

**Corporate Social Responsibility towards AIDS orphans in  
South Africa: trends in the motor manufacturing sector and  
guidelines for corporate action**

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**DECLARATION**

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this assignment is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university for a degree.

## ABSTRACT

The HIV/AIDS pandemic is destroying young adults in the prime of their lives. Children not only become orphans, but also gain instant “adult” status – becoming heads of households, breadwinners and customers. Children who fill such roles must be recognised as important stakeholders with regard to business. As limited available estimations suggest that South Africa is home to 800 000 orphans, corporations must realise that it will make good business sense to invest in the country’s AIDS orphans<sup>1</sup> today, as these children will constitute both their future clients and employees.

This study examines trends in the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives of five major corporations in the South African motor manufacturing sector. AIDS orphans were also involved in the study through participation in three focus group discussions. The evidence reveals that corporations do not recognise AIDS orphans as important stakeholders to business, nor do they see it as their responsibility to carry the burden of care for such children. Orphans felt that corporations in this business sector do not care about their needs and well-being. They regarded companies who were involved in CSR projects in their communities as “caring” and this resulted in the children hosting positive feelings towards involved companies. They even expressed the desire to purchase their brand of motor vehicle, as opposed to competitor’s brands that were not involved (through CSR) in their community, in future.

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<sup>1</sup> Hereafter the term “AIDS orphans” will be used to refer to those children whose parents die as a result of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. It must be noted that there is concern that the use of such terms results in further discrimination and stigma for the children affected by HIV/AIDS. In this case, however, the term is used to draw attention to the very particular plight of a growing proportion of South Africa’s population, as well as to the fact that, given the growth in numbers, the phenomenon has the potential (unless recognised and managed) to become a crisis for South Africa in general and for South African businesses in particular.

## OPSOMMING

Die MIV/VIGS pandemie is besig om die lewens van jongmense te verwoes. Kinders word nie alleenlik wees gelaat nie, maar word ook oornag volwassenes. Hulle word die hoof van huishoudings, broodwinners en kliënte vir besighede. Kinders wat hierdie rolle vervul moet daarom as belangrike aandeelhouers in die besigheidswêreld erken word. Beperkte skattings veronderstel dat Suid-Afrika tans ongeveer 800 000 weeskinders huisves. Besighede moet, in die lig hiervan, besef dat dit goeie besigheidssin maak om in VIGS-Weeskinders<sup>1</sup> te belê, aangesien hierdie kinders hul toekomstige kliënte en werknemers is.

Hierdie studie ondersoek tendense in besighede se sosiale verantwoordelikeheidsinisiatiewe (“Corporate Social Responsibility Initiatives”), binne die motorvervaardigingsbedryf van Suid-Afrika. VIGS-Weeskinders was ook nouliks by die studie betrokke, deur middel van deelname aan drie fokusgroepbesprekings. Die studie het bewys dat besighede nie VIGS-Weeskinders as belangrike aandeelhouers erken nie, en dat dit ook nie as hul plig gesien word om na weeskinders om te sien nie. Weeskinders, daarenteen, was van die opinie dat besighede in dié bepaalde bedryf nie omsien na hul welstand, of probeer om in hul behoeftes te voorsien nie. Kinders het wel besighede wat betrokke is by sosiale verantwoordelikeheidsinisiatiewe in hul gemeenskappe, beskryf as “liefdevol”, en dit het daartoe gelei dat kinders positiewe houdings jeens sulke besighede gehuldig het. Kinders het selfs die behoefte uitgespreek om, eendag eerder handelsmerke se voertuie te koop wat wel sosiale verantwoordelikeheidsinisiatiewe in hul gemeenskappe bedryf, as dié wat niks doen om hul lot te verlig nie.

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<sup>1</sup> Hierna sal die term “VIGS-Weeskinders” verwys na kinders wie hul ouers verloor het as gevolg van die MIV/VIGS epidemie. Daar moet op gelet word dat die gebruik van sulke terme verdere diskriminasie en stigmatisering tot gevolg kan hê vir kinders wat geaffekteer word deur MIV/VIGS. In hierdie geval word die term egter gebruik om juis aandag te trek na die spesifieke lot van dié groeiende deel van die Suid-Afrikaanse bevolking. Verder wil die gebruik van hierdie term ook aandag vestig op die feit dat indien die verskynsel van VIGS-Weeskinders nie dringende aandag geniet nie, Suid-Afrika, maar veral die Suid-Afrikaanse besigheidssektor, ‘n ramp in die gesig staar.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

*In Sub-Saharan Africa the HIV/AIDS epidemic has deepened poverty and exacerbated deprivation of families. The responsibility of caring for orphaned children is a major factor pushing many extended families beyond their ability to cope. With the number of orphans requiring protection and support on the increase, this problem flows over to the public sphere. Many countries are therefore experiencing large increases in the number of families headed by women and grandparents and these households are unable to provide for the basic needs of the orphans in their care (UNICEF, 2003:12).*

HIV and AIDS have devastating effects on corporate South Africa. In response to this crisis many companies are implementing measures to combat the devastating effects on markets, profits, and the labour force. The “internal” management of HIV/AIDS is therefore becoming part of the corporate landscape in South Africa. Although many companies are beginning to put programmes in place to combat the effects of HIV/AIDS effectively internally, this study proposes that corporate South Africa is not managing HIV/AIDS on an “external” basis. HIV/AIDS inevitably affects communities, families and households in areas where corporations operate. For this reason corporate agendas are increasingly being shaped by the interaction between companies and their stakeholders. These stakeholders, in turn place increased demands on corporations, who need to pay attention, because of their numbers.

South Africa is the country with the largest gini coefficient in the world and HIV/AIDS is further increasing the existing gaps between the “haves” and the “have-nots” (Kelly, K., Parker, W. and Gelb, S. 2002). Corporate South Africa represents the “haves” – profit-driven institutions who need or want to spend a percentage of their profits on social issues. The “have-nots” are millions of HIV/AIDS sufferers and children who become orphaned through the pandemic. The link between the “haves” and the “have-nots” can be found in the fact that South Africa’s growing orphan generation will be the corporate clients and stakeholders of tomorrow. Corporations should therefore not only address HIV/AIDS internally (amongst staff member and contractors), because the lack of an adequate external response (i.e. CSR initiatives for orphan support programmes) can have negative effects on their businesses in future.

