

ANNUAL REPORT 2006



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Director's Report



Prof Nico Steytler

The Community Law Centre had a very productive year in 2006, producing high quality research, developing important policy papers for government, informing public debate on issues of contention, extending its training and education activities to provincial and local governments and disseminating information to a broad range of decision-makers. The Centre's expertise has also been brought to bear on the public domain by informing Parliament on issues of intergovernmental relations, children's rights and social security. Submissions were also made to the South African Law Reform Commission on the trafficking of children.

The research work of the Centre has been effectively communicated to the public at large through our flagship lay journals – *Article 40*, *Article 19*, *CSPRI's Newsletter*, *ESR Review* and the *Local Government Bulletin*. The Gender Project launched two new publications. One on gender-based violence and HIV/AIDS in the SADC region and is entitled *Iminyango*, and the other publication (published with the Saartjie Baartman Legal Advice and Training Project), deals with legal issues in children maintenance and is entitled *Maintenance Update*. Collectively, these publications have a distribution network of nearly 20 000 copies.

Organisation of the Centre

The Centre's policy is to increase collaboration between its projects, thus strengthening its institutional capacity and enabling it to explore cross-cutting themes. To this end, 2006 saw projects increasingly working together in areas that facilitated collaboration. The Gender Project and the Socio-Economic Rights Project, for example, joined forces in conducting research on reducing women and girls' vulnerability to HIV/AIDS by ensuring their inheritance and property rights and specific emphasis on the right to access adequate housing.

The Centre's activities were executed by its staff of 13 researchers (including two doctoral research interns, one masters research intern and two research assistants) and six administrative personnel (includ-

ing an office manager, a financial manager and an information manager). The quality of the Centre's work is a product of the excellence of our staff. The Centre was thus proud to see Godfrey Odongo (doctoral research intern) capped with an LLD and Reuben Baatjies awarded an LLM in March 2006.

Finances

The Centre's continued growth was also reflected in its finances. Its income increased by 10% from 2005 to an amount of over R9 million. The Centre maintained sound financial management. Apart from the overall audit of the university's books, over 72% of the Centre's donor agreements were further externally audited and all of them received an unqualified audit. The Centre wishes to thank all its donors for supporting the work of its projects. Particular acknowledgement goes to the Ford Foundation for generously providing both core funding for administration and project-based funding.

Third Dullah Omar Memorial Lecture

The Third Dullah Omar Memorial Lecture again affirmed the importance of this event on the UWC calendar. The lecture was delivered by Justice Arthur Chaskalson, former Chief Justice of South Africa, speaking on the theme of socio-economic rights and the courts.



Justice Arthur Chaskalson

Annual Report

This report highlights the main activities and research products of the Centre for 2006. For a full report on all the Centre's activities, please visit our website: <http://www.communitylawcentre.org.za/Publications/annual-reports/annual-report-2006.pdf>



Research

The central focus of the Centre and the basis for informing public debate, teaching and training activities and litigation, is quality research in areas highly relevant to the development of human rights and democracy. In 2006 research was conducted at both a theoretical and an empirical level. As a university-based institution, our goal is also to publish our research results in peer-reviewed publications.

The **Children's Rights Project** focused on two major research projects. Following from their work in 2005 on children used by adults to commit crime (CUBAC) for the International Labour Organisation, the Project embarked on two pilot projects in 2006. These comprise a range of activities and interventions, including programmatic interventions,

working with police, prosecutors and probation officers, as well as local site co-ordination. These projects formed part of a technical assistance programme to the Department of Labour in implementing the South African Child Labour Programme of Action.

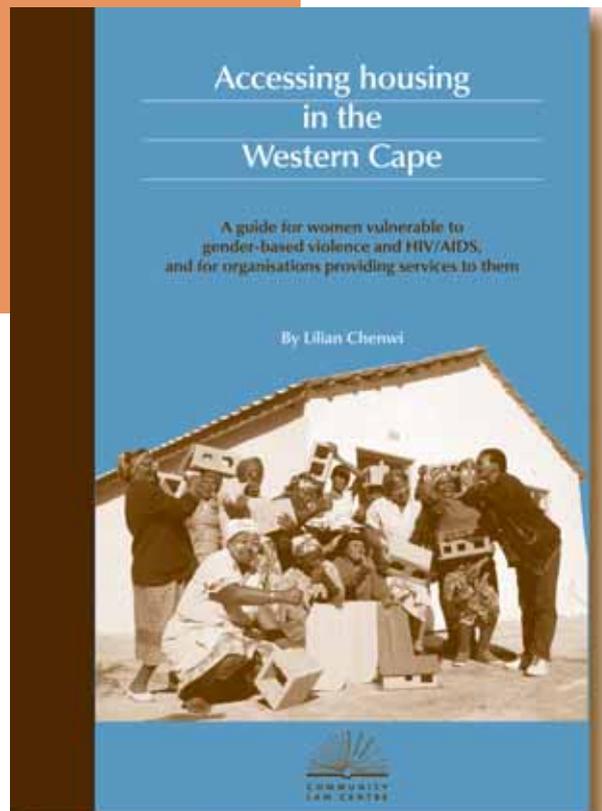
As co-ordinator of the Child Justice Alliance, the Project managed the second baseline study into the criminal justice system and how it treats children in three magisterial districts: Pietermaritzburg, Wynberg and Pretoria. This research will then be used as baseline data against which the implementation of the Child Justice Bill (when passed) can be measured and monitored.

