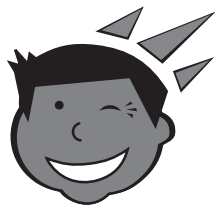
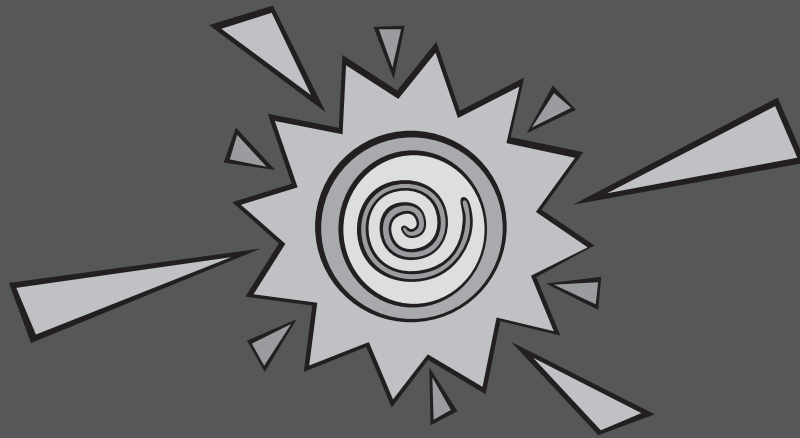


Building Resilience  
in Children Affected  
by HIV/AIDS



Revised  
Edition



Maskew Miller Longman  
Forest Drive, Pinelands, Cape Town

Associated companies, branches and representatives throughout Africa and the world.

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## Preface

Who can say that he or she hasn't ever seen children begging along our city streets, heading towards a life of dislocation and crime? Surely, we have all been moved by news reports of children suffering from severe neglect, physical abuse, or rape. Is there any parent left who can say that he or she is not worried about the legacy we are leaving our children? Under these circumstances, who will be our continent's leaders, our conscience, our future?

According to the best data we have, in 2001 Namibia, for example, had over 82 000 orphans. Within a generation, that number is expected to triple. The plight of these children will be the single largest impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic on this nation. The plight is similar in other African countries.

One thing we know for sure: Orphans and vulnerable children don't deserve their fate. There is nothing that any of them did to justify their sorrow, their hardship, and their losses.

And yet, most of them suffer a lot. And as a nation, we suffer with them. Too often, their personal losses result in lost opportunity, lost hope, and a lost future that affects their entire community, and ultimately, the entire country.

Thus, the first message we want to give with this manual on psycho-social supports for orphans and vulnerable children is that THESE CHILDREN ARE OUR CHILDREN. They belong to all of us. And they are our collective responsibility.

Secondly, the message is that "Love is Not Enough". Caring for our continent's orphans and vulnerable children takes time. And effort. And knowledge.

That is what this manual is about. Read it. Study it. Refer back to it as often as you can. Attend a training course offered by Catholic AIDS Action or another organisation which supports the contents of this book. Above all, this manual is meant to be applied within our own families and in our communities.

The Ministry of Women's Affairs and Child Welfare in Namibia is proud to be associated with the development of this manual by Catholic AIDS Action, and the publication of this revised edition in partnership with Maskew Miller Longman, and recommends it to our fellow Ministries and to all people of goodwill everywhere. May God bless you in your work of caring for others.



(Ms) Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah  
Minister, Ministry of Women's Affairs and Child Welfare  
Republic of Namibia

## **A note from the author**

Dear parents, caregivers and teachers,

This handbook is aimed at people who live and work with children affected by HIV/AIDS.

The dimension of the HIV/AIDS pandemic and its consequences for our children, our families, our communities and our society often make us feel powerless. As caregivers, we are faced with an increasing number of children who have already lost or are going to lose their parents. We teach them in our classrooms, we take them into our homes and we share our lives with them. Often we feel unsure about how to help them deal with the loss of a parent. But the children we care for are our future and it is our task to walk beside them into that future.

This handbook is aimed at helping parents, caregivers and teachers to understand children who are nursing a diseased parent or who have lost a parent. It provides practical advice for teachers and caregivers on how to support children who have experienced loss and death in order to help them cope. It offers ideas for discussions that can be held on a one-to-one basis in the child's home or with a group of children in the classroom. It is neither a recipe for success nor a book of rules. Instead, this handbook consists of a collection of ideas, theories, tasks and exercises that should help us to understand the behaviour and feelings of children affected by HIV/AIDS.

The impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic challenges us to approach childcare and education differently, but we have experienced teachers on our side – the children themselves! Sometimes children know best what they need. When we listen to them, pay attention to their ideas and learn from their coping strategies, we recognise their resources, their skills, their strengths and their endurance. In order to assist them, we have to work with them.

Working with children affected by HIV/AIDS requires courage and creativity. We may need enormous reserves of commitment and compassion. Our compassion can be expressed not only in care, but also in understanding and friendship. We can develop a vision of the possibilities that lie beyond the reality that faces us. We can be committed both to the child and to the rights of that child. Children need strong advocates to make their voices heard and to fight for their future.

A book cannot answer all our questions. A book will never contain all the exercises and ideas that we will need – but it will hopefully encourage us to have the courage and commitment necessary to develop our own creative methods of helping children to cope.

Silke-Andrea Mallmann CPS

Mariannahill, June 2002




# Acknowledgements

This handbook, originally developed in Namibia, is intended to supplement and reinforce various training programmes on Orphans and Vulnerable Children in Namibia and other African countries. Among the many organisations that were involved and consulted for the development of the original Namibia edition are: Catholic AIDS Action; Philippi Namibia; the Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture; the National OVC (Orphans and Vulnerable Children) Steering Committee; the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Child Welfare; the Ministry of Health and Social Services; NANTU (Namibian National Teachers' Union); the Legal Assistance Centre; Family Health International and CAFO (Church Alliance for Orphans). We are very grateful to the representatives from these organisations who shared their ideas and support. Expressions of interest from other partners and countries led to the development of this revised edition with Maskew Miller Longman as our publishing partners.

The person who must get the lion's share of the credit for this handbook is Sr Silke Mallmann. Sr Silke is based at St Mary's Hospital at Mariannhill in South Africa. While writing this handbook she drew on her experiences working with refugee children and children affected by HIV/AIDS. We believe that God sent Sr Silke to us. From the moment she contacted Catholic AIDS Action we knew we were on the right track. We offer her our deepest thanks and our admiration.

We offer our sincere thanks to our donors. Initial support for this publication came from a training grant received from NANTU and the Canadian Teachers' Federation. But as demand for this handbook increased and the table of contents grew accordingly, we needed additional support. For that we thank the Secure the Future Foundation, Bristol Myers Squibb and the Catholic Medical Mission Board of the United States. Finally, we are deeply indebted to Family Health International, USAID, UNICEF, the Ford Foundation, and the Namibian government for their ongoing work in Namibia with orphans and vulnerable children.

Catholic AIDS Action staff received their initial training in psycho-social support for orphans and vulnerable children with the assistance of Family Health International and USAID, in cooperation with Philippi Namibia and Masiye Camps (Regional Psycho-Social Institute) in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. Thankfully, FHI/USAID continues to assist us in training community leaders and volunteers in psycho-social support, as well as in our provision of direct care to orphans and vulnerable children.



Some other individuals deserve special mention. Karen Landmann gave us the idea for this handbook when she wrote a chapter on children's issues for one of our publications called, "Caring for ourselves in order to care for others". Rose de Buysscher, Sara Bowsky and Paul Pope (from Family Health International/USAID), and Stefan Germain, Ezekiel Mafusire and Ms Ncazelo Ncube and colleagues (from Masiye camp in Zimbabwe and the Regional Psycho-Social Institute for Orphans and Vulnerable Children) contributed valuable ideas, suggestions and background material. We also drew inspiration and support from Kurt Madörin at Terre des Hommes in Tanzania and Liz Towell at SINOSIZO in South Africa.

Francis van Rooi, based at our national office, has been the administrative coordinator for this project, as well as for the field-based workshops. Without her commitment and efficiency, the rest of us would have given up long ago. Marianne Olivier of Philippi Namibia rearranged some of her own training and curriculum-development in order to accommodate us. Sr Dr Raphaela Händler, Caroline Thomas, Petronella Coetzee-Masabane of the Ministry of Health and Social Services (MoHSS) and I reviewed the manuscript prior to its publication, as did Susanchen Dippenaar, Claudia Tjikuua, Mary Collins and Evy George of the Ministry of Basic Education, Sports and Culture.

The games and methods used in this book have partly been taken from already existing games and adapted for this book. Part of the games have been acquired during various workshops and youth camps and part of the material has originally been produced by the Katholischen Jungschar Oesterreich. The picture story exercise on page 60 has been developed by Dr Gisela Perren-Klinger.

Finally, we thank the children and their caregivers: they are our teachers, our guidance counsellors and our inspiration. It is to them that this book is dedicated.



Lucy Y Steinitz, PhD

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