



University of Pretoria
School of Health Systems and Public Health

The health and living conditions of children in child-headed households in Siteki, Swaziland

By

Samantha Sibusisiwe Earnshaw

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Supervisor: Dr. Zola Njongwe

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Dedication

I, [Name], hereby declare that this dissertation, which I hereby submit for the degree of [Degree], was written by me and that all the material contained therein is my own work and that all the material contained therein is my own work and that all the material contained therein is my own work and that all the material contained therein is my own work.

Dedication

To the memory of my father Samuel Sydney Earnshaw

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of [Degree]

Done at Pretoria, on the 11/11/2006



Declaration

I, Samantha Earnshaw, declare that this dissertation, which I hereby submit for the degree in Master of Public Health (MPH) at the School of Health Systems and Public Health, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not previously been submitted for other degrees or diploma purposes at any other institution. All sources used have been quoted and acknowledged by complete references.

Student's signature: _____

Supervisor's signature: _____

Date: _____

Signed at: _____

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Abstract

In Swaziland it is estimated that approximately 10-15 % of the entire population will be orphans and other vulnerable children by 2010 and that one in ten households in the country today are child-headed because of the impact of HIV and AIDS. As the epidemic continues to devastate families and affect incomes, the traditional safety nets of family and community are stressed and assistance to these children is infrequent at best. The focus of this study is to determine the health and living conditions of children living in these types of households. The population comprised 41 heads of household, caring for 97 siblings among them. Data was collected in a single period between the months of February and April 2007 using the Convenience sampling and employing a semi-structured questionnaire. Children were generally physically healthy, despite not receiving adequate food or balanced diets. Most had access to health facilities or at least sources of medication. Education assistance exists but is limited and abuse was generally not reported due to fear of reprisal. There is a dearth of information on adolescents in Swaziland, the primary caregivers in most child-headed households. Children are not actively consulted and encouraged to participate in helping to solve the problems they are affected by. There is a lack of coordination between caregiver organisations, leading to ineffective and inefficient service provision for this particular vulnerable group. This report gives recommendations for ways in which to begin to overcome these issues, as well as suggestions for further research to better understand, prevent and assist child-headed households.



Abbreviations

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AMICAALL	Alliance of Mayors' Initiative for Community Action on AIDS at the Local Level
AU	The African Union
CBO	Community-based Organisation
CHH	Child-headed Household
CRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
ECHO	European Commission's Humanitarian Aid Office
FBO	Faith-based Organisation
FLAS	Family Life Association of Swaziland
HH	Head of Household
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
KaGogo	Community Social Centres ("Grandmother's house")
Lutsango	Lutsango IwakaNgwane Traditional Women's Regiment
LL	Lihlombe Lekukhalela – Community Counsellors
MoHSW	Ministry of Health and Social Welfare
NERCHA	National Emergency Response Council on HIV/AIDS
NCP	Neighbourhood Care Point
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation (local and international)
NPA	National Plan of Action for Orphans and Vulnerable Children
OVC	Orphans and other Vulnerable Children
PHC	Primary Health Care
PSS	Psychosocial Support
RHM	Rural Health Motivator
SOS	SOS Children's Villages
TIBIYO	Tibiyo Taka Ngwane (The King's Trust Fund)
TINKUNDLA	Swaziland Constituencies
TB	Tuberculosis
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WV	World Vision