



Safer cities, stronger starts

It's an important time for children
and teens.

August 2026

Issue No. 17

It is a big month for children and teens in South Africa, one that is busy, meaningful, and moving in the right direction.

The National Strategy to Accelerate Action for Children (NSAAC) is now public, which has been a milestone years in the making.

We joined Metro Lives Cape Town to talk about what it really takes to build safer cities for children and are look forward to the upcoming editions in Johannesburg and Durban.

The #WasteNot competition is in full swing, connecting household waste to child health in ways that are hard to ignore.

The MMS trial launched, bringing us closer to tackling malnutrition before it starts.

We're also marking World Breastfeeding Week and Women's Month, both reminders of how closely children's wellbeing is tied to the mothers and caregivers who hold them.

Lots to unpack. Let's get into it.

Hold My Hand



A new clinical trial could change how South Africa supports pregnant mothers

A landmark clinical trial has launched at the Wits RHI Shandukani Clinical Research Site in Johannesburg. The MMS SA 2025 Clinical Trial will test whether Multiple Micronutrient Supplementation (MMS) – a single tablet combining a range of vitamins and minerals – is more acceptable to pregnant women than the current standard iron and folic acid supplements given in South Africa's public health system.

Why it matters: poor maternal nutrition remains one of South Africa's biggest public health challenges, contributing to anaemia, low birth weight, premature birth and other complications for mothers and babies. Getting nutrition right during pregnancy is one of the most powerful ways to give a child the best possible start — right at the beginning of those critical first 1 000 days.

The trial is running with pregnant women receiving antenatal care at the Esselen Clinic, Hillbrow Community Health Centre and the Hugh Solomon Building at Wits RHI, and brought together the National Department of Health, academia, healthcare providers, regulators, development partners and civil society for the launch. Hold My Hand shared how partnerships like this one are already supporting maternal nutrition on the ground.

The trial is led by Wits RHI in partnership with Sight and Life Foundation, DG Murray Trust and Hold My Hand, with support from the Children's Investment Fund Foundation.

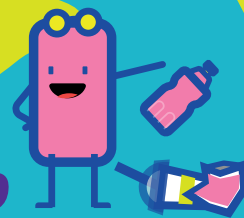
[More Information](#)



Competition

Submissions Open: **21 July 2026**

Closing Date: **21 August 2026**



#WasteNot Competition: Round one winners announced

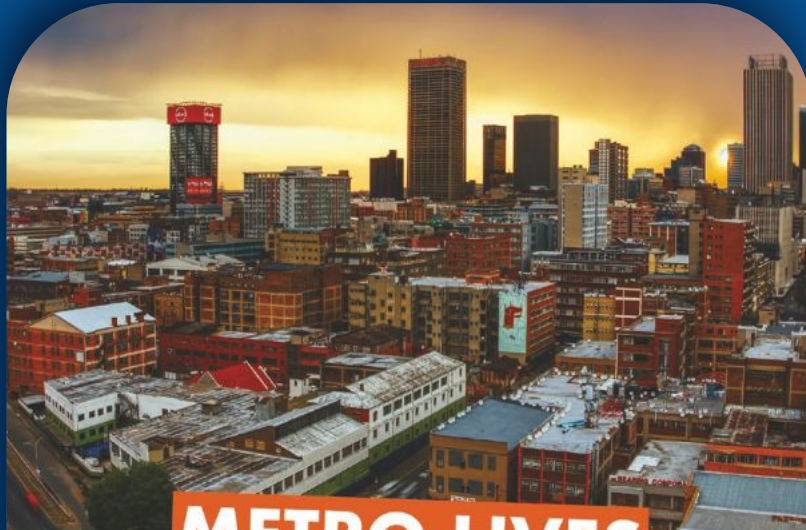
The creativity is already pouring in. Our first round of **#WasteNot** winners shows just how far a good idea and a bit of resourcefulness can go – from bags handmade out of breadbags, to a guitar built entirely by hand, to a garden growing in second-hand plastic bottles. And a special shout-out to a group of high school learners calling themselves the "Trash Titans," who've taken it upon themselves to clean up their school grounds.

Until 21 August 2026, we're inviting South Africans to get creative about reducing, reusing and recycling, because a healthy environment means healthier children. Poor waste removal and burning rubbish don't just pollute the air; they fuel the infections and stunting that hold children back.