In 2006, the **Civil Society Prison Reform Initiative (CSPRI)** placed the emphasis on policy development, promoting good governance in the prison system, prevention and combating of torture, and HIV/AIDS in prisons. In respect of promoting good governance in the prison system, two projects were undertaken. The first was a conceptual clarification of prison corruption aimed at describing the unique nature of this form of corruption and its impact on the rights of prisoners. The second project placed the emphasis on the role of investigations in combating corruption in the prison system as part of the overall strategy developed by government, the other two key strategy components being prevention and public education.

Research initiated in 2005 on the criminalisation of torture in South Africa continued in 2006 and culminated in written and oral submissions to the UN Committee against Torture (Geneva) in November 2006. This was in response to South Africa's Initial Report, as required by Article 14 of the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

Prisoners' rights are a contested terrain and the high rate of violent crime in South Africa is creating a less sympathetic public attitude towards prisoners. Given the recent promulgation of the Correctional Services Act, the need was identified to make this legislation more accessible to practitioners working with prisoners and their families. Research, culminating in a user-friendly guide to the Act, was undertaken and completed.

The **Gender Project** conducted research on the Firearms Control Act, 2000, in the context of the relationship between firearm-related injuries and domestic violence. The research included field research at seven magistrates' courts in the Western Cape consisting of in-depth interviews with prosecutors and



magistrates and examination of more than a thousand court documents. The research forms part of a comprehensive report dealing with the implementation of the Firearms Control Act in the context of domestic violence.

The **Local Government Project** investigated where and how powers of provincial and local government overlap and made suggestions as to how these overlaps can be managed. The Project further reviewed the practice of intergovernmental forums at provincial and district level, where the three spheres come together to ensure cooperation and alignment of functions.

Disputes between spheres of government are counterproductive when it comes to service delivery. The Project sought to provide assistance in this area by producing a guide to dispute resolution, which was published as official guidelines by the Department of Provincial and Local Government.

A central theme in this project's work in 2006 has been its response to the need for a comprehensive textbook on local government law that can be used by practitioners and students. As the key pieces of legislation on local government have now been finalised and are being implemented, the time is ripe for the publication of a full overview of the law. Project members completed a draft for a loose-leaf textbook that will be published by Butterworth's Legal Publishers in 2007.

In 2006, the **Socio-Economic Rights Project** conducted research on various issues affecting specific vulnerable groups, namely the inheritance and property rights of women affected by HIV/AIDS and gender-based violence (in a qualitative study that was conducted jointly with the Gender Project and the Saartjie Baartman Centre); and the socio-economic rights of the elderly and children. Specific areas of research included housing (including protection against arbitrary eviction) and food (including nutrition) rights.

Collaboration between projects

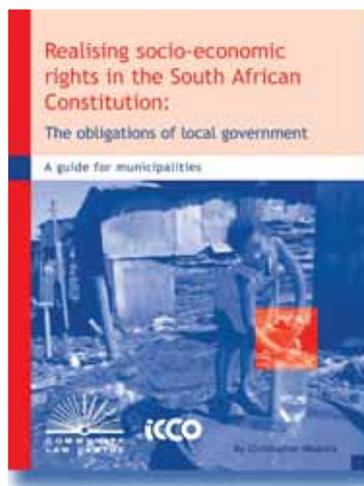
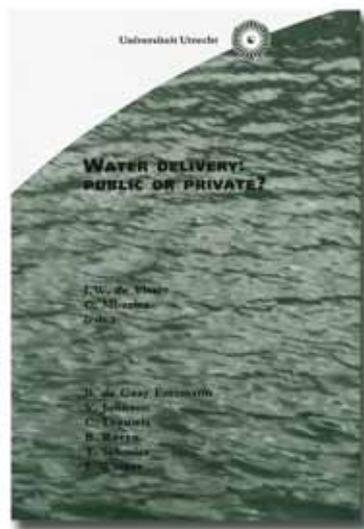
The **Gender** and **Socio-Economic Rights Projects** conducted research on reducing women and girls' vulnerability to HIV/AIDS by ensuring their inheritance

and property rights, with specific emphasis on the right to access to adequate housing.

