

**A CASE STUDY ANALYSING THE DROPOUT RATE OF CHILDREN WHO ARE
HEADS OF HOUSEHOLDS AT MANDELA VILLAGE IN TSHWANE MUNICIPALITY,
GAUTENG PROVINCE**

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Declaration

By submitting this assignment electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the owner of the copyright thereof (unless to the extent explicitly otherwise stated) and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

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Abstract

The study was about assessing the dropout rate of children who are heads of households at Mandela Village in Tshwane Municipality, Gauteng Province. Given the number of orphans who are escalating in each year as a result of HIV/AIDS pandemic especially in the Sub Saharan region, the author's intention was to analyse what are the causes for these children to drop out from school, and what can be done to minimize the dropout rate of these children.

All the participants were the children who are heads of households and residents of Mandela Village, East of Mamelodi Township, and Pretoria. Data was collected through in-depth interviews with thirty-one children who are heads of households, as well as with two educators in schools where these children are attending school or were attending school. This was followed by two focus groups with the same children. The intention of using the focus group was to investigate the issues raised during the interviews and to establish an understanding of how the children who are heads of households want to improve their own circumstances.

The study findings observed that there were no strong linkages in assisting children who are heads of households between the Department of Social Development and Department of Education in the North Rand Region, Gauteng. Other findings were that the schools have no support programmes or teachers assigned to assist these children to cope with schoolwork. Due to multiplicity of responsibilities they are faced with, they are not coping with their studies.

The findings also identified that the children who are heads of households tend to drop out of school from grade ten onwards. From these children, majority are girls who are older than fourteen years old. The main reason cited by the girls who drop out of school is pregnancy, and for the boys they mentioned inability to cope with their studies because of the added responsibilities that forced them to seek employment and find means to put food on the table. Other findings were that some of these children were also lacking practical skills in home management.

Opsomming

Die studie handel oor die bepaling van die aantal kinders, wat hoofde is van huishoudings, wat skool verlaat by Mandela Village in Tshwane Munisipaliteit, Gauteng, Provinsie. Met in aggenome die jaarlikse toename in getal weeskinders as gevolg van die HIV/AIDS pandemie, hoofsaaklik in die Sub-Sahara streek, was dit die skrywer se intensie om die oorsake van hierdie kinders se skool verlating te bepaal en wat gedoen kan word om die tempo van skoolverlating van hierdie kinders te minimiseer.

Al die deelnemers was die kinders wat hoofde is van huishoudings en wat inwoners is van Mandela Village, Oos van Mamelodi Dorpsgebied, Pretoria. Data is versamel deur in diepte onderhoude met een en dertig kinders, wat hoofde is van huishoudings en twee onderwysers in die skole, waar dieselfde kinders skool gaan of skool gegaan het. Dit is opgevolg deur twee fokus groepe met dieselfde kinders. Die intensie van die fokus groepe was om die kwessies wat aan die lig gekom het tydens die onderhoude na te vors en insig te verkry oor hoe die kinders wat hoofde is van huishoudings, hulle eie omstandighede wil verbeter.

Die waarneming van die studie se bevindings was dat daar geen sterk verband is in die ondersteuning van die kinders wat hoofde is van huishoudings, tussen die Departement van Sosiale Ontwikkeling en die Departement van Onderwys in die Noord Rand Streek, Gauteng nie. Ander bevindinge was dat skole het geen ondersteunings programme of aangewese onderwysers om hierdie kinders by te staan om met die skool werk te kan byhou nie. Hierdie kinders kan nie byhou met hulle skoolwerk nie, as gevolg van die veelvoudige verantwoordelikhede waarmee hulle te doen kry.

Die bevindinge bepaal dat die kinders wat hoofde is van huishoudings, geneig is om die skool te verlaat vanaf graad 10. Van hierdie kinders, hoofsaaklik dogters, is ouer as veertien jaar. Die hoof rede vir die dogters om die skool te verlaat is swangerskap en vir die seuns die onvermoë om hulle studies by te hou, as gevolg van meer verantwoordelikhede, wat hulle dwing om werk te gaan soek en om middele te vind om kos op die tafel te sit. Ander bevindinge was ook dat sommige van hierdie kinders nie die vaardighede het in tuiste bestuur nie.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Motivation of the study

Worldwide it is estimated that there are more than 15 million children under the age of eighteen who have been orphaned as a result of AIDS. More than 12 million of these children live in Sub-Saharan Africa, where it is estimated that 9% of all children have lost one parent to AIDS (Fredriksson, et al: 2008). As HIV infections become increasingly common among the adult population, it is expected that within this decade millions of children will lose parents to AIDS. By 2010, it is predicted that there will be around 15.7 million AIDS orphans in Sub-Saharan Africa (Fredriksson et al: 2008).

According to (Meintjies, Leatt & Berry, 2005: 67-69) and in Meintjies et al (2006) there are over 18 million children in South Africa. Children constitute over one third (39%) of the country's population. Most children are living in either KwaZulu-Natal (21%) or the Eastern Cape (17%). A further 15% live in Gauteng and 14% in Limpopo Province. Of all children, thirty nine (39%) are currently aged between six and twelve years old, while one third (33%) of all children are younger than six. These gender and age patterns apply nationally as well as provincially.

In presenting a demographic profile of South Africa's children, a breakdown by population groups has been included although such breakdowns are only useful when monitoring the extent to which inequalities still prevail. A detailed breakdown is presented in Table 1.1- 1.4.

Table 1.1: The number and proportion of children living in South Africa in 2004 and 2005, by Province.

Province	2004		2005	
	Number	%	Number	%
Eastern Cape	3,215,848	18	3,137,425	17
Free State	1,063,842	6	1,114,138	6
Gauteng	2,641,734	15	2,656,467	15
KwaZulu- Natal	3,792,376	21	3,841,255	21
Limpopo	2,615,605	15	2,614,998	14
Mpumalanga	1,307,862	7	1,351,142	7
Northern Cape	337,193	2	337,494	2
North West	1,488,648	8	1,461,484	8
Western Cape	1,558,710	9	1,572,127	9
South Africa	18,021,815	100	18,086,530	100

Source: Statistics South Africa (StatsSA: 2005 & 2006).

Table 1.2: The number and proportion of children living in South Africa in 2004 and 2005, by population group.

Population group	2004		2005	
	Number	%	Number	%
African	15,070,504	84	15,171,869	84
Coloured	1,533,496	9	1,520,850	8
Indian	310,162	2	345,712	2
White	1,098,909	6	1,037,661	6
South Africa	18,013,071	100	18,086,530	100

Source: (StatsSA: 2005 & 2006).

Table 1.3: The number and proportion of children living in South Africa in 2004 and 2005, by age.

Age	2004		2005	
	Number	%	Number	%
0-5 years	5,949,840	33	6,047,373	33
6-12 years	7,124,436	40	6,998,372	39
13-17 years	4,947,539	27	5,040,785	28
South Africa	18,021,815	100	18,086,530	100

Source: (StatsSA: 2005 & 2006).

Table 1.4 The number and proportion of children living in South Africa in 2004 and 2005, by gender.

Sex	2004		2005	
	Number	%	Number	%
Female	8,525,502	47	8,595,335	48
Male	9,495,370	53	9,487,940	52
South Africa	18,020,872	100	18,083,275	100

Source: (StatsSA: 2005 & 2006).

StatsSA (2006) indicated that in 2005 there were approximately 3.4 million orphans in South Africa. A detailed breakdown on the profile of orphans was presented in Table 1.5. This was equal to 18.6% of all children in South Africa at the time. Half of all orphans were found to be resident in two Provinces: 864,643 (23%) in KwaZulu-Natal: and a further 796,525 (25%) in the Eastern Cape (StatsSA: 2005).

Table 1.5 The total number and proportion of orphans living in South Africa in 2004 and 2005.

Province	2004		2005	
	Total orphans Number	%	Maternal orphans Number	%
Eastern Cape	715,712	22	796,525	25
Free State	205,562	19	266,850	24
Gauteng	372,173	14	300,598	11
KwaZulu-Natal	827,754	22	864,643	23
Limpopo	407,389	16	429,652	16
Mpumalanga	229,631	18	247,393	18
Northern Cape	51,744	15	44,159	13
North West	309,825	21	274,018	19
Western Cape	166,546	11	136,667	9
South Africa	3,286,336	18	3,360,505	19

Sources: (StatsSA: 2005 & 2006).

There is much concern that the number of children who are heads of households will increase rapidly due to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. While there is currently little evidence to support this notion, and it seems that many such households exist only temporarily (Meintjies & Giese: 2004; Hill, Ardington & Hosegood: 2005). It is nonetheless crucial to monitor their prevalence and nature.

StatsSA (2005) enabled an analysis of children who are heads of households but the findings must be treated with extreme caution because of the small sub-sample size, and the absence of confidence intervals. The survey suggested that there were 118,564 children living in 66,556 households in July 2005. The proportion of children who are heads of households relative to those living in adult headed household is small: 0.7% of children were found to be heads of households. Over three quarters of children who are heads of household were located in only three Provinces at the time of the survey: Limpopo (39%), the Eastern Cape (23%), and

KwaZulu-Natal (13%). Detailed breakdown is presented in Table 1.6. (Stats SA: 2005 & 2006).

Table 1.6: The number and proportion of children who are heads of household in South Africa in 2004 & 2005

Province	2004		2005	
	Child-headed households Number	%	Child-headed households Number	%
Eastern Cape	28,718	0.9	27,280	0.9
Free State	3,773	0.4	5,306	0.2
Gauteng	1,850	0.1	4,590	0.2
KwaZulu-Natal	11,044	0.3	15,152	0.4
Limpopo	36,438	1.4	45,795	1.8
Mpumalanga	7,197	0.6	5,945	0.4
Northern Cape	14,680	1.0	9,156	0.6
North West	98	0.0	474	0.1
Western Cape	626	0.0	1,580	0.1
South Africa	104,423	0.6	118,564	0.7

Sources: (StatsSA: 2005 & 2006).

Income and poverty levels are important because they indicate how many children may not be able to have their basic needs met. As money is needed to access a range of services, income and poverty is often closely related to poor health, reduced access to education and physical environments that compromise personal safety. Child poverty in South Africa is exceedingly high. In 2005, two-thirds (11.9 million) of children in South Africa lived in households that had an income of R1, 200 per month or less. This measure includes all sources of income, including social grants. Rates of child poverty differ across the country. Limpopo Province has the highest rate of child poverty, 83% in 2005; the Eastern Cape Province followed closely at 80%. KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga and the North West Provinces have higher rates of child poverty than the national average. Nearly all poor children (95%) in South Africa are Africans (StatsSA: 2005 & 2006).

