

South Africa

Snapshot

Population

47,9 million of which 48% lives below the poverty line

Ethnic Groups

79.6% African
8.9% Colored
2.5% Indian/Asian
9.1% White

Median Age

23 years

Children under 5

Estimated at 10.8% of total population

Source

Statistics South Africa. Mid-year population estimates 2007. <http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0302/P03022007.pdf>

Nelson Mandela Children's Fund: <http://www.mandela-children.ca/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=99>

UNAIDS: http://www.unaids.org/en/CountryResponses/Countries/south_africa.asp

Department of Social Development: <http://www.hsdc.ac.za/Document-1648.phtml>

The Music Therapy Community Clinic: <http://www.music-therapy.co.za/>



Early Childhood Development in South Africa

In 2005, the South African Government Program of Action set out Early Childhood Development as one of its key actions, which places an integrated and holistic approach to early childhood care and development high on the political agenda. The vision and mission of this program include the following:

- Provide a caring and integrated system (service delivery) for young children and their caregivers
- Facilitate human development (pre-birth to age 9 years) through developmental services/ social protection services
- Improve the quality of life for young children and their caregivers in a sustainable manner.
- Have a special focus on those (young children and their caregivers) that are most vulnerable and in need of special interventions.

Demographics

There are currently approximately 30 registered music therapists in South Africa. The majority of the practicing music therapists work with young children in various settings including mainstream schools, schools for children with special needs, multi-disciplinary centers, community centers, hospitals and in private practice. Music therapists are working with young children with a wide range of needs including children with mental disabilities (including Autism, Down Syndrome), physical disabilities (including cerebral palsy, burn victims), learning difficulties (including ADHD, ADD), children experiencing emotional difficulties (dealing with grief or trauma) and children suffering from illness (including TB and HIV&AIDS). Most of the music therapists work part time.

Background Information

The University of Pretoria offers the only

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music therapy training program in South Africa in the form of a two year post graduate degree. Completion of this Masters degree leads to registration with the Health Professions Council of South Africa. This year, the University of Pretoria will be running its 6th Music Therapy training program and the program has delivered 28 graduates since its inception in 1999.

Common Approaches

Music therapists' approaches in work with young children primarily focus on Creative Music Therapy (based on the Nordoff-Robbins approach). Music therapists are furthermore finding innovative ways of responding to the prevalent HIV pandemic in South Africa and its effects on society. At the end of 2007, there were approximately 5.7 million people living with HIV in South Africa, and almost 1,000 AIDS deaths occurring every day. For each person living with HIV in South Africa, not only does it impact their lives, but also those of their families, friends and wider communities. Not only are many children infected with HIV in South Africa, but many more are suffering from the loss of their parents and family members from AIDS. UNAIDS estimated that there were 1.4 million South African children orphaned by AIDS in 2007, compared to 780,000 in 2003. Once orphaned, these children are more likely to face poverty, poor health and a lack of access to education. Music therapy is a powerful tool that can offer psycho-social support to HIV- and AIDS-affected young children, their caregivers, and wider communities.



About the Author

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