

Living with our *Bibi**

“Our granny is always our hope.”

*A qualitative study of children living with grandmothers
in the Nshamba area of north western Tanzania*

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Introduction

Many children have been left as orphans as a result of HIV and AIDS. In much of Africa it is grandparents who have stepped into the care gap. In sub-Saharan Africa the percentage of orphan children estimated to be living with grandparents in 2000 was 61%¹. Over 50% of children orphaned by the HIV and AIDS pandemic in Tanzania live with their grandparents.²

Given this situation it is important for us to begin to understand more about the lived experience of children being brought up by grandparents. The Kwa Wazee Project (see below) provided a unique opportunity to work with groups of children living in elderly-headed households. This report is the result of a series of participatory workshops with children who are part of the project. It gives a useful understanding of the issues children are facing and directions for policy and programme intervention. What is important is that the report is based entirely on what the children have to say for,

*If we are unaware of the problems and issues that concern children and young people we cannot hope to devise strategies or solutions that will address their concerns, and will constantly be struggling to make sense of the world without some of the vital information we need.*³

This study is a companion study to a study that looks at the impact of a cash transfer on the lives of the grandparents and the children in their households.⁴ The reports should be read together.

Kwa Wazee Project

The Kwa Wazee Project is a project that works with grandparents and their children in the Kagera district of Tanzania (see red arrow on map).

¹ UNAIDS (2004). Children on the Brink 2004: A Joint Report of New Orphan Estimates and a Framework for Action. New York: UNAIDS, UNICEF, USAID

² Clark, F and R. Monasch (2004). "Grandparents' growing role as carers," Ageing and Development, Issue 16, June 2004.

³ Ivan-Smith E and Johnson V (1998) *The Way Forward. In Stepping Forward. Children and young people's participation in the development process*. London: Intermediate Technology Publications p299

⁴ Hofmann, S, Heslop, M. Clacherty, G and Kessey, F. (2008) *Salt, Soap And Shoes for School The Impact of Social Pensions on the Lives of Older People and Grandchildren in the Kwa Wazee Project. Tanzania. Dar es Salaam: REPSSI, Help Age International, SDC:*



www http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/africa/tanzania_pol_2003.

The main activity of the Kwa Wazee Project is to provide a cash transfer (pension) to grandparents (mostly grandmothers). The project started at the end of 2003. Grandmothers are selected based on several vulnerability factors such as age, lack of a relative who provides regular remittance, lack of land to farm etc. Grannies in five areas - Nshamba and the neighbouring villages of Ngeenge, Mubunda, Kishanda and Buganguzi get small monthly pensions for themselves (TShs 6000) and for the grandchildren they support (TShs 3000 each). By September 2007, 560 grannies and 502 grandchildren had received support.

In addition psychosocial support groups are run with some of the grandparents and grandchildren.

This report is based on discussions held with about 70 of the children who are part of the Kwa Wazee Project. Some of the children were part of the regular monthly psychosocial support meetings (30) and the others were children who participated in the Impact Study referred to above (40). Both children from households where a cash grant was received and children from households that had not yet accessed a grant (20) are represented in this study.

Research approach

A full day participatory workshop was held with the children. The children were divided into two different age groups (9-12 and 13-15) and into groups of ten. An outline of the activities is given in Appendix 1. The discussion was led by a skilled interpreter/facilitator and an experienced child-research facilitator in the children's home language of *kiHaya*. All discussion was taped and then transcribed. The transcriptions were analysed using a thematic approach where the themes were allowed to emerge from the data⁵. The findings section below is organised around these themes.

Throughout, the emphasis was on capturing the children's voices about the issues. Thus the findings section is presented largely through the quotes of the children.

Children as researchers

An innovative approach in which a group of children did their own research proved to be a very useful source of information. A small group of 12 children aged from 9 to 17 who lived with grandparents came together for a training workshop. The idea of research was explained in a simple way to the children who then brainstormed and decided on a set of questions that they thought would be useful to ask children who were living with grandparents.

Working in pairs and threes the children then thought about children they knew in their area. We discussed getting consent and basic demographic data and then did some practise in asking questions. We talked about taking notes and recording our observations. The children then went off to do the interviews. They returned a week later to report back. Each of them had interviewed someone – interestingly in most cases the most vulnerable families in their area. (Most of the families were later contacted and became part of the Kwa Wazee Project). The discussion with the researcher children was recorded and transcribed and has been used in preparing this report.

Ethical principles

Ensuring that such a study meets ethical principles for child-participatory research is important⁶. A set of ethical guidelines was applied⁷. In particular, since the study involved working with orphans and vulnerable children, it was

⁵ Boyatzis, RE (1998). *Transforming Qualitative Information, Thematic Analysis and Code Development*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage publications

⁶ Clacherty, GE and Donald, D. (2007) Child participation in research: reflections on ethical challenges in the southern African context. *African Journal of AIDS Research*, 6(2): 147–156

⁷ Schenk, K. & Williamson, J. (2005) *Ethical Approaches to Gathering Information from Children and Adolescents in International Settings: Guidelines and Resources*. Washington, D.C.: Population Council.

seen as vitally important to ensure that the ethical principle of “least harm”⁸ was given high priority.

In the activity-based workshops, the principle of least harm was applied through creating an environment of trust in which children were free to express only as much as they felt safe to tell. Activities were structured in such a way to prevent children having to talk about issues that may make them sad. Probing a child’s feelings or details of a painful event were explicitly avoided unless freely offered.

Throughout the research process, the principle of anonymity and of confidentiality was strictly applied. Apart from the obvious importance of avoiding the identification of individual participants, confidentiality was strictly maintained in focus group activities where the importance of children treating each other’s contributions in confidence was stressed. In addition activities that looked at sensitive issues such as having no soap or food were structured in such a way that children could share their home circumstances anonymously.

The principle of informed consent was applied in that researchers explained what the research was about and how the results would be used in a way that the children could understand. Continuous consent was applied through making it clear to children that they could choose not to participate in any activity in which they might feel uncomfortable, or to withdraw at any stage during the research process.

It is also important to point out that the children who participated were part of an ongoing programme of support for children living with grandparents and if children showed signs of distress or need they were referred to the KwaWazee Project for follow up.

Findings

1. Coming to live with granny

The importance of past experience was a contextual factor that emerged in the discussions with the children. This theme is presented first as it was clear that past life experience had impacted on the children’s present understandings, relationships with their grandmothers and their sense of their future.

Multiple deaths and orphanhood

Most of the children who participated in this study had lost both parents. This was, even for the children whose parents had died when they were very young, a cause of deep sadness for all them.

The death of their parents was a cause of emotional stress that was close to the surface and quickly articulated in the activity that looked at emotional

⁸ Boyden J. and Ennew J. (Eds.) (1997). *Children in Focus; A Manual for Participatory Research With Children*. Stockholm: Rädda Barnen

stress. Children were asked to describe through a metaphor of stones in a basket what 'stones' made their lives 'heavy'. In all the groups the first stone and the biggest stone they chose was always "having thoughts about our mother and father who are now dead."

- *Always being sad is one of the difficult things.*
- *Why are you always sad?*
- *Thinking of my mother and father.*

Sometimes you are sitting at school just thinking about your mother and you are doing bad because you are thinking too much.

You even remember the past and even if you study hard you can't do anything in exams. Worry is why children fail.

When we discussed if any of the stones have been taken out, if any of the emotional stress they feel had been reduced, the children all agreed that the sadness about their parents was still 'in their basket'.

The children's understanding of their difficult present circumstances was often explained in the context of not having parents. When we discussed school attendance and progress they referred to the fact that they did not have the support of parents as other children did and this was why they did not do as well as other children.