This one-year project, a joint initiative with the Saartjie Baartman Centre for Women & Children, aims to strengthen the capacity of informal community structures (for example, 'street committees') to give effect to the right of women and girls to have access to adequate housing as a means to reduce their vulnerability to gender-based violence and HIV/AIDS. Formal housing programmes on all levels of government were examined in order to establish whether adequate provision is made for women vulnerable to gender-based violence.

The **Local Government** and **Socio-Economic Rights Projects** continued their research on the impact of privatisation on basic municipal services, culminating in two publications:

- *Water Delivery: Public or private?*, edited by Dr Jaap de Visser and Christopher Mbazira; and
- *Realising socio-economic rights in the South African Constitution: A guide to municipalities*, written by Christopher Mbazira.



Commissioned research

Based on its reputation for high quality research, the Centre is frequently requested and commissioned to undertake applied research for various government departments and non-governmental bodies. Through this work, the Centre and its staff not only make a major contribution to policy formulation, but also are placed at the coalface of the key challenges confronting government and civil society. In 2006, the Centre was engaged in the development of policies and draft legislation for national departments, provinces, municipalities and international organisations.

The **Children's Rights Project** was requested by Save the Children Swaziland to assist them in their child law reform efforts in that

country. This required this project to conduct consultative workshops with stakeholders in order to elicit information on what the new child law should contain. The information collected was collated and a draft discussion paper and Bill will be produced in 2007.

CSPRI participated in a UN Office on Drugs and Crime Prevention (UNODC) study reviewing 20 crime prevention projects in SADC, aimed at identifying good practice in offender reintegration programmes from South Africa, Malawi and Swaziland. This project forms part of a larger study funded by the UNODC to identify good crime prevention practices in both southern Africa and the Caribbean.

CSPRI was commissioned by the Open Society Foundation of South Africa (OSF-SA) to conduct research on the impact of sentencing on the size of the prison population. The study found, among other things, that if current trends continue, South Africa will face a crisis in respect of prison overcrowding by 2015.

CSPRI is managing, on behalf of the UWC, a three-year project to monitor the implementation of the Correctional Services Act. The project was commissioned by the OSF-SA and is the result of a partnership agreement between OSF-SA and the Department of Correctional Services.

If a municipality fails to deliver services, the adequate provincial response may be to intervene and take over (parts of) the municipality. Staff members of the **Local Government Project** produced guidelines on this topic for both the Department of Provincial and Local Government and the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Local Government and Traditional Affairs.

Informing public debate on law reform

When the provinces considered the amendment to the Children's Act dealing with corporal punishment, the Children's Rights Project, in collaboration with RAPCAN, sent documentation packs on the issue to all of the nine provincial legislatures. The packs comprised the *Article 19* publication, fact-sheets compiled by RAPCAN and the All Africa Special Report on Corporal Punishment.



CSPRI continues to actively monitor the work of the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Correctional Services and committee meetings remain a productive forum for sharing information with members of Parliament and officials of the Department of Correctional Services. Two formal submissions were made to the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Correctional Services, one on

the budget vote and another on the research project monitoring the implementation of the Correctional Services Act (see above). CSPRI drew the Committee's attention to the high number of unnatural deaths in prison (75 in total), a figure that declined substantially thereafter. A submission was also made to the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Labour regarding youth imprisonment and unemployment.

In 2006, the Sexual Offences Bill, first tabled in Parliament in 2003, was again tabled in revised form in June 2006. The **Gender Project** wrote submissions on the revised Bill to the National Assembly Portfolio Committee on Justice and Constitutional Development. The submissions related to the substantive definitions of offences and matters of procedure and evidence (including the admissibility of evidence of the complainant's previous sexual history) and criminal procedure, as well as the rights of persons with disabilities. The Project also submitted written comments on the Firearms Control Amendment Bill to the National Assembly Portfolio Committee on Safety and Security, and formed part of the Gun Control Alliance delegation, which presented a further oral submission to the Committee.

Education, training & information sharing

The Centre presented workshops and seminars to public officers and officials in the three spheres of government as well as the judiciary, civic groups and students. Lay publications were produced to educate both government and civil society on their rights and obligations. One of the Centre's core activities is to disseminate the Centre's expertise and research results to the broader community through education programmes, training workshops, publications and the website.

Education Programmes

Once again, the Centre presented the bulk of the LLM Module on Constitutional Litigation. The Module consisted of courses on:

- children's rights;
- criminal justice and the Constitution;
- socio-economic rights;
- intergovernmental relations; and
- constitutional law practice.

The Centre continued its partnership with the Universities of Pretoria, Makerere, Ghana, Cameroon, the American University in Cairo and the Eduardo Mondlane University in Maputo to present the LLM in Human Rights and Democratisation in Africa for students from across the continent. The Centre hosted six students who attended the LLM courses offered by the University of the Western Cape and completed their dissertations with the Centre.

Training

Apart from the numerous training workshops in which staff members participated across the country, various training and information sharing workshops were held by the Projects, including the following.