*Heartbeat* is a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) working in the community development arena. The mission of the organisation is to alleviate the suffering of orphaned and vulnerable children (OVC) by facilitating change in communities. More than 80% of the organisation’s funding comes from the South African private sector. Companies are generally willing to donate funds towards *Heartbeat*’s cause, but a recent study by the UK’s Save the Children Foundation (SCFUK, April 2002) found that a third of the 95 South African corporations sampled would rather contribute towards orphanages and not to community-based developmental interventions. Orphanages, however, generally are not regarded as a

sustainable intervention for OVC, and this trend in CSR spending must therefore be examined (SCUK, 2002:3). The Save the Children study (April, 2002:2) established that South African CSR spending towards orphans was mostly directed to supporting orphanages. The study also aimed to answer the question: Why should children be seen as important stakeholders in the HIV/AIDS responses of corporations? Their answer:

*Business should engage further with children affected by HIV/AIDS because internal company policies alone cannot protect business from the impact of AIDS. Children are among businesses' largest group of stakeholders with significant purchasing power. Given the likely increase in child-headed households due to the epidemic, children are likely to become more important stakeholders for business. Business also has the responsibility to protect and promote children's rights.*

## **2. LITERATURE OVERVIEW**

### **2.1 Corporate Social Responsibility in South Africa**

The importance of social development and particularly the role of the private sector are increasingly acknowledged worldwide, and especially in South Africa. According to Margie Keaton, Chief Executive Officer of the First Rand Foundation (2001), attempts are being made to formalise the way in which companies interact with local communities and other stakeholders affected by their operations (CSI Handbook, 2001:27).

Yet, although the case for CSR is emphasised, South Africa, with its apartheid legacy, high unemployment, and HIV/AIDS crisis, has no clear model for CSR. What seems to be of greater importance however is that corporations need to find unique CSR strategies that suit their size, sector, clients and business values. The new millennium has brought the era of CSR to South Africa and the gap between social responsibility and business imperatives seems to narrow as the debate on the business value of CSR intensifies (CSI Handbook, 2001: 27).

Shafik Gabr, CEO of the Artoc Group, warns that corporate ignorance can have a devastating effect on the South African economy. "Key members of the investment community are beginning to realize that socially and environmentally responsible investments are significant issues that affect the value of their investment, earnings per share, profitability and the likelihood of winning contracts in future" (World Economic Forum Report, 2004:13).

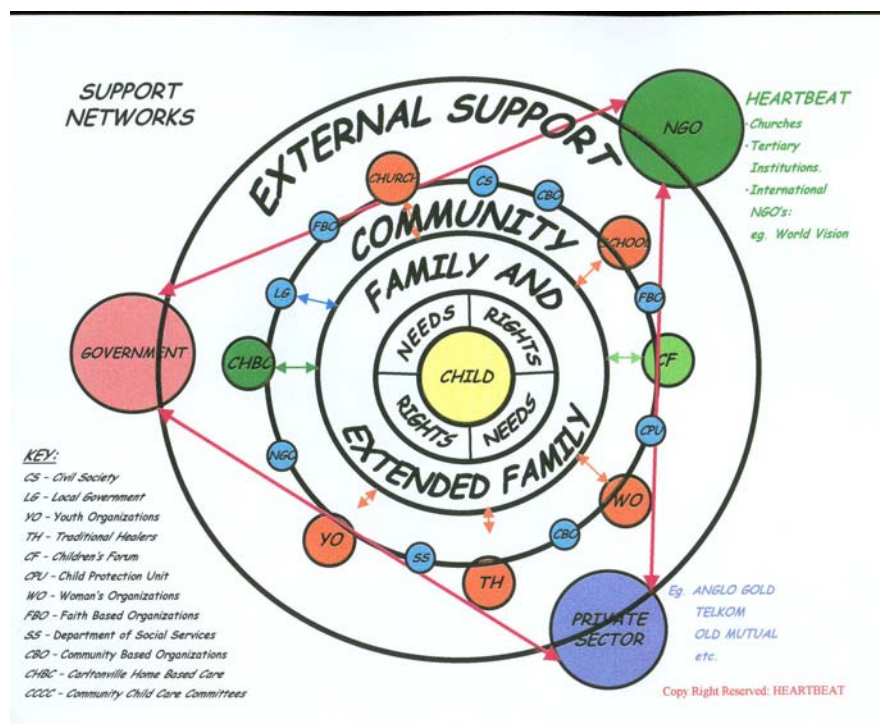
Colleen du Toit, Executive Director of the South African Grant Makers Association (SAGA), acknowledges that the most important contribution business can make to society is to keep the economy buoyant. She further emphasises the fact that buoyant economies cannot flourish in unstable societies thus confirming that CSR does indeed make good business sense (CSI Handbook, 2001: 39).

One could therefore argue that these factors serve as good enough reason to review the way in which CSR programmes are developed and implemented in South Africa. Although CSR managers are required to report more vigorously on the socio-economic effects of their grant making, there is currently little national evidence of the impact of CSR investments in South Africa (De Jongh, 2003:7).

## 2.2 Why corporations are reluctant to invest in AIDS Orphans

The Heartbeat model of community-based care and support for OVC has the child as its main focus. The model illustrates that each orphan in South Africa has certain catch nets that should enable the child to lead a stable life – despite losing his/her parents (see Figure 1 below). There are three catch-nets: 1) the family and extended family; 2) the community; and 3) an external support level to which the government, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) / Community Based Organisations (CBOs) / Faith Based Organisations (FBOs), and corporations belong. Currently the burden of care and support of orphans is primarily carried by communities, NGOs and government.

Figure 1: Support Networks



Why then are corporations not performing their duty in the external support catch net for orphans? The Save the Children Study (2002:26) identified two main reasons for this lack of support. Firstly, business is subject to a restricted mindset when considering the link between children and HIV/AIDS. Children are frequently classified as “orphaned” or “infected” by HIV/AIDS, and few corporations realise that a child can be “affected” without



being infected<sup>2</sup>. Secondly, corporations do not see it as their responsibility to address the needs of children affected by HIV/AIDS, preferring government and NGOs to do this “welfare” work. Apart from relying on a few philanthropic hearts in corporate boardrooms, NGOs like Heartbeat therefore need to be seriously convincing to assure corporations of the long-term benefits of investing in orphans today.

### **2.3 Why corporations should invest in AIDS Orphans now**

Despite the warning signals, many corporations are still ignorant of the devastating effects HIV/AIDS will have on their business. It might be understandable then, that some corporations reason that AIDS orphans (as a “side-effect” of the pandemic) do not affect them directly – thereby justifying their limited action in this area. When studying the micro-economic (household) impact of HIV/AIDS however, it becomes clear why investments should be made towards the care of people, and specifically children, affected by the pandemic.

