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Kids Haven protects and cares for children in crisis, and empowers families, children and communities to build safe and caring spaces for all.

KIDS JUSTICE

Who it is for:

Anyone who approaches Kids Haven needing assistance with documentation.
Children living in residential care at Kids Haven who do not have documentation, including foreign, refugee, and children in need of asylum.

Where it takes place:

The Kids Justice team is based at the Kids Haven centre in Benoni. The team has undergone training to understand the pathways to citizenship and how to gather the necessary documentation to prove relationship.

Clients received assisted with citizenship and other documentation. Many cases are still ongoing. Kids Haven facilitates DNA testing, interviews, and family tracing in order to secure late birth registrations for citizens. Started with seed funding from the HCI Foundation in 2017 (which still continues to fund) and recently expanded with the Kinderfonds MAMAS impact funding, Kids Justice now includes a children's rights attorney, dedicated social worker, trainee paralegal and experienced community development worker. A two-day workshop in June 2025 was the second such workshop, in collaboration with Scalabrini (Cape Town) and other partners, aimed at training social workers to support clients needing to get their late birth registrations - an ongoing issue with backlogs at the Department spanning years. This is very important work as citizenship means an identity in society and the ability to get a job.

Key outcome:

To get birth certificates and/or Identity Documents for those who approach Kids Haven needing help.

The key reason for Kids Justice and our efforts to get documents is that we see citizenship as a key component of child safety or protection. Without a document you are invisible. Being invisible means you are most likely not to realise your rights - the right to protection, right to health, right to education, right to work, right to social support. All these rights are critical for your well-being. Without these rights, you are vulnerable to exploitation, abuse and hardship – even illiteracy, no healthcare, and no work.

We work closely with Home Affairs and have built a healthy working relationship. We get the requirements and a referral from Home Affairs to go to the National Health Laboratories for DNA testing if this is needed to determine parentage.

Documentation is a key output for every child admitted into care. Kids Haven is working with Scalabrini in Cape Town to request permanent residency for undocumented abandoned children or children who are extremely unlikely to secure documentation due to lost or no family connections.

Kids Haven covers the transport cost for those who are not able to afford the fare to and from the Department of Home Affairs. There is as a lot of travelling throughout the process. We verify the documents and book a DNA test. DNA tests are done by the National Health Laboratory Service or private laboratories. There is a cost of at least R1 685 for a DNA test. Clients must travel from their homes to Home Affairs for the late registration of birth application process, interview process, and documentation collection.

Additional outcome:

- Children who are documented can enter the formal schooling system.
- Parents who are documented can start looking for a job and providing for their families offering better care to their children.
- Youth can study and find employment as citizens of South Africa.
- Foreign, unaccompanied and refugee children will secure birth certificates and passports from their embassies. Kids Haven supports these children to return to families in their countries of origin.

Results in 2025:

The Kids Justice team assisted **103** clients in the community and in residential care during the year.

Cost:

Budget for the year is R918 721 which covers costs for documentation, transport, the team, DNA testing and medical costs.

- ID reprint R140.00
- Birth certificate reprint R75
- DNA test at Ampath Laboratories R1,685.00 each
- DNA test at Lancet laboratories R1,450.00 each
- DNA test at National Health Laboratories, R900.00 each

Funding:

The HCI Foundation and Kinderfonds MAMAS are primary funders of Kids Justice supporting the Kids Justice team.

How to help:

- **Funding for programme**

Donations towards transport costs are much appreciated.

Donations to cover the costs of an ID/birth certificate reprint: ID is R140.00 and birth certificate is R75.00 and DNA testing from R900 – R1685.

Donate any amount on a monthly or annual basis