





PART TWO

Survive Thrive Transform

Part two motivates for greater investment to ensure South Africa's children not only survive but thrive and reach their full potential, by:

- focusing on the Sustainable Development Goals
- ensuring that the 2030 Global Agenda promotes children's survival and development
- identifying local priorities
- promoting nurturing care
- creating safe environments
- improving child nutrition
- getting reading right
- creating inclusive and enabling environments
- reflecting on progress and calling for action.

Overview

Part two comprises a set of nine essays that consider how we can use the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to promote nurturing care and create enabling environments in which children not only survive, but thrive and reach their full potential.

Setting an ambitious agenda for children: The Sustainable Development Goals

(pages 22 – 31)

This essay introduces the global agenda for children and adolescents as set out in the SDGs and the Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health. It discusses how the SDGs relate to children's rights, and how these new global goals build on and extend the aspirations of the Millennium Development Goals. It also highlights the importance of tracking child-centred indicators to monitor progress for children, and concludes with an overview of the current status of South Africa's children.

Striving for the Sustainable Development Goals: What do children need to thrive?

(pages 32 – 42)

This essay draws on children's rights, scientific evidence, and economic arguments for investing in children's survival and optimal development to critically engage with the global agenda. It introduces the essential elements of nurturing care and highlights the importance of addressing children's needs holistically, across the life course, and in the context of their families and communities. It concludes by considering the extent to which the SDGs have the potential to create an enabling environment in which children can thrive and reach their full potential.

Investing in children: The drivers of national transformation in South Africa

(pages 43 – 50)

The third essay focuses on the South African context and explores how the global agenda aligns with local priorities. The essay acknowledges recent progress and points to outstanding challenges where greater investment in children could trigger a "tipping point" and help drive sustained social and economic transformation in South Africa.

Caring for children: Relationships matter

(pages 51 – 60)

Love, nurturing care and a sense of belonging are arguably the most essential elements for children's emotional and mental well-being. This essay focuses on children's interpersonal relationships and the factors that facilitate intimate and caring relationship building throughout the life cycle. The systems of care for South Africa's children are discussed including the potential role of families, professionals and communities. Factors that can compromise care, as well as interventions that can improve the quality of caring relationships, are foregrounded.

Preventing violence: From evidence to implementation

(pages 61 – 67)

Preventing violence is a strong focus in the SDGs which also aim to address many of structural and environmental factors that compromise children's safety. This essay details the high levels of violence and trauma experienced by South Africa's children and their impact on children's development across the life course. It introduces seven evidence-based strategies that have the greatest potential to reduce violence against children, and considers what is needed to bridge the gap between evidence and implementation in order to take violence prevention to scale.

Ending stunting: Transforming the health system so children can thrive

(pages 68 – 76)

Stunting continues to compromise the development of one in four young children in South Africa. This essay identifies what is needed to address the immediate, underlying and basic causes of child undernutrition. It motivates for greater investment in community health workers to extend the reach of health-care services and support children's optimal development and nutrition. It also calls for a broad social movement to advocate for child health equity and address widespread poverty, inequality and inadequate services – the drivers of malnutrition.



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Getting reading right: Building firm foundations

(pages 77 – 83)

The SDGs' focus on equal and quality education is particularly pressing in the South African context where schooling outcomes remain poor despite high attendance, and where inequalities are already deeply entrenched before young children enter formal schooling. Given these challenges, this essay identifies learning to read as a national priority and a critical foundation for formal education. The essay outlines the causes of South Africa's poor reading outcomes and identifies eight interventions that have the potential to enhance reading outcomes in the foundation phase.

Welcoming all children: The inclusion imperative

(pages 84 – 90)

The SDGs envisage an inclusive approach to development in which no one is left behind, but what does this mean in practice? This essay focuses on children with disabilities to deepen readers' understanding of inclusion. The authors illustrate how children

with disabilities experience multiple forms of exclusion that compromise their development. They then outline what is needed to create more enabling environments in which each and every child thrive.

Transforming South Africa: A call to action

(pages 91 – 95)

The final essay outlines the current risks and challenges, and identifies opportunities to transform systems and improve child outcomes. Building on the SDGs, this essay calls for an integrated and inclusive approach that mobilises all sectors of society to make sure that no child is left behind. It also foregrounds the need to shift attitudes and behaviour to create more welcoming and inclusive environments that are responsive to the needs of children and their caregivers.