Children who live with grannies are being sent back home by teachers. If you live with a poor granny who cannot buy you shoes and you are sent back home because of no shoes while others are going on with the classes you are just at home waiting for shoes. If the parents were there you would be having the shoes.

Those who live with their grannies are missing school more than those with parents.

When we discussed having basic material needs they referred to the fact that they did not have parents to earn money so they struggled.

I have to work to earn money. Sometimes I have to even ask neighbours for food. You sometimes really regret it and it even makes you think of when you had your parents and wish that your parents were there.

When we talked about work they referred to the fact that there were no parents in the house to do the hard work or to earn money to pay someone else to do this so they had to work harder.

I can say we work more than children who have parents because we have a lot of work to do on our own.

They (children living with grandmothers) find the work they have to do very difficult. They have to work hard so that they get to eat. If they would be with their parents their parents could be working so that they feed them. But now they are living with their gran who cannot work so they have to work to get food for their gran and them. They are weeding for money.

It was clear that their understanding of their present circumstances was linked to their identity as an orphan.

Another important factor that emerged is that many of the children had lived with and even looked after their ill parents before they died. Many drew pictures of ill parents when drawing the story of how they came to live with granny.



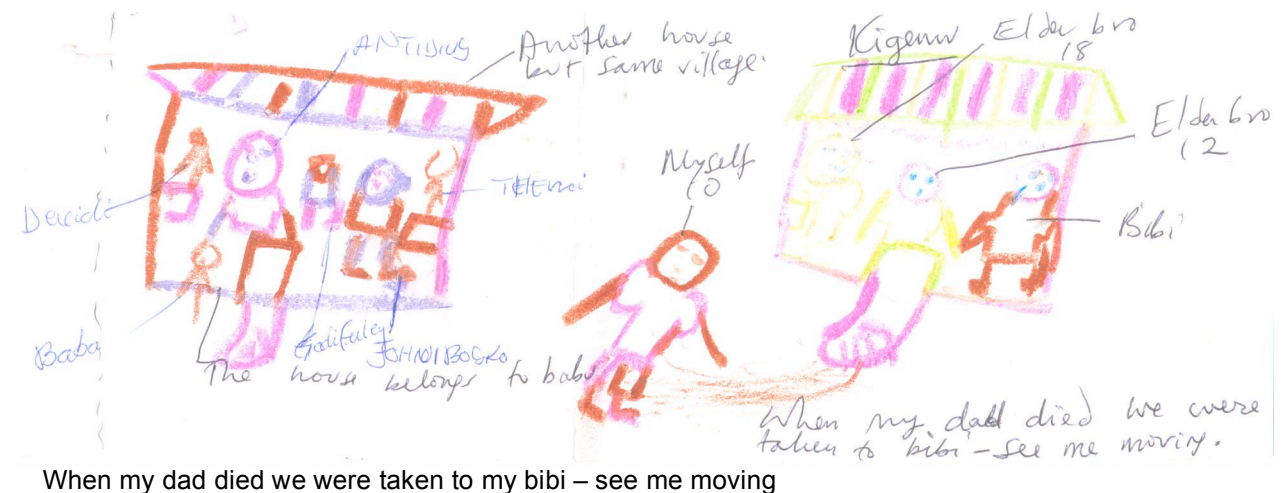
For ethical reasons we did not talk about this period of the children's lives in much detail but it was clear that the trauma of this experience had had an impact on them. In one of the activities we talked about what the children wanted to achieve in their future and what could stand in their way. Once they had listed their aspirations in all of the older groups one or two children always said that they may die.

- What could stop you from getting to this place you want to be in 5 years time?
- If you get sick.
- Okay.
- You may have started and you are going further then you just get this disease and then you go back home and you die.

This suggests a familiarity with and acceptance of death that is not developmentally appropriate but is likely a product of the experience of multiple deaths.

Migration

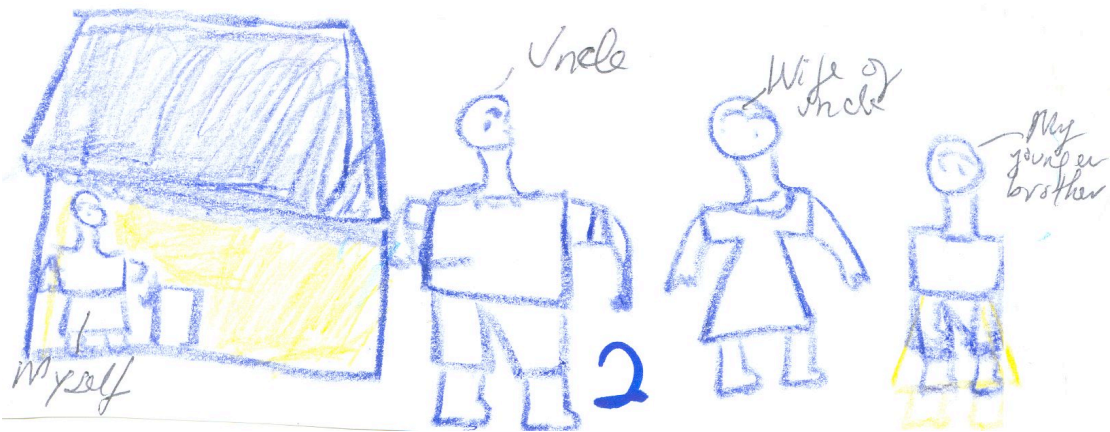
All of the children had moved at least once in their lives. Many had moved twice before coming to live with their grandparents – most often after the death of one parent and then again after the death of the second parent.



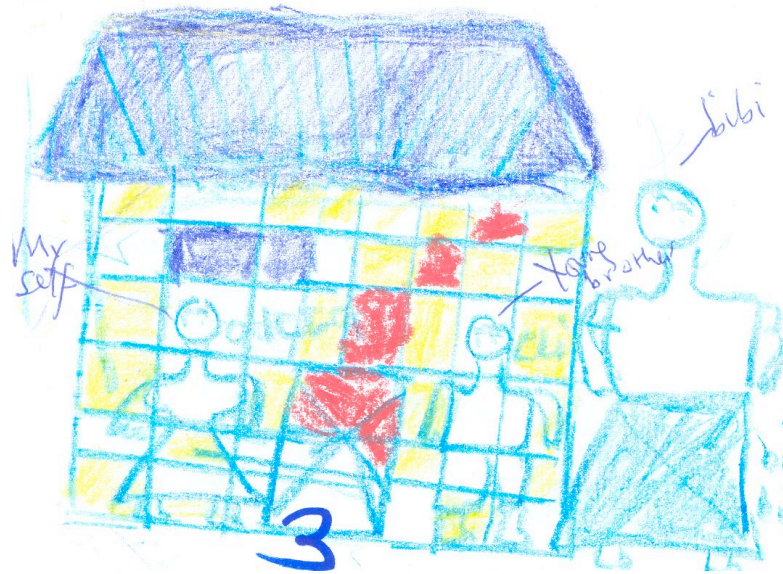
Many of the children had moved three or four times. The most common pattern was moving after the death of one parent, then after the death of the second to an aunt or uncle and then finally to granny.