The impact of HIV/AIDS on individuals, households, communities and societies is cumulative and interrelated. Communities become affected through the proliferation of impacted households. Nations become affected by the weight on impacted individuals, households and communities, and eventually the impact of AIDS influences international relations (SADC, 2002: 4). These negative impacts of the pandemic can be directly linked to the gloomy forecasts for corporations, especially for those in the manufacturing sectors, should they not act now. UNAIDS illustrates this chain of causation as follows:

*HIV/AIDS will continue to affect the lives of several generations of children. The impact will mark their communities for decades as the numbers of impoverished children rise, their insecurity worsens, education and work opportunities decline, nurturing and support systems erode and mortality rises. Large scale, long-term efforts are needed to cope with these harsh new realities (UNAIDS, 2001).*

On top of this negative snowball effect, Kelly *et al.* (2002:13) argues that HIV/AIDS kills people in their productive prime. The disease destroys breadwinners and thus drastically reduces household income. HIV/AIDS also weakens a country’s tax base and reduces its ability to finance public expenditures, including those aimed at accumulating human capital. With thousands of parents and breadwinners dying, the traditional community and extended family resources are stretched beyond capacity (see Figure 2). Already impoverished extended families cannot cope with the extra burden of caring for additional children and thus the phenomenon of “child-headed households” (households where children have lost both parents and stay alone or with their siblings) emerge.

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<sup>2</sup> Various studies have proven that only a third of children who are born from HIV-positive mothers are HIV-positive themselves (Whiteside, 2000:14; Loudon, 1998:32).



consumable goods will decrease, as will average household savings. This will, in turn, have negative effect on economic growth in general (Kelly *et al.*, 2002:17).

Apart from these threats of economic slowdown and loss of human capital, governments face growing demands to care for OVC (Sunday Times, 2003). This burden of care cannot simply be placed at government's door however. Corporations need to pull their weight as part of the external support network for these children. Whiteside (1999:9) warns that increased numbers of orphans represent a potential long-term threat to stability, development and democracy that will inevitably affect corporations. Martin Schönteich (1999:4) of the South African Institute of Security Studies explains that when parents die, children in child-headed households develop without proper supervision, and will therefore be at risk of becoming involved in criminal activity. Such children are disconnected from social, economic and political support structures and constitute an "extra-national" population group that can easily become a tool for ethnic warfare and economic exploitation. As a result of broad-based neglect, destitute orphans flee to the cities, seeking refuge. There, criminal activity, fuelled by poverty, starvation and exploitation, increases in the exact areas where corporations are predominantly based.

Figure 2 illustrates the chain of devastation at a micro-economic level. Orphans become heads of households where they have buying power, but at the same time enjoy little support from their catch nets illustrated in Figure 1. On the positive (left-hand) side, Figure 2 illustrates that corporations do have a choice in how they deal with the AIDS orphan crisis. By fulfilling their role as one of the major catch-nets, corporations can ensure that a stable home environment, with increased savings and stability, is created. This stability will, in turn have a positive effect on the South African democracy as a whole.

### **3. AIMS OF THIS STUDY**

This study had three main aims:

#### **3.1 To create awareness in the South African corporate sector (specifically in the motor manufacturing sector) regarding the AIDS Orphan crisis**

As discussed before, the Save the Children Study (2000) found that many corporations regarded the AIDS orphan crisis as an issue to be addressed within the social domain. The main aim of this study is therefore to create awareness of the effects millions of destitute orphans will have on corporations, their surrounding communities and the economy in which they operate (refer back to Figures 1 and 2). It is hoped that increased awareness will trigger future research into the corporate costs of intervention versus the costs of choosing not to intervene.

### **3.1 To identify sector-specific challenges for the South African motor manufacturing industry regarding this particular threat**

All corporations need to ask themselves who their future clients will be in a country where HIV/AIDS is rife. The motor manufacturing sector could possibly define their prospective clients as educated, economically active citizens who aspire towards the finer things in life – “sheer driving pleasure” (BMW), or people who can afford to have a little fun – “life’s more fun in a Tazz” (Toyota). HIV/AIDS is changing the potential market and client, however. With an estimated orphan population of 2.5 million by 2010 (Save the Children, 2000:11), children in child-headed households will have increased buying power, and will inevitably form an important target market of potential clients.

While infection rates are stabilising in developed nations, they are increasing rapidly in Africa – the continent where substantial motor industry investments are being made (South African Automotive Yearbook, 2003). The juxtaposition of an increase in HIV infection rates at the same time as increased motor industry investments means that the South African motor manufacturing sector faces huge challenges. “According to estimates, many companies in the South African motor manufacturing sector have between 20 and 40% HIV positive skilled workers (South African Automotive Yearbook, 2003). Few companies have, however, implemented measures to combat this loss in staff productivity, illness and AIDS-related deaths. DaimlerChrysler was one of the first motor manufacturers to react and their first HIV policy was implemented in 1996. In South Africa the company has a workforce of 4500, but when their families are included, a total of 23 000 dependants benefit from Daimler’s early response (South African Automotive Yearbook, 2003).

The challenge for the South African motor manufacturing sector is to elevate existing concepts of CSR beyond the boundaries of legal compliance and “feel-good” philanthropy. CSR deserves a central position alongside issues of corporate strategy, risk management and reputation (World Economic Forum Report, 2004:4). Olins (2001:10) warns that the successful brands of the future will have to stand not only for the product they represent, but also for a desirable image where “the next big thing in brands is social responsibility” (Olins, 2001:10). Corporate competing in the same market, who also “behave well” will enjoy the competitive advantage. In the future, consumers will determine the socio-economic sphere in which companies operate (Olins, 2001:10).

### **3.2 To involve orphans in finding possible solutions for this problem**

A study of this nature would not achieve a major goal if it did not involve AIDS orphans in investigating possible solutions for the problems they have to face. While analysing limited research on the topic “AIDS orphans and CSR”, it became clear that orphans have seldom been included in the process of problem solving. This study therefore also aimed to show that it is vitally important to listen to orphans and to take their opinions seriously. The final validity and reliability of this study could only be achieved if orphans were consulted and