- Training workshops on the CUBAC diversion and prevention programmes for educators, prosecutors, probation officers and police in Mitchell's Plain and Mamelodi;
- Four training workshops on child justice for the Western Cape Department of Social Services for probation officers on diversion, assessment, sentencing and placement of children;

- In conjunction with the Saartjie Baartman Legal Advice and Training Project, training workshops on the Maintenance Act and on the complaints mechanisms created in the Domestic Violence Act;
- A three-day training workshop for the City of Cape Town's Councillors on the Legal Framework for Local Government.
- With the Saartjie Baartman Centre, an education workshop entitled 'Housing for women experiencing violence: Policies and programmes'.

Information sharing: Lay publications

The Centre produced a number of journals that communicated its research results to a wider audience.

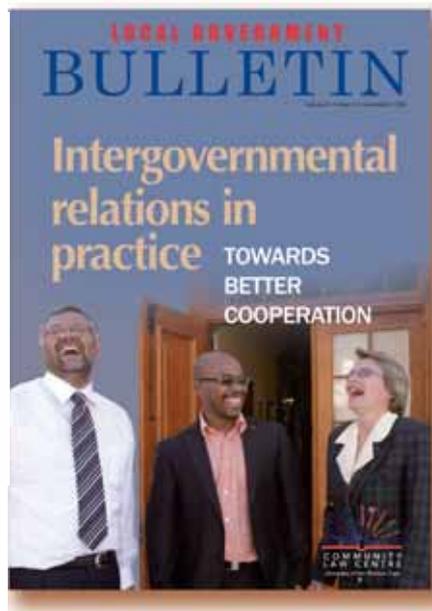
Article 40, a quarterly journal with a circulation of 3500 copies, focuses on legal developments, case law and innovations in child justice development in South Africa and also other African countries. The tone and import of the publication is motivational and inspirational rather than analytical or academic and is written in plain language.

Article 19 is dedicated to disseminate diverse and relevant information advocating for the prohibition of corporal punishment to South African stakeholders. The 3000 copies of each of the three issues produced in 2006 were disseminated to a wide range of interested parties.

Five issues of the **CSPRI Newsletter**, an electronic newsletter on prisons, were distributed to over 400 subscribers.

Two issues of **Maintenance Update** were published with the Saartjie Baartman Legal Advice and Training Project. This publication deals with legal issues in children's maintenance and aims to provide information on recent developments in this area of expertise. The 250 copies per is-





sue are circulated to magistrates, maintenance officers, community workers and organisations that deal with maintenance.

The Gender Project published its first issue of *Iminyango*, which is aimed at providing information on the intersections between gender-based violence and HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa. A thousand copies were distributed to organisations which deal with gender-based violence and HIV/AIDS in the SADC region.

ESR Review is a quarterly publication seeking to inform public debates and



capture developments on critical socio-economic rights issues and is distributed to about 3000 international and national human rights/legal practitioners, experts and activists.

The *Local Government Bulletin* underwent an overhaul and the five issues produced in 2006 emerged for the first time in full colour. The 11 000 copies of each issue are distributed to all municipal councillors, senior managers and stakeholders in the national and provincial governments.



Other legal publications

Following on the work done on CUBAC for the International Labour Organisation in 2005, the following publications were produced in 2006:

- *Situation analysis and pilot design;*
- *Prevention programme manual;*
- *Children's perceptions of their use by adults in the commission of offences;*
- *Diversion programme manual; and*
- *Guidelines for role-players in the criminal justice system*

Workshops and conferences

The Centre hosted a number of workshops and conferences in 2006, including the following:

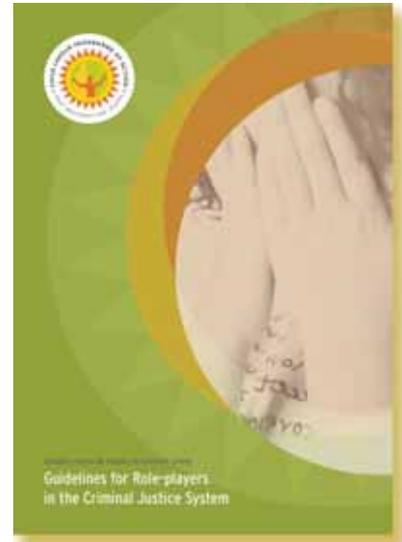
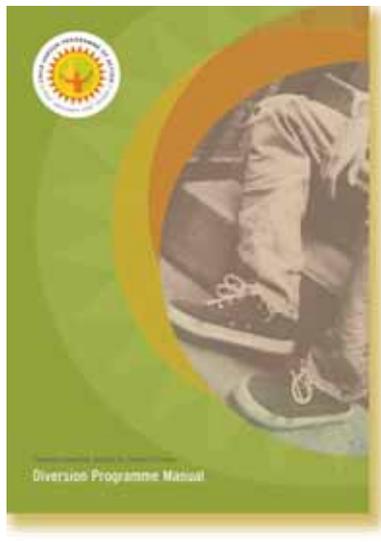
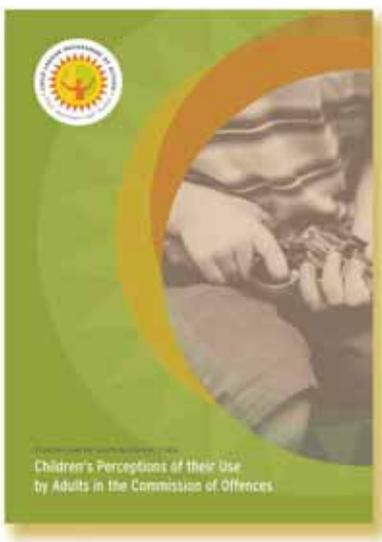
Child justice in South Africa: Children's rights under construction:

A conference convened by the Open Society Foundation of South Africa (OSF-SA) and the Child Justice Alliance, which the Children's Rights Project co-ordinates. The discourse and deliberations at the conference were enhanced by the attendance of Professor Jaap Doek, Chairperson of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, who delivered the keynote address.



Professor Jaap Doek, Chairperson of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child





Corporal punishment: A seminar highlighting recent international developments relating to corporal punishment of children and assessing their impact on efforts to eliminate corporal punishment in South Africa.

Offender reintegration and minimum standards for the detention of children: A seminar attended by members of the judiciary, the Judicial Inspectorate of Prisons, members of Parliament and NGOs.

The Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act: A year in the provinces and districts: A national conference reviewing the implementation of the Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act, attended by mayors, municipal managers and representatives of both national and provincial governments.

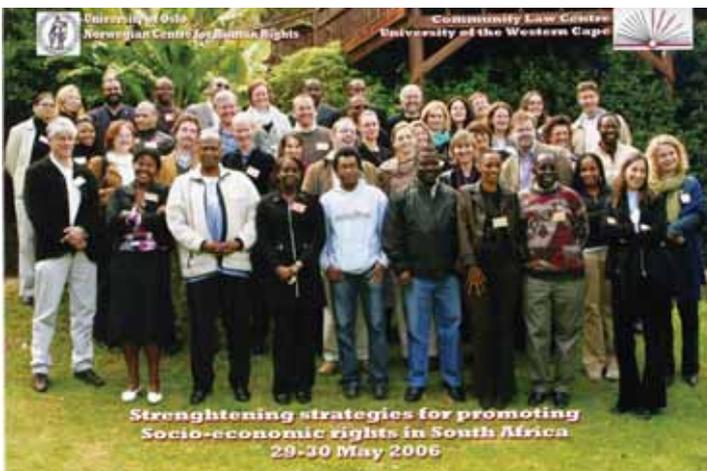
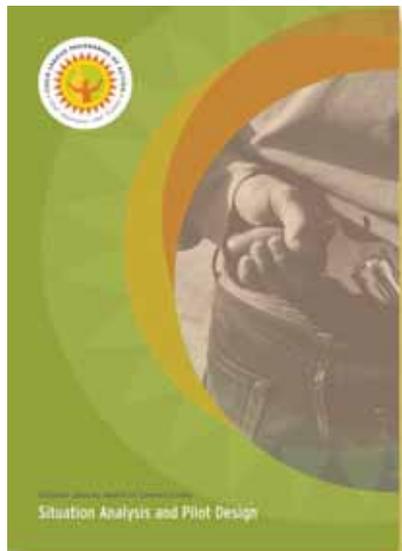
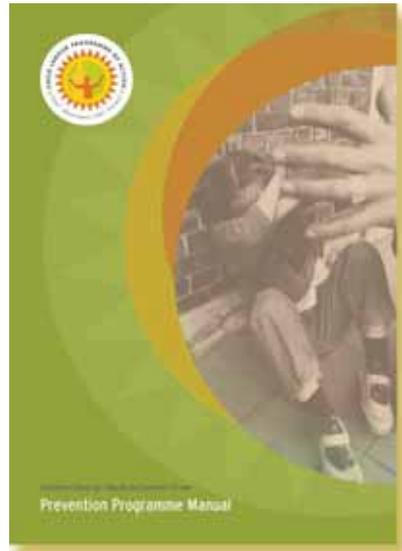
The realisation of socio-economic rights in KwaZulu Natal: This was co-hosted with the South African Human Rights Commission, Commission on Gender Equality, the Office of Ombudsperson at the eThekweni Municipality, Street Law of South Africa, as well as the Civil Society Advocacy Programme, in Durban.

Strengthening strategies for promoting socio-economic rights in South Africa: This workshop, informed by the growing animosity between government and certain civil society organisations, was attended by more than 40 human rights experts and activists from both the NGO sector and academic institutions.