1. We were living with my mother and father

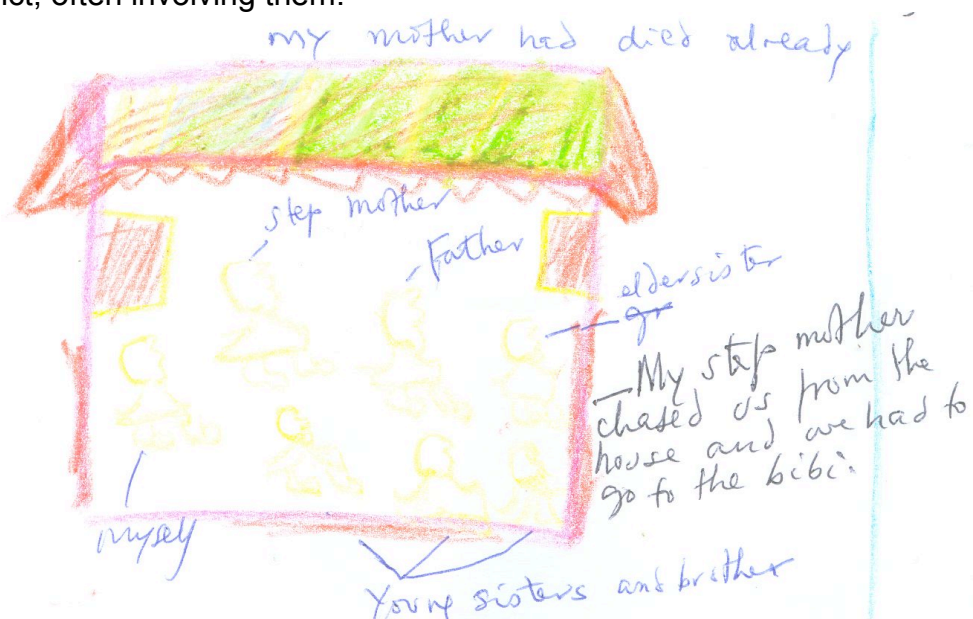


2. We went to live with my uncle and aunt



3. Then we went to live with bibi

It was clear that for many of the children the moves had been linked to family conflict, often involving them.



My stepmother chased us from the house and we had to go and live with bibi

When we discussed whether children would prefer to live with their granny or with someone else a few children spoke very strongly (and obviously from experience) about how children were often badly treated by aunts and uncles.

The granny does more than the uncle can do. You may be staying with your uncle, you go to school, coming back from school you don't find the food is ready, instead the uncle tells you to go and collect fire wood, fetch water and cook yourself. While with the granny you would find the food is ready, you would eat first, she asks you to do some other activities. The uncle may have a wife who treats you bad, she treats her children better than she treats you. Like she tells you all, including her children to go to collect fire wood but separates it. She tells the children that if you go there bring whatever wood you get and come back quickly before this comes. So you just go to the field together but they come earlier than you, you find the food has already been eaten by the children of the uncle and when you come they tell you the food is not here or it was already been eaten. It may also happen in the household of the uncle that the uncle's children steal something and then their mother tells the uncle that it is this one who stole this item, so the uncle just doesn't like to stay with you because of what his wife said.

This context of multiple deaths and migrancy is important in understanding the information that emerged about the children's lack of future orientation and their fear for their future (see 7. below). Having experienced death and migration many feared (quite realistically) that this was something they would have to face again in the future.

2. Children living with granny work harder

Like all rural children the children who live with their grannies all do household work. They collect water, wash dishes, cook, wash clothes, sweep the yard, weed the *shamba* (small farm), cut grass for sleeping on and for feeding to animals, look after young children and collect firewood.



Feeding the cow



Weeding in the shamba



Cooking

Collecting water

This burden of work is a heavy one for all poor rural children. But the work with the children in the KwaWazee project suggests that children who live in elderly-headed households do more work than other children – the burden of work is a heavier one.

The children gave a number of reasons for this.

Few children in the household

They mentioned that often grannies look after only one or two children and this means the burden of work is often heavy for these few children.

If you are the only big sister in your family and you are living with your granny all the responsibility in your family falls on you because others are still young and you are the only person who can do work.

No able adults in household

Children living with grandmothers also said that they had to do tasks that would usually be done by adults.

The amount of work depends on who you are staying with. Like if you stay with parents they buy you food then you have not to work but if you stay with your granny then you have to work for food because the granny cannot work for food. If you have a strong granny you don't do so much but when the granny gets sick then you have to work harder.

It also emerged that children living in elderly-headed households often do work that is not commonly associated with their gender, which is sometimes difficult for them.

Sometimes a boy living with his granny feels bad. Peeling bananas and cooking are activities that girls are always doing so if he sometimes peels bananas and cooks he is not feeling okay and when the fellow boys see him, they laugh at him. They say this is the woman, he is doing the work of women, he is cooking and peeling bananas. He feels bitter when they laugh at him.

If the boy is washing the clothes of his gran other kids may be laughing at him.

The work that may make a girl to be laughed at is burning banana trees because it is the work of men. She just has to do that because there is nobody else.

The other kids also laugh at these ones because they are shaving the granny's head or sometimes they are cutting her hair.

Work was also not age-specific as it is in parent-headed households. In this study it emerged that even very young children were cooking and collecting wood (jobs that would usually be given to older children) simply because granny was unable to do these things as she was sick or too old and there were no older children in the household. This is a list of work done by a girl of 10.

After school I collect water, then I cook the food – I cook every evening. Then I wash the utensils and pots. After school some days I wash the clothes. I also collect food for the chickens and feed them. There is no one helping me, the other children in the house are 1 year and 3 years so it is only me.

Work to earn money

It also emerged that because elderly-headed households have no source of household income as there is no one earning in the house children do work to earn money to get basic needs such as food, soap and kerosene. This increases their workload significantly.

I am weeding on Saturdays and Sundays for a neighbour. I give the money to granny to buy salt or soap.

- I do work for money. I buy soap and kerosene.*
- I do work and get money. I buy soap for washing my granny's clothes.*
- We decide on our own to do the work.*
- Because without work we can't get money for buying our daily needs.*

Viktor's story

When Viktor came into the room he looked like the small boy of 8 that he was but as we began to work and talk together about his life we realised that he may be small in stature but that he worked like a man in his family.

He fetched water for money, he collected firewood for money and ran a

business taking bananas to market. This involved buying a huge and heavy bunch of bananas from a neighbour (his granny had no *shamba* of her own to grow bananas) and then pushing the bicycle up and down hills to get to the market where he sold the bananas and then returned home to pay the neighbour his share, keeping the rest to buy food for him and his granny and small sister.

Looking after granny

Children living in elderly-headed households have extra work related to looking after their grandparents. They wash their grandmother's clothes, cook for them when sick and do basic hygiene tasks such as shaving their hair, taking sand fleas (jiggers) out of their feet and even cutting their fingernails.

- *What are some of the things you do especially for granny?*
- *Shaving hair.*
- *Taking out jiggers (sand fleas) from her feet.*
- *Cutting her nails.*
- *Cooking for her.*
- *Washing her clothes*
- *When she is sick I go to look for herbs in the field.*
- *When she is sick I cook for her.*

I am fetching water and then cooking for my granny.

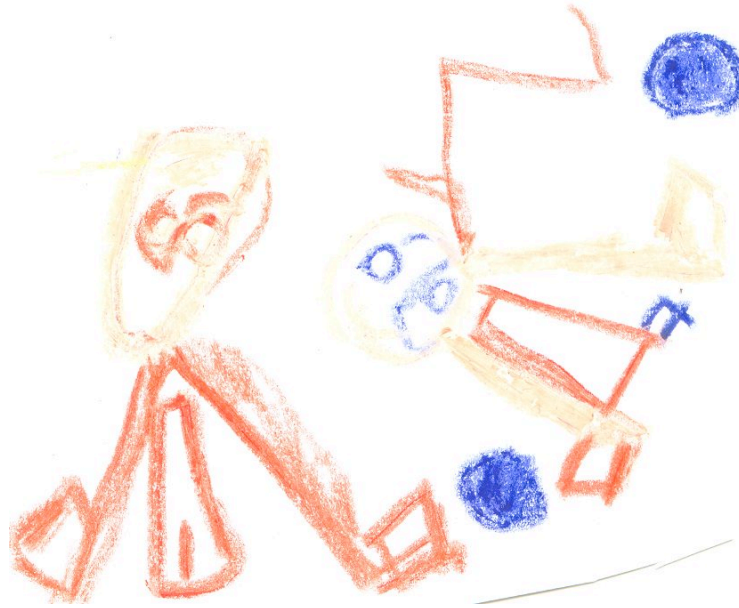
The fact that many of the children lived with very old grannies who were often sick added to their burden.