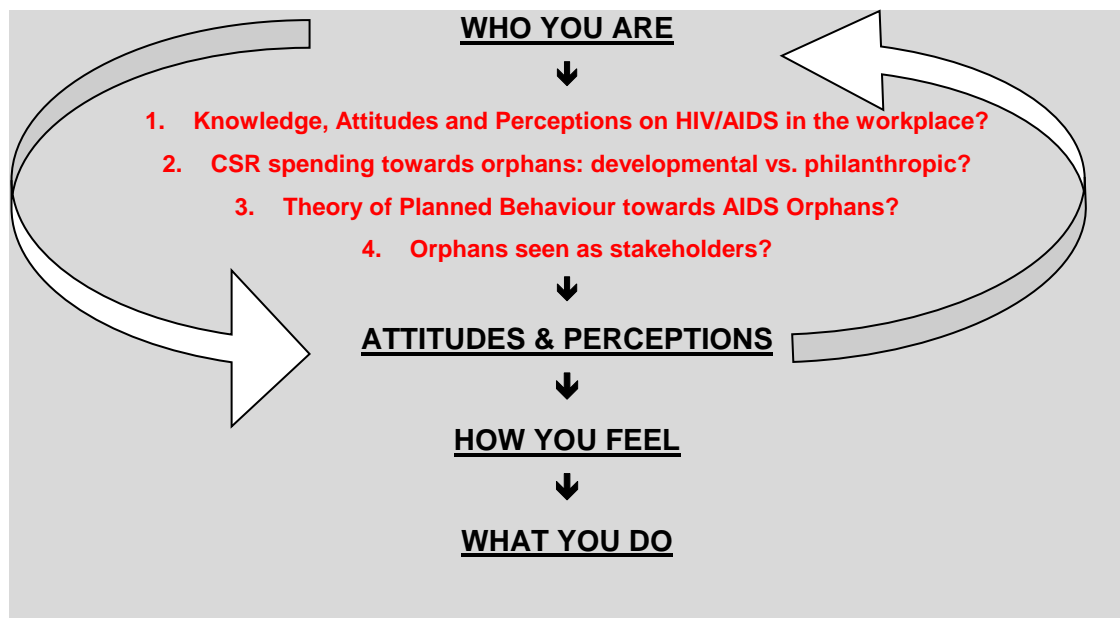
results conveyed to the corporations involved. Apart from giving children a voice, their involvement would also show corporations to be caring, compassionate companies that are willing to attend to the plight of children.

#### 4. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This study had three main objectives, which were designed to meet the three aims mentioned above:

##### 4.1 To test the Corporate Chain of Causation (CCC) of CSR spending towards AIDS Orphans, through structured interviews

Figure 3: Corporate Chain of Causation



When analysing corporate sector responses to a given problem, the unique nature of the corporate is considered. In this study, the corporations were major role players in the motor manufacturing sector of a Third World country. South Africa's history of Apartheid discrimination, poverty, and inequality has resulted in a corporate landscape that is unique and extremely challenging. The corporations under discussion all used mechanised manufacturing processes as well as relatively unskilled labour. In short, the five corporate respondents were similar in nature. The main proposition for this study was that the growing number of orphans would affect certain business sectors more negatively than others. The perceived threat of the growing numbers of orphans would further influence a company's response to this phenomenon. Although comparison between different business sectors was not feasible for this study, it would be valuable to investigate why competitors in different sectors react differently in the face of the same threat.

The first of the three objectives sought to prove that, even if companies are quite similar, attitudes and perceptions are real determining factors, as reactions to the same threat may vary significantly. This main proposition is supported by four sub-propositions that are determinants for corporate attitudes and perceptions towards the AIDS orphan crisis. Before reporting on corporations' responses to the four sub-propositions (and thus their feelings and attitudes towards AIDS orphans), a brief explanation of the purpose of each sub-proposition will be given.

**Sub-Proposition 1: What Knowledge, Attitudes and Perceptions concerning HIV/AIDS exist in the workplace?**

If companies have negative attitudes and perceptions concerning HIV/AIDS, a limited 'internal' response to the epidemic can be expected. This limited 'internal' response will inevitably lead to even greater limitations in the 'external' (CSR) response towards HIV/AIDS. Companies will therefore not spend money on Aids Orphans through CSR if they have not already implemented measures to combat the epidemic internally. Corporate attitudes towards HIV/AIDS have a direct influence on the action that is taken to combat it. The provision of anti-retrovirals (ARVs) to HIV-positive staff is an example of how internal action precedes external responses, since a company's internal decision to provide ARVs to infected staff directly affects the number of AIDS orphans in the country. Corporations in the mining sector have started to provide ARVs to all HIV-positive employees. Critics, however, argue that providing staff with ARVs will only delay the process of children becoming orphaned. Childhood development studies though, have shown that the effects of a child losing his/her parents before the age of seven are more devastating than when the loss occurs at a later stage of life (World Bank News Release, 2003).

**Sub-Proposition 2: Long-term vision for CSR spending towards orphans: developmental vs. philanthropic?**

This proposition states that corporations who choose a developmental approach for their future dealings with the crisis will benefit because CSR funds spent on philanthropic interventions will be funds wasted. UNAIDS (2001) emphasises that "institutional care for the majority of orphans and other vulnerable children is neither developmentally ideal, nor a financially appropriate option. It is better to devote (corporate) resources towards strengthening the abilities of families and communities to care for orphaned children, to improve income-generating opportunities as well as access to credit and health care services".

Institutionalised care for orphans is also generally viewed as undesirable for the following reasons: 1) children's emotional needs are often neglected; 2) there is no continuum of care; 3) children are isolated from a "normal" community environment; and 4) children are stigmatised for being in a "home" (Save the Children, 2002:43). It is of concern, then, to note that more than a third of the companies participating in the Save the Children study

contributed funds to orphanages as their only response to the orphan crisis (Save the Children, 2002:3). Referring to Figure 1, corporations need to take cognisance of the fact that orphanages are characterised by a loss of human capital, and this loss will affect have business negatively.

### **Sub-Proposition 3: Theory of Planned Behaviour towards AIDS Orphans?**

Icek Ajzen's "Theory of Planned Behaviour" (TPB) states that an individual's (or in this instance, a corporation's) intention to perform a given behaviour will ultimately influence the actual execution thereof (Ajzen, 1991:181). Intentions are indicators of how hard people (or corporations) are willing to try to perform a particular behaviour. As a general rule, the stronger the intention to engage in a given behaviour the more likely will be its performance (Ajzen, 1991:181). TPB postulates three determinants of intention: 1) attitude towards the behaviour; 2) social pressure to perform a given behaviour, and 3) the degree of perceived behavioural control in performing a given behaviour. Similarly, companies are under increased pressure from their competitors and stakeholders, to perform certain "socially acceptable behaviours". The South African mining industry is a good example of how "peer pressure" and competition can lead to the development of various sector-specific models of managing the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Corporate competition plays a vital role in trying to find the "best practice" or most suitable model of intervention.

The final determinant of intention is the degree of control, which refers to the perceived degree of difficulty with which a given behaviour can be performed (Ajzen, 1991:188, 196).

The more favourable the attitude is, the greater the perceived behavioural control. Stronger perceived control would in turn lead to a much stronger intention to perform the behaviour (Ajzen, 1991:188). Companies will therefore not invest in AIDS orphans if they do not feel that they have behavioural control of the situation. Again, the actions and experiences of competitors may also influence corporate actions.

