

## **Christina Nomdo's Biography**

Christina Nomdo is serving as the child rights specialist Commissioner on the National Planning Commission (NPC) for the last 4 years. During this time, she has conducted a child participation initiative to get feedback directly from children about how the National Development Plan (NDP) should be reviewed to include the perspectives of children. Therefore, in 2017 and 2018, Christina worked with government and civil society partners in the children's sector to conduct workshops with children in all nine provinces of South Africa. On a recommendation received from a child in the February 2017 stakeholders' meeting, she also conducted workshops with especially vulnerable children – those in prisons, in state care and children with disabilities in special schools. This project has resulted in two reports, with a children's storybook forthcoming in 2020. The process report has been completed and is available on the NPC website. The analysis report was presented to NPC plenary in December 2019.<sup>1</sup>

From 2009 to 2017 Christina Nomdo was the Executive Director of Resources Aimed at the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (RAPCAN), a child rights organisation focused on building child violence prevention practice models. Most of these models have been institutionalised into the child protection system of South Africa. For example, the Child Witness Project — a project which supports children to testify in court about sexual offence crimes of which they have been victims or witnesses — still operates in five courts in the Western Cape. During her term as the Executive Director, RAPCAN was an applicant in a pioneering constitutional child rights case which aimed to reform the Sexual Offences Act to protect children from criminalization for normative behaviour. The Board determined that RAPCAN had fulfilled its mission and closed the organization in 2017. RAPCAN invested the remainder of its resources into legacy projects. For example, RAPCAN provided enough resources to the University of Cape Town (UCT) for a doctoral bursary for child abuse prevention research, in perpetuity. In addition, the trademark child rights graphic novel entitled *A Trolley Full of Rights* was translated into French and Portuguese, and was disseminated through a partner organization in other African countries. Christina was employed at the Children's Budget Unit (CBU) of the Institute for Democracy in Southern Africa (Idasa) between 2003 and 2006. The CBU focused on research and training to

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<sup>1</sup>[https://www.nationalplanningcommission.org.za/assets/Documents/Childrens%20NDP%20Process\\_August%202019.pdf](https://www.nationalplanningcommission.org.za/assets/Documents/Childrens%20NDP%20Process_August%202019.pdf)

analyse government's budgets and programmes intended to realise children's rights. In partnership with Shaamela Cassiem and 100 children from across South Africa, Christina co-developed a groundbreaking method in 2005 to guide children to monitor government budgets from a child rights perspective. This method is contained in the training manual entitled *Children Participating in Governance: Budget Monitoring from a Rights-based Framework*. The CBU also implemented this manual in Jamaica when commissioned by UNICEF. This manual was used as the foundation for working with children in 2017 and 2018 on the NDP review project — attesting to its continued relevance.

Christina worked as a development consultant between 2006 to 2008 and 2017 to present. She completed many significant commissions to advance children's rights. These include:

- Co-chaired an expert group meeting on *Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination and Violence Against the Girl Child* at the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre in Florence, Italy (2006)
- Conceptualised, designed, piloted and published a resource guide, facilitators' manual and accompanying participant worksheets with four government departments and civil society representatives in South African on *Addressing child labour*, commissioned by the International Labour Organization's (ILO) (2006)
- Co-developed models for youth empowerment and supporting adults in working from a rights framework with youth on issues of community safety. These initiatives are currently being tested in four African countries – Kenya, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia and Zimbabwe (2018-9)

Christina has qualifications in child psychology and librarianship. Her first job was as a child librarian in a public library in Belhar. Subsequent to which she worked with the Western Cape Community Partnerships Project as a Youth Service Coordinator in Belhar. Having spent most of her formative years in Belhar, she is deeply connected to this community. For the past 3 years (2017-2019), Christina conducted youth development programmes and mentorship in the library at Belhar High School, her alma mater, in a voluntary capacity.

Her Masters degree from the Environmental and Geographical Sciences Department at UCT is focused on gendered social networks of survival which profiles women's experiences in Manenberg and Guguletu. She is currently a PhD candidate at UCT in public law focusing on children's rights.