I feel bad having the granny who is always sick. Because when she is not sick we come from school and we find food ready and then we do other activities. But when she is sick we don't get food and we have to cook. When she is sick we sometimes even don't go to school. You may wake up and find she is sick. She tells you she needs porridge so instead of going to school you have to stay home and prepare porridge for her. Then you stay home until a neighbour comes and then you go to get herbs for her.

Time for myself

It is also clear that children living in elderly-headed households have much less time to themselves because they have a heavier workload.

- *I am working so from Monday to Friday I don't get any time for my own things. I would like that at least on Thursday I would get some time.*
- *The only time to play is at school.*
- *We have some time to rest while at school. And do activities like play games and talk to friends. At home we are always kept busy with home activities (chores)*



Playing soccer

We discussed with the children how it made them feel when they did not have time for themselves. This is what they said.

If you don't get time off you feel abandoned in what you are doing.

- *You need time for resting.*
- *If you are done with your activities you have to play.*
- *I feel not okay if I don't have time to play.*
- *I feel angry because it is my right to play.*
- *I feel bad. I feel unhappy.*

If you get time to play and read, you feel that you are being cared for. If you already have a lot of work it is nice to get permission to go and play some games.

- *When you get time enough to talk to your friend you relax and you just cool off, have no worries about hard work and then after you rest you can switch on again with daily jobs.*
- *You need time to talk to friends to exchange ideas.*

A finding from the accompanying study on the impact of pensions is worth quoting here. In this study it was clear that the children who came from homes that were getting a small pension did far less earning work and had far more free time than those who were not receiving a pension. The money meant that granny could pay for someone else to do the heavier work, the children did not have to do so much work to earn money and consequently had time to play, read, do school work or just think. The positive impact of this on psycho-social health is obvious from the comments the children have made.

No resentment

It is important to highlight something else that emerged from the discussions with the children. They do not resent the fact that they work harder than children who live in parent-headed households.

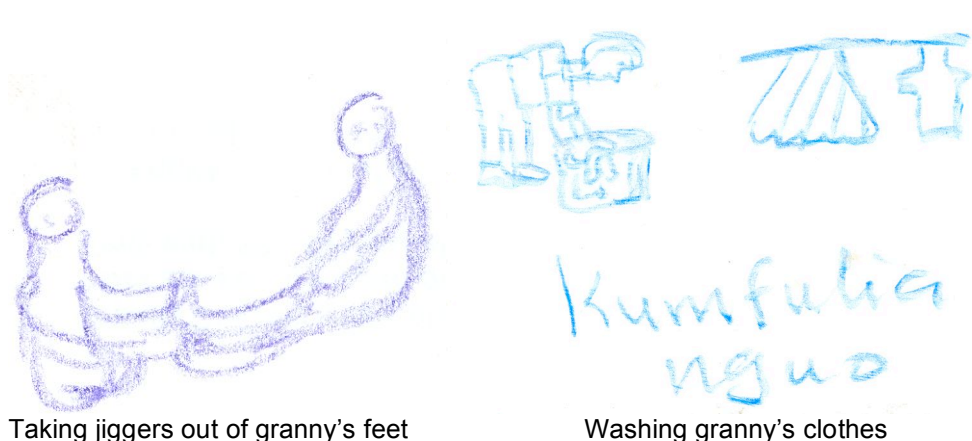
I feel bad because I miss my personal time but I just read the situation the way it is. If my granny stops me from doing my personal activities, I just be patient because there is nothing I can do.

They show a deep sense of responsibility and a sense of pride in being able to help granny.

The good thing about living with our granny is because they are old we feel responsible to take care of them.

I say that taking jiggers⁹ (sand fleas) out of grannies feet is something I like to do because if people see my gran with jiggers it's a shame on me, they will say to her, you have kids but they don't take the jiggers out.

The tasks they said they liked the most were often ones that involved looking after granny.



Taking jiggers out of granny's feet

Washing granny's clothes

When asked why these were their favourite tasks they replied.

I like to do the work to look after my granny. It is easy because I love her.

3. Children living with granny are poorer

Another theme that emerged very strongly is that children living in elderly-headed households are generally poorer than children living in households with parents.

⁹ Jiggers are very small sand fleas that need to be dug out of the feet. If they are not taken out they become infected. Having infected sores on the feet from jiggers is a sign that the person is not looked after or does not care for themselves.

One of the activities we did with the children was to show them two children and say that they lived with a granny. How did people know they lived with granny? The most consistent answer was that people knew because they did not have good clothes, had no soap to wash and went from house to house begging for food. The way the children saw it – children living with grandparents were poorer than other children.

- *What happens if there is no soap in the house?*
- *We have to go to the neighbours.*
- *Who has to go and ask for soap from the neighbours? (9 of the 12 children in a 9-12 year old group put up their hands.)*

The children in the study often made references to having too little food. They also said that they did not eat dagga (small dried fish – the most common source of protein) or beans regularly.

They also talked about often running out of soap. This impacted on their acceptance in the community and on school-going (see below). The children also talked about the other impacts of deep poverty, no blankets and houses that were falling down.

The house is broken and I cannot get money for repair.

We are always sad because the rain is coming in the house.

There are no bed sheets (blankets). Mosquitoes can attack you and it is very cold at night.

Again the fact that the children did not blame their grannies but accepted their lot with a quiet pragmatism emerged. They often said that they just had to accept things. In fact the extent to which they had accepted never being satisfied after eating became apparent when we asked the children if they ever went to other houses to ask for food. The younger children said they did but the older children said that they would never do this as it was humiliating. The way they described their acceptance of being hungry suggests a deep acceptance of deprivation. Though this attitude is admirable one can only wonder at the impact this has not only on health and development but also on self-concept.

- *For us because we are a bit older we see the situation at home and we see that there is no food and then we must be patient. We cope with the situation, but for a young child it is difficult for him or her to say that the situation I am living in is a result of our problem. So the small ones even after we have got something at home still have a chance to go around and get more food. The small ones – we wouldn't go.*
- *How many of you wish you were younger and could go and ask for more food from neighbours?*
(they nod their heads, one child says me – the others look down – very sad).

One interesting issue emerged about why children living in elderly-headed households have less food to eat. The children-researchers made the observation that grannies often did not have enough land to farm effectively, nor did they have the labour to do so. This meant they produced less food for sale and to eat. They pointed out that these households did not have economically active members in them so the food from the farm was even more important to them than in other households.

- *Children living with granny mostly eat from the shamba (small household farm). If they are planting and they are waiting for the harvest they just starve because they have no food.*
- *That is true about the hardship. In the one house (where they interviewed the children) There is not enough food because the mother is dead and the father is missing. And worse still he sold all the shambas and just left a small piece of shamba with the granny. So they sometimes have to work but it is just children working.*
- *Sometimes in these houses you will see they cut the bananas before they are ripe to eat because they are so hungry.*

This issue of land ownership was also raised by children when they talked about their futures and also in relation to the power to make decisions about their lives (see xx below)

4. Children who live with granny often miss or drop out of school

Late for school

The children reported that they were often late for school mostly because they had work to do before school.

- *Who is sometimes late for school? (All the children in a 9-12 year age group put up their hands.)*
- *What are you doing?*
- *I have to prepare food for the baby before I go to school.*
- *To peel bananas before school.*
- *I cook food.*

Again the same acceptance that this was just part of life was apparent.