Detailed breakdown is presented in Table 1.7.

Table 1.7: The number and proportion of children living in income poverty in South Africa in 2004 & 2005

Province	2004		2005	
	Poor children		Poor children	
	Number	%	Number	%
Eastern Cape	2,533,770	78.8	2,516,541	80.2
Free State	721,868	67.9	729,756	65.5
Gauteng	1,170,640	44.3	1,141,275	43.0
KwaZulu-Natal	2,623,460	69.2	2,651,938	69.0
Limpopo	2,118,486	81.0	2,169,415	83.0
Mpumalanga	910,900	69.6	938,461	69.5
Northern Cape	1,071,098	63.1	201,093	59.6
North West	212,735	72.0	1,056,026	72.3
Western Cape	542,192	34.8	567,235	36.1
South Africa	11,905,147	66.1	11,971,741	66.2

Sources : (StatsSA: 2005 & 2006)

Given the predicted rise in the population suffering from the HIV/AIDS epidemic, it is a foregone conclusion that the number of children who are heads of households in South Africa is likely to increase in the coming years. It is therefore necessary to ensure that children who are heads of households are given special attention and care.

It is the purpose of this study to make a contribution towards understanding the challenges faced by children who are heads of households who are either at school or who have dropped out of school, as the author believes that education is a sustainable key to addressing poverty, unemployment and crime in the country.

1.2 Problem statement

There seems to be consensus that children who are heads of households tend to take a parental responsibility. Such responsibility includes leaving school to work either as child labour, steal or doing anything that will earn them money to support other children in the household. Based on this

view, it would be interesting to analyse what are the causes for the children who are heads of households to drop out of school, and what can be done to minimize the dropout rate of these children. The study investigated the link between socio-economic conditions as a result of being children who are heads of households and their dropout rate at schools. The study focused on children who are heads of households only.

1.3 Definition of concepts

Child-headed household: A child-headed household is when a child who is younger than 18 years old take over as the head of the household and fend for him/her and his/her siblings without any adult to look after them (StatsSA: 2005).

1.4 Goal and Objectives of the study

1.4.1 Goals of the study

The goal of the study was to analyse the causes for the children who are heads of households to drop out of school, and what can be done to minimize their dropout rate in Mandela Village, Pretoria.

1.4.2 Objectives of the study

Objectives of the study were done by analysing;

- The support children who are heads of households are receiving from government and civil society.
- The access that children who are heads of households have to foster care parents and mentors.
- The age at which children are left by their parents to head households and its influence on their dropout rate at school.
- Whether there is any relationship between the gender of children who are heads of households and their dropout rate at school.

1.5 Value of the study

Children have been robbed of their childhood because they have been left with no choice but to head households. Orphans have become parents in their teenage years because they lost their

parents at an early age due to HIV/AIDS. The study will forge a way of guiding different role players in the community to understand the difficulties and challenges that force children who are heads of households to drop out of school, and what can be done to minimize the dropout rate of these children.

1.6 Methods of investigation

Details of the methods used are outlined in Chapter Three of this study. Briefly the methods used include the following:

1.6.1 Research design

The researcher used a qualitative research design. A qualitative research design is a study that collects some type of non-numerical data to answer a research question (Christenssen, 2007:39). In this study non-numerical data collected included the observed behaviour and statements made by the children who are heads of households and their educators during the interviews and the focus group discussions.

1.6.2 Method of Data Collection

The researcher used in-depth interviewing as a method to collect data. The purpose of choosing in-depth interviewing method was to learn about the children who are heads of household's perspective and experiences so that the researcher could propose appropriate interventions and models for these children. In-depth interviews refer to a conversation between the researcher and the participant with the aim of collecting detailed information about that person, and their perspective and experience of a particular issue (Benjamin: 2003).

As a tool the researcher used interview schedules. The interview schedules were comprised of open-ended questions and closed-ended questions. According to Huysamen (1994) supported by Christensen (2007) open-ended questions allow respondents to answer in any way they please, whereas closed-ended questions requires respondents to choose from a limited number of predetermined responses.

The interview schedules with the children who are heads of households are annexed as Appendix A and interview schedules with educators where these children are attending school or were attending school are annexed as Appendix C.

The interview schedules were followed by conducting focus groups with children who are heads of households only with the intention to gain their in-depth opinions and suggestions on what they indicated as needs and challenges (Huysamen, 1994 & Christensen, 2007).

1.6.3 Unit of analysis

The unit of analysis were children who are heads of households in Mandela Village which is an extension of Mamelodi Township within Tshwane Municipality in the Gauteng Province of South Africa.

1.6.4 Data analysis

The data analysed in the study was gathered from the interviews and focus group discussions. The researcher kept all the transcripts of the data collected during the study. All the data gathered during the research was analysed by reading through all the transcripts, and made brief notes about what the respondents said about different focus areas of the research. On the transcripts, the researcher gave page numbers and paragraph numbers so as to find things in the interview easily. This was followed by a brief summary of the interviews. Addition of themes that the researcher came across in the interview through follow up questions and information the respondents offered were included. The researcher also placed the different issues raised around each broad theme into categories by naming a category and counting how many times reference was made in that category of response (Benjamin : 2003).

1.7 Ethical issues

According to Britannica Concise Encyclopedia (1:2007) ethics is a branch of philosophy concerned with the nature of ultimate value and the standards by which human actions are judged to be right or wrong. Based on the ethical principles, the researcher has applied the following principles in the study:

- Informed consent was received from all respondents beforehand.
- Their participation in the study was voluntary.
- Confidentiality was guaranteed.
- Respondents were treated with respect, fairness and honesty.
- Emotional and cultural values were considered.
- Professionalism was maintained at all times.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEWED

Prior to the research, relevant literature and studies that focused on the challenges of children who are heads of households, the support that is given to them, their coping strategies, their education and educational needs was studied.

In terms of this chapter, literature reviewed will be analysed under the following themes:

- Challenges and needs of children who are heads of households.
- Their coping strategies.
- Support given to children who are heads of households.
- Education of children who are heads of households.

2.1 Challenges and needs of children who are heads of households.

According to Foster, et al (1997:159) in their study in Manicaland, Zimbabwe, children who are heads of households experience challenges ranging from high living costs specifically in urban areas where food, accommodation and education costs are high. They further indicated that these children are sometimes evicted from their properties for non-payment of rent. They concluded in their study by arguing that children who are heads of households are moving in different directions with boys becoming street children or leaving to work in rural farms and girls taking up low paid domestic employment.

According to the International HIV/AIDS Alliance (2005:46-47), in a situational analysis study that was conducted at Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh States in India, came with the following findings:

- Children who are heads of households are pushed into adult roles and forced to assume greater responsibility in their families, their education is affected and has a negative impact on their physical and mental health.

- There is lack of support from relatives and families.
- Some are vulnerable to several forms of abuse and they suffer from hunger and illness.
- Problems are further aggravated by the stigma and discrimination they face in the community, church etc.

According to the Policy Framework for orphans and other vulnerable children made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS: South Africa (2005), the socio-economic impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic has resulted in families and community and social disintegration because of the inability of the extended family to provide these children with basic requirements such as shelter, food, medical care, education, love and support. The International HIV/AIDS Alliance (2005:46-47) supported the Policy Framework for orphans and other vulnerable children made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS: South Africa (2005) findings and agreed that there is lack of support from relatives and families.

Maqoko & Dreyer (2006:717) adding to other studies, indicated that children who are heads of households suffer from the psychological trauma of witnessing parent's illness, dealing with death, absence of adult guidance and mentoring, difficulty in obtaining food and shelter and the threat of child prostitution and child labour. Policy Framework for orphans and other vulnerable children made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS: South Africa (2005) cited that the fear of disclosure and making informed decisions especially among women is a challenge for these children to cope.

Maqoko & Dreyer (2006:717) are supported by Tolfree (2004) who further argued that these children refer to the problems in not having anyone to speak up for them if they are falsely accused of an offence or misbehaviour or if people take advantage of them as traumatic. They find themselves in a weak position with no parent figure to mediate on their behalf.

Lack of basic skills and knowledge has also been identified as a challenge facing children who are heads of households. According to Tolfree (2004), these children do not have the opportunities to learn or have access to cultural knowledge that usually comes from parents and families. To him, this can be linked to the exploitation that these children can face with relatives.

Ayieko (2007:10-12) in the study at Kisumu & Siaya district in Ghana further confirmed the above challenges.

Acord (2001) also supporting the International HIV/AIDS Alliance (2005:46-47), argued that girls who are heads of households are particularly vulnerable because any man, who wants to, can enter their shelter and force them into sexual relationships. These girls do not tell anyone because no one would defend them. Acord (2001) further argued that some girls enter prostitution to buy food and pay for school fees or medicine for their siblings. Sometimes they give themselves to older men in order to live under protection, and this often leads to unwanted pregnancies and or HIV/AIDS.

Boys can be denied agreed money for labouring work or paid half the wages given to adults for equivalent work. They are powerless to demand their rights (Acord: 2001; Tolfree: 2004).

From the literature reviewed on challenges faced by children who are heads of households, it is evident that the challenges are common in most of the countries. The difference is how the children who are heads of households are assisted to cope with these challenges. The next section will focus on the coping mechanism of children who are heads of households.

2.2 The coping mechanism of children who are heads of households

According to Johnson (2000:7) orphaned children try to stick together as much as possible, they try to keep contact with their external families who often come and visit them regularly. Their grandparents house some; other support is received from caregivers, guardians and volunteers.

Other coping strategies include civil society interventions in coming up with social recreational therapy camps to assist children who are heads of households to cope in their environment by involving them in recreational activities to build their self esteem, self confidence and trust. As part of these camps practical skills training in household management, parenting etc are given (Germann: 2000).

2.3 Support given to children who are heads of households

In this section support given to children who are heads of households will be grouped as support from Government, Non-Governmental Organisations and the Private Sector.

2.3.1 Support from Government

According to South African Government Services (SAGS:2008), products and services that are relevant to children who are less fortunate and require special attention are clustered under a "Single

Window" program called Bana Pele. The services and products include food security, psychosocial services, free health care at primary health care clinics, free and safe scholar transport to those learners who live more than 5 km away from the nearest school and a free uniform in their first year of school. They also receive the benefits of a school feeding scheme and exemption from schools fees.

