Practice](#) includes over 400 individual representatives actively implementing or interested in implementing INSPIRE-related programmes from the UN agencies, bilateral agencies, international professional associations, national NGOs/CSOs, grassroots groups, government bodies and philanthropic foundations and academia.

A key focus of the Working Group since the publication of the INSPIRE framework in 2016 has been on producing technical documents and

materials, raising awareness about the technical package, and developing and implementing training materials on how to use it. In this new phase, which saw the global coordination of the INSPIRE working group shifting from the CPC Learning Network to the ISS in June 2022, the Working Group prioritises implementation, cultural adaption, and country-level scale-up. In this role, the ISS has interviewed the Secretariat and Working Group to identify needs, challenges and opportunities to better understand the INSPIRE ecosystem. It found that there was a need to document and learn from countries using INSPIRE and adapting it to their local settings.

The INSPIRE Working Group met in December 2022 in Geneva. This was the first in-person meeting since COVID-19. The ISS facilitated the meeting, and the outcomes and recommendations of this workshop were shared.



# Presentations on the INSPIRE package and Pathfinding

## The INSPIRE package

Save the Children and the ISS made three short presentations to frame the workshop. Jody van der Heyde from the ISS made a brief presentation recapping the [INSPIRE technical package](#). It outlined the seven strategies, including examples of each strategy's evidence-based interventions. Participants were informed about the [INSPIRE Massive Open](#)

[Online Course](#) (MOOC). Released in 2022, the MOOC is designed for anyone working in the VAC field, regardless of skill or experience. It is intended to strengthen knowledge about VAC and its associated risk factors. Each module introduces one of the seven strategies, the evidence supporting it and an outline of approaches to implementation.



## INSPIRE coordination and uptake

A [presentation](#) by Bonface Beti summarised the INSPIRE [Uptake Report](#) which describes how the VAC field has adopted the INSPIRE framework, applied its strategies, and adapted it at the local, national, and regional levels. According to the Uptake report, 67 countries have engaged with the technical package.

Participants learned that an objective of the INSPIRE coordinators is to convene local and country-level learnings (like this workshop), focusing on how countries, in the global south, have adapted, implemented, and scaled up the strategies. By brokering requests to the INSPIRE Working Group, the Secretariat also strives to make technical assistance available to countries.

## Reflecting on South Africa as a Pathfinding country

Steve Miller from Save the Children made the final [presentation](#), reflecting on South Africa as a Pathfinding country. The Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children created the concept of [‘Pathfinding’](#) to raise awareness, stimulate leadership commitment, and galvanise action to prevent VAC around the globe. [South Africa](#) became a Pathfinding country in 2017 when the government made a formal, public commitment to ending VAC.

South Africa’s Pathfinding status was discussed in a reflective conversation after the presentation. While

Pathfinding is an attractive concept, there are many challenges to the current model and South Africa’s role as a Pathfinding country. Currently, no government official has been appointed as a focal point to serve as a bridge between South Africa and the Global Partnership. The late Connie Nxumalo, former Director of the Department of Social Development (DSD), held this position previously. Considering that Pathfinding has lost its momentum in South Africa due to the lack of a focal point or “champion”, it is uncertain if the Department of Social Development will remain the lead department in this regard.

### What does it mean to be a Pathfinding country?

Pathfinding countries are those whose governments have made a request to become a Pathfinder within the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children. The Pathfinding countries have also made a formal, public commitment to end violence against children in their countries.

Pathfinding countries use INSPIRE to understand the drivers of violence and build responses that improve the lives of children. Governments committing to Pathfinding status are expected to take the following steps:

- Appoint a senior government focal point to lead the in-country process.
- Convene and support a multi-stakeholder group.
- Collect, structure, and analyse data on violence against children.
- Develop an evidence-based and costed national strategy plan to end VAC that sets commitments for three to five years.
- Consult with children and adhere to partnership standards on child participation.

