

CHILD ACTIVISM SOUTH AFRICA

Authors: Delreeze Moshopane, and Lucy Jamieson
with input from the ICCRP IAC members, Children's Institute, University of Cape Town, 2024.

Methods

This study aimed to find and map all the organizations that support **child activism** in South Africa. We looked at articles and books to understand what activism is and to create a checklist of what these organizations should be like. We searched the internet and social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to find these organizations. We also talked to experts and asked the organizations we found if they knew of any others.

Included:

- Organizations or projects that aim to promote children's rights
- Support for children under 18 to campaign for children's rights
- Active between January 2022 and July 2023
- Based in South Africa

Excluded:

- Organizations that fight for children's rights but do not work directly with children
- Organizations that work with children but do not campaign for change
- One-time or yearly events, for example, Youth Day celebrations

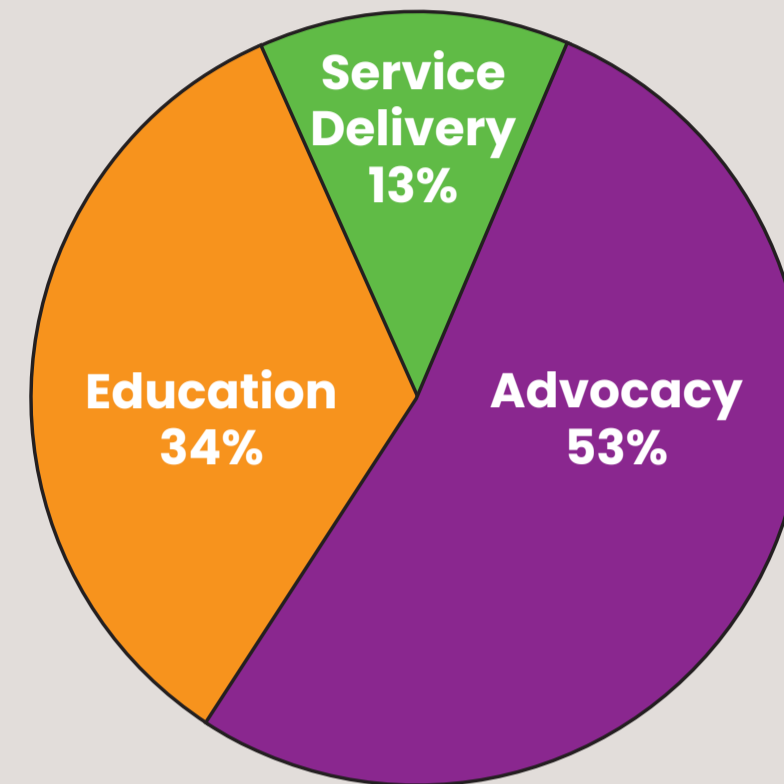
After deciding which organizations to include, we contacted them to learn more about what they do and how children are involved in their campaigns. We then organized all this information into a spreadsheet to create a map of these amazing child activist groups in South Africa.

Results

We found 62 organizations that have supported children's activism at some point. However, 36 organizations (58%) were not included in the study because they had no activity between January 2022 and July 2023. Some organizations could not provide detailed information on the age of their members, so we couldn't tell if they worked with children and young people. Only 26 organizations (42%) met all the criteria to be included in the study.

Primary function

All the organizations support children's activism. For some advocacy is their main job, while others also work on education, empowerment, or service delivery alongside supporting children's activism.