There is nothing else to do because we always have to help our grannies before we go to school. We just accept that we should do the work at home before we go to school, then even if they cane us, they punish us it is okay.

Some grannies did not see school as important

Some children also said that granny saw work as more important than school work.

Some grand mothers do not like us to study at home. She sees you taking out the book maybe to look over an exercise from school and she says stop and do other work.

Other grans don't allow their children to go to school instead they just say, what do you benefit from school just stay here and do the work.

It is important to note that this was the case only with some children as other children said granny encouraged them to go to school (see below)

Children also reported that sometimes grannies were gullible and naughty children could pretend that they had gone to school when they had not.

- If you are staying with your mother and father it's easier because your mother or father will chase you to go to school, but for granny she is no longer energetic to make a follow up whether you are going to school or not.

- Some children just wake up as usual in the morning pretending they are going to school while they end up in the forest and they just come back at the time when others are coming from school, they join them.

A heavy workload means less time for school work

The children talked about the fact that the heavy workload they had meant they did not get enough time for school work.

(Children don't go to school) if they have a lot to do and they don't get an opportunity to go to school. Home activities so they have to work a lot at home.

Sometimes they just stop from going to school so that they can do something at home, do their work at home.

One issue raised by the children was that they had to stay away from school if their granny was sick. A few children often had to look after ill grandmothers.

I miss school instead I go to cook food for her because she is sick. I never did the examination last year because my mother was sick and now my granny is sick. I will do the year (grade) again. I am in Grade 3.

Children also mentioned that once you fall behind at school it is hard to catch up and then you fail and have to stay back and this is a problem.

If you have been in the same place (grade) for more than one year they get tired and decide on their own to no longer go to school.

Being chased from school

The most common problem reported about schooling was related to the fact that elderly-headed households were poor. Granny could not afford to buy new school uniforms, socks or shoes, nor could she afford to give the children money for fees, stationery or books. All groups reported being chased away from school for periods that varied from a day to two months with three of the children having dropped out of school altogether. Some children reported

being absent frequently for 2 or 3 days because they were sent home from school.

If the teachers at school have sent them back home because of no shoes and socks so they will just stay at home until they get shoes and socks. Because I had no shoes I stayed at home for a month before my granny had money to buy me shoes. So after the month my granny could have money and she bought me plastic shoes.

Another major issue for children was soap. They reported that they often missed school because there was no soap to wash uniforms or themselves. They also reported that they were teased by children and that teachers punished them because they had not washed. This issue was a particularly painful one for the children to talk about.

In a single desk we sit two, now it happens that one goes to the classroom with that old uniform, they make groups in the classroom and they start discussing about you. What kind of a student stayed for a long time at her place – Friday to Monday and she couldn't even manage to wash the school uniform but you sit on your own and you know the real situation – that you could not get soap to wash the clothes, in fact there is no soap.

Money to shave hair and for kerosene to study at night were also seen as problems related to school going.

The reason we fail at school it may happen that during the day you are busy with the family work and at night when you have time to study you are stopped because there is no kerosene.

Children also talked about how being hungry affected progress at school.

Sometimes somebody starves at night and then thinks of going to school and there is nothing to eat at school and then he or she decides that they won't go to school.

Children living with parents had more chance of success in school

The issue of progress in school was explored with the children. They were very clear about the fact that children who lived with parents had more chance of doing well at school because parents could afford to get their children extra tuition, they had money for kerosene to work at night and children who had parents did not have to work so hard so had more time for school work.

Children who are living with granny miss school more. Because I am living with my granny its not easy for her to buy shoes (for school) instead she buys food for us.

5. Community response to children living with grannies

This issue was explored with the children themselves and with some members of the community (interviews with 10 women who were waiting for small business loans at the local women's bank).

The children's perception was that neighbours perceived children from elderly-headed households to be poorer, dirtier and naughtier than other children. This is how they described how people saw them.

- *Here is a picture of some children who live with their granny. Can anyone tell that they stay with their granny?*
- *Sometimes you can tell.*
- *How?*
- *You may go to school with that old uniform and people can see this is a child living with his grandmother.*

- *Neighbours know but others do too. They can see – they say she must be living with her granny or she would not be like this. How is she?*
- *She has no uniform and she is coughing. She has jiggers (sand fleas) in her feet because the granny cannot see to take them out.*

This correlated quite closely with the perceptions of the 10 women who were interviewed.

There is a big difference between children living with parents and children living with grannies. Those living with grannies live in troubles – no kerosene, no books, no uniforms and some even stop going to school. They live in trouble because there is no money even for food.

You can see theme because their hair is unshaved, they are dirty because there is no soap. If there were parents they would look for soap.

Though these women tended to focus on the behaviour of the children and the lack of competence of the grannies rather than on their economic circumstances.

- *Children who stay with grandparents have bad habits. Because they are not moulded by their grannies in the way they would be by parents.*
- *They have no food so just go around and ask and even think of stealing and playing games with street kids and copying bad habits.*
- *Girls have unwanted pregnancies and HIV infections.*

They felt that the grandmothers were not able to discipline the children because they 'loved them too much'.

Grandparents love the children and so love them and don't mould them and punish them and that allows bad habits.

Another strong theme that emerged from the interviews with the women was that grandmothers were not competent to look after children as they were old. Old age made people 'retarded' - it affected their judgement.

Granny's brain is retarded she does not think of the future and how to mould the children. When you get old your level of getting angry decreases so you cannot discipline children any more.

The older's brains are not so good.

The obvious disconnect between this view and the picture the children paint of their lives with their grandparents (see 6. below) suggests that much needs to be done to reduce discrimination against the elderly and against orphan children.

6. Relationships with granny

The picture of the relationship between children and their grandparents that emerged is a complex one with a mixture of care, love, guidance and conflict at times.

We are comfortable living with granny

One activity (done with 40 of the children) asked them to say how comfortable they were living with their granny on a scale of 1 to 10 – 10 being most comfortable and 1 least comfortable. The table below presents the results

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
3	0	1	0	6	1	1	2	8	18

Most of the children were very comfortable living with their grandmother. Those children who were not comfortable at all (3) had particular home circumstances that made them uncomfortable, for example a grandmother who was drinking. There were, however, some children who described things that made it difficult to live with their grandmothers (see below). All the children agreed though that they would rather live with their grandmothers than with an aunt or uncle. There was much discussion about this, with some of the children obviously speaking from direct experience.

Generally grandmothers were perceived to be people who would care for them. The following were reasons children gave for wanting to live with their grandmothers.

*I am happy to look after Bibi because she is taking care of me.
Protecting me. When I was still young she used to take care of me and even now she is cooking for me when I come from school.*

- I like to live with my grandmother because she loves me.*
- How do you know she loves you?*
- Because if I feel like eating fish she buys it for me.*

Sometimes my grandmother is sick and I just expect when I come back from school I have to cook for myself, but still you find there is food already, so even though she is sick she also prepares food for me.

What is interesting about the above quotes is that for the children love was often linked to the grandmother being able to provide their basic needs – this was how they knew that she loved them. One of the activities explored this. Children were asked how they felt when they came home after school and there was no food cooked for them to eat. They all agreed that this made them cross and it then made it difficult for them to willingly do the chores they had to do.

If there is no food you just murmur (quietly complain). You put wrinkles on your face like this (she shows a cross face). You go and do the work but you just complain and murmur.

But if there is food you are happy to work.

*- Now days (since granny got the pension) we buy rice and food.
- Yes, instead of starving we at least eat now days. Now we are happy to work.*

And if granny can buy things for school children are even happier.

