

6 FAMILY LIFE

The apartheid economic system is based on cheap black migrant labour for the mines and factories. Millions of Africans are obliged to spend the whole of their working lives as contract labourers, denied the right to live with their families.

The breadwinner's dependants are left behind in the rural areas, often in distress and poverty. African children in these areas are likely to see their fathers only once a year. Often the mothers too go to work, leaving the children with grandparents or friends. This may lead to the breakup of families and many social and personal problems. Small children are commonly left in the care of older sisters, who have to take family responsibilities at an early age.

Most white children, on the other hand, live with their parents in spacious homes, usually with gardens and servants. They enjoy a prosperity unknown to blacks, because of the very low level of wages paid to black workers.



Grandmother and grandchild

Photo: Peter Magubane



An Indian family

Photo: Abisag Tüllman

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A Coloured family

Photo: Steve Bloom



African mothers and children in Crossroads

Photo: Steve Bloom