It is further argued that all children between the ages of 0-6 in Gauteng get access to free Primary Health Care (PHC) at clinics and hospitals run by the Department of Health. Children between the ages of 7 and 14 get access to free Primary Health Care

at clinics only. The South African Year Book (2007/08) further explained that needy children, whose parents or foster parents qualify for a social grant, receive either the Child Support Grant, Care Dependency Grant if the child needs full-time care because of physical or mental disability or Foster Care Grant from the Department of Social Development (SAGS:2008). It is also explained that children who are in Grade one in school designated as Quintile 1 by the Department of Education receive a free uniform in their first year of school. They also receive the benefits of a school feeding scheme, and exemption from schools fees. Children in schools not designated as Quintile 1 may apply for and receive school fees exemption; however this is dependent on a means test, as defined by the Governing Body of the school.

Children who live further than 5 kilometres from their school may apply for scholar transport, via the principal of their school (SAGS: 2008). There are a number of grants that can be accessed by children who are heads of households, with specific guidelines on how to access them, and they are listed below.

2.3.1.1 Care Dependency Grant

Care Dependency Grant is a monthly payment from Government to a parent, legal guardian or foster parent of a child under the age of eighteen (18) years with severe disabilities (mentally or physically) and in need of full time and special care. The child must be tested at the age of six years to find out on whether he or she can attend a special school (SAGS: 2008) supported by (AIDSbuzz: 2008).

Guidelines are also provided on how a caregiver can be eligible for the grant, and they are:

- The applicant needs to be a South African citizen or a permanent resident and live in South Africa.

- Be a legal guardian of the child, if not the parent and be given permission by Commissioner of the children's court to look after the child.
- The child should be less than eighteen (18) years old.
- The medical report must confirm the disability of the child.
- The caregiver can provide the child with adequate accommodation and sufficient food and clothing, and make sure the child receive treatment.
- The child remains in the care of the caregiver and is not permanently looked after in a government hospital or treatment centre.
- The caregiver is not receiving any other kind of grant for the child.
- The caregiver meets the requirement of a Means Test.

It is also explained that the requirements of a Means Test includes;

- Any income the child may receive from other sources must be less than R15 000 a year.
- The caregiver must not earn more than R12, 800 if is a single parent or legal guardian or foster parent, and if married the total income must not exceed R225, 600 per year and the application should include proof in the form of bank statements.
- The caregiver must have an official thirteen digit bar-coded South African Identity Document to qualify.
- Proof of marital status.

2.3.1.2 Child Support Grant

Child Support Grant is paid to the primary care giver or children concerned. Only a child or children under the age of fourteen (14) qualify for this grant. The caregiver should not be related but must be the person who looks after the child or children and takes responsibility for their everyday needs such as food, clothing, schooling and health care. The primary caregiver can be a sister, brother, neighbour, friend or a grandparent. The caregiver may not apply for support for more than six children of whom he or she is not the biological parent (SAGS: 2008) supported by (AIDSbuzz: 2008).

Guidelines on how a caregiver can be eligible for the grant are provided, and they are:

- The caregiver including the child needs to be South African citizens and live in South Africa.
- Be a legal guardian of the child, if not the parent and be given permission by Commissioner of the children's court to look after the child.
- The child should be less than fourteen (14) years old.

- The caregiver should not be receiving any other form of grant for the child and is not paid to look after the child.
- The caregiver meets the requirement of a Means Test.

The requirements of a Means Test include;

- The caregiver must not earn more than R25,200 if is a single parent or legal guardian or foster parent, and if married the total income must not exceed R50,400 per year and in the application the caregiver should include proof in the form of bank statements
- The caregiver must have an official thirteen digit bar-coded South African Identity Document to qualify.
- UIF certificate or a sworn statement to prove that the caregiver is unemployed.
SAGS (2008) supported by AIDSbuzz (2008).

2.3.1.3 Foster care grant

Foster care grant is a grant paid to a child that has been placed in the custody of foster parent as a result of being orphaned, abandoned, at risk, abused and neglected. The grant is given to the potential foster parent who will provide care to the child who is not her/his biological child. However, to become a legal foster parent one can apply at a children's court. The grant is issued for a period of two years and the foster parent will then re-apply (SAGS: 2008) supported by (AIDSbuzz: 2008).

According to AIDSbuzz (2008) there are guidelines on how a caregiver can be eligible for the grant, and they are:

- The foster parent including the child needs to be South African citizens and live in South Africa.
- The child should be less than eighteen (18) years old or extended to twenty (21) years if the child is still attending secondary school.
- The child remains with the foster parent and attend school (if under the compulsory school age).
- A copy of the children's court order placing the child in the custody of the foster parent.
- Proof of the child's school attendance.

AIDSbuzz (2008) supporting SAGS (2008) also explained that the income of the foster parents is not taken into account and they do not need to pass a means test to qualify for the grant. At the same time the income of the child (from a trust account or the child's biological parents) must be less than R15 000 a year. All the applications are done through a social worker from the Department of

Social Development, Child Welfare Society or any welfare organization that render statutory services.

These forms of support as provided by Government are recommended by Freeman & Nkomo (2006, 509) where they emphasised the importance of Government to provide direct assistance to families to assist children who are heads of households. Their view is that by assisting families through grant, education and personal assistance, it is likely to lead to significant incorporation of these children to families and less need for institutions or funding other caring and accommodation options.

2.3.2 Support from Non-Governmental Organisations

According to SAGS (2008), organisations like the Child Welfare Society or any welfare organisation that render statutory services can make applications through the court for a foster care grant and other grants. Kate Lenahan (personal communication, 14 July 2008) emphasised that Non-Governmental Organisations are instrumental in assisting children who are heads of households with food parcels, different Government grants, psychosocial support and deploying volunteers to provide parental support as well as advocacy.

2.3.3 Support provided by the Private Sector

Boldrini & Trimble (2008) indicated eight (8) large companies that are taking steps to protect their supply chain against HIV/AIDS, particularly targeting small and medium enterprises. However, there are no collective programmes aimed at children infected or affected by HIV/AIDS like children who are heads of households.

There are pockets of programmes that are geared towards children who are heads of households. From the literature reviewed the practical and relevant example was the Mail & Guardian and ABSA partnership. According to du Plessis and Khumalo (2008), Mail & Guardian in partnership with ABSA started a new corporate Social Investment project at the beginning of 2008 called Take a Child to School. This project targeted children who are heads of households, orphans and children living with HIV/AIDS. ABSA assisted these children by sponsoring them with basic schooling necessities including transport fees, stationery, and school uniform and toiletries.

2.4 Support needed by children who are heads of households

Nelson Mandela Foundation (2007:38-39) argued that the need for food, security, clothing and education feature very high on the list of orphans who are heads of households. Financial support is required for NGO's, community base care and support structures to collaborate with Government and families in assisting these children.

Nelson Mandela Foundation (2007:38-39) further argued that priority should be on sustainable food supply to these children, to assist them to continue with their schooling, support and incentives paid to volunteer workers to ensure effective home base care. Capacity of communities and extended family structures need to be energized and capacitated. Financial assistance would go a long way to assist caregivers within the community and extended family structures. Orphanages can serve as temporary accommodation for children waiting to be placed in foster care and should be considered for funding and capacity building.

Nelson Mandela Foundation (2007:38-39) also emphasised that there should be advocacy work which foster human rights, principles and ethical conduct among individuals and organisations dealing with orphans particularly those who tend to abuse the systems of grant.

According to (Tucker: 2008) supported by (Desmond & Kvaluvig: 2005), (Bower: 2005), (Maclellan: 2005) & (Mkhize: 2006), they argued that there is a need for a more proactive and decisive Government intervention that specifically targets orphan and such intervention should include reviewing social grant legislation, developing a policy framework to enable national initiatives that support and empower service providers in removing red tape to fast track the issuing of grants.

2.5 Education and Educational needs of children who are heads of households

Masondo (2006:17) in a study that focused on the "lived experiences, plight and special needs and rights of orphans living in child-headed household in Bronkhortspruit", came up with interesting findings and recommendations. All participants in the study showed a strong inclination to want to continue with their schooling and would remain at school, as it was feasible to do so. Children appear to be more conscious of the value of education to ensure a better future for them and would battle against all odd to remain at school. Masondo (2006:52-56) further suggested that a clear advocacy program to ensure that orphans especially those who are heads of households are taken

care of must be driven by the Department of Education. The Department of Education needs to ensure that children of school going age in communities seriously affected by HIV/AIDS have an opportunity and financial means to receive education of a good quality. He further argued that attention should be paid particularly to the school and educational needs of girls who are frequently required to assume a misappropriate share of responsibilities associated with caring for siblings and parents who are ill.

Labuschagne (1998) proposed that;

- The educators need to be involved in supporting the children by assuring that there is always someone available if children want to talk.
- The educators must communicate in a sensitive way, that is, establish a relationship of trust.
- They must build a positive self-esteem by giving positive feedback honestly.
- They must make opportunities for creative self-expression through art and drama.
- They must initiate group activities for all children, infected and affected as these children are inclined to isolate themselves.
- Educators must never tell the class the child's secret and they must not make infected/affected children conspicuous by giving them too much attention. In addition, teachers must be fair and discipline if necessary and should make time in the afternoon to talk to the children.

Griessel-Roux et al (2005: 254-255) further supported Masondo, and however add the need to include HIV/AIDS in the school curriculum. Their views are further supported by (Vilakazi: 2005) and (Rispel et al: 2006) who emphasised the importance of a curriculum which outline what the children need to do to cope with HIV/AIDS.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter focuses on identifying the study area, research design, the methods of data collection and an outline on how the data was analysed. A motivation on why such tools are preferred was made as part of this chapter.

3.1 Study area

The study was conducted in Mandela Village which is an extension of Mamelodi Township within Tshwane Municipality in the Gauteng Province of South Africa. Mandela Village is situated about 25km east of the City of Tshwane (Pretoria) on the east of Mamelodi. It is bordered by Magaliesburg Ridge on the north. Mandela Village is dominated by shack dwellings and Reconstruction and Development Programmes (RDP) houses. Within two (2) kilometers of Mandela Village there is a primary school therefore lack of access to at least primary education cannot be seen as deterrent to children not to attend school.