### End Violence Partnership Pathfinding countries





# Mapping developments in the South African violence-against-children ecosystem

To understand how South Africa uses INSPIRE, participants mapped changes to the VAC ecosystem since the 2019 workshop, sharing information about national, provincial, and local developments as presented below. The list includes information about and from the organisations represented at the workshop and others working in the ecosystem. This is not an exhaustive list of all developments, and the categories are not mutually exclusive.

## Research-related developments:

- The South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC) conducted an [analysis](#) on child deaths. The results show a decline in the number of deaths due to child abuse and neglect.
- The ISS published an [evidence map](#) and an [evidence review](#) of interventions to prevent violence against women and children; and a [policy brief](#) on how violence against women and children is represented in research.
- [The ISS evaluated](#) four positive parenting programmes and a social mobilisation process in the Western Cape.
- The Children’s Institute annual publication of the [Child Gauge](#) was published.
- The [Centre for Excellence in Human Development](#) at Wits University has analysed the data from the Birth to 30 longitudinal study to understand the links between experiences of violence and adversity in childhood with outcomes later in life.
- [UNICEF](#), in partnership with ECPAT and INTERPOL, conducted research on online child

sexual abuse and exploitation in South Africa, the first country-level study of its kind.

- UNESCO launched [Connect with Respect](#), a curriculum tool to prevent GBV in schools, in 2021.

## Government and policy-related developments:

- The DBE adopted the call to action of ‘[Safe to Learn](#)’, an Global Partnership to End Violence initiative that aims to keep children safe and secure in school.
- The DBE is developing [guidelines](#) for the Socio-educational Inclusion of Diverse Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Expression and Sex Characteristics for South African schools.
- The DSD published the [National Child Care and Protection Policy](#) in 2019, which secures the rights and safety of children.
- The [National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide](#) was published in 2020.
- The second [Presidential Summit Gender-Based Violence and Femicide](#) was held in November 2022.

At the summit, it was announced that the Children's agenda would move to Presidency.

- The Western Cape government appointed a [Children's Commissioner](#) who protects the rights, needs and interests of children in the province. The Commission is independent of the government and reports progress to the provincial parliament.
- The Western Cape government's [Safety Plan](#) is being implemented. This strategic plan aims to reduce violence, including violence against children, by adopting an evidence-based approach.
- The Western Cape government plans to scale up evidence-based family strengthening (parenting programmes) in the Western Cape to reduce family and community violence. The province has published a [research report](#) which mapped and reviewed how parenting programmes are designed, implemented and monitored. It has also engaged researchers and implementing NGOs in a series of workshops to plan for the scale-up of family strengthening programmes in the province.
- Early Childhood Development transitioned from the DSD to DBE in April 2022.
- National Treasury is piloting the mainstreaming of children into the budgets.
- The Deputy Minister of the DBE is leading an internal campaign to increase cooperation and awareness within departments.
- The [National Strategic Plan](#) on HIV, TB and STIs was revised for 2023–2028. It aims to reduce the barriers and improve access to HIV, TB and STI prevention and treatment for all citizens, including children.
- In 2021, DBE published a policy on the [Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy in Schools](#).



- In June 2022, the DSD introduced the [Child Support Grant Top Up](#), which provides an additional R240 support for orphans and caregivers of orphans.
- The Department of Justice has streamlined the Truth and Reconciliation Bursary, which ensures children of apartheid veterans receive financial assistance more efficiently.

#### NGO-related developments:

- The [South African Parenting Programmes Implementors Network](#) (SAPPIN) has been established.
- Save the Children has made a conscious effort to start listening to children's voices. In doing so, they have noticed that children are beginning to speak about violence and how it impacts their lives. Save the Children notes an increase in the reporting of violent incidents.
- CINDI, in partnership with Childline South Africa, published a [study](#) on how gendered norms and constructs of masculinity and femininity shape the sexual abuse and harmful sexual behaviour of boys.
- NGOs have experienced increased collaborations and fruitful partnerships through the [South African National Child Rights Coalition](#).
- CWB have started collaborating with religious leaders and noticed that pastors can encourage parents to attend parenting programmes.
- CWB shifted to digital and hybrid technologies during the COVID-19 pandemic and found that it increased how families could be supported.

