

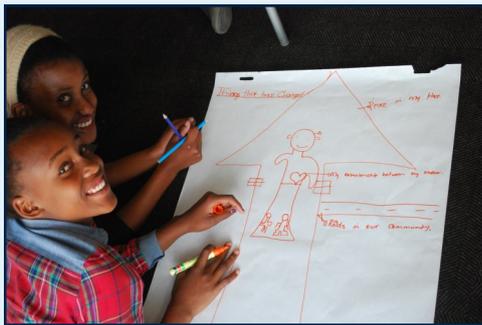


## Improving evidence-based policy and programming for AIDS-affected children in Sub-Saharan Africa: Dr Lucie Cluver



The phenomenon of children living in AIDS-affected families in sub-Saharan Africa was first identified in the mid-1990s, and has risen to massive proportions with an estimated 3-4 million AIDS-affected children in South Africa alone. Since 2005, a pioneering set of Oxford

University studies has actively informed the development of evidence-based policy, practice, and programming for AIDS-affected children in Sub-Saharan Africa (totalling an estimated 85 million children, orphaned by HIV/AIDS or living with AIDS-ill caregivers).



Cluver designed a research programme to maximise impact on key stakeholders through two key studies:

**The Orphan Resilience Study: 2005-2011** – the world's first longitudinal study of AIDS-orphaned children, following 1025 children in high-deprivation urban South Africa.

**The Young Carer's Study: 2009-2013** – the world's largest study of AIDS-affected children, following 6004 children and interviewing 2500 of their primary caregivers.

Cluver found that parental AIDS-illness leads to severe negative educational, sexual and psychological effects, and that major and long term impacts on child development, educational, psychological and sexual health are directly related to the social consequences of AIDS, including stigma, extreme poverty and bullying.

The utilisation of these studies by policymakers and practitioners in sub-Saharan Africa has helped mitigate the effects of AIDS on some of the most vulnerable children.

**South African government policy and planning** – the research has been cited in a number of major policy documents used to determine the provision of services for AIDS-affected children, and in the development of the government's National AIDS Council's national framework for HIV/AIDS programming.

**International NGO policy and programming** – the research team worked closely with five key bodies involved in policy and interventions for AIDS-affected children in sub-Saharan Africa (UNICEF, Save the Children, Regional Interagency Task Team for Children Affected by AIDS and the Regional Psychosocial Support Initiative, World Vision, PEPFAR-USAID, and Catholic Relief Services, and the research has informed the development of these organisation's policies.

**US government foreign aid policy and programming** – the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR-USAID) is the largest single funder of programming for AIDS-affected children. The research has strengthened the evidence-base for the development of programming in psychosocial support, economic strengthening and child abuse prevention within PEPFAR-funded programmes reaching an estimated 4.5 million children per year.



*"By sharing rigorous evidence on how children affected by HIV faced increased vulnerabilities over time, Dr Cluver has engaged major policy makers, donors and program implementers in critically "rethinking" and redesigning programs with an emphasis on effectively measuring results."* Regional HIV and AIDS Advisor at Save the Children