The population of the area was estimated at eighty thousand (80 000) of which 60% are female and 40% are male. In terms of age breakdown children under the age of 10 years constitute 20% of the population; those between the ages of 10 to 35 constitute 35% of the population. The rest of the population was made up of 30% of adults and 15% of elderly people mainly those above the age of 65 (Community profile, 2007).

3.2 Research design

In this study the researcher used a non-experimental qualitative research design. The study analysed the causes for the children who are heads of households to drop out from school, and what can be done to minimize their dropout rate. Information was collected by means of interviews, focus group discussions and observed behaviour to children who are heads of households and educators from schools where these children are attending or were attending school.

The purpose of using the research design was to assist the researcher to gain a better understanding and insight into the problems, needs and challenges of these children.

3.3 Research method

The interview method was used to gather the data from the children who are heads of households. Christensen (2007:66) supported by Huysamen (1994:144) agreed that an interview (face-to-face) is a survey method involving a personal interview, often conducted in the interviewee's home and obtaining responses to the survey by conducting a personal interview.

The intention of choosing this method was to obtain these children's views and experiences, encourage them to talk about whatever is important to them, at the same time allowing them to "tell their stories" in their own words, gain their inside perspective, that is, their feelings, opinions, attitudes and experiences but more so to grant them the necessary privacy to participate freely in the exercise. The interview schedules with the children who are heads of households are annexed as Appendix A.

The researcher used interview schedules. The interview schedules were comprised of open-ended questions and closed-ended questions. According to Huysamen (1994) supported by Christensen (2007) open-ended questions allow respondents to answer in any way they please, whereas closed-ended questions requires respondents to choose from a limited number of predetermined responses.

As a follow up to the interviews, the researcher engaged the children in focus group discussions with an intention to gain their in-depth opinions and suggestions on what they indicated as needs and challenges (Huysamen, 1994; Christensen, 2007). The latter was helpful in proposing a package or suite of recommendations to policy makers as how best to support children who are heads of households. The focus group schedules are annexed as Appendix B.

The interviews were also conducted with educators from schools where these children are attending or were attending school. The intention was to understand and establish the challenges that the schools encounter from children who are heads of households. This included an analysis of their performance and how it can be linked to their status of being children who are heads of households. The interview schedules with educators are annexed as Appendix C.

3.4 Selection of participants

The research problem paved a way in selecting the type of respondents for the study. According to Mouton (1996:34) population is a collection of objects, events or individuals having some common

characteristics that the researcher is interested in studying. In this study the population referred to children who are heads of households in Mandela Village. The total number of the target population that was included in the study was thirty-one children who are heads of households, and two educators.

Permission was granted by the Director of North Gauteng Mental Health (NGMH) to access files of the children who are heads of households from the social worker who was working in the HIV/AIDS Community Home Base Care Program in Mandela Village. Some of the names were accessed from referrals forwarded by care workers who were staying in Mandela Village and working in the HIV/AIDS Community Home Base Care Program.

In selecting the participants, the researcher saw a need that would assist NGMH to have a better insight into the experiences and challenges of these children, and a clearer understanding on where the priority of service delivery should be. In addition, the researcher was the programme manager of the HIV/AIDS Community Home Base Care Program in Mandela Village.

3.5 Data analysis

The guiding principle in qualitative research is that the researcher needs to focus the analyses on a couple of specific themes that can be related to the study's aim and research questions (Kvale, 1996). The qualitative research method made it possible to divide the material into a creative way thus the data was analysed by grouping the responses from children who are heads of households into themes and was then reduced into five in-depth interview studies. Such responses were presented as themes that were in line with the information collected by means of scheduled interviews.

The data collected from children who are heads of households through interview schedules and focus group discussions was categorized as follows:

- Their age and the age at which they became heads of households.
- The circumstances in which they became heads of households.
- The support they received or are receiving from family members, community, state and civil society in general.
- The adequacy of support being received and the gaps including how such gaps can be closed.
- The size of their households.

- Their coping strategies.
- Their school performance if at school, and if not at school the reasons behind their dropout.
- Their attitude towards schooling and support needed.
- Their proposals to government, community and society at large.

Information pertaining to the performance of children who are heads of households was obtained from educators with specific focus on:

- Their class performance.
- Their attendance at school.
- Their throughput rate.
- Problems the school encounter from children who are heads of households.
- The support the school needs in order to support children who are heads of households.
- The support the school is currently giving to children who are heads of households.

Responses analysed from these five in-depth interviews were then compared with each other and with other studies that were analysed as part of literature review. The mutual unique experiences by respondents were singled out and at the same time were tested against the existing policies and support programmes of Government. A conclusion was made in terms of analyzing the causes for the children who are heads of households to dropout from school, and what can be done to minimize their dropout rate.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The research findings are presented under five (5) areas that include:

- Five in-depth interviews selected from the thirty–one interviews held with children who are heads of households.
- Findings collected through focus group discussions.
- Findings obtained from interview held with educators from the two local schools, namely Emasangweni Primary School and Stanza Bopape High School.
- Comparative analysis of the results obtained from focus group discussions with interviews held with children who are heads of households. Included is also a comparison of findings obtained from interview schedules with children who are heads of households and that of educators from the two local schools.
- The fifth component is mainly the conclusion of the chapter. It mainly focuses on comparing the findings from this research with research findings from other authors which were analysed as part of the literature review.

4.2 Five in-depth interviews selected from the thirty–one interviews held with children who are heads of households

The research was kick-started by engaging thirty–one children who are heads of households in interviews. As explained in Chapter Three of this study, the database of these children was gathered from the files of the social worker who run the HIV/AIDS program in Mandela Village and referrals that were forwarded by care workers who are working in the program.

The researcher made appointments with these children prior the interviews by visiting them at schools and also at their homes, especially for those that dropped out of school. Most of the interviews were held at schools and some at their homes for those who dropped out of school. The initial contacts were twenty minutes and they paved a smooth sailing with the interviews although some of these children were at times shy and not willing to provide information freely unless some probing was done. By probing it does not mean the researcher was forcing the children to speak, but was a way of getting more clarity with some areas.

As explained in Chapter Three of this study, the researcher used interview schedules. The interview schedules were comprised of open-ended questions and closed-ended questions. The interviews were planned for one hour each but some took longer than planned as some children had more to contribute than the others, and at the same time, the researcher felt that the number of children interviewed was big for one researcher. The researcher spent two months interviewing these children.

The researcher also used the technique presented in Chapter Three of this study to analyse the data.

4.3 Analysis of cases focusing on the challenges, coping strategies and interventions

To add more personal colour, the researcher selected five of the interview respondents to present in a little more detail. The purpose was to raise consciousness to the readers of this study on the unique challenges and experiences of children who are heads of households.

The real names of the participants will not be disclosed as confidentiality was guaranteed. The results presented are focusing on the participant's own experiences and stories. Each interview analysed, is presented in seven (7) themes which are:

- General background of the respondent.
- The demographic profile and family situation of the respondent.
- General support received from family relatives, government and civil society.
- Perception about adequacy of support.
- Coping strategies.
- School performance and their attitude towards school and support needed.
- Proposal for typical intervention they need from state and the society.

4.3.1 Respondent 1

4.3.1.1 General background

The respondent is a fifteen (15) year old girl who is staying with her siblings aged ten (10) and seven (7) years old. The family lives in an RDP house. The house is not fenced but there are two outside shacks that are rented to tenants. The whereabouts of the respondent's father is unknown to the children because they last saw him when the respondent was eight years old.

4.3.1.2 The demographic profile and family circumstances

At the age of twelve (12) years, the respondent's mother was diagnosed with TB. She was in and out of hospital, and six months before she died, she was unable to do any work. The situation forced the respondent to assume the responsibilities of the mother because she was the oldest. *"In the morning I would assist my mother with house chores before going to school and at the same time ensures that my siblings are also ready for school"*. The respondent's mother's condition became worse and died on her thirteenth birthday.

4.3.1.3 General support received from family, relatives, government and civil society

The respondent mentioned that life has been difficult after their mother died. The tenants took advantage of the situation and were at times reluctant to pay rent. A friend of her mother who is not staying far from them has been the pillar of their strength. *"Aunty B would come every day, bring us food and listen to our needs and assist where she can"*. Aunty B has managed to alert a NGMH social worker in our area about the situation, and we are in a process of finalizing foster care grant. The process has been lengthy because the respondent's siblings had no birth certificates, but fortunately there were clinic cards. Aunty B has been appointed as the potential foster parent. The social worker has allocated a care worker who visits twice a month, and also gives a food parcel monthly.

Contact with relatives has been difficult because of the distance. There is no support given by the relatives. Respondent was quoted saying: *"Aunty B did phone them before the funeral, and they never showed up, and anyway we were not close as we have never visited them"*.

4.3.1.4 Perception about adequate support

The respondent reported that at the beginning everything was dark; that there were no hope that there were people who care. In the neighbourhood other children would refuse to invite them to their homes especially for lunch or dinner. *"School holidays were our toughest days as we would go to bed hungry"*. The respondent further mentioned that at school her siblings rely on the feeding scheme, and for her it is tough because high school pupils are different, they look down on children who carry lunch boxes as it is a status to carry cash and buy from shops next to the school. If you carry lunch they will make fun of you. *"I prefer to eat as much before going to school, if there is something, and starve until I come back from school"*.

The respondent said that they have all been exempted from paying school fees. The respondent appreciated the support she was receiving from the Government, NGO's and other sectors but still

felt it was not enough. She said learners in her grade were going for an educational tour, and she would not go because she could not afford it. *“It is very painful to hear the excitement of who will be going and you know for you is a dream that will not come true”*.

4.3.1.5 Coping strategies

The respondent mentioned that an arrangement has been made for them to sleep over in Aunty B’s place and only come home during the day. The arrangement was made through the help of the social worker for fear of sexual abuse. *“We are happy with the arrangement because we have touch with our home, during the day we go home and prepare our own meals”*.

4.3.1.6 School performance

The respondent was quick to mention that they are all coping very well at school. *“We have all passed with good percentage and I am very proud of ourselves”*

4.3.1.7 Attitude towards schooling and support needed

The respondent mentioned that she would never leave school without matric. She has observed that some of her peers have left school because of pregnancy and have never returned. *“I want to be a social worker and also contribute in assisting those who had similar experiences like me, so if I leave school, I will never reach my goal”*. The respondent identified bursaries that will cover books, school uniform, stationery and pocket money for educational tours as priority needs that will assist her to achieve her goal.

