

*The psycho-educational needs
of children orphaned by AIDS
as perceived by their caregivers.*

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*Voor mijn broertje Reinhard,
die altijd alles moest dragen*

“Whoever receives one little child like this for My sake, receives Me.”

Matthew 18,5

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Abstract

During the past decade, South Africa has become the country with the highest number of HIV/AIDS infections in the world. In the wake of the widely spread HIV/AIDS epidemic in South Africa, hundreds of thousands of children are left parentless. Since limited research exists on the psycho-educational needs of children orphaned by AIDS in South Africa, the focus of this study was on their psycho-educational development.

A literature study was conducted to investigate the HIV/AIDS epidemic in South Africa and its consequences for the psycho-educational development of AIDS orphans.

A qualitative investigation was undertaken and interviews were conducted with caregivers of AIDS orphans at two care centres in rural KwaZulu-Natal. The aim of the investigation was to identify the psycho-educational needs of AIDS orphans as perceived by their caregivers. Moreover, the investigation also aimed at identifying factors that impede the psycho-educational development of AIDS orphans, and to determine the extent to which these day care centres meet the psycho-educational needs of these orphans.

The following psycho-educational needs of AIDS orphans emerged from the investigation:

- the need to socialise and communicate
- the need to cope with parental death
- the need for acceptance
- the need for security and care
- the need for love and belonging
- the need to deal with negative emotions

Physical and material needs were added to the above needs, since these were frequently mentioned during the course of the interviews.

Factors that seriously impeded the psycho-educational development of AIDS orphans were abuse and neglect. The investigation also revealed that the care centres were to a large extent able to meet a broad spectrum of these orphans' psycho-educational needs, especially at the care centre where the AIDS orphans were able to sleep over and received the full-time attention caregivers. Since the extended family system can no longer fully carry the burden of hundreds of thousands of AIDS orphans in South Africa, care centres situated in the affected communities can offer a

viable alternative to traditional models of care. The study emphasised the need for further research on the needs of AIDS orphans as well as increased support of AIDS orphans on local, provincial and national levels.

Keywords: psycho-educational needs, orphans, AIDS orphans, HIV/AIDS epidemic, child development

Opsomming

Gedurende die afgelope dekade het Suid-Afrika die land geword met die hoogste voorkoms van MIV/VIGS infeksies in die wêreld. In die voetspoor van die wyd verspreide MIV/VIGS epidemie in Suid-Afrika is honderde duisende kinders oerloos gelaat. Omdat beperkte navorsing bestaan oor die psigo-opvoedkundige behoeftes van kinders wat wees gelaat is deur VIGS in Suid-Afrika, het hierdie studie gefokus op die psigo-opvoedkundige ontwikkeling van hierdie kinders.

'n Literatuurstudie is onderneem om die MIV/VIGS epidemie in Suid-Afrika en die gevolge vir die psigo-opvoedkundige ontwikkeling van VIGS weeskinders te ondersoek.

'n Kwalitatiewe ondersoek is onderneem en onderhoude is gevoer met die versorgers van VIGS weeskinders by twee sorgsentrums in landelike gebiede van KwaZulu-Natal. Die doel van die navorsing was om die psigo-opvoedkundige behoeftes van die VIGS weeskinders, soos waargeneem deur hulle versorgers, te identifiseer. Verder wou die navorser ook faktore identifiseer wat die psigo-opvoedkundige behoeftes van die VIGS weeskinders benadeel en bepaal in watter mate die sorgsentrums aan die psigo-opvoedkundige behoeftes van die weeskinders voldoen.

Die volgende psigo-opvoedkundige behoeftes van die VIGS weeskinders is deur die ondersoek aangedui:

- die behoefte aan sosialisering en kommunikasie;
- die behoefte om die ouers se dood te verwerk;
- die behoefte aan aanvaarding;
- die behoefte aan veiligheid en versorging;
- die behoefte aan liefde en toebehorendheid, en
- die behoefte om negatiewe emosies te kan hanteer.

Fisieke en materiële behoeftes is by die bostaande behoeftes bygevoeg, omdat dit dikwels gedurende die onderhoude na vore gekom het.

Faktore wat die psigo-opvoedkundige behoeftes van die VIGS weeskinders ernstig benadeel het, was mishandeling en verwaarlosing. Die ondersoek het ook aangedui dat die sorgsentrums tot 'n groot mate aan 'n breë spektrum van die weeskinders se psigo-opvoedkundige behoeftes voldoen het, veral by die sorgsentrum waar die VIGS weeskinders kon oorslaap en die voltydse aandag van die versorgers ontvang het.

Omdat die uitgebreide gesinsisteam nie langer die volledige las van die versorging van honderde duisende VIGS weeskinders in Suid-Afrika kan dra nie, kan sorgsentrums in die geaffekteerde gemeenskappe 'n lewensvatbare alternatief bied vir tradisionele versorgingsmodelle. Die studie het die belangrikheid van verdere navorsing oor die behoeftes van VIGS weeskinders, asook die behoefte aan meer ondersteuning aan VIGS weeskinders op plaaslike, provinsiale en nasionale vlakke, beklemtoon.

Sleutelwoorde: psigo-opvoedkundige behoeftes, weeskinders, VIGS weeskinders, MIV/VIGS epidemie, kinderontwikkeling

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