

Foreword

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The Children's Institute recently celebrated its 10-year anniversary, and the release of this seventh issue of the influential *South African Child Gauge* is an indication of its ongoing commitment to monitor the situation of children in South Africa.

This year also marks the centenary of the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Cape Town, and we are reminded of the core values on which the faculty was built. These have found their expression in the human rights focus and advocacy-based research that are synonymous with the Children's Institute.

This issue of the *Child Gauge* once again chronicles the health and welfare of the country's youngest citizens, many of whom live on the margins of society.

There is compelling evidence to show that children's survival, development, and life trajectories are largely determined by their early socio-economic

circumstances. Inequality is rising in emerging economies as well as in rich countries. In South Africa inequality and poverty, combined with HIV, have reduced life expectancy at birth, and education has not been delivered at a quality that can yet enable the next generation to escape the poverty trap.

Drawing on a child poverty and inequality roundtable that was co-hosted by the Programme to Support Pro-Poor Policy Development in the Presidency, UNICEF and the Children's Institute, this collection of 10 essays outlines the extent and impact of income inequality on children's living conditions, care arrangements, health and education, and identifies some interventions that have the potential to break the cycle of poverty and reduce inequality.

This publication is intentionally designed to make academic research and analysis useful and accessible to a wide range of readers – in government and civil society – as a basis for improved policy and practice and the progressive realisation of children's constitutional rights.

This issue of the *Child Gauge* also speaks to a broader initiative at the University of Cape Town which is bringing together academics, civil society and government around a Carnegie-like national inquiry on poverty and inequality. I am delighted that the Children's Institute is among the contributors to this important debate.