4.3.1.8 Proposal for typical interventions they need from state and society

The respondent mentioned that as the head in her family, she had realized the difficulty and responsibilities of being a parent. *“I used to be angry when my mother could not give or afford what we wanted, since I am now wearing her shoes, I do not complain anymore”*. Her proposal to Government and the community was to ensure that children who are heads of households and vulnerable because of the circumstances should be supported holistically. *“We want food because going to bed or to school with an empty stomach is a recipe for crime, children should be given comprehensive bursaries that will ensure that all school needs are accommodated”*.

4.3.2 Respondent 2

4.3.2.1 General background

The respondent is a thirteen (13) year old boy. He is staying with his twin sisters who are ten (10) years old, three cousins, aged eleven (11), nine (9) and six (6) years. The children are staying in a three-roomed shack alone after their aunt (mother to the cousin) was stabbed by her husband and died. His late aunt came to stay with them when he was eight years old after his mother died. The cause of their mother's illness that resulted to her death was unknown by the children.

4.3.2.2 Demographic profile and family circumstances

The respondent is staying in a three-roomed shack. The shack is in a serviced area. There is a communal tap, outside toilet and electricity. It is divided into two bedrooms, dining area that is also used as a kitchen.

4.3.2.3 General support received from family, relatives, government and society

The respondent mentioned that it was very difficult at home since all of them were children.

Their maternal grandparents were still alive but were frail to come and stay with them, and at the same time they did not have means to relocate. The respondent said there was a distant cousin who was closer but they saw him after the funeral of their mother. *"We do not get support from our relatives; our neighbours are our new and immediate family"*.

The respondent also mentioned that a social worker has visited their home, wrote a report about their circumstances and promised to send a care worker who will be in contact with them. He was not sure what support they will receive from government.

4.3.2.4 Perception about adequate support

The respondent felt there was no support because it was too slow: *"How can children go to bed hungry if government cares?"*. He expressed anger towards his late aunt's husband because he claimed that he was the one who brought misery in their lives. He was observed to be very angry and full of hatred when mentioning his name and was not keen to reveal more.

4.3.2.5 Coping strategies

The respondent mentioned that he used to assist in washing cars in the neighbourhood and being a taxi assistant but is no longer interested in those odd jobs. He said: *"You wash and clean a car and*

you are given small change instead of a full fee especially if you are young and tiny like me, with the taxi it only works out during weekends and holidays when it is busy, during the week you starve". He mentioned that he has other surviving strategies that he was not keen to disclose. He kept on saying: *"since I am no longer washing cars or a taxi operator, I earn more because I can now afford to buy shoes, clothes and have a decent meal with my family everyday"*.

4.3.2.6 School performance

The respondent mentioned that he was not coping at school although he understands the value of education. He said: *"I am not interested to continue schooling because I put so much effort but my marks are always low"*. The respondent argued that he used to ask help from his classmates and decided to stop when he realised that they were making jokes with his slow progress. He never reported his frustration to the educators because he was not comfortable to do so. At the same time he was happy with the school performance of his siblings at home.

4.3.2.7 Attitude towards schooling and support needed

The respondent's attitude towards schooling was negative. He mentioned that if their home circumstances do not change, he will leave school and go out there to fend for his siblings.

4.3.2.8 Proposal for typical interventions they need from state and society

"Although the government pay for school fees and give books, it is not enough to orphans because we have to buy other books the school is not supplying, we do not go to school trips because no one will pay for you, the school uniform is a once off, for grade ones only, I have never benefited in school uniform, I only witnessed it with my six (6) year old cousin". The respondent strongly felt that there should be collaboration between government and the society in addressing the needs of all children who are heads of households.

4.3.3 Respondent 3

4.3.3.1 General background

The respondent is seventeen (17) years old, staying in a two-roomed shack. She is sharing their home with her two brothers aged fifteen (15) and thirteen (13) years.

The respondent's parents passed away in 2004. In June of that year, her mother's health deteriorated and was diagnosed with pneumonia and died after 3 days. While they were mourning the death of their mother, their father followed. They do not know what the cause was but on the

death certificate they have written natural causes. He collapsed at work, was rushed to the hospital and died the following day.

4.3.3.2 General support received from family, relatives, government and civil society

The respondent mentioned that she is receiving a monthly income from her father's employer. The money is deposited into her account. She mentioned that the financial support is not enough because most of it goes to food and electricity. They do not buy clothes but lay-by, and they do it twice a year.

They are not receiving any grant because the process is taking long although they did apply: *"I was advised by the neighbour to apply for grant but we have been waiting since, it is now six months"*. The respondent mentioned that she was informed recently that their application was turned down because they failed to submit a certified proof of residence. She was at the same time positive that they would eventually get help. Their relatives are not assisting as they believe their late father's income from employer was adequate.

4.3.3.3 Perception about adequate of support

The respondent felt that the support was not enough but was better than not getting anything. She was not willing to elaborate.

4.3.3.4 Coping strategies

The respondent mentioned that she used the income from the employer wisely. She used to spend the money and only realized when the cupboards were empty what she should have done. *"I sit down with my brothers; we budget and ensure that our needs do not exceed our income"*.

4.3.3.5 School performance

The respondent mentioned that she left school in the first quarter of the term because she fell pregnant. She looked older than her age and was very shy and kept on looking down. She mentioned that she was disappointed to learn that she was pregnant although she was coming to terms with it. Her other siblings were performing at an acceptable standard.

4.3.3.6 Attitude towards schooling and support needed

The respondent mentioned that she was worried about what the future holds for her and the baby because her boyfriend was unemployed: *"I am longing to finish matric but the current circumstances are not allowing it"*. The respondent mentioned food and clothing as her priority

needs. Education was seen as the last need because the respondent felt that going back to school would be an unmet dream.

4.3.3.7 Proposal for typical interventions needed from the state and society

There were no substantial proposals from the respondent except to say that government should increase the amount of the grant given to children who are heads of households.

4.3.4 Respondent 4

4.3.4.1 General background

The respondent is fourteen (14) years old and lost her mother two months ago. She is staying in an RDP house. The respondent was aware of what was the cause of her mother's illness and cause of her death: *"My mother died of pneumonia because she had AIDS"*. The respondent has never met her father; she does not know whether he is still alive.

4.3.4.2 General support received from family, relatives, government and civil society

Osie B (care worker) was seen by the respondent as her source of support. *"After the funeral, my aunt wanted to take me with her, and I refused. It was my mother's wish that I stay in at home because it took her 10 years to receive the house. If I did agree to go with my aunt, I would have broken my mother's spirit. I will stay in my mother's house as long as I wish and no one will remove me"*. The respondent was emotional when she started to talk and reflect on their living conditions before they moved to their new home.

The respondent mentioned that her maternal family has been very supportive although she was reluctant to go with them: *"My aunt bought me food and clothes before she left after the funeral"*. The care worker volunteered to take care of the respondent until all the logistics were sorted out.

4.3.4.3 Perception about adequate of support

It was difficult for the respondent to comment on the support as she was not sure what more to expect, and from whom.

4.3.4.4 Coping strategies

The respondent mentioned that she sleeps over in the neighbourhood but spent most of her day at her mother's house when she is not at school. She mentioned that she has been taught a memory book and is busy doing one for herself *"Osie B has taught me about a memory book, it is too*

emotional to do it right now, but it has helped me to move on and accept that my mother is no more. I am still scared to think of my new journey to survive”.

The researcher’s understanding of a memory book is “a memory book is a participatory tool that leaves a legacy of love and protection to those who have to move on in life”.

4.3.4.5 School performance

The respondent mentioned that her performance dropped when her mother was terminally ill because she used to spend days beside her hospital bed with the hope that she would recover: *“I have not performed well in the past six months but I will pick up”.*

4.3.4.6 Attitude towards schooling and support needed

The respondent was confident and presented a positive attitude towards schooling. She felt that if she could have all the necessary tools that include school uniform, school fees, food and pocket money nothing would stop her from schooling.

4.3.4.7 Proposal for typical interventions needed from the state and society

“Children should not be denied opportunities because they are orphans; we need love, care and support”.

4.3.5 Respondent 5

4.3.5.1 General background

The respondent is an eighteen (18) year old female. She is staying in an RDP house with three shacks in the backyard that are rented out to tenants. She has an eight (8) year old brother who is intellectually and profoundly disabled. Her brother was coming home only for long school holidays. The child was returned because the facility closed down. The respondent also left school in grade 10 because her mother was in and out of hospital and there was no one to take care of her. She mentioned that her mother died from an HIV related illness a year ago.

4.3.5.2 General support received from family, relatives, government and civil society

The respondent mentioned that it is a very stressful situation. *“As I was trying to recap from my mother’s death, the facility where my brother was kept closed down, so I am back to square one because he needs 24 hour assistance, he is depending on an adult for everything”.* She further argued that the neighbours are not supportive and she suspect it was because of the condition of her

brother. She was advised by a friend to apply for a care dependency grant and has not done so yet because her identity document was misplaced during her mothers' funeral. Her maternal relatives are not supportive.

4.3.5.3 Perception about adequate of support

In her own words she said: *"we are not supported, I hear about the support that is provided by Government to orphans but I have not seen anything, it is therefore difficult to comment about adequate support"*.

4.3.5.4 Coping strategies

"I am not coping at all because I am not sure whether I am doing the right thing or giving my brother enough care and support". The respondent is surviving by the money she collects from the tenants, and has not received any grant from government as yet.

4.3.5.5 School performance

The respondent mentioned that she dropped out of school in grade ten (10). She cited household workload and the need to care for her brother as the reason for her dropout. She was observed to be emotionally stressed.

4.3.5.6 Attitude towards schooling and support needed

The respondent demonstrated an understanding of the importance of education but at that stage felt hopeless. She was worried that she was getting too old to attend day school. She indicated, however, that if she could receive financial support to cover their household needs, she was willing to go back to school. Her concern was that currently there was no support and time was moving. She said she needed advice on what to do next.

4.3.5.7 Proposal of typical intervention from state and society

"Orphans should be brought to the attention of the state. Community leaders must take responsibility and take us to the relevant offices for help. The Government services are for us, and if you are poor, no body takes you seriously, I have my own experiences".