### **Sub-Proposition 4: Are orphans seen and treated as key stakeholders?**

This proposition states that companies who do not regard orphans as stakeholders will not a) report to them regarding their CSR spending; and b) include them in internal benefit management procedures.

Companies have high regard for the views and opinions of their stakeholders, since satisfied stakeholders are key to corporate survival in a competitive market place. "The customer is always right" has become a catch phrase that drives marketing campaigns worldwide. "Stakeholders" are commonly referred to as people who have a stake in the company and whose lives are affected by the way in which a company conducts its business". Stakeholders usually include shareholders, clients, communities and staff. Corporations do not recognise orphans as stakeholders in their business.

Treating orphans as important stakeholders means recognising their consumer rights. On the flip side, choosing to ignore their rights could result in negative publicity for corporations. Inadequate benefit management systems for the children of deceased employees are one example of companies ignoring orphans as a stakeholder grouping. Although such news of the mismanagement of benefits for orphans could have devastating effects on the corporation's image, the real consideration should be the image that is instilled in the minds of the children, as this image will be difficult to erase when such children become adults.

The Save the Children study (2000:26) illustrates how youth in Khayelitsha and Langa perceived a particular company as "not caring", and subsequently grouped together and physically blocked company trucks from entering the area. The company suffered significantly, and lost customers to another supplier. This example of children's stakeholder value should be a warning sign to corporations who are reluctant to recognise orphans as an important stakeholder grouping. The Chairperson of American Express, James Robinson, explains their vision for CSI: "*We are giving away money, but we are doing it in a way that builds business*" (Adkins, 1999:14).

By using this CCC in the analysis of CSR spending towards AIDS orphans, awareness was created around the whole orphan crisis in South Africa. The corporate Chain of Causation caused corporations to reconsider their current spending, or lack thereof, and placed the spotlight on orphans and their needs.

#### **4.2 To analyse current trends in CSR spending towards Aids orphans in one particular business sector**

Current (post 2000) trends in the CSR spending of motor manufacturers were analysed. The rationale for analysing trends in CSR spending was to ascertain why companies in the same business sector, operating within the same economic climate in the same country, react differently when facing the same threat. In an attempt to answer this fundamental question, a chain of causation was proposed to corporate respondents. Individual testing of this chain with each corporate respondent became the second objective of this study. The second aim of the study, namely to "identify sector-specific challenges for the South African motor manufacturing sector regarding this particular threat", was met by analysing trend in CSR spending in one particular business sector.

#### **4.3 To compile a Managerial Checklist that would assist corporations to maximize their CSR spending towards AIDS orphans**

The final objective of the study was to construct a checklist that CSR managers could use when considering their next proposal for funding children's and, more specifically, orphans' projects. The purpose of the checklist was also to encourage CSR managers to start seeing investing in AIDS orphans as constructive development rather than philanthropy. When it



comes to AIDS Orphans, managers should apply the principles from the new CSR Managerial Checklist:

**STEP 1: CONSULT**

**STEP 2: STRATEGIC MARKETING**

**STEP 3: REPORT**

This managerial checklist enabled the researcher to meet the third aim of the study, namely to “involve orphans in finding possible solutions for the problem”. The focus group discussions conducted with orphans proved that it is possible to consult with orphans regarding their needs.

## **5. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

The research design that was used was case study comparative research, in which the primary focus was “... to compare particular societies by intensively examining a limited number of cases” (Neuman, 1997:404). Exploratory research was conducted to find out why different companies within one business sector reacted differently to the particular problem of AIDS orphans.

### **5.1 Interviews with corporations**

The research methodology consisted of interactive, structured interviews with the relevant CSR managers of the five corporations. These interviews were preceded by desk research on the history of CSR spending within the company. Available CSR reports and related information on the company website were examined. The aim of this examination was to identify trends that existed in the company’s CSR spending. Apart from the standard questions posed to all respondents, specific questions pertaining to the unique actions of each corporate respondent were also asked. Interviews were conducted with five major corporations in the South African motor manufacturing sector. Three interviews were conducted in person during March 2004, and two interviews were conducted via email and telephone conversations during April of the same year. The average duration of the personal interviews with CSR and HIV/AIDS managers was one hour.

The questionnaire that was used during the interviews with corporations covered four sections. The first section aimed to provide answers to the question “Who are you?” – referring to the specific business sector in which all the respondents were operating, as well as to how HIV/AIDS affected that business sector and particular corporation. The second section covered questions on attitudes and perceptions. First, attitudes towards HIV/AIDS in the workplace, and then attitudes and perceptions regarding AIDS orphans were discussed. The third section aimed to test the Corporate Chain of Causation (CCC) of CSR spending towards AIDS orphans (see Research Objectives, Point 3). The aim of this section was to

ascertain whether a link could be established between internal attitudes and perceptions, and external behaviour – as covered in the fourth section of questions.

## **5.2 Focus group discussions with orphans**

Focus group discussions were conducted with groups of high school children (all orphans in Heartbeat's programmes) living in communities in close proximity to where the corporations in question operate. The purpose of the focus groups was to ascertain what the views and opinions of orphans in South Africa were with regard to the five corporations under discussion. Twenty-six orphans participated in the discussions that were conducted in Nellmapius, Atteridgeville and Katlehong in Gauteng.

Child participants were asked the same nine questions with regard to all five corporations. To eliminate confusion, a picture of the particular corporate logo was displayed, and then all nine questions pertaining to that particular corporate were asked. In responding, orphans had to grade their responses between points on a Schutte Scale, the measuring instrument used in the discussion. The Scale is a wooden, hand-held instrument with two distinct sides. The side viewed by respondents has three main areas representing "strongly agree", "neutral", and "strongly disagree". The side that the researcher faces displays scores ranging from 1 to 11, which enables the researcher to quantify the subjective opinions given by each respondent. The Schutte Scale was chosen as the desired discussion tool, as it is specifically designed to enable group members to express their thoughts where language is a barrier. This ensured that all children had an equal chance of responding and participating.

Children were asked about the brand and logo; (if they recognised the brand or logo, if they knew someone who drove such a car) what they thought about the brand (including "Has this company ever done anything for you?", "Are you aware of anything being done by the company in your community?"); and whether they would ever buy such a car, and why or why not. During all three focus group discussions, children signed consent forms for participating in the study. Interpreters, who were also confidants of the children, were used in each instance to repeat all questions in the mother tongue of the group. Schutte Scale scores were captured, and the whole session was recorded for further analysis. The sessions with children did not exceed one hour in duration.