It is evident that despite the COVID-19 pandemic and its associated impact, significant progress has been made in the field of VAC prevention in South Africa.



# Sectoral needs, opportunities and reflections on INSPIRE

Participants were asked to reflect on the needs, opportunities, and value of INSPIRE in their work to gain a deeper understanding of its application in South Africa. This activity was conducted in three sectors: government, research and non-governmental organisations.

The questions guiding the process were:

- How are you using INSPIRE?
- What value does INSPIRE bring to your institution?
- What is working?
- What are the opportunities?
- What are the needs?
- What frameworks or guidelines are you using to inform your work to prevent violence against children?

## The government sector:

In the government sector, DBE was the only one to answer the above questions. Briefly, INSPIRE was used in the following ways:

- To inform the strategic direction of three directorates in the department
- INSPIRE indicators were incorporated in a newly developed monitoring and evaluation tool
- The portfolio Committee was briefed on INSPIRE and how it relates to DBE's work
- INSPIRE was presented at inter-provincial meetings

The department did not express their views on needs, opportunities, and what works. But listed the following additional frameworks alongside INSPIRE:

- [National School Safety Framework](#)
- [The Care and Support for Teaching and Learning Programme](#)

- [Protocol for the Management and Reporting of Sexual Abuse and Harassment in Schools](#)
- [The National Child Care and Protection Policy](#)
- Inter-sectoral Protocol on the Protection of Children
- [The Western Cape government Safety Plan](#)

## NGO sector

In the NGO group, INSPIRE is used by various organisations to:

- Inform gender transformative, norm and value change in schools for boys and girls
- Guide the implementation of parenting programmes such as Parenting for Lifelong Health
- Guide income and economic strengthening
- Advocate for VAC
- Enable collaboration between SAPPIN and the Violence Prevention Forum

Using INSPIRE adds value to NGOs because it:

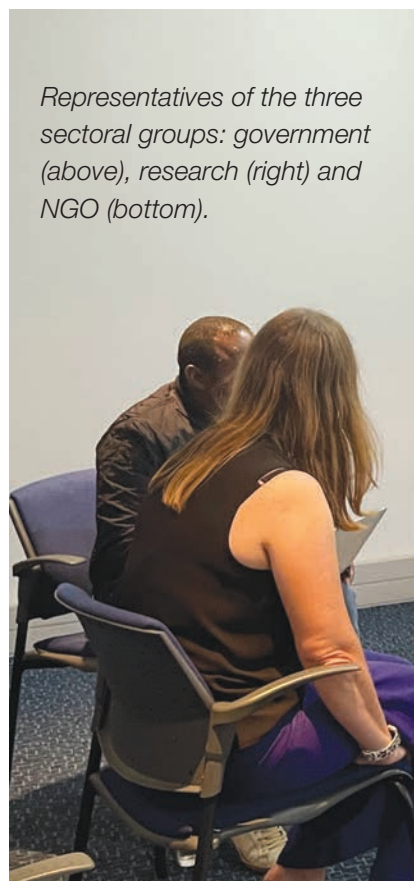
- Enables partner coordination among NGOs
- Encourages and motivates NGO staff to have access to the leading global evidence-based technical package to prevent VAC.
- Using the global evidence-based technical package in their violence prevention work adds legitimacy to organisations.

In terms of what is working for NGOs:

Like the DBE, the NGO group did not express their opinions on the needs and opportunities for using

INSPIRE. Nevertheless, the following frameworks were highlighted in addition to INSPIRE:

- [The National Child Care and Protection Policy](#)
- The [National Strategic Plan on Gender-based Violence and Femicide](#)
- The suite of [Parenting for Lifelong Health](#) programmes



*Representatives of the three sectoral groups: government (above), research (right) and NGO (bottom).*

## Research sector

The research sector used INSPIRE in the following ways:

- To guide the ISS [Evidence Map](#)
- To create a two-way stream of evidence, which involves using INSPIRE in research while also including several studies and evaluations on effective South African VAC interventions in INSPIRE.