4.4 Findings collected through focus group discussions.

As was mentioned in Chapter Three of this study, the researcher held two focus group discussions with children who are heads of households. The first group consisted of children who were

attending school or had dropped out of school at primary level, and the second group had children who were attending or dropped out at high school. The primary school group had sixteen (16) participants and the high school group had fifteen (15) participants. The venue used for the primary group was a classroom that these children were using when attending after care sessions (the HIV/AIDS Community Home Base Care Program run by NGMH), and for the high school group a garage offered by a care attendant was used. The researcher had two sessions in each group that took between two to three hours.

Preparations were done prior the first sessions, and all logistics were attended to. Care attendants who are working in Mandela Village played an instrumental role and ensured that the venue was ready; refreshments were prepared and served to the participants timeously before each session started.

The researcher spent the first session on reviving introductions, agreeing on ground rules and establishing code of conduct, the expectations, providing an explanation on the purpose of the discussions, and what would happen to the results. The researcher did not spend a lot of time on helping the participants to relax because all participants did participate during the interviews.

To break the ice, the researcher used questions that were easy to answer. The researcher was drawing expertise from her own experiences of running groups in other programs offered by her organisation. The researcher used participatory methods to draw the participation of the participants. The group were also sub-divided into smaller groups during the session, and each sub-group was allowed to present the results of their discussion during plenary. The researcher also took notes and jot down all important contributions including non-verbal behaviour. Participants were thanked after each session and contact details of the researcher were left for future referrals.

4.5 General findings

The general findings focus mainly on the demographic profile, problems and challenges faced by children who are heads of households as well as the special needs and challenges for girls who are heads of household.

4.6 Demographic profile

The demographic profile is presented in terms of age, gender, family size and family composition. As indicated under the research methodology chapter, thirty-one (31) respondents were interviewed at Mandela Village.

The age range of the participants varied between eight (8) and eighteen (18) years. The majority of participants in the primary school group were between ten and fourteen, and at high school the respondents were older than fourteen (14) years. The ages at which these children became heads of households ranged between the ages of seven (7) and eighteen (18).

Twenty one (21) out of thirty one (31) respondents who participated in the focus group discussions were girls. This illustrated that in terms of gender the majority of children in this sample who are heads of households were girls. In terms of family size and composition their households ranged between three (3) and eight (8) members. The general trend is that a typical household tends to be composed of boys and girls, cousins and grandchildren. The presence of grandchildren can be associated with the prevalence of early child pregnancy within these households.

4.6.1 Problems and challenges faced by children who are heads of households

The major problems faced by these children were, the lack of preparation to manage households, the lack of support from family and relatives, being overburdened with responsibilities, vulnerability to sexual abuse, hunger, were doomed to try to find jobs in the informal sector and subsistence employment as well as dropping out of school.

4.6.1 Lack of preparation to manage the household

Almost all the respondents said they were totally unprepared to assume responsibility as a head of household. They indicated that while it was a shock to lose a parent at a tender age they never realized the immense challenges facing a head of the family. They said lack of money to buy the basic household necessities was a major stress factor. Twenty eight (28) of the respondents indicated that their parents would wait until they were bedridden to inform them about their HIV/AIDS status.

In their opinion such a late disclosure from parents does not allow enough time to learn to function as heads of households. They mentioned that most of the dependant siblings were grateful that they had someone to take care of them.

4.6.2 Lack of support from family and relatives

Twenty eight (28) of the respondents indicated that there were no forms of support provided by their families and relatives. The few that was receiving support indicated that it was in the form of food, clothing and pocket money for school. One respondent, a girl aged sixteen (16) who was receiving support from relatives was in tears because she and her siblings had to work as slaves to earn the support from relatives. In her own words she said: *“My aunt will dump washing and ironing and sometimes require that I clean her house while her own children are just sitting watching television and relaxing”*. She had a frustrated expression as she was narrating the situation. She further mentioned that her cousins were arrogant and they would demand that she and her siblings clean their school shoes and prepare lunch for them, and what frustrated her was that she was being instructed by children younger than herself.

4.6.3 Overburdened with responsibilities

As heads of households, all the respondents indicated that they hardly found time to socialize and play with other children. Their roles ranged from cleaning the house, preparing meals, doing washing, doing their own homework (those who are still at school) and assisting their siblings with their homework. Some respondents indicated that they had to perform casual jobs to support their siblings while others refused to disclose how they coped financially. It was my impression from the labels on the clothing some of these respondents wore that they were earning money elsewhere, but did not want to reveal the source.

4.6.4 Vulnerability to sexual abuse

Incidence of sexual abuse was not very common amongst the respondents. Only three respondents indicated that either somebody attempted to abuse them sexually or were abused sexually.

The main case that stood out was of a young girl age nine (9). She mentioned that she was sexually abused by her uncle who was asked by her family to stay with them after the death of their mother. She indicated that she reported her uncle to the class teacher who then informed the social workers. As she was speaking she appeared confident that she was bold enough to report her uncle who now faces criminal charges. She indicated however that her reporting the matter had divided her family as some felt this was a private family matter, there was no need to report it to the school but to family elders.

4.6.5 Hunger

All the respondents emphasised the fact that hunger was one of their major challenges. This was vigorously expressed, especially by those over the age of fourteen (14), as they were not entitled to a child support grant. Even those that were entitled to a child support grant highlighted that the process to obtain grants was very bureaucratic. A birth certificate was required and most of them had no birth certificates. Their relatives were not willing to endure long queues at the Department of Home Affairs. Some mentioned that their relatives claimed that they had no money to pay for transport for the whole household.

Some of the respondents who managed to submit documents said these documents were often misplaced by the officials. One girl aged ten (10) indicated that whenever she went to check on the progress of her application, the official would indicate that her application was not received.

The respondents who were receiving a child support grant highlighted their appreciation but requested jokingly that Mr. Trevor Manuel should increase the grant of children who are heads of households. They said it has been difficult to cope with high food and transport costs.

Seven (7) indicated that under the current food prices, food was lasting them for eleven days (11) in a month. In order to survive for the remainder of the month, they mentioned that some came up with strategies to eat one meal a day while others adopted a strategy to attend local occasions over weekend hoping to get a meal while others refused to disclose their survival strategies.

4.6.6 Informal sector and subsistence employment

One respondent worked to support his family. He worked mainly as a car washer and as a taxi conductor, but he was demoralized by the low and unsustainable income, and claimed to have subsequently resorted to theft to survive and support his family.

4.6.7 Dropout from school

Two thirds of the respondents indicated that they were attending school. The majority of the respondents who were attending school were doing grade four (4) and seven (7). Only two (2) were in school grades above grade seven (7). They were in grade eight (8) and nine (9) respectively. A third of the respondents had dropped out of school. Those who have dropped out of school were over the age of fourteen (14). They had dropped out of school mainly in grade nine (9) and ten (10). Majority of all the drop outs were girls. Most of the respondents indicated that they had dropped out of school after their grants were stopped.

One of the respondents said: *“I am no longer entitled to get child support grant, I must find means to boost my family income”*. According to the respondent this was because of the high food and electricity prices.

Another respondent, a sixteen (16) year old girl highlighted that over and above the lack of money to buy food, she felt embarrassed that she could not afford new clothes. She said she had to rely on second-hand clothes donated by charity organisations. In her own words she said: *“My status as a woman in the community will remain low and decent men will not propose to me in future”*. Other reasons highlighted as the cause of dropping out were pregnancy, the lack of money to buy school uniforms and to pay school fees.

However, there were two respondents who demonstrated an unwillingness to go back to school as they needed to support their own children. The argument was that the child support grant was inadequate and there would be no one to look after their children while they were at school. In addition they felt that they were too old to go back to the same grades which they have dropped out as they were almost eighteen (18) years old and regarded themselves as adults rather than still being children.

4.6.8 Special needs and challenges for girls who are heads of households

Girls as heads of households faced more challenges than boys. Three (3) of the girl respondents argued that they were taught to accept violence and abuse. They felt that in terms of the African culture, society had too many expectations from girls and women to demonstrate high respect for men in general.

One respondent said she had escaped from attempts of sexual abuse. She said a male in his twenties passed by their house asking for water and started proposing to her. She refused, and the man started to tell her that as she was struggling he would be of financial assistance to her and the family as well as being able to provide security. When the respondent indicated to the man that she was not interested and was *“not cheap”*, the man abused her verbally and refused to leave her house until she said that she would scream. She said on numerous occasions she had reported the matter to the street committee but was never taken seriously.

Another respondent highlighted an incident whereby she refused to open her home gate to a drunken male neighbour. She said the neighbour started abusing her verbally using vulgar language and threatening her that he would enter by force and nobody will do anything, as most people in the

area were scared of him. She further mentioned that because she was scared as well, she never reported the matter to the police as the neighbour belonged to a gang which, according to her, is known to police.

Another respondent narrated an incident where a boy from the neighbourhood broke their house front window, presumably by mistake. When she requested that the boy's parents fix the window, she was chased away by the boy's parents, further indicating that she must find her own means to fix the window. Fortunately for her, an elder brother of the boy, after hearing about the incident, agreed to fix the window. The girl felt that the reason for the negative attitude was because she was a girl, and that the father of the boy knew that she could not fight back.

The last interesting case presented was that of a respondent whose siblings are boys. She said for the past two years since their mother passed away her siblings were reluctant to perform household chores like cooking and washing their clothes. They said they could not wash clothes for a girl and they could not cook for her. She further mentioned that she had to accept their behaviour as they also act as a form of security in the house. None of the issues raised by the girls were raised by any of the boys who are heads of households.

4.7 Analysis of responses from educators

The educators were asked to elaborate on the existing school management systems that are in place to support children who are heads of households. They were further required to give an outline of school performance and problems encountered from these children. Responses were obtained from educators at Emasangweni Primary School and Stanza Bopape High School.

4.7.1 Responses from primary school educator

4.7.1.1 School management system

The educator mentioned that the school does not have specific policies or guidelines that focus on assisting the children who are heads of households only. All the policies that govern the management of the school are inclusive irrespective of the children's background and socio economic status.

The school does have a database of all orphans although it does not contain details of the causes of the parent's death. The children who are in the database are not treated differently or given

preferential treatment. The school management team implements an open door policy and all learners are encouraged to contact or report any challenges they come across especially if they have direct impact to the learner's studies.

4.7.1.2 Class performance of children who are heads of households

The educator mentioned that the school does not have a performance system that rate the ability of children who are heads of households only. In each term, the performance of each learner is rated and performance of those learners who have over achieved and scored highest in different subjects are called by the principal during assembly and congratulated. In a nutshell, the educator could not give a separate account of the performance of children who are heads of households.