Websites

The Centre's website informs users about what the different Projects are doing and disseminates their publications. Through this medium, the Centre plays a critical role in educating its website audience on issues relating to democracy

and human rights in the country. The Centre's website was redesigned in order to keep abreast of the current trends in web-based information management.



International collaboration

Increasingly, the Centre is engaged in international projects, bringing its expertise to bear in international forums.

In May 2006, the **Children's Rights Project** submitted an alternate report to South Africa's initial country report on the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

In November, the Children's Rights Project made oral submissions to the Committee on the Convention Against Torture in Geneva relating to corporal punishment in schools and the detention of children in South Africa under Article 16 of the Convention. In addition, informal meetings were held with the two rapporteurs from the Committee who were responsible for drafting the Committee's Concluding Observations. After the Government of South Africa made their submission on the Initial Report, the Project also submitted a supplementary written submission to the Committee. The Concluding Observations by the Committee on the Convention Against Torture have included the submissions made by the Children's Rights Project in relation to corporal punishment and the Child Justice Bill.

The Children's Rights Project was also invited by the African Child Policy Forum in Addis Ababa to assist them in the compilation of a report on the Harmonisation of Child Laws in Southern and Eastern Africa. This involved the Project looking at previous work it had undertaken in Mozambique, Swaziland, Lesotho and South Africa in order to compile reports on the law reform processes in those countries and to highlight good practice.

The Children's Rights Project's contribution will form part of a final synthesised report, which will be launched in Nairobi in May 2007.

In response to the South African government's Ini-

tial Report to the Committee against Torture, as required by Article 14 of the UN Convention against Torture, **CSPRI** submitted a shadow report. The Committee considered the Initial Report, as well as other submissions from non-governmental organisations' in November 2006. CSPRI attended this meeting in Geneva, Switzerland, and presented information additional to its written report. The Committee expressed deep concern about South Africa's lack of progress in criminalising torture in domestic legislation, a problem that was identified by CSPRI in 2004.

The **Local Government Project's** international work centred on the recognition of decentralisation and the role of local government in particular, as an important strategy towards enhancing development and democracy. The emergence of a decentralised state in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the role of the South African government in supporting this process continue to create avenues for the Project to make its knowledge and expertise available to the DRC. On behalf of the Department of Provincial and Local Government, the Project drafted a framework for an organic (basic) law, which must establish a system of local government. The Project further assisted the Department with preparing and hosting a study tour on decentralisation in South Africa for a delegation of government officials of the DRC.

The **Socio-Economic Rights Project** continues to play a role in key international developments pertaining to socio-economic rights.

A member of this project participated in an International Civil Society Forum held in Lisbon, Portugal that addressed key elements that will be the subject of discussion and negotiation by the Open-ended Working Group on an Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights during its upcoming session in July 2007. The Optional Protocol is a significant tool for the enforcement of socio-economic rights at the international level as well as at the national level.

Participation in *amicus curiae* litigation

On the basis of its research, the Centre has in the past intervened as an *amicus curiae* in key constitutional matters relating to its expertise.

In 2006, the **Socio-Economic Rights Project** continued with this strategy and intervened as *amicus curiae* in two court cases. The first case, *The City of Johannesburg v Rand Property (Pty) Ltd and Others*, will be heard in February 2007 in the Supreme Court of Appeal.

This case centres around an appeal by the City of Johannesburg against a High Court ruling that the former may only evict people living in derelict build-

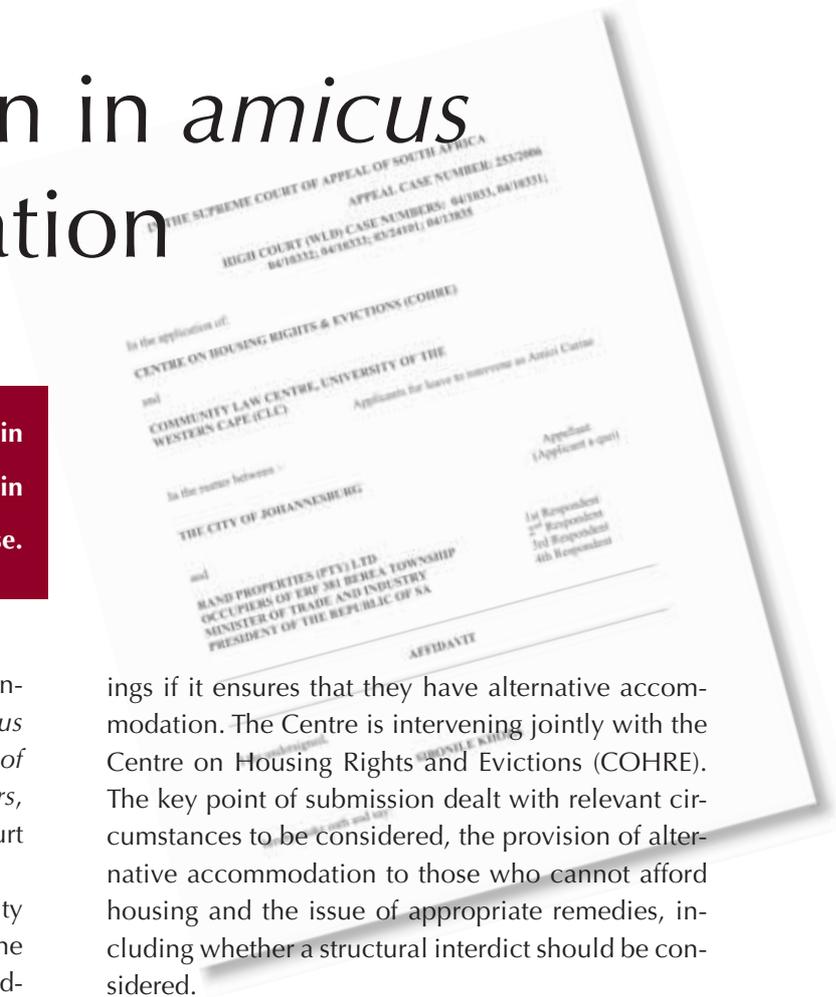
ings if it ensures that they have alternative accommodation. The Centre is intervening jointly with the Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE). The key point of submission dealt with relevant circumstances to be considered, the provision of alternative accommodation to those who cannot afford housing and the issue of appropriate remedies, including whether a structural interdict should be considered.