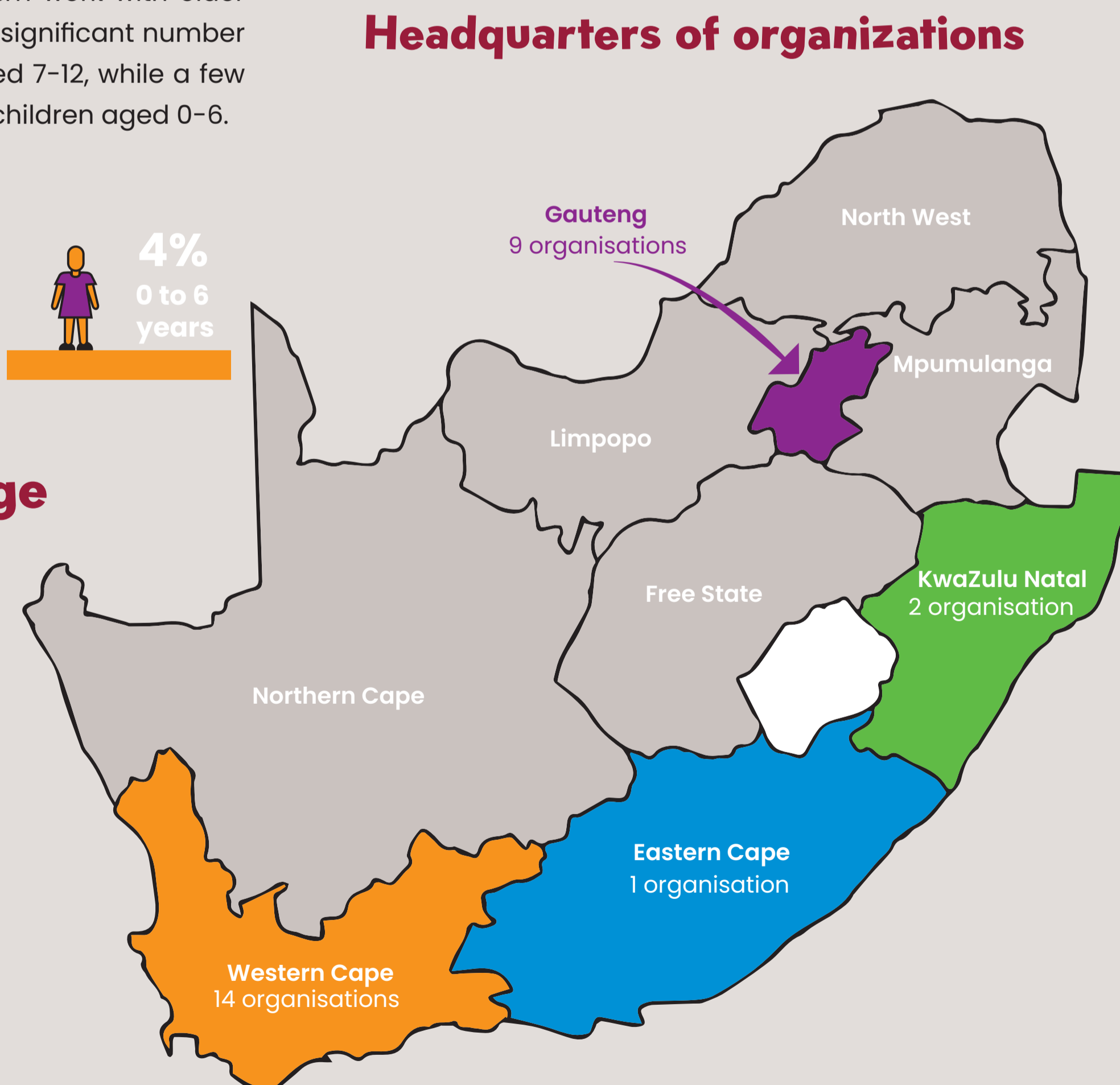
Age of children

We identified 26 active organizations that work with children and young people between the ages of 6 to 18. Almost half of the organizations that support child activism work with older children aged 13-18. A significant number work with children aged 7-12, while a few work with very young children aged 0-6.



Geographical coverage

Most organizations focus on local campaigns in a specific town or city. Some have a national or provincial focus, working on issues that affect a broader area. National organizations work on issues that affect children across the entire country. They might advocate for better laws related to child protection – the Children's Act, or on raising awareness about a national issue such as the state of school infrastructure.



Decisions about campaigns

All children have some influence over what the organisation campaigns for and how. But decision-making is often shared with adults. In some cases (42%) children and young people influence adult decisions and plans, in others they collaborate with adults. Few organizations (16%) allowed children to lead and run the campaigns themselves.

Children's participation in the organization's governance

Most organizations allow children to hold leadership positions in the organisation and have a say in decision-making about how it is run. However, about a fifth of the organisations do not involve children in governance decisions.



Campaign topics

Most organizations focus on multiple children's rights and social justice issues. The most common topics are safety and violence and civic engagement, this includes local campaigns and supporting young activists to engage with democratic processes. Education and health are also important focuses, along with environmental activism.

