

G L O B A L H E A L T H

A photograph of a group of children in a brick structure, possibly a well or a play area. The children are smiling and have their hands raised, reaching towards the camera. The scene is lit with a warm, reddish-orange light, creating a dramatic and hopeful atmosphere. The children are of various ages and are looking directly at the viewer.

Children and AIDS

Sub-Saharan Africa

EDITED BY

MARGARET LOMBE AND ALEX OCHUMBO

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ASHGATE

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Notes on Contributors

A unique characteristic of this book is the multidisciplinary perspectives that the contributing authors bring to this work. Contributing authors come from a range of academic disciplines and fields of practice. This diverse perspective is essential to a book of this nature. The issue of vulnerability, especially among orphaned children, reveals an intersection of a number of factors such as poverty, lack of access to education and healthcare services, social support, and how these interact to inhibit life chances for vulnerable children and their communities.

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We dedicate this book to the African child and every child upon whom the label of vulnerability has been attached by those with the mandate to love, nurture and safeguard. We look into your eyes, we see capacity to dream and realize your potentiality. We salute you African child.

Preface and Acknowledgments

Many people and experiences inspired this book. It reflects our journey as we grapple with the challenge of growing vulnerability among children in sub-Saharan Africa. A major source of influence is our parents through whose eyes we learned to look at a child with reverence. We learned to believe in the virtue of *convivencia*; that you and I belong to the greater whole and that the child is the center.

Another source of inspiration are students at the Boston College Graduate School of Social Work, in the Global Practice field of study, who through the years have pushed us to question the universality of human rights. For years, together, we have wrestled with injustice but stand strong enough to dream of a world in which every man, woman and child, regardless of “isms,” has validation. Together, we have learned to take steps toward that ideal—we believe that a just world in which children are valued is possible.

Colleagues in the field of social work have greatly influenced this work by providing a platform upon which to wrestle with challenging issues of this nature. Dean Alberto Godenzi deserves special mention for providing an environment that understands the intersection between human rights, health and social justice. We are indebted to Michael Sherraden for pushing us to look at the “why not?” and Kevin Mahoney for graciously listening as we tried to make sense of the rights of the child within the African context.

Perhaps, the most significant inspiration of all has been the children classified as “vulnerable” whom we have interacted with in our own families, communities and as researchers. We have looked into their eyes, held their hands, played and laughed with them. In them we see children full of life! Full of potential! Full of hope. We also see children on the brink; children whose lives are defined by adversity. We struggle with the concept of vulnerability because it’s not African. We struggle because behind orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) is the sober reality of helplessness among children. This reality challenges us to take steps to understand their plight from what is known about them and from the children’s own perspective. This book is an attempt at bringing this together in one place. It is also an invitation to dialogue, to reflect on the concept of vulnerability as an acceptable way of categorizing children. The book is a challenge and a call to action for all with power to positively influence the welfare of children, especially the welfare of the child living on the street, mourning the loss of a parent, heading a household—a sick, cold, and hungry child. We acknowledge Bishop Lombe, and men, women, and even children who are dedicated to accompanying children

classified as vulnerable. We salute all who are committed to promoting human dignity, often under trying circumstances.

We are grateful for the opportunity to struggle with this issue. We express our sincere appreciation to friends and family who provided valuable support and feedback from the inception of this book to its completion. We are thankful to Yande for valuable conversations and support with organization of initial drafts. We appreciate the support provided by Grace Lombe, Protus Lumiti, and Nicholas Syano during the data collection and writing phases. We extend our sincere gratitude to everyone who took an interest in this work. We are deeply thankful to all contributors; this book would not have been written without your commitment to the welfare of children. We are especially indebted to children made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS in Botswana, Kenya, and Zambia, whose experiences this book draws upon. We thank them for their grace and courage in providing voice to their experiences; allowing us to see what life is like for them from their point of view. We truly appreciate the time and effort of all who made this work possible.

List of Abbreviations

ACRWC	African Charter on the Rights of the Child
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ARV	Antiretroviral
BAIS	Botswana AIDS Impact Survey
BOCONGO	Botswana Council of Non-Governmental Organizations
BWP	Botswana Pula
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CCN	Community Care Nigeria
COGRI	Children of God Relief Institute
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSO	Central Statistics Office
DSS	Department of Social Services
FBOs	Faith-Based Organizations
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IATT	Inter-Agency Task Team for Children affected by HIV/AIDS
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MLG	Ministry of Local Government
MOH	Ministry of Health
MTP	Medium Term Plan
NAP	National Action Plan
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
PSS	Psychosocial Support Services
SADC	The Southern Africa Development Community
SLAs	Savings and Loans Associations
STPA	Short Term Plan of Action on the Care of Orphans
UNAIDS	United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Emergency Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

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