Entries are open to everyone: send a photo or video of your waste-busting idea to **0600 411 111**, along with a voice note or text explaining what you made or did. Ten winners will share prizes from **R1 500** to **R5 000**.

Every bit of action counts. Join in at **#WasteNot**.

Submit on WhatsApp



METRO LIVES

City of Johannesburg

How can Johannesburg put children at the centre of its renewal?

Join us for a public conversation about the cities our children and young people deserve — and what municipalities must do to build them.

[Register to watch the live broadcast](#)

 **24 August 2026**  **Start Time: 18:00**

Hosted by



Local government decisions shape children's daily lives

Metro Lives is a series of public conversations in South Africa's metros about the role municipalities can play in creating spaces and conditions in which children and families can thrive. Held in an election year, it's not an election debate – it's an election challenge: to put children at the centre of local government planning and decision-making, and to give the public the tools to hold their local leaders to it.

Join us for Metro Lives: City of Johannesburg

Date: 24 August 2026
Time: 18:00 – 20:00 (SAST)
Live on Zoom

[Register here](#)

News From Our Community



Why higher alcohol taxes matter

In a new Daily Maverick article, David Harrison (DGMT CEO) challenges claims that higher alcohol taxes will hurt South Africa's economy. He argues that heavy drinking comes with major health, social and economic costs, while evidence shows that higher excise taxes can reduce harmful consumption and raise government revenue.

[Read More](#)

Major progress in childhood development

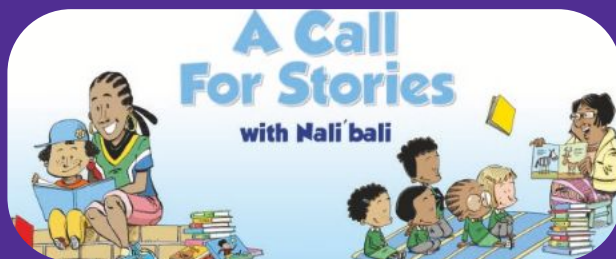
Ilifa Labantwana's 2025 annual report highlights major progress in early childhood development, from the country's largest-ever investment in early learning to the Bana Pele social compact and the new eCares data system.

Together, these shifts are helping build a more coordinated, data-driven ECD sector and expand access to quality early learning.

[Read Report](#)

A new way to learn about ECD safety

Ntataise has launched an interactive Safety Inspector Game to help ECD practitioners identify hazards, understand minimum safety standards and practise making safer decisions. Players help Sunshine ECD Centre prepare for an inspection through practical challenges, earning points and working towards Gold Certificate status.

[Play The Game](#)

Calling all storytellers

Nal'ibali is calling on writers to submit original children's stories in South Africa's indigenous languages. Stories should be written for children aged 6–11 and encourage reading for pleasure. The top story in each language will get R3 000, with R1 800 for runners-up. Submissions close on 31 August 2026.

[Submit Your Story](#)

Our Community

Meet some of our new community members!

We're growing, and it's beautiful to see more hearts and hands joining the journey.



The Tiger Brands Foundation (TBF) is a South African non-profit organisation dedicated to improving learner nutrition and educational outcomes across all nine provinces through sustainable, holistic school feeding programmes. Operating in partnership with schools, communities, government, and the private sector, TBF reaches more than 74 000 learners annually and has served over 157 million nutritious meals.



Bini Birdies is a South African child-centered social enterprise and placemaking organisation that focuses on early childhood development, playful learning environments, and literacy. "Bini" comes from zimbini, meaning "two" in isiXhosa, representing partnership, connection, and the growth built through relationships.



Sando Bursary Trust is a registered Public Benefit Organisation committed to making tertiary education accessible to deserving South African students who face financial barriers. Through mentorship, guidance, and personal development, they help students succeed academically and professionally.

Join Our Community

Stay connected

Get the latest updates, inspiring stories, and ways to make a difference by following us on social media.

Together, we're creating a brighter future for South Africa's children and teens. Thank you for holding hands with us on this incredible journey.

Want to share your latest news?
Drop an email at news@holdmyhand.org.za



Together, we will change our future.

Thank you for being a vital part of our mission to put children at the center of our future. Your involvement makes all the difference!