

Government's social development response to children made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS: Identifying gaps in policy and budgeting

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According to figures released by the Department of Health of South Africa in 2005, an estimated 6.29-6.57 million people were HIV positive in 2004. South Africa is home to approximately 17.7 million children. HIV/AIDS produces and compounds different forms of vulnerability among children. First, children are being made directly vulnerable by infection (mostly caused by mother to child transmission) and related ill-health. The number and proportion of infections due to child abuse is increasing. Secondly, HIV/AIDS is causing vulnerability among children by leaving them orphaned. Based on calculations of the Actuarial Society of South Africa (ASSA), there are roughly 1 million children in South Africa who have lost a mother (maternal orphans) and around 2.13 million who have lost a father. It is estimated that about half of all orphaned children have lost parents due to AIDS-related mortality. Projections derived from the ASSA models predict that by 2015, in the absence of any major treatment or behaviour change, roughly 3.05 million children under 18 will be maternally orphaned and 4.51 million paternally orphaned the majority of deaths being AIDS related. This paper analyses the policy and budget action of one government department - social development - in relation to assistance for children made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS. The paper comprises four sections. Section one explains the service delivery role of the social development department in relation to caring for children made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS. Section two sketches the child rights and legal context underpinning social development service delivery to vulnerable children. Section three provides an overview of the policy framework developed to coordinate and guide social development service delivery to children made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS and identifies its shortcomings. Section four focuses on budgeting for service delivery to children made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS.

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