4.7.1.3 School attendance

The educator's response was that school attendance of children who are heads of households does not differ from other children citing an example: *"I have a boy in my class who is from a well off family, both parents are alive and they give him all the support he needs, but he is playing truancy, and he does not take his education seriously"*.

The educators do not assess these children's absenteeism in isolation unless is an extreme situation. *"Some children are born with the virus and are unaware because their parents have never told them, and educators picked it up when the child school attendance is questionable."*

4.7.1.4 Throughput rate

The educator mentioned that children tend to relax at the beginning of the year, and assume that they would work hard towards the end of the year.

As educators they were concerned because the education curriculum brings new changes yearly and most of these changes are not easily understood by educators, and also educators take an extra effort to introduce any changes to the learners. The throughput rate of children who heads of households does not differ much from all the other learners.

4.7.1.5 Problems encountered from children who are heads of households

The educator mentioned that hunger was the major challenge the other educators were identifying in the classes. Children at times come to school without having breakfast or carrying any packed lunch. Another problem encountered was lack of proper school uniform; some of the children wear torn uniforms, bare feet or shoes that are not suitable. *"We also have cases of children, who do not*

have underwear, and it is quite scary, and as teachers we always try to rescue such cases”. Another problem cited was sexual abuse cases that were not reported timeously and at times discovered when a child is pregnant. According to the educator these cases were not only encountered from children who are heads of household but across although there were extreme cases.

4.7.1.6 Support needed in order to assist children who are heads of households

The educator mentioned that retired teachers who could come forward and volunteer at the school would be highly appreciated. The school was also in need of a school social worker or psychologist as they relied on referring, and were not always receiving feedback timeously on the progress of the children.

4.7.1.7 Support the school is currently giving to children who are heads of households

There is a feeding scheme programme that accommodates all children. During the first interval, all children who wanted something to eat, joined the queues and have food. The menu was rotated but was mostly bread, soup and pap.

The school also had a partnership with North Gauteng Mental Health (NGMH) social worker that run the HIV/AIDS programme. The program catered for orphans and vulnerable children. After school children were assisted with the school homework, psycho-social support, grants and were also engaged in different group work activities and educational camps. The life orientation offered at school also provided some form of support to these children as well and was facilitated through education and awareness campaigns.

4.7.2 Responses from high school educator

4.7.1.1 School management system

The school had a task team that comprised of members from the governing body, the life orientation Head of Department, and the head boy and head girl. The task team represented the school management system. The school does have a policy and guidelines that addresses the needs of orphans and vulnerable children. The team was responsible to oversee that the needs of all learners were met and also refer them to relevant structures when a need arises.

The database kept had the records of all children and with separate codes that distinguish the background and status of each child. The database does not indicate the cause of parent's death

especially if the child is an orphan. The system used assisted class educators to keep an eye on these children although not giving them preferential treatment. The system also assisted the school to have a better understanding on who qualifies for school fees exemption and who can benefit from the school “community fund”.

4.7.1.2 Class performance

The educator mentioned that the coding system was helping the school to sift the data but the school was not discriminating when looking at class performance, and children were rated according to what they had achieved.

4.7.1.3 School attendance

The educator mentioned that it was a general norm that the school attendance of girls was poorer than boys. Reasons cited would include, family member who was sick, had to accompany family member to a traditional gathering or sick themselves. The boys tend to bunk classes after lunch especially on Fridays. Pupils coming late also posed as a challenge because attendance registers were marked during the first period, if a learner misses the first period without a report at the class teacher, would be marked absent even if the learner came late.

4.7.1.4 Throughput rate

According to the educator the throughput rate was categorized by gender. The educator claimed that girls were not putting in extra effort regarding their studies as compared to boys. The added responsibilities posed a challenge among girls and were not willing to disclose the challenges they were encountering.

4.7.1.5 Problems encountered from children who are heads of households

The educator argued that the children tend to drop out of school very easily especially after the death of the bread winners. Girls also became pregnant and never return to school. Boys are at times involved and experiment with drugs, theft and showing signs of hooliganism.

4.7.1.6 Support needed in order to assist children who are heads of households

The educator emphasized a great need of community involvement with the school, and where children could join “buddy groups” in their communities to encourage them not to lose hope and drop out of school without at least completing grade twelve (12). Some children needed proper home management guidance and the school did not offer such skills but was referring to relevant structures.

4.7.1.7 Support the school is currently giving to children who are heads of households

The educator indicated that they were exempting children who are heads of households from paying school fees and they were also assisting them with referrals to relevant service providers.

4.8 A comparative analysis of results obtained in interviews and the focus groups

The results obtained from the interviews and the focus group discussions illustrated more similarities than differences. The respondents were willing to express their feelings and participated freely in the study. In addition the respondents selected to participate in the interviews and focus groups were able to elaborate on their coping strategies or survival strategies as well as their perception about the adequacy of support provided by families, relatives, government and civil society. They were all in agreement that the support was inadequate and was not aligned to their needs as heads of households. Respondents who participated in the interviews and focus groups were able to propose what can be done to assist them. A difference noted was the respondent's lack of understanding in the different grants available, to support children who are heads of households.

4.9 A comparative analysis of findings obtained from interviews with children who are heads of households and with those of educators

The common feature was that both the children and the educators confirmed a high dropout rate at high school level. They further confirmed that the high dropout rate was mainly among girls.

The educators highlighted that there was no difference in school performance and dropout rate between children who are heads of households and others. This was due to school policies that were not allowing capturing of data in that manner.

Children who came from families that had both parents in the area also were receiving similar results. The latter can be attributed by the fact that the standard of living at Mandela Village is almost the same. Poverty and unemployment were high hence there was no significant difference. The most significant difference in information provided was that the educators indicated that there was school feeding programme in the schools and that all children were supplied with stationery. This was not mentioned by the children who are heads of households attending high school during interviews; it was mentioned at primary level. This demonstrated that children at primary school get at least one meal a day. The challenge comes over weekends and school holidays. One can

conclude that where unemployment, poverty is the same, the general performance and drop out rate is likely to be similar.

4.10 Comparative analysis of research findings with literature reviewed

The focus in this section is to conduct a comparative analysis between the findings obtained through this research against literature reviewed. The comparative analysis focuses mainly on the challenges or problems of children who are heads of households.

4.10.1 Comparison analysis on the challenges facing children who are heads of households

4.10.1.1 Lack of preparation to manage the household

The findings from the study have demonstrated that children who are heads of households were not ready to head their households. These findings are in sharp contrast to those of (Germann: 2000) who indicated that civil society has come up with social therapy camps to assist children who are heads of households to build their self esteem, self confidence and trust. He further added that, as part of these camps these children are offered practical skills training in household management and parenting.

4.10.1.2 Lack of support from family and relatives

The findings from the study demonstrated a lack of support from families and relatives. Information from literature reviewed produced a mixed bag of findings. Findings from literature reviewed that support the findings of the researcher are those carried by the International HIV/AIDS Alliance (2005:46-47) and supported by the Policy Framework for orphans and other vulnerable children made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS in South Africa (2005) that confirm the lack of support from families and relatives.

Contrary to the findings from the study, authors like (Johnson: 2000) observed that children who are heads of households do receive support from their grandparents, care givers, guardians and volunteers.

From this analysis it is evident that it was depending on circumstances, some children were receiving support and others were not receiving any support from their families, relatives, Government and civil society in general.

4.10.1.3 Overburdened with responsibilities

The study has demonstrated that children who are heads of households are overburdened with responsibilities. These findings turn to concur with those of the International HIV/AIDS Alliance (2005:46-47), Maqoko and Dreyer (2006: 717) and Ayieko (2007: 10-12). All these authors confirmed that children who are heads of household are pushed to adult roles and are forced to assume greater responsibilities in their family. As result of these responsibilities, education of these children is negatively affected and they suffer from psychological trauma.

4.10.1.4 Vulnerability to sexual abuse

Findings from the study revealed that there were few incidents of sexual abuse reported by children who are heads of households.

From the literature reviewed none of the studies reported overwhelming incidents of sexual abuse, however studies carried by the International HIV/AIDS Alliance (2005: 46-47) and Maqoko and Dreyer (2006: 717) confirmed that incidence of sexual abuse are common in households that were headed by children.

Acord (2001) further added that girls who are heads of households are particularly vulnerable because any man, who wants to, can enter their shelter and force them into sexual relationships. These girls do not tell anyone because no one would defend them. Acord (2001) further argued that some girls enter prostitution to buy food and pay for school fees or medicine for their siblings. Sometimes they give themselves to older men in order to live under protection, and this often leads to unwanted pregnancies and or HIV/AIDS

4.10.1.5 Hunger

The study had revealed that children who are heads of households suffer from hunger. From the literature reviewed, all the researchers confirm the challenge of hunger.

Foster et al (1997: 159), International HIV/AIDS Alliance (2005: 46-47) and the Nelson Mandela Foundation (2007) all confirm that food feature very high on the priority list of children who are heads of households.

4.10.1.6 Informal sector and subsistence employment

Both the findings from the study and literature reviewed have demonstrated few cases whereby children who are heads of households are used in child labour or perform informal and subsistence

employment. Cases of child labour were reported in studies carried outside South Africa mainly in Zimbabwe where according to Foster et al (1997: 159) children who are heads of households are leaving to work in rural farms and girls in particular take up low paid domestic work.

4.10.1.7 Dropout from school and general school performance

Findings from the study have observed a high dropout rate among girls and mainly from high school level.

Information obtained from literature reviewed had no focus on dropout rate, however according to Masondo (2006: 17) in his study: “lived experiences, plight and special needs and rights of orphans living in child-headed household in Bronkhortspruit”, revealed that children who are heads of households are very conscious about the value of education and are willing to go back to school if they can receive adequate support.

4.10.1.8 Discrimination and stigma

The study findings found out that there were no incident of discrimination and stigma reported by any of the respondents, that was contrary to findings obtained from the studies undertaken by the International HIV/AIDS Alliance (2005:46-47) where they highlighted high levels of stigma and discrimination with children who are heads of households.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the results of the study that analysed the dropout rate of children who are heads of households at Mandela Village. In this chapter the researcher will focus on providing a summary of what was learnt in the study and point out the direction for future research.