The second case, together with the Centre for Applied Legal Studies, is the Pretoria High Court case of *Christian Roberts and Others v The Minister of Social Development and Others*.

This case concerns the constitutionality of a number of laws and regulations on social assistance concerning the rights of both women and men between the ages of 60 and 64 who receive, or should be entitled to receive, old age pension grants in terms of these laws. It is important in determining whether the age differentiation unfairly discriminates against older men on the basis of gender. This case will be heard in 2007.



Adv. Geoff Budlender (centre front) representing the Community Law Centre and COHRE in the case, *City of Johannesburg v Rand Property (Pty) Ltd and Others*.



Finances

	Donors
Core funding and project activities	Ford Foundation
Children's Rights Project Child Justice Alliance Article 40 Article 19 Children's Bill Advocacy CUBAC Project	Open Society Foundation of SA SIDA and Open Society Foundation of SA Save the Children Sweden Save the Children Sweden International Labour Organisation
CSPRI	Ford Foundation Open Society Foundation of SA Rockefeller Brothers Foundation Idasa Pact/USAID
Gender Project Firearms Control Act and Domestic Violence HIV/AIDS and Gender-based Violence	AusAID Heinrich Boell Stiftung
Local Government Project	Austrian Development Co-operation MOTT Foundation Conflict and Governance Facility of the EU and National Treasury (CAGE)
Socio-Economic Rights Project Implementing socio-economic rights in SA	Atlantic Philanthropies Norwegian Centre for Human Rights, University of Oslo
Joint Projects Housing Project (Gender and Socio-Economic Rights Projects) Privatisation Project (Local Government and Socio-Economic Rights Project)	International Center for Research on Women (through UNAIDS) Interchurch Organisation for Development Cooperation (ICCO)
LLM in Human Rights & Democratisation in Africa	Centre for Human Rights (University of Pretoria)

Income and expenditure statement

The Centre's funds are administered by the University's Finance Department. As part of the University's

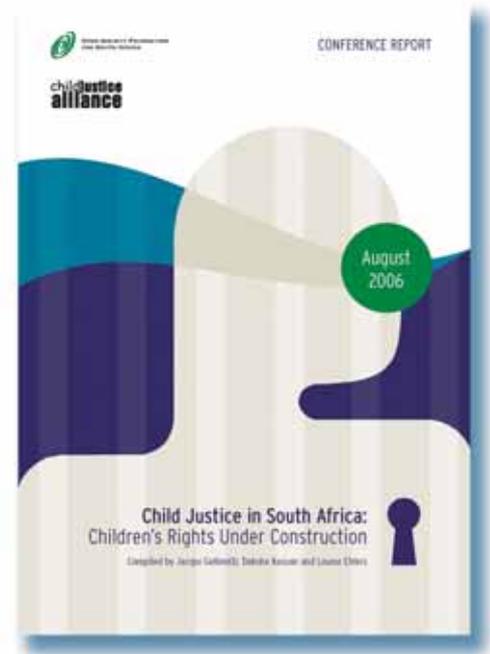
accounts, they are audited during the University's general external audit.