I just work (on household chores). It is easier to work if you are happy. You quickly work because she has bought you shoes

They did also point out though that if granny was unable to provide things they also accepted the situation as they knew granny could not help it.

I feel bad when there is no food when I come from school but I just cope with the situation because I know my granny is not the cause of the situation.

It seems, therefore, that relationships in the home were strained if the granny was too sick or too old or too poor to provide basic needs such as food. This issue is important as it shows how deeply relationships between grandchildren and their grandparents are affected by poverty. It also points to the stress that grandparents carry when they are not able to meet the children's basic needs because they are ill or too old. It is not only that the children have to cook the food or go without it is also that they feel 'unloved'.

The accompanying study that looks at the impact of a pension on elderly-headed households highlights this too. In those homes that had some money because of the pension grandchildren expressed the idea that they knew they were loved because they had money for basics but also because sometimes granny brought home rice (a special treat) or fresh fish or even meat on the day she got her pension. Granny was also able to pay them little bits of money for work they did and she could buy them something for Christmas.

- *We expect that when all parents are dead there is only the grandmother who will take care of us and love us.*
- *How do you know she loves you A?*
- *If I feel like eating fish and she has money she buys it for me.*

We always help our grannies but we come to help them more when they bring us a gift because you feel you have hope and you are happy.

I like to stay with my granny. Sometimes she gets cross but when Christmas comes near she buys me a present and then I really love her.

It is interesting to note that the children showed their love for their grannies by doing work for them and looking after them.

I show that I love her because I have to fetch water, I have to collect firewood.

Sometimes granny gets cross and beats us

The one source of conflict in the home that was mentioned often by all the children was related to the children's need for time to play and rest. There is an obvious generation gap in many of the homes. Grannies seem to have strong ideas about obedience but in a context of hard work many of the children felt that their grannies did not understand their need to have time to play and rest. It seems that most of the conflict in the home centred around this issue.

I like to play indiki (local game played with a ball and three children) with friends sometimes the grannies don't like this we play until late into the evening.

If you don't do the work your granny beats you. She just insults you, warns you.

Then your gran sends you to collect firewood and you go instead to pay football and if you are sent somewhere and you are late in coming back. If you are late in coming from fetching water then your gran beats you.

Children talked a lot about how difficult it was to explain that this conflict upset them. One group requested that the Kwa Wazee Project hold a meeting to explain to grannies that children needed time to play. They felt they could not communicate this directly with their grannies as this was not respectful.

We cannot tell our granny directly. If you tell directly to your gran she will go the neighbours complaining that you always give insults to her.

I suggest we have a meeting once like this one. Then we can talk about our good and bad habits with the grannies.

One or two of the children were clearly living in homes where the conflict went beyond the generation gap issue.

Always we feel very bad when our granny is drinking alcohol and she comes home and she asks whether the food is ready and if the food is not ready even though we were doing other work she doesn't recognise this she just starts fighting.

My granny shouts at me. She says my mother died and I will also die.

My granny tells me to get out of the house. She says that the first part of the beer brew is the sweetest (her own children). I am not the sweetest.

Though this was not the norm it does point to the need to be vigilant about the vulnerability of certain homes and not to assume that all grandparents are coping. In this study a follow up was made in these cases.

Granny guides us and teaches us

The children reported that most of their grannies thought that school was very important and they encouraged them to work hard and not to miss school.

I have never seen my granny stopping me from going to school and though she has never been to school she always regrets that my father did not take me sooner to school. Sometimes I even tell her I have a headache and she feels I am cheating and she says go to school first, ask for permission and then come back.

This is backed up by evidence from the grandmothers¹⁰ who reported their distress at not being able to provide for their children's school needs resulting in children often missing school. 73% of the grandmothers who were not receiving a pension reported that they worried most of the time that their grandchildren could not go to school properly.

Another theme that emerged strongly from the children's discussions was that their grandparents taught them important things about life – skills they would need and also values. They taught children how to be good people. The children felt that grandparents did this better and more often than parents and in this area they felt they were better off than children living with their parents.

I like my granny because when I used to stay with my mother we never knew some things. There were some simple things my mother did not teach us but when our mother died we went to stay with Bibi. She told us some things and now we are still doing the work and even helping her.

¹⁰ Hofmann, S, Heslop, M, Clacherty, G and Kessey, F. (2008) *Salt, Soap And Shoes for School The Impact of Social Pensions on the Lives of Older People and Grandchildren in the Kwa Wazee Project. Tanzania. Dar es Salaam: REPSSI, Help Age International, SDC*

Granny warns us against fighting people. It happens that you fight and you go back to granny and your teeth are broken and she will say when you go to jail no one will come and see you.

Children also said that another reason they liked living with their grandparents is that they told stories. Many of the children said they often sat and listened to stories of 'long ago'.

- She tells me stories about long ago.*
- My granny too. (six other children agree)*
- I like to hear stories of the past.*

My granny tells stories of the fathers, his grandfather of his grandfather and of his grandfather and his grandfather.

Grannies also seemed to be good at making jokes too.

My granny makes jokes. She pulls my clothes when I want to go out, she just pulls.

We have to look after granny

So it is clear that the grandchildren depend on their grandmothers for care and support and guidance but the relationship is one of interdependence because the grandmothers depend on the grandchildren, both in an emotional sense and in terms of the help the children give to their grandmothers.

The children described many tasks that they did that were directly related to looking after granny (see 2. above).

There is little evidence that this interdependence is harmful for the children. Rather it seems to be beneficial. When children were asked which work they most liked to they consistently chose tasks that were related to looking after granny. The children display a sense of pride in being able to look after their granny and it is also a way in which they show their love for her.

We are happy to look after our grandmothers because they are old and we feel responsible to take care of them.

She is the one who brought me up so whatever I am doing I am paying back what she gave to me so it is a gift I am giving back.

It is important to note though that some children expressed a sense of powerlessness and felt the burden of looking after a very old or sick grandmother.

When my gran is always sick I am always worried because I am always depending on her and she is like my guardian so when she is sick I have no one I can depend on instead of depending on her she starts to depend on me while I have nothing to help.

7. Our future

Children worry about where they will live when their granny dies.

Our granny is always our hope so we think one day if our granny is not around we shall be in trouble. Because our grannies always treat us like their own children because they know we are the children of their children. So they treat us even better than the uncles and aunts can do. You think that if your granny dies you will go to stay with your uncle and the wife of your uncle may be treating you unfair and may be treating you worse than she treats her own children.

During the workshops we explored the issue of their future with the children. They were asked what they thought they would be doing in 5 years time. All the children articulated something that they were aiming for.

- *Playing soccer.*
- *A farmer – a chicken farmer.*
- *Building houses.*
- *A farmer.*
- *Selling tomatoes.*
- *A teacher.*

But when we then went on to discuss what may get in their way of achieving their goal it was clear that many of the children had fears about their future. They feared having to stay with uncles.

I may go and stay with my uncle. I will be going to school then my uncle tells me don't go to school just go to take care of the goats, to look after the goats.

They saw their economic situation as the biggest potential stumbling block. Their lack of inherited land was one problem they articulated.

Right now I am staying with my granny. Let's say I prepare a shamba for future life at my granny's house and then abruptly my granny dies and then that very shamba that I have prepared for my future has been inherited by some people (uncles) and I don't have money to buy another shamba.

Like me who wants to be a teacher I can get into secondary school and then there are no school fees so I have to stop.

You just give up because there is nobody (to give you money for school). Even if you are studying hard nothing will happen.

The children articulated the idea that they needed help if they were to achieve their goals. They quite pragmatically understood that their grandmother may not be able to give them this help.

We also explored with the children how their relationship with their grandparent may change over the next few years as they grew older and their grandmother grew frailer.

Children were aware that their responsibilities would increase.