5.2 Summary of lessons learnt from the study and direction for future research

The study has shown some common grounds with other studies conducted that children can indeed be heads of households because of the death of their parents due to HIV/AIDS pandemic. The challenges and experiences of children who are heads of households are among the causes for some of these children to drop out of school.

It has emerged from the study that Department of Social Development and Department of Education who are supposed to be the key role players are not doing enough to support children who are heads of households in the new parenting challenges they are facing. Other observations made were the inflexible requirements and red tape posed by the Department of Home Affairs that has resulted in most of children who are heads of households to be unable to obtain social grants. It might be worth noting in future research, to conduct in-depth analysis on the impact of the Department of Home Affairs policies to the rights of citizens particularly children.

It was also worth noting that Mandela Village is among the communities that have “community forums” where street committees are to an extent involved in the development initiatives. During the study it was disappointing to learn that as much as children who are heads of households knew that there were such structures in their community, but the roles and responsibilities of these community structures were not clearly understood by these children. This was further emphasized by a respondent who claimed that cases reported by them as children who are heads of households were not taken seriously. For future studies it would be vital for community structures to engage with community members on all issues pertaining to the upliftment of their community and avoid judgmental attitude. Community empowerment where the roles and responsibilities of the community structures are outlined would pave a positive future in the development of the community.

The study also demonstrated a conflict between culture and gender where some families in the study were raising boys differently from girls. The challenge was further aggravated by the fact that some boys in the study were refusing to assist with house chores like cleaning of the house, washing dishes and cooking. The parents were found to have a responsibility of empowering their children especially boys that they have a role to play in house management, gone are the days where it was an acceptable norm that: “*a place of a woman is in the kitchen*”. The boys have to be taught these values and principles at home so as to be responsible fathers in future. They should not wait for their sisters to ask them a hand, but the boys should be able to see a need to assist.

Culturally the situation where children especially boys grew up without their fathers, can have a profound impact on their lives. Initiatives that encourage and assist boys or men to take care of their families and show an element of respect to an opposite gender should be the driving force that brings hope to change these stereotypes. Such initiatives can be done with collaboration between community structures and service providers that drive such initiatives, like men’s forums.

It was also worth noting that grandparents in Mandela Village were mostly not staying with their grandchildren, and the few respondents who mentioned them, their grandparents were staying far from these grandchildren. For future studies it will be vital to revive the role that was played or is still played by some grandparents in instilling values to their grandchildren. Grandparents should be encouraged to take care of their grandchildren without being pressurized by their families.

The socio-economic situation is destroying “*Ubuntu*”. From the study it has been interesting to learn that some neighbours or relatives are distancing themselves from sharing resources with children who are heads of households. Some of these children were going to bed hungry especially when schools were closed. This was seen as a major challenge facing these children as the circumstances were forcing them to fend for themselves as the communities have been turned to “*survival of the fittest grounds*”.

The positive that has emerged from the study was that children who are heads of households understood the value of education despite the added responsibilities facing them. Some of the children who dropped out of school were longing to complete matric but their circumstances were not conducive. For future studies, it would be important to analyse after care services that could be provided to children who are heads of households that dropped out of school, and how can such services be accessible to these children.

The researcher has learnt that the role played by Non-Governmental Organisations was instrumental in assisting children who are heads of households although was also not adequate. The researcher also used the study as a platform of referring some cases to the social worker of NGMH and other relevant services providers because children who are heads of households in Mandela Village were not always aware of services rendered by the different service providers; some of these children were not empowered on what services to expect, from whom, what would be required and time frame for such services. It was worth noting that there was a great need for service providers to do proper community entry and organise education and awareness campaigns prior working in the community. The researcher's recommendation is to strengthen collaboration, partnership and joint ventures in service delivery to speed the efficiency of assistance required by these children. The drivers could be community structures, as an example, street committees whom have first hand information of what are the gaps in their community.

The researcher has also learnt that there were some children who are heads of households who were also taking care of their profoundly disabled siblings. The care needed by such siblings was hectic and required twenty-four hour supervision. Despite such challenges, the researcher also established that Mandela Village did not have residential facilities that accommodate such cases; the community was relying on outside service providers. The street committees should be the eyes and ears of the community to lobby Government to bring resources and encourage support and security of all role players working in the community.

The Department of Education was also identified as lacking in providing enough support to children who are heads of households. The support provided at schools was accommodating all children irrespective of socio-economic situation at home. Children who are heads of households were found to be struggling to find a balance in doing the school work and at the same time home management, thus some were not coping with their studies and dropping out of school. It was also established that schools did not have enough infrastructure to accommodate these children especially in high school, and they were not treated differently when school requirements like stationery, school uniform, money to pay for excursion and educational trips, school fees was needed. It was established that schools did have database of children who were either orphaned or vulnerable but the difference was on the efforts put in place to assist these children.

It was also worth noting that the primary school had made extra strides through forming partnerships with other services, as an example NGMH, to render after care services. In such an initiative children are not just assisted with their homework, the children are also benefiting in

psycho-social support and other needs that are identified or reported are attended to. For future studies it would be interesting to document how many schools are providing such services and at the same time share these best practices. Such best practice models could be considered by policy makers especially to schools where such initiatives do not exist. The policy makers could also employ school social workers or psychologist to assist these children as there is a dire need for such services at schools, and thus would be another way of assisting children who are heads of households not to drop out of school but to long for education.

The study has also demonstrated that the ongoing changes that are brought to the curriculum at schools were to some extent a concern to the educators, as some of these changes were not easily understood by educators thus delaying the culture of learning as some educators had to take an extra effort to introduce such changes to the learners. Some of these changes had an impact in the education of children who are heads of households as they were not able to meet all the required standards and needs, thus were demotivated and drop out of school. Policy makers of the Department of Education need to be sensitive, flexible and ensure that any changes brought to schools come with a full package, and all the resources that would motivate the educators and children to take their studies seriously. Such developments should be introduced before the schools go on holidays so that educators could have enough time to familiarize themselves with such changes even if it means them not taking full school vacation as children.

The study has revealed a high dropout rate in children over the age of fourteen (14) years and mostly girls. This is attributed to lack of access to Government grants and support of children in this age group. Policy makers of the Department of Social Development and Education should review their policies so that these children are supported until they complete their studies. There should be comprehensive bursaries that should take these children to tertiary education. The outcome could be reduction in poverty, unemployment and crime in the country.

Children who are heads of households should not be discouraged and drop out of school because of the lack of resources but attempts have to be made to assist these children. This study did not just attempt to assist policy makers in having a better insight of the challenges facing children who are heads of households but also identified the causes for these children to drop out of school, and suggested some strategies that would contribute in encouraging these children not to drop out of school.

There is a need for a strong collaboration between the Department of Education and Social Development as both Departments have a key role in shaping the future of these children. Both these Departments must continually sensitize the Department of Home Affairs to come up with practical policies and to encourage their employees to put customers first. Children who are heads of households should be given priority assistance especially when all the required and relevant proof is received.

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW SCHEDULES DIRECTED TO CHILDREN WHO ARE HEADS OF HOUSEHOLDS

Name of the respondent _____

Respondent Number: _____

Gender of the respondent _____

A: Personal Questions

1. Where do you live?

2. How old are you?

3. How many are you at home?

4. When did your parents passed away?

4.1 Mother: _____

4.2 Father: _____

5. Is there a member of your family/ relative/ member of the community who is providing support to you?

6. If there is family/ relative/ member of the community supporting you, who is that person?

7. What kind of support do you get from this person mentioned in question 6?

8. What is your role as the head of the household? List

9. How do you cope with life challenges?

10. Do you need any assistance?

11. What kind of assistance do you need? List in order of priority

12. In your opinion who should provide this assistance to you?

B: Educational Matters

1. Are you attending school?

2. If you are at school, what grade are you in now?

3. If you are at school, how are you performing at school?

4. If not at school, at what grade did you dropout of school?

5. If not at school, why did you leave school?

6. How was your school performance when you were still at school?

7. If all your needs can be met will you go back to school?

8. If you are willing to go back to school what assistance will you need? (List in order of priority)

9. If you are not willing to go back to school, how do you think you will survive in life without being educated?

C: Social Services

1. Are you a recipient of government grant?

2. If you receive a grant, what grant is it?

3. Does the grant cover your needs?

4. If the grant does not cover your needs, what assistance is missing?

5. If you are not a recipient of a grant how do you make a living?

6. If you are not a recipient of any grant what kind of support do you need (List in order of priority)

7. Did you receive any training on home management and other life skills? Explain in detail?

8. If you did receive some form of training, who provided such training?

9. Was the training useful to you?

B: Performance of children who are heads of households

1. In general how do you rate the performance of children who are heads of households compared to children who have parents in the area?

2. How is the school attendance of children who are heads of households compared to children who have parents?

3. What is the dropout rate in general at school?

4. How many of the drop outs are children who are heads of households?

5. Do you see any difference in the dropout rate of children who are heads of households compared to children who have parents at school?

6. If there is a difference, what are the causes of such a difference?

7. Is there a difference in dropout rate between boys and girls at school?

8. If there is a difference, what cause such a difference?

9. What is being done by the school to reduce the learner's dropout rate?

10. Do you see any reduction in the dropout rate as a result of school intervention?

APPENDIX B: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION WITH CHILDREN WHO ARE HEADS OF HOUSEHOLDS

1. Can you confirm that the following are the needs of children who are heads of households?

2. Can you rank these needs in order of priority?

3. You indicated that the level of support from Government is not adequate. Be reasonable, what would be an ideal level of support in your opinion?

4. What type of support do you expect to get from the school?

5. In your opinion how best should the support be provided to children who are heads of households?

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW SCHEDULES DIRECTED TO EDUCATORS IN SCHOOLS WHERE THE CHILDREN WHO ARE HEADS OF HOUSEHOLDS ARE ATTENDING/ WERE ATTENDING SCHOOL

Name of the respondent: _____

Respondent Number: _____

Role of the respondent at school?

A: School Management Systems

1. Does the school have a policy or guidelines to assist children who are heads of households?

2. If there is such policy or guidelines in place what do they entail?

3. Irrespective of an existence of a policy or guidelines, what kind of assistance do children who are heads of households receive from the school?

4. Does the school provide or conduct awareness and educational programmes in HIV/AIDS?

5. Does the school provide life skills training in general?

6. If the school provides training, what does the training address?

7. Does the school have a database of children who are heads of households?

8. If there is such a database, how many children in this school are heads of households?

9. If there is no database, how do you know that there are children who are heads of households?