INCOME	2006 R	2005 R
Atlantic Philanthropies	0.00	849,500.00
Save the Children Sweden	266,574.00	434,984.00
North South Institute	300,000.00	0.00
Ford Foundation	708,429.10	650,434.90
Swiss Development Corporation	209,923.31	128,703.39
Centre for Human Rights (UP)	276,272.20	283,672.00
Open Society Foundation	1,275,992.66	175,000.00
Interchurch Organisation for development co-operation	540,100.00	321,634.56
USAID - CREA SA	0.00	630,173.70
Australian Aid	125,000.00	125,000.00
Conflict & Governance Facility - CAGE	140,454.60	561,818.40
International Labour Organisation	1,198,489.20	561,814.71
Rockefeller Brothers Fund	0.00	330,500.00
Norwegian Centre for Human Rights (Uni Oslo)	1,812,000.00	385,605.52
Commissioned Research	2,113,254.98	2,918,961.90
Consultancies	181,461.00	119,893.53
TOTAL INCOME	9,147,951.05	8,477,696.61
EXPENDITURE		
Salaries	3,298,527.25	2,876,518.32
Stationery	115,833.76	77,866.77
Advertising	50,041.87	33,215.72
Bank Charges	0.00	25,063.36
Photocopying & Postage	177,514.40	111,924.12
Telephone	71,526.07	74,902.80
Travelling	578,328.07	584,696.46
Conferences & Seminars	449,375.96	95,666.40
Subscriptions & Books	68,973.05	61,393.06
Audit Fees	28,322.10	34,790.00
Equipment	43,841.60	23,664.80
Consultation Fees	1,313,582.19	408,030.65
Partner Activities	847,131.07	202,752.67
Sundry Expense	0.00	3,209.74
Publications	1,206,538.00	751,637.32
Website	73,411.90	31,556.50
Staff Development	50,936.93	62,247.00
Post-Graduate Bursaries	344,394.05	240,168.96
Litigation	21,878.91	0.00
Computer Equipment	120,934.29	68,862.54
Functions	30,489.66	10,759.56
Returned to Funder	61,524.47	90,350.86
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	8,953,105.60	5,869,277.61
CLOSING BALANCE FOR YEAR	194,845.45	2,608,419.00
Surplus carried forward from previous year	4,792,266.60	2,055,367.56
Prior Year Adjustment	-33,342.58	128,480.04
NET CLOSING BALANCE 2006	4,953,769.47	4,792,266.60

Publications & research reports

Books, chapters in books and articles

- Chenwi, Lilian. 2006. Fair trial rights and their relation to the death penalty in Africa. *International and Comparative Law Quarterly*, 55: 609.
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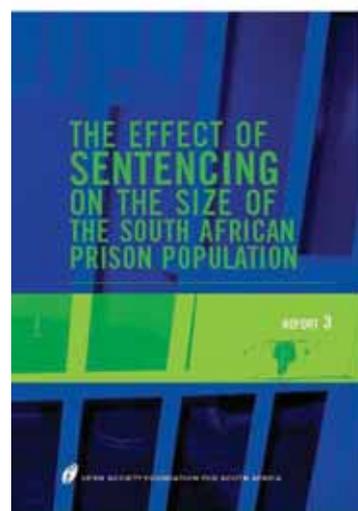
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The complete list of publications and research reports is available on our website: <http://www.communitylawcentre.org.za/Publications/annual-reports/annual-report-2006.pdf/>



About the Community Law Centre

Mission statement

The Community Law Centre, established in 1990, works to realise the democratic values and human rights enshrined in South Africa's Constitution. It is founded on the belief that our constitutional order must promote good governance, socio-economic development and the protection of the rights of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. Given the need for regional integration to encourage development in Africa, the Centre also seeks to advance human rights and democracy in this broader context. Based on high quality research, the Centre engages in policy development, advocacy and educational initiatives, focusing on areas critical to the realisation of human rights and democracy in South Africa and Africa in general.

Focus areas

The Centre's areas of focus are:

- The *Children's Rights Project*, which works towards the recognition and protection of children's rights in all spheres of society, with a particular focus on child justice.
- The *Civil Society Prison Reform Initiative*, which focuses on prisons and corrections to improve human rights in South African prisons through increased oversight by civil society.
- The *Gender Project*, which works towards the achievement of substantive gender equality and the realisation of women's rights.

- The *Local Government Project*, which assists local government to give effect to its constitutional mandate and promotes accountable and democratic governance and socio-economic development.
- The *Socio-Economic Rights Project*, which focuses on the realisation of the socio-economic rights of groups and communities living in poverty.

These objectives were pursued by means of four interrelated activities: research, informing public debate, teaching, training and education, and, to a limited extent, test case litigation as *amicus curiae*.

Resources

The Centre houses the Documentation Centre, which has a specialised collection of material on gender equality and women's rights, as well as children's rights and socio-economic rights, intergovernmental relations, and general human rights issues. The Documentation Centre also holds a substantial collection of books on international law and international human rights law, built up by sustained support from the Raoul Wallenberg Institute at the University of Lund in Sweden. This support is currently in its eleventh year of cooperation. The Centre has an accessible and user-friendly website (<http://www.communitylawcentre.org.za>) including a searchable database of the Documentation Centre's unique collection.