Using INSPIRE adds value to research organisations because it:

- elevates the value of child-focused researched
- helps to concretise the intersections between VAC and violence against women.

It was also noted that one of the challenges faced by research organisations is in documenting and recording evidence from practice.

As reflected above, some questions were left unanswered.

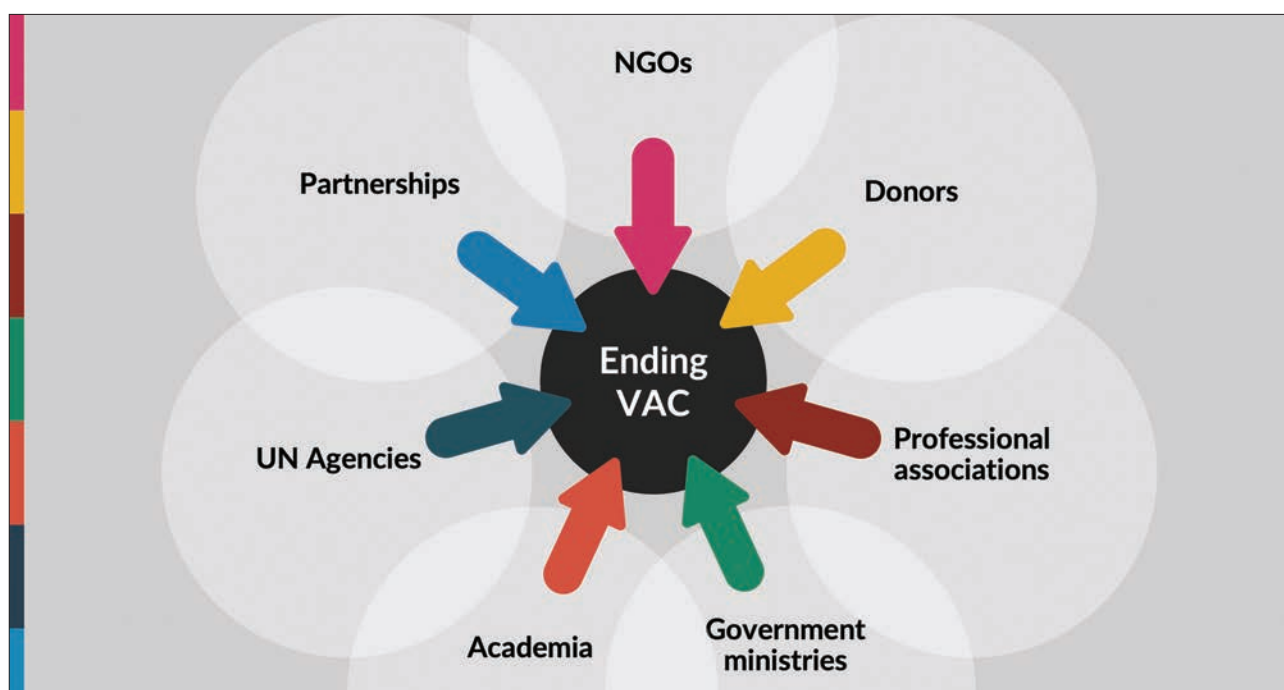
Participants noted that the INSPIRE journey is challenging and requires further exploration.



# Gaps and shortcomings

## Participants identified the following gaps and shortcomings:

- Despite a growing evidence base, knowledge gaps persist in the VAC field. A specific need for more research was identified in the intersections between climate change and VAC; how to better protect migrant children affected by VAC; the reasons for teenage pregnancy; the intersections between VAC and violence against women; and what happens to children whose mothers have been killed. Participants emphasised that conducting research with children presents methodological and ethical challenges, including access, consent, confidentiality, and safeguarding the child.
- Participants agreed that evidence-based interventions must be scaled up, however there is little consensus as to what exactly 'scale-up' means and who is responsible for it. NGOs felt that although they possess programme and implementation expertise, they lack the resources to scale up. A few participants suggested that the government should provide resources to NGOs to scale-up.
- Communication and coordination between government and NGOs are lacking. One participant said that "NGOs and governments don't speak the same language," which creates confusion when they communicate with each other. Another participant commented that the government and non-governmental organisations have different perspectives on parenting programmes and what is needed to make them effective. The gap between government and NGOs is perceived to be increasing because of this lack of understanding.
- Researchers felt that the INSPIRE package does not always speak to them. They felt the package was catered towards governments, NGOs, and programme implementors.
- There was consensus that an absence of a focal point in government to champion the INSPIRE framework on a national level is a challenge that needs to be dealt with as soon as possible.





