

**LISTENING TO THE UNHEARD STORIES OF CHILDREN  
AFFECTED BY HIV AND AIDS IN A BEREAVEMENT PROCESS IN  
THE MAMELODI TOWNSHIP OF TSHWANE:  
A NARRATIVE RESEARCH STUDY**

by

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## DECLARATION

I, Gaefele Simon Mailula, hereby declare that “**Listening to the unheard stories of children affected by HIV and AIDS in a bereavement process in Mamelodi Township of Tshwane: A narrative research study**”, is my own work and that all the sources I used or quoted have been indicated and properly acknowledged by means of complete academic references. This work has not previously been submitted – in part or in total – to any other department or university for the purpose of obtaining a degree.

GAEFELE SIMON MAILIUA

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Children living in the Mamelodi Township of Tshwane and affected by HIV and AIDS have their own unique challenges they face everyday. These challenges include the poverty context of the township and the stigmatising effect of the community towards these children, compounded by very difficult extended family circumstances and also the struggle with their own identity crisis in the specific developmental phases in which these children find themselves.

The focus of this study was to listen to the stories of children affected by HIV and AIDS in the midst of the bereavement process. The emotional responses of children affected by HIV and AIDS within child-headed households experiencing difficulties were identified and explored.

A narrative research design was used to capture a chapter in the life stories of three (3) children affected by HIV and AIDS as well as a caregiver who died of AIDS before I completed this study. Data was collected by means of individual interviews, group sessions, and letters which the children wrote to God and the field notes in the form of journal entries written by the researcher, as well as individual feedback and collaboration sessions with the specific caregivers. Data was analysed by means of several phases of theme analysis after which - through a final analysis - psycho-social, emotional and economic response themes were identified.

This study found that children affected by HIV/AIDS experience complex emotions in response to their plight. The strongest emotional response themes that emerged, which were reported by all the children were frustration, happiness and love. The more negative emotional responses were mentioned in relation to the feeling that they were being stigmatised in school as well as in their community.



## OPSOMMING

Kinders wat deur HIV en Vigs ge-afekteer word en woonagtig is in die Mamelodi Nedersetting in Tshwane, word daagliks deur unieke uitdagings gekonfronteer. Hierdie uitdagings sluit in die armoede konteks van die nedersetting en die stigmatiseringseffek van die gemeenskap teenoor hierdie kinders wat vererger word deur die baie moeilike opset in die uitgebreide familie, asook hul identiteitsstryd binne die spesifieke ontwikkelingsfases waarin hierdie kinders hulself bevind.

Die fokus van hierdie studie was om te luister na die stories van kinders wat deur HIV en VIGS ge-afekteer word midde-in die rouproses. Die emosionele response van kinders ge-afekteer deur HIV en VIGS binne kinderbegeleide huishoudings wat probleme ondervind, was geïdentifiseer en ondersoek.

'n Narratiewe navorsingsontwerp was aangewend om 'n hoofstuk in die lewensverhale van drie (3) kinders wat deur HIV en VIGS ge-afekteer is, vas te vang, asook die van 'n versorger wat aan VIGS gesterf het voordat ek die studie voltooi het. Data insameling het plaasgevind deur middel van individuele onderhoude, groepsessies, briewe wat die kinders aan God gerig het, asook navorsingsnotas in die veld deur die navorser in die vorm van joernaalinskrywings, sowel as individuele terugvoer en samewerkingssessies met die betrokke versorgers. Data was ontleed deur verskillende fases van tema ontleding, waarna daar - deur middel van 'n finale analise - psigo-sosiale, emosionele en ekonomiese respons temas geïdentifiseer was.

Hierdie studie kom tot die gevolgtrekking dat kinders wat deur HIV en VIGS ge-afekteer word, komplekse emosies ervaar in reaksie op hulle situasie. Die sterkste emosionele respons temas wat na vore gekom het soos deur die kinders gerapporteer is, was frustrasie, geluk en liefde. Die meer negatiewe emosionele response was vermeld in verband met die gevoel dat hulle by die skool sowel as in die gemeenskap gestigmatiseer word.



## KEY TERMS

Children affected by HIV/AIDS

People living with AIDS (PLWA)

Bereavement process

The Church

God's presence

Post-modernism

Social Constructionism

Post-foundational Practical Theology

Narrative Approach

Co-researchers

Psycho-social and emotional themes

Economic aspects

## SLEUTELTERME

Kinders ge-afekteer deur HIV en VIGS

Persone met Vigs (PMV)

Rouproses

Die Kerk

God se Teenwoordigheid

Postmodernisme

Sosiaal-Konstruksionisme

'Postfoundational' Praktiese Teologie

Narratiewe Benadering

Mede-navorsers

Psigo-sosiale en emosionele temas

Ekonomiese aspekte

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