## **5.3 Result-sharing workshop**

The study was to be concluded with a result-sharing session hosted at Heartbeat's offices in Pretoria. The workshop was cancelled, as only one of the five corporate respondents participating in the study was able to attend. Although the other respondents expressed interest in the final outcomes of the research, it was decided to cancel the workshop as it proved to be fairly impossible to find a date for the workshop that would suit all five respondents. A better response was obtained from other corporations, CSR managers and

consultants who did not participate in the study. This positive reaction to the research topic and interest in the results also showed that this study was unique and groundbreaking.

## 6. POPULATIONS AND SAMPLE

Given the scope of this study, an in-depth analysis of only one particular business sector was feasible. With this in mind, the motor manufacturing sector in South Africa was chosen, for the following reasons:

- No research of this nature into this particular sector's intervention regarding AIDS orphans (as opposed to other sectors, e.g. mining and banking where more had been done on the topic), which indicated that this is a relatively unexplored field of study;
- The sector's largest group of employees are factory workers working on production lines or in assembly plants. Such working conditions are extremely sensitive towards sudden changes in the workforce (i.e. employees dying of HIV/AIDS). Corporations should therefore be more advanced with regard to their internal response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic than companies employing fewer employees in their production lines, or manufacturing with products by means of automotive machines;
- Major production plants of motor manufacturers tend to be on the outskirts of urban areas. Corporations often also invest CSR funding in areas where they operate or where their workers live. In this regard, the pre-research assumption was that corporations would have invested specifically in these areas. These areas also coincided with some of the areas where Heartbeat (the researcher's employer) has operations, and has identified thousands of AIDS orphans; and
- The sector is a significant contributor to the economic growth experienced by the South African economy since 1994, and it was the third-largest contributor to the South African economy, after mining and agriculture, by the end of 2001 (Sparks, 2003). It is important to analyse this particular sector's response to the orphan crisis as it is a major role player in the economy as a whole.

With regard to the focus group discussion of AIDS orphans, respondents had the following common characteristics:

- They were orphaned;
- They were beneficiaries in Heartbeat's programmes;
- They were between the ages of 12 and 19;
- They lived predominantly in child-headed households; and
- They lived in communities in close proximity to motor manufacturing plants.

Critics might argue that these sample groups are not representative of the total target population (corporations and AIDS orphans). The focus of the study was primarily to explore how a small group of carefully selected respondents reacted to problems that concerned both groups. Future research could aim at increasing the sample sizes of both corporate and orphan response groups.

## **7. RESULTS**

### **7.1 Corporate Interviews**

Each discussion will now be summarised per corporation. Corporate respondents did not give their consent for the use of their identities or company names in these results, and corporations will therefore be referred to as "Corporate 1, 2, 3, etc".

#### **Corporation 1:**

Both the CSI and HIV/AIDS managers participated in this interview. Respondents were initially hesitant, and wanted to know whether the results would be published or their names used. (This was the only interview in which these questions were asked). In their response to the question "Do you think HIV/AIDS affects your particular business sector negatively?", the CSI manager asked the HIV/AIDS manager *"Did HIV/AIDS have a major impact?"* and the HIV/AIDS manager told his colleague: *"You know, I don't know if I can trust this lady (referring to the interviewer). I don't want to say things here that will get out in a very awkward way. We will have to see how we can smooth the words out, without giving specific detail."*

Although respondents acknowledged that "they (company employees) have the infection" because of broad-based HIV-testing being done on site, they did not think that the motor manufacturing sector was affected more negatively than other business sectors. They compared their industry to the mining industry that had greater challenges to face with regard to the internal management of HIV/AIDS. Respondents also felt that internal attitudes towards fellow staff that are HIV-positive comprised a combination of extremes – from support to stigmatisation.

Regarding the type of approach they believed would be most suitable in dealing with South Africa's orphan crisis, both respondents believed that the developmental route was the most desirable course, but they acknowledged that their CSI in practise mostly supported welfarist projects due to logistical and budget constraints. They also did not see it as the responsibility of the corporation to intervene in the lives of orphans, feeling that communities have the required capacity to perform this role. When asked, "Do you think investing your company's CSR funds towards AIDS orphans is money well spent?" respondents replied that they did not want to answer the question.

Respondents did not think that there was any link between their company's internal response to the pandemic and their external corporate social responsibility to orphans. They did, however, acknowledge that their employees firstly and then their families constituted the primary focus of their HIV/AIDS intervention and care. Apart from these contradictions, assumptions were voiced that children born to HIV-positive mothers would be HIV-positive themselves and that orphans would not really be a threat to the company because they would die before they became adults.

### **Corporation 2:**

The respondent acknowledged straight away that HIV/AIDS presented a crisis for the company and that it affected the motor manufacturing sector negatively, because of the huge numbers of factory-based employees who have lower levels of education and income than workers in other (non-manufacturing) sectors. This manager also agreed that there was still a lot of "silence" and "denial" concerning HIV/AIDS in the workplace and that, even though they had a voluntary counselling and testing facility on site, hardly any employees have voluntarily undergone HIV-testing.

Besides not enjoying overwhelming success with their internal management of HIV/AIDS, Corporation 2 was one of the only respondents who actually invested CSR funds directly towards AIDS orphans. Two programmes were currently running in Gauteng and Kwazulu-Natal, where support systems for orphans are implemented as an extension of existing home-based care programmes or hospices for the terminally ill. Like Corporation 1, this respondent also felt that the care of orphans and vulnerable children should be the joint responsibility of government and communities, and that the main onus of care did not really fall on the shoulders of the corporate sector. Although agreeing that orphans are a huge crisis for South Africa, this respondent was very clear on the fact that supporting orphans was not the main focus area of their CSR department, and that educational projects would be the preferred area of support.

The respondent also did not think that sound CSR investments towards orphans would affect their brand positively, or that prospective clients would consider a company's CSR activities when having to choose a particular product or service. Commenting on the relation between CSR and marketing, this respondent said: "We don't really advertise what we do in CSR, simply because our trustees do not believe that we can use CSR as marketing. For us it is two totally separate issues".

### **Corporation 3:**

Although this respondent acknowledged that no economic impact study had been done to determine the impact of HIV/AIDS internally, 86% of staff had undergone an HIV blood test and this initiative revealed that 6% of employees were HIV-positive. As a result of various

support programmes implemented over the past three years, this corporation did not feel that HIV/AIDS affected them negatively at the time. The respondent ascribed the success of the internal management programme to the fact that its holistic approach was built on a culture of trust – from the clinic staff to the managing director, people feel that they can trust each other regarding sensitive issues like HIV-status. This culture of trust has also secured open communication and stronger support networks for HIV-positive employees.