# Perspectives on updating INSPIRE

The shifts in global context during the Covid-19 pandemic led to calls for INSPIRE to be updated with new evidence and evaluation. As part of the growing knowledge base of what works to prevent violence, the updates would reflect emerging concerns in the field, such as climate change, conflict, and new developments in the technological and digital spaces.

These calls were bolstered by the growing recognition of the intersections between violence against children and violence against women and the appeal to integrate better or align the two fields.

The consensus amongst participants was that a revision of INSPIRE was a good idea and an important task but not urgent. More specifically:

- According to government officials, revising INSPIRE was not a top priority. They said it was more important to identify and select an INSPIRE focal point.
- Government officials acknowledged the need to explore the intersections between climate change and violence against children, although it didn't necessarily warrant a complete framework update.



Instead of a full revision, it might be useful to ask questions such as 'how does the current framework of INSPIRE consider climate change?'

- Researchers pointed out that it was too soon to update INSPIRE and that more time was required to monitor its use in countries.
- Participants expressed that they had only recently begun to fully comprehend the package and that updating it would require a relearning of the framework that would be too time-consuming.
- Participants emphasised that building the capacity of focal points and the need for technical assistance in the implementation and scale-up was more urgent than a revision.
- Participants suggested that broader consultation is required before proceeding with the update.



# Recommendations and conclusion

The meeting ended with the following recommendations:

In general, three clusters of recommendations were:

## 1. What is needed from government to better prevent violence against children:

- The government needs to reappoint an INSPIRE champion or possibly several champions. The champion would support children's issues at all government policy levels. Participants believed the champion could support the uptake of INSPIRE at provincial and local levels.
- Improved coordination between government departments, including DSD, DBE, and National Treasury on children's issues and preventing violence against children is required.
- Better information on effective interventions and programmes in South Africa will help the National Treasury in developing national budgets and better allocating resources to government departments.

## 2. On improving the INSPIRE framework and the role it could play at the country level:

- Expand learning opportunities on INSPIRE like the current workshop that allows multi-sectoral reflection and engagement.
- INSPIRE must be on the [Violence Prevention Forum](#) and SAPPIN's agenda, given their mandate to support violence prevention work in South Africa.
- The INSPIRE MOOC must be adapted to the South African context, disseminated, and locally accredited.

## 3. On improving support for NGOs, researchers and implementors:

- NGOs would benefit from technical assistance and capacity building from the INSPIRE Working Group, particularly on social norm change and the scale-up of parenting programmes.

- More research is needed on how to scale up INSPIRE strategies while adapting it to the local context.



## Conclusion

Since the ISS stepped into the role of INSPIRE coordinator, there is a strong focus on country-level learning workshops, like the one held in South Africa. More workshops of this nature are planned for 2023.

Despite the social and economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, South Africa has made significant strides in preventing violence against children in all three sectors. However, there are still challenges to overcome, particularly regarding coordination and communication between NGOs and the government.

There was consensus among participants that evidence-based interventions and programmes should be scaled up, but it remains unclear how and who will drive the process. Participants agreed that the government needed to appoint a new INSPIRE focal point to rebuild Pathfinder momentum in South Africa.