I wish to be a soldier but when I am going around my work to arrest people I must pass by my home. I will find granny there. I will give her something or I will go to my office and report that I am going to see my granny.

They were aware of the grandmother being a potential burden. In fact for many of the children they had already taken on the role of carer of the granny and had an awareness of her dependence on them.

I am always depending on her and she is like my guardian so when she is sick instead of depending on her she starts depending on me and I have no one to help me.

A gender difference emerged here. The children seemed to think that as the boys grew older they would take less responsibility for their grandparents but the girls would need to carry on looking after them.

The boys most of the boys when they get older they are drinking and some go to do business and some do road construction and others go to the village and make shops they will not be so much at home.

Some of the girls thought that this burden may even prevent them from getting married and having their own families.

I myself I won't be married. I will stay with granny. Granny will think of all the types of work that she will have to do and she thinks who will do this if I allow this one to go. So it is not easy for the granny just to allow you to be married not only because of the work you are doing but because she knows she is getting old. If the granny thinks you are leaving she knows you are the strongest one in the house and what if the thieves come at night and want to steal something.

The children articulated the idea that their capacity to support their grandparents as they grow older will be compromised by the lack of resources to access training and the fact that they may have to stay at home and look after their grandparents.

I just feel I am weak because I am wandering around and begging because I should be depending on my gran but she is depending on me. But I have no ability to do the work that can earn me an income of more than 100Tsh. The work I can do is sweeping, weeding and that cannot bring us an income so I will always be weak.

I just feel bad if she tells me to stay with her to keep her safe because I know I will have less chance to do the work I will need to do so I can look after a whole family here. So I always feel bad. The granny stopping you from going to do work where you can get good money is making you feel bad.

This situation highlights the tragedy of the loss of the middle generation – the children's parents who would be economically active and therefore able to help their children to economic independence and the grandparent's children who would be able to look after them as they got older and weaker.

Summary of findings

It is clear that children living in elderly-headed households have more stressors in their lives than children living with parents.

One key stress identified by the children is the grief they feel at the loss of their parents. This grief, coupled with the trauma of looking after ill parents before they died and the displacement of migration as they moved (often more than once) from their original home to their grandmother's leaves children with a heavy emotional burden.

Another major stressor is related to the economic situation of elderly-headed households. There are no economically active members in the household so there is often no money for basic needs such as food, soap or kerosene. Other necessities such as blankets and money to repair the house are also a problem. This situation is often exacerbated by the fact that the family does not have access to sufficient land to farm effectively as land has been lost when the children's parents died.

This situation of deep poverty means that children living in elderly-headed households have to work to earn money. In addition, many of them also have more household work to do than children living with parents. This is because there are often only a few children living in elderly-headed households, there are no older and stronger adults to do the heavy work and they have to look after an old person who is sometimes ill and not strong.

Because of this heavy workload children living with grandmothers do not have sufficient time for themselves. This causes stress because as the children point out, time for playing, talking to friends and for just sitting is important to emotional well-being.

It is also clear that access to school and progress in school is a problem for children living in elderly-headed households. Their economic situation means that they are often chased from school for lack of uniforms etc. Their progress is affected by lack of food, heavy work before school, looking after ill grannies, no kerosene to study at night and a heavy workload after school.

These children also have to contend with the prejudice of community members who see them as ill-disciplined and dirty.

Yet the children are very clear that for most of them there are many good things about living with their grandmothers. Their grandmothers love them, give them a sense of identity, teach them about life, make sure they go to school and make jokes and tell them stories of long ago. Children in this study are very clear that they would rather live with grandparents than with other extended family members.

The children display a strong sense of responsibility and care for their grandparents. They are happy to look after them as this shows they love them. They often express the idea that they hold no resentment towards their grandparents for their situation. It is clear that the benefit for children of the relationship is greater than the stress.

Children are, however, honest about the difficulties in the relationships they have with their grandparents. The main difficulty is related to a generation gap – the children's need to play and socialise often conflicts with their granny's wish to see that household work is done. This seems to be a conflict that the children are largely able to cope with. There are a few children, though, who are in situations of deeper conflict that make them vulnerable.

One of the greatest stress factors emerged when children were asked to think about the future. Children worry about where they will go when their grandmothers die. They also worry about their capacity in the future to support themselves and their grandmothers. The lack of land tenure was particularly worrying for the children as they knew that without land they could not support themselves.

They show a realistic fear about their future. They are aware that their economic situation will mitigate against their ability to gain further education and therefore their ability to be economically active adults will be affected. They are also aware that they will have the burden of looking after an aging grandparent. Many of the children worry about how they will combine looking after their granny with their need to earn money and establish their own families.

Analysis and conclusions

The AIDS pandemic has created new family structures. One of these, for example, is the child-headed household. Another is the family structure that is the focus of this research, the elderly-headed household. These new family structures have particular characteristics.

The findings in this study suggest that the following characterise the elderly-headed household:

- Poverty
- Grandchildren as caretakers
- An uncertain future
- A generation gap

Each of these traits has a consequence for children.

Poverty

Health and development

The findings suggest that children living in elderly-headed households do not get enough food and seldom have access to protein. This must be detrimental to healthy growth and development.

Overwork

It is clear that children from elderly-headed households are overworked. If one applies the South African Department of Labour¹¹ definition of “more than 3 hours of house work” as detrimental to a child’s health and mental well-being these children, who appear to do much more than three hours a day, are at risk.

Stress

Another consequence of poverty is the stress felt by grandmothers and children and the affect this stress has on the relationship between children and their grandparents. It is clear from the findings in this report that children place strong expectations on their grandparents for food, school clothes and materials and even gifts.

It is also clear that when the grandparents cannot respond adequately to these expectations the children feel that life with parents is better than life with granny. Wangila and Akukwe¹² in their study of grandmothers in Uganda talk about how this inability to provide for their grandchildren causes deep stress for grandparents and anger over their helplessness to provide. They point out that this stress affects the relationship between the grandmother and the children.

Education

The findings suggest that even though grandmothers and grandchildren see education as very important, children living with grandmothers do not access education easily because of poverty. In addition, if they do get to school, their progress is hampered, again largely because of poverty.

Children as caretakers

Another characteristic of the elderly-headed household is that children function as caretakers. Bauman¹³ in her study on children caring for ill parents points out the consequence of this.

When children have responsibility for the welfare of others they may become parentified: that is, they assume responsibilities performed

¹¹ Department of Labour. (2003). Child Labour Action Programme for South Africa (CLAP).Pretoria: Department of Labour, Republic of South Africa. p.001

¹² Wangila, R. and Akukwe, C. (2006) *Africa, AIDS orphans and their grandparents: benefits and preventable hidden dangers*. Tsehai Publishers and Distributors: Hollywood, CA.

¹³ Bauman, LJ Foster G Silver EJ Berman R Gamble I Muchanetta L (2006) Children caring for their ill parents with HIV/AIDS. *Vulnerable Children and Youth Studies*, April 2006; 1(1): 56–70

more appropriately by an adult, including providing health and personal care, emotional support, caring for siblings and maintaining the household. If the parent is too ill to work, children may feel it is their responsibility to provide for the family.

Parentification can include role reversal: that is, the child acting as parent to the parent... Inhibited development and depression are both recognised outcomes when children take on the parenting role (Wallace, 1996), as are delayed development, guilt and low self esteem (Barnett & Parker, 1998).

Parentification was associated with more internalizing symptoms and some externalizing behaviors in adolescents (Stein et al. 1999).

Parentification is obvious in the descriptions of the children in this study and it seems clear that this places them at risk emotionally.