Unlike the previous two respondents, Corporation 3 felt that companies should take responsibility for the care and support of orphans, although the state and the community also have a role to play. Regarding institutional versus community-based care for orphans, the respondent replied, “If we are going to call it an AIDS orphan crisis, it calls for measures beyond just institutionalised care”. This was also the first respondent to acknowledge that good corporate citizenship is something that the public expect from companies and that investing in communities would have a positive return for corporations involved in such initiatives. In light of this, the respondent also felt that investing money in AIDS orphans would have a positive influence on their corporate brand.

Considering the link between the provision of ARVs to company staff and South Africa’s growing orphan crisis, Corporation 3 was also the first one to recognise this link. “I know there is a link between the two issues, but I am not sure how we would address it. Practically, our CSR and HIV/AIDS departments currently operate independent of each other, and operate from separate budgets”. The respondent did, however, suggest that internal spending towards HIV/AIDS would definitely precede external CSR towards orphans, as “our focus is internal first as we believe that charity begins at home and as such we wish to first impact areas from which we draw our employees and thereafter address issues in the larger South Africa.”

#### **Corporation 4:**

This respondent quite clearly believed that HIV/AIDS affects the company negatively. “Many people are dying due to AIDS related illnesses but most are still ignorant and continue with their behaviours, resulting in the company losing valuable assets”. To the question “What are staff members’ general attitude towards HIV/AIDS” the respondent answered, “Staff members still deny the fact that HIV/AIDS is real and living amongst us. They still see it as something that only affects poor people”.

Regarding their external (CSR) response to the pandemic, the respondent was hesitant to give concrete examples of support for children and orphans in particular. The respondent did, however, state that the corporation would be more inclined to support developmental projects in support of orphans since “community-based care initiatives would be a desired intervention in ensuring that orphans are re-united with family members and re-integrated into their communities”. In this light, the respondent agreed that it is the responsibility of

corporations to get involved in the care of orphans, and also felt that potential clients would consider the CSR activities of corporations when having to choose a preferred brand of motor vehicle. Similarly, the respondent agreed that positive media exposure of their CSR towards orphans would influence their brand in a positive manner.

On questions concerning the internal benefit management of unclaimed staff benefits, the respondent was the first to acknowledge that they experienced problems with children of deceased staff returning to the company seeking financial assistance and support. The respondent felt that more could be done to ensure that the benefits to which orphans are entitled are better managed. The respondent also felt that the mismanagement of funds could have devastating effects on the corporate brand, if measures were not strengthened.

#### **Corporation 5:**

This respondent felt that HIV/AIDS currently was well managed and under control, but feared the future when more employees would become sick and die due to AIDS. Having implemented various programmes regarding the management of HIV/AIDS in the workplace, this respondent felt corporations could not sit back and say they had done enough. Regarding their staff's general attitude towards the pandemic, the respondent declared that it was one of "support and understanding". This was the only respondent who described internal attitudes as such.

As with previous respondents, Corporation 5 also felt that managing the orphan crisis required a combination of welfarist and developmental approaches. In this regard, the company has supported both types of projects for orphans and vulnerable children.

Regarding public expectations, Corporation 5 did not think that the general public expected them to invest in AIDS orphans. On the flip side this respondent did, however, acknowledge that positive media exposure regarding CSR investments towards orphans would benefit their brand. The respondent continued to say that, although positive media exposure would have positive effects on the brand, the company did not view CSR as a marketing tool. Similarly the respondent emphasised: "We invest in orphans because it is the moral and ethical thing to do."

#### **7.2 Focus group discussions with orphans**

A total of 26 children participated in focus group discussions held in three townships in Gauteng during March 2004. After all three group discussions children signed consent forms stating their voluntary participation in the study. Interpreters, who were also confidants of the children, were used in each instance to repeat all questions in the mother tongue of the group.

In summary, the orphans from the three different townships had very similar answers to the questions asked. Initial assumptions that corporations in closer proximity to the orphans in a particular group would be more recognisable, due to greater activity in that community, were not confirmed. Very similar responses were given to questions three and four, namely “Do you know of any community projects that this company has supported in your community?” and “Do you know of anything that this company has ever done for the children in your community?” In all three discussion groups, the same two corporations (Corporate 2 and 3) were mentioned as companies that had done things for the community, but also specifically for children in the community.

Another surprising finding was that although children were not aware of community and child support projects run by Corporation 5, they rated this company second (out of five) when asked if they thought it was aware of the orphan crisis in South Africa and whether they thought it was aware of the daily problems that orphans face. This also eliminated earlier assumptions that children would view a company with a strong presence in a particular community as caring and understanding. This finding therefore shows that the physical presence of a company does not necessarily create positive attitudes and perceptions amongst children and that other factors like advertising, popular trends and status connected to a brand all play a vital role.

The first three corporations that were interviewed were rated amongst the top three places when children were asked if they thought these particular companies realised that they (as orphaned children) were their future clients – i.e. important stakeholders. Children also placed these three companies at the top of their lists when asked to indicate whether they thought these companies would assist them should they go to them seeking assistance with a problem. Interestingly, children in all three discussions groups placed the five companies in almost identical order in response to questions regarding being future stakeholders of the company and being cared for by the company. This shows that the children did not separate these two issues and that, in their eyes, a company that saw them as stakeholders (potential clients), would also care about them and therefore listen to their problems.

The last question aimed to shed light on children’s attitudes and perceptions of the different corporations, and whether these attitudes would in the future influence their choice in buying a car. It was interesting to note that children’s perceptions and attitudes towards the five motor manufacturers in question could be directly linked to the cars they would choose to buy in the future. Corporations 2, 3 and 4 consistently rated amongst the top three on the children’s lists and it came as no surprise therefore, that these three brands were also the favourites when children were asked to choose a car to buy for themselves.

In summary, the focus group discussions with children proved extremely valuable because they revealed that:

- Children are very aware of what corporations do or fail to do in their communities;



- Children have very clear perceptions of how they (as orphaned children) are viewed by corporations; and
- Children's perceptions of corporations do influence them when they are given a choice with regard to buying a product or service.

### **7.3 Summary of Results**

#### **Corporations:**

- Do not view orphans as important stakeholders in their business.
- Do not see a link between their internal (workplace) response towards HIV/AIDS and their external (CSR) spending towards the support of orphans.
- Do not see it as their responsibility to take care of orphans – government or NGO's should.
- Do not think their CSR towards orphans will positively influence their brand.
- Are inclined to support institutional care projects (orphanages) rather than community-based projects.
- Have never consulted with children regarding CSR projects that directly affect them.
- Do not see the urgency of their company investing in orphans today.

#### **Children:**

- Did not feel that they were consulted by corporations.
- Thought that the researcher was sent by the corporations and that they would get into trouble if the corporations found out what they thought of them.
- Were not aware of many community-based projects undertaken by corporations in aid of children or their community at large.
- Their overall impression of each company corresponded with their awareness of community projects the corporate was doing and influenced whether they would one day buy a particular brand or not.

