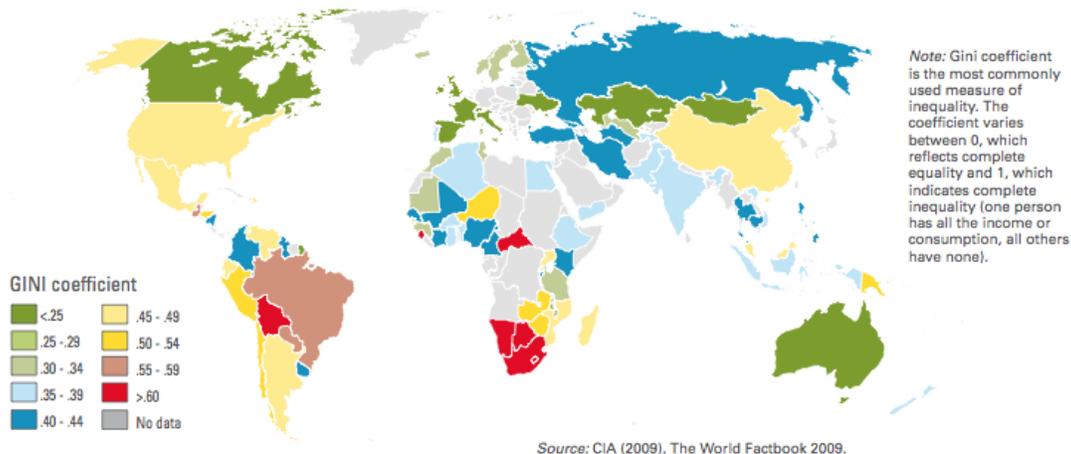


## 18.6 Million Reasons to Care: South African Report Highlights Rights of Children in the Country

Since the end of apartheid in 1994, South Africa has seen significant progress in fulfilling the rights of its 18.6 million children (who now represent about 37% of the population), including: a reduction of poverty, increased gender equality, and near-universal primary education rate. South Africa, however, remains one of the most unequal countries in the world, with the poorest quintile of the population earning only 1.8% of total national household income.

### South Africa is one of the most unequal countries in the world

Gini coefficient by country in the world



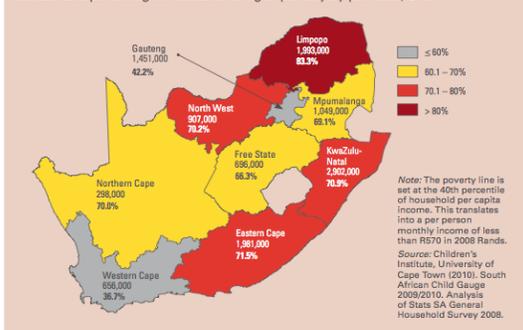
“South Africa is relatively rich in terms of data availability, especially compared to other African countries,” says UNICEF South Africa Social Policy Specialist Bjorn Gelders. “On the other hand, little has been written about inequalities between children based on the income or wealth status of their families and households.” This observation, among others like it, led to the creation of a report entitled “South Africa’s Children: A Review of Equity and Child Rights.”

The document, a joint effort of UNICEF, the [South African Human Rights Commission \(SAHRC\)](#), and the [Department of Women, Children and People With Disabilities of the Republic of South Africa](#), is a comprehensive analysis of key indicators highlighting different aspects of children’s rights in the country. Some of the most striking aspects of the report include impressive racial and wealth disparities between various regions of South Africa. For instance, while only 2% of children in Western Cape live in households with no toilet facility, that number jumps to 41% when looking at Eastern Cape.

Maps showing sub-national data, generated via DevInfo, were able to emphasize intra-country disparities. “There is no other free software out there that allows you to do that,” says Mr. Gelders.

### In South Africa, 11.9 million children (64% of all children) live in income poverty

Number and percentage of children living in poverty by province, 2008



### Access to adequate sanitation has improved over the past decade

Percentage of children living in households with access to adequate sanitation by province, 2002 and 2009

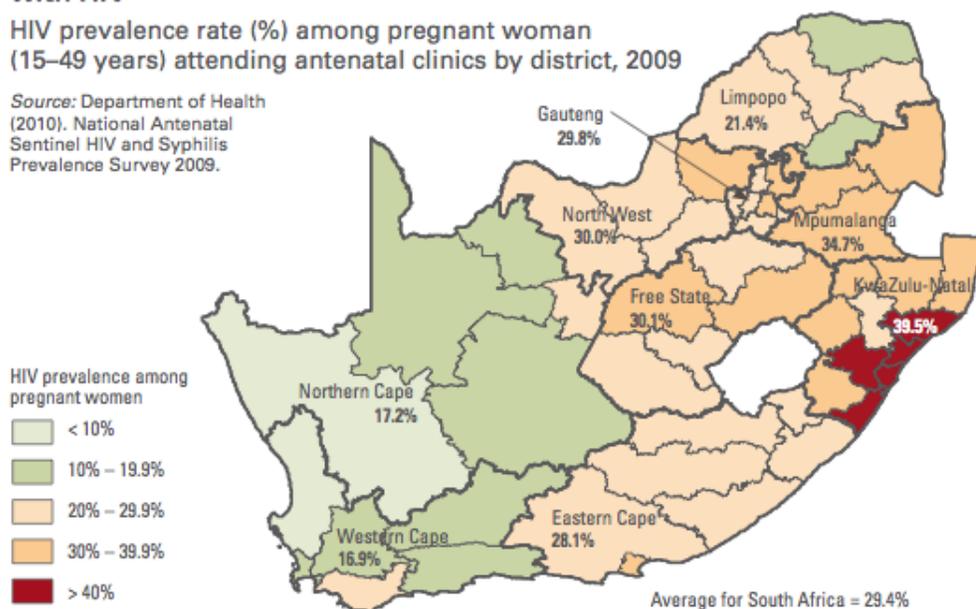


### Close to 30% of pregnant women are HIV positive

In 5 districts in KwaZulu-Natal more than 40% of pregnant women are living with HIV

HIV prevalence rate (%) among pregnant woman (15–49 years) attending antenatal clinics by district, 2009

Source: Department of Health (2010). National Antenatal Sentinel HIV and Syphilis Prevalence Survey 2009.



Key players such as the [Department of Social Development](#), the [National Treasury](#), the [National Department of Health](#) and the [Department of Basic Education](#) have already reviewed the eye-opening report. The Review of Equity and Child Rights was launched at a three-day seminar in March 2011, which led to the adoption of the [Midrand Declaration](#) by SAHRC, UNICEF and delegates attending the seminar. Finally, the report was also tabled for presentation at the Cabinet, thus ensuring adequate attention is given to equity and child rights in the highest circles of the government. Discussions with National and Provincial speakers of Parliament and relevant committees has led to increased interest and commitment to provide structured oversights for laws, plans, and budgets on issues affecting vulnerable children.

A .pdf of the document is available for free on the UNICEF website by clicking [here](#).

Why does this matter? South African Human Rights Commissioner Lindiwe Mokate says in the opening statement of the report: "It is important that we are constantly

reminded that those of us who are tasked with the responsibility of providing services to our children are not merely involved in an act of kindness, but rather in the delivery of an inalienable human right [...].”

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