## Appendix 1:

# List of participants

- [The Children in Distress Network](#) (CINDI)
- [Clowns Without Borders South Africa](#) (CWB)
- Department of Basic Education (DBE)
- National Treasury
- Phaphama Initiatives
- [Save the Children South Africa](#)
- [South African Medical Research Council](#) (SAMRC)
- [UNICEF South Africa](#)
- Western Cape Government (WCGOV)



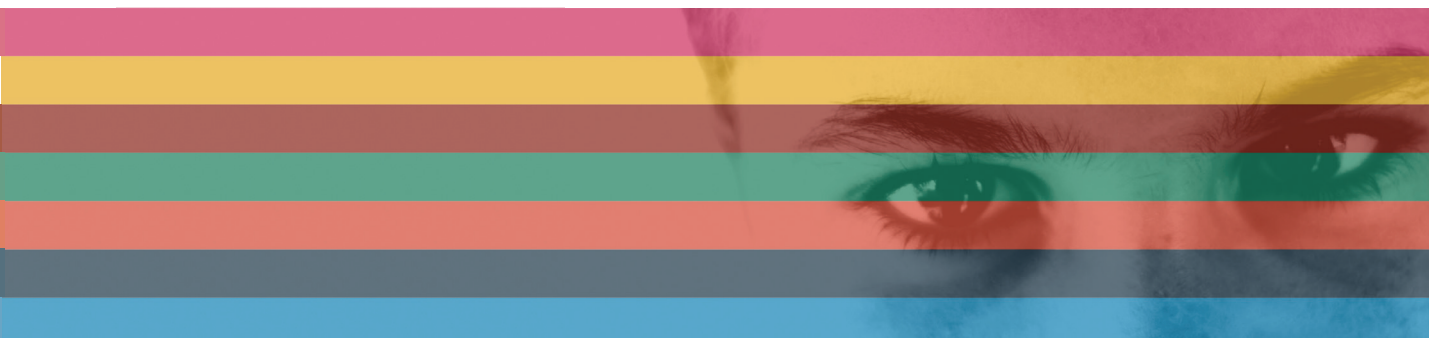


## Appendix 2:

# Gaps and shortcomings identified at the 2019 workshop

At the 2019 workshop, participants experienced the following challenges in using the INSPIRE framework:

- The absence of a clear and coherent national strategy that's effectively communicated and supported by government departments, NGOs and the research community hampers coordination, cooperation, and progress through competition for resources.
- NGOs struggle to develop and use monitoring and evaluation tools and frameworks and that makes it difficult for them to report on and track their progress.
- Children felt that violence against men has been sidelined. This, they said, is a result of a gender bias in who society believes should be protected. This has resulted in men – especially young men and boys – having the violence directed against them underestimated and overlooked. Young boys are often considered 'men' and treated as such.
- Researchers acknowledged the lack of coherence and coordination of research relevant to the INSPIRE strategies and pointed to a particular lack of knowledge about what is required to effectively change harmful norms. The need for implementation research to better inform practice was highlighted.
- Vicarious trauma experienced by frontline service providers in government and the NGO sector, and more indirectly for researchers, is not sufficiently recognised or addressed. Teachers, in particular, need additional training and support to non-violently manage conduct problems and aggressive and violent behaviour in schools.
- Programmes for LGBTQI+ children and adults seem to be concentrated in some areas and are not available in many places.
- There are child representatives in the national Children's Parliament and at the Provincial level. Provincial structures, which include junior mayors and junior councillors, are invisible at the local level in communities.



## About the ISS

The Institute for Security Studies (ISS) partners to build knowledge and skills that secure Africa's future. The ISS is an African non-profit with offices in South Africa, Kenya, Ethiopia and Senegal. Using its networks and influence, the ISS provides timely and credible policy research, practical training and technical assistance to governments and civil society.

## About Save the Children South Africa

Save the Children South Africa is part of the world's largest independent development and rights based organisation for children, represented in over 120 countries worldwide. We fight for children's rights. We help them fulfill their potential. In South Africa, we work to ensure that every child, especially the most vulnerable, has a happy and healthy childhood.

## About Unicef South Africa

UNICEF South Africa, there for every child. UNICEF SA works to promote the rights of every child. We strive to ensure that no child is left behind. In this, we work to support the South African Government, families and communities in reducing child poverty and improving education, health care and child protection for every child.

## Development partners

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