**8. MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS:  
THE CSR CHECKLIST FOR IMPROVED MANAGEMENT OF THE AIDS ORPHAN  
CRISIS**

Consulting, Strategic Marketing and Reporting form the basic checklist that corporate grant makers should use to maximise their CSR spending towards AIDS orphans. These principles will now be discussed.

**STEP 1: Consult**

This study would not be credible if it urged corporations to consult orphans through their CSR, but did not itself attempt to consult with orphans to find out what their perceptions and attitudes towards CSR and the motor manufacturing industry in South Africa were. Reiterating the importance of the increased purchasing power that millions of orphans already have, this section could be extremely useful for corporate grant makers – not only in the motor manufacturing sector, but also in general.

**STEP 2: Strategic Marketing**

Sue Adkins, in her book “Cause related marketing: Who cares wins” (2002), illustrates how companies and charities can both benefit financially through sound Cause Related Marketing (CRM) initiatives. The results of the CRM campaigns mentioned in Adkins’ book illustrates that it makes good business sense to invest money in children. On the other hand, elaborate marketing campaigns that falsely portray corporations as “caring” can be devastating to the corporate image if word gets out that this is a false image. As Adkins remarks: “It takes decades to build a reputation and a brand, and only moments to destroy both” (2002:28).

In 2002 Business in the Community (BITC)(UK) conducted research on consumer behaviour and the effect on brand value. The following results were reported:

- 75% of CEOs and marketing directors believed that CRM could enhance their corporate brand.
- 81% of consumers agreed that they were more likely to buy a product associated with a cause they cared about – price and quality being equal.
- 77% of consumers who participated in CRM campaigns said it changed their perceptions and beliefs towards the company or brand involved. ([www.crm.org.uk](http://www.crm.org.uk))

Achieving success through CRM is not easy, and corporations need to ensure that they consult adequately with all stakeholders at community level – including the orphans themselves. Here corporations can utilise the services and expertise of NGOs to ensure that the image of a caring, open, consultative company is instilled in the minds of orphans – their future clients. In essence, the theory of Cause Related Marketing emphasises the “Win:Win” relationship that should be developed between the corporate and the charities they choose to support.

### **STEP 3: Report**

Earlier in the discussion on how corporations should involve orphans as important stakeholders, the emphasis was placed on consulting. Consulting orphans on CSR issues, however, is however not enough. Companies need to implement measures to ensure that children are also informed of their actions – especially of those actions that affect them directly.

“Reporting” can include various interventions. Companies can start by involving all the children of employees (irrespective of the status of the employee’s health) in internal HIV/AIDS education programmes. Regular consultation and information on the topic, as well as the company’s interventions when an employee becomes infected with HIV or ill with AIDS related illnesses will ease the blow when parents tell their children that they have tested HIV-positive. Responsible corporate citizens should also implement assistance programmes for orphaned children after the death of employees and host workshops and events to show children that the corporation has not forgotten about them, that the corporation cares, and that it is willing to support them (in whatever way).

With reference to the earlier problems related to benefit and provident fund payouts to orphans, companies need to reassure children of deceased employees that they are implementing control measures to ensure that any funds that children are entitled to receive will reach them, but will also be managed on their behalf – either by the company or by an independent third party (for example MATCO – an asset management company based in

Johannesburg that specifically deals with benefit payouts to orphans). The implementation of such control measures and the openness with which it is done will, in turn, create an image of credibility in the minds of orphans.

## **9. CONCLUSION**

By 2010, between 16 and 26% of children under the age of 15 who are living in the SADC region will be orphans – mainly as a result of HIV/AIDS (SADC, 2002:2). In Acknowledgement of this startling fact, corporations interviewed in this study have realised

that as employees, citizens and customers of tomorrow, AIDS Orphans should become the key stakeholders of today.

In the 2003 Survey of European Fund Managers, Financial Analysts and Investor Relations Officers, 79% of respondents felt that the mismanagement of social and environmental risks would have a negative effect on a company's market value in the long term (World Economic Forum Report, 2004:10). For this reason, addressing the physical, social, developmental and economic needs of AIDS orphans needs to become a crucial part of corporate CSI spending if companies are to survive this social and environmental risk.

In his address to the World Economic Forum in Davos (1997), President Nelson Mandela called for a unique response to the challenge of HIV/AIDS. He argued that "the vision which fuelled our struggle for freedom, the deployment of energies and resources, the unity and commitment to common goals – all these are needed if we are to bring HIV/AIDS under control. Future generations – our children – will judge us on the adequacy of our response" (Dhlomo, 2000:1).

This study shows that corporate South Africa must realise that choosing not to intervene in the lives of AIDS orphans will ultimately have negative effects on business and on the South African economy as a whole. Implementing the new CSR checklist for corporate action should assist corporations in all business sectors to deal with this crisis.

## **10. SHORTCOMINGS OF THE STUDY**

The scope of this study was limited. For practical reasons, only one business sector could be analysed. Corporations outside this sector might therefore argue that the study has no real value, as they do not operate in this particular corporate environment.

As mentioned before, sample size and representation of the larger population could also have been questioned and future studies in this field might need to aim at increasing both sample sizes for corporate and child respondents.

The study was explorative in nature, which meant that no quantifiable results were collected. The aim was to explore the trends in CSR spending towards a specific focus area (AIDS orphans) and then to explore what orphans think of the corporations in question. Due to this research design, corporations might also argue that, since the effects of AIDS orphans on business was not quantified, it cannot be argued to have such a grave effect.

The time frame in which the study had to be completed also counts as a shortcoming. The ideal would have been to conduct a longitudinal study in which a limited number of corporations were "tested" for their CSR programmes over a period of 10 years. This would have enabled the researcher to introduce a control group of companies who do not intervene in the lives of orphans in any way, versus those that do implement measures to combat the

pandemic. One could then have quantified the economic impact of intervening versus not intervening on the business as a whole.

## **11. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

Analysing a limited number of cases in a longitudinal study, for example over 10 years, could be very insightful. Corporations would then be able to see clearly whether their CSR investments towards AIDS orphans, or indeed the lack thereof, influenced their business profits, marketing campaigns and overall company image. Corporations would then also be able to see what an important stakeholder grouping these children have become and would realise the importance of consulting with and reporting to them on the way their businesses are being run. This type of research need not only be undertaken for corporations in the manufacturing sector but could be done for those in other sectors, allowing interesting correlations and comparisons to be drawn from the results. Longitudinal studies of this nature would also quantify the impact that a particular stakeholder grouping (AIDS orphans) has on corporations in a particular sector.

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