Parent and child

The findings suggest that even though children have the responsibilities of an adult they also have to behave like a child. Being subjected to what is sometimes a rigid demand for obedience from their grannies (often motivated by their grandmother's wish to protect their children) on one hand and yet carrying the responsibility of an adult on the other places them in a difficult and ambiguous position that causes emotional stress.

Expectations for the future

The children are also confronted by the fact that their grannies expect them to assume the function of their own children (now dead or absent) and to take care of them in the future. The findings suggest that children see this expectation as compromising their own life plans.

Uncertain future

A further stress that is added to the lives of children living in elderly-headed households is the uncertainty they feel about their immediate futures. They worry about what will happen to them when their grandmothers die. They have already experienced grief and dislocation and know what it is like, so this fear is even deeper for them.

The worry that a child in this situation faces is that he or she will have to move again and will likely have to live with aunts and uncles in a situation they know from experience is worse than their life with their grandmother.

Another aspect of this uncertainty is that the children fear (quite realistically) that they will not inherit property when their grandmothers die, leaving them with no means to make a living.

Generation gap

Another characteristic of the elderly-headed household is the gap between the grandparent's generation and the children. It emerges in the conflict between grandmothers and children over time to play and to socialise and rest.

Grandmothers seem not to see the importance of this, yet the children point out why they need time for themselves. The conflict causes stress and affects the relationship between children and grandparents.

Some of the discussion about the future also points to a generation gap. Grandmothers expect that they will be looked after but the children know that their ability to do this will be severely hampered because of the missing generation. Parents would have provided the means for further training and income generation and would have taken responsibility for the grandparents.

Vulnerability and strength

Each of the traits described above make children living in elderly-headed households vulnerable. They are vulnerable emotionally because of these traits. They are made additionally vulnerable by the grief of losing their parents. A grief that is, as the findings show, still close to the surface and largely not yet dealt with. They are also physically vulnerable because of poverty.

Yet, the study shows that children living with their grandmothers feel, on the whole, loved and cared for in spite of the poverty and stress. Perhaps it is this sense of being loved that results in the resilience that is obvious in what the children say about their lives and themselves.

They have a strong sense of responsibility towards their grandparents, they feel proud that they can work hard and care for their grannies. They feel they have learned skills that other children don't have and they are clearly good survivors and adaptors.

If we but acknowledge their vulnerability and respond to it appropriately, the resilience they have learned from being a child in an elderly-headed household is very likely to enable these children to become important and valuable adult members of society. The question, then, is whether children living in elderly-headed households receive adequate external support that allows them to manage the stressors in their lives and to preserve the resilience they clearly have.

Suggested responses to the vulnerability of children living in elderly-headed households

1. Predictable economic support to alleviate the poverty that children living in elderly-headed households experience. It is clear that this would address both physical and psycho-social needs.
2. Local organisational support that would allow children and grannies in elderly-headed households to support each other. This would reduce isolation and increase the capacity of the elderly and the children to manage their everyday relationships better.
3. Some kind of legal security in the future. This would reduce stress for grandparents and children. This needs to deal with both future care arrangements and land ownership.

Appendix 1

This is the research instrument used with 40 of the children in the study sample. The rest of the information emerged from discussions with children who participated in the accompanying study that looked at the impact of pensions on grandparents and children.

KwaWazee

Evaluation – What is it like to be a child who lives with a granny?

The focus of the research will be on:

- The relationship the children have with their elderly carer
- How extended family, peers, neighbours and the broader community respond to their particular family situation
- What they are, have, know and can do that other children don't have because they live with a granny
- What they see as the practical and social and psychological challenges because they live with an elderly carer
- What are their expectations of a carer and how is this met or not
- How the children perceive the future
- The effect and impact of previous life experience of the children i.e. multiple loss on the relationship with the grandparent
- To try and understand how this type of family where the child is often the 'strong one' (also the case with families where children look after ill adults and in child-headed households) is shifting the role and definition of childhood and adolescence.

Children as researchers ...

9 children from the PSS group will be trained as researchers and were asked to interview 3 or 4 children from their area who live with grandparents.

The main question they will look at is:

What is it like to be a child living with a granny?

Explain what research is and give them the 'mantle of the expert' by making them all researchers. 'Mtafiti'

Do you know children who have no parents and who live with grannies – not in KwaWazee?

Work with them to think of questions around 3 theme:

- Work
- Food
- School

Training

- i) Ethics – give children a choice - a researcher listens and does not gossip etc
- ii) Introductions – how to introduce yourself
- iii) How to explain what you are doing
- iv) Record basic information
 - name
 - bibi's name
 - who lives in the house and ages
 - school and grade
- v) How to ask questions
 - Give people time to talk
 - Clarification question
 - Follow on question
- vi) Recording the information – notes and then after it do a quick

Let them practice doing an interview.

Workshop outline

Activity 1: Looking at work

Draw circles with chalk on the floor. What work are you doing in a normal day? As the children tell what they are doing let some of them draw a picture to show each work activity.

i) Work you do

- Which work are you doing **before** school?
- Are you ever late for school or not going because of this house work?
- Who does work **after** school?
- Are you spending time looking after your grandmother? What do you do for her everyday?
- What are you doing if granny is sick? When was the last time she was sick? Is she sick often? Are you helping your granny with any other things that are for her?

Here are some flowers. Put flowers next to the nice work.

- Why do you like this work? What makes it good?

Here are some stones for heavy work/difficult work.

- Why is it difficult?

ii) Work to earn

Ask about work to earn money if it has not come up.

- Who is doing work to get money? Show with a bean if you are earning money from any of this work in the circles.

- Why do you do it? What do you need the money for?

iii) Time for yourself

What do you do when you have no school work, no house work, nothing that has to be done?

- Do you have enough time for yourself? Show me on a scale from 1 – 10 with your hands.

iv) What could help reduce the work load?

What could help you to get more time for yourself and to reduce the work load?

Talk in pairs and then share ideas.

Activity 2: Who lives with you

Draw a picture of your house and all the people who live in your house. Tell us about the picture.

Activity 3: How comfortable are you living with granny?

Give each child a scale on a piece of paper. The scale will be from 1 to 10. 1 is not comfortable at all and 10 is very comfortable. Tell them it will be anonymous. Each child must work alone and show how they would rate their life living with their granny. They then hand them in anonymously.

The papers are collected and we look at the pattern and show them on a common scale.

Most of you are close to here... Why would a child be close to 1? What happens in their life that they feel they feel uncomfortable living with granny?

What would need to happen so they could move up just one place on the scale?

What would need to happen in their life that they feel very comfortable to live with granny?

Activity 4: A time line of my life – how I came to live with granny and how I think about the future.

Part 1: How I came to live with granny

Give each child a long piece of paper. The paper begins where they were born and ends with today. Draw all the places you have lived in. The place where you were born and then if you moved to another place show that. Then show when you came to live with granny.

Have a discussion – how did you come to live with granny?

Part 2: My future

Now add a piece of paper to the end of the long piece and explain that this is about their future. They are to think where will they be in 10 years time (or more if they are younger) and draw themselves in their future.

“Imagine yourself here, now as a young boy or girl and then here you are at this place in your life in 10/20 years time.”

“Think about what you would like to be doing in 10/20 years time.

“What could get in your way of getting to this place. There may be some stones that you will have to climb over. What could they be?” Draw them and talk about them. Draw how you will or can get over the stones.

Activity 5: Power relations

Show the silhouette figures of a baby and a granny (1)

Who is depending on who? What is the granny doing for the baby? What is the baby doing for the granny?

Show (2) young child and granny

Who is depending on who? What is the small child doing for the granny?
What is the granny doing for the small child?

Who is depending on who? What is the older boy/girl doing for the granny?
What is the granny doing for the child?

Who is depending on who? What is the grown up child doing for the granny?
What is the granny doing for the grown up child?