



Save the Children

UK

Press Release

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Report highlights the devastating impact of AIDS on mothers and children in Mozambique

Many children in Africa have lost, or are at risk of losing, their mothers to AIDS. Mozambique is one country affected by this problem, and the number of cases is growing. Because of this disease, thousands of children in the country are taking care of themselves after losing one or both parents. They also care for sick relatives and younger siblings, or live with ailing grandparents who struggle in their old age to look after them.

In Zambezia Province where Save the Children UK operates, it is estimated that 273,000 children have already lost their parents. By 2010, there will be 1.82 million orphans in Mozambique of which a large percentage will be due to HIV / AIDS. Not only are children deprived of their mothers, they are also robbed of their childhoods. Without their parents to support them their rights to education, health care, shelter and protection from abuse and exploitation are severely undermined.

Graca's case is typical. Aged nine she lives with her mother who has been ill for three years. Her father passed away last year. She is now out of school and spends much of her time in domestic and agricultural work to help the family survive, with little or no time for recreation or play. Graca describes some of the hardships she faces on a daily basis in caring for her ailing mother:

“I look after my mum every day. I go and fetch water, I clean the house and wash the plates. I prepare food for her when she's sick. My mum can walk, but if she does, for two days afterwards she can't walk or go to the fields.”

In order to raise more awareness about the consequences for children arising from the death or illness of ailing parents, Save the Children UK has released a report called *Missing Mothers: Meeting the Needs of AIDS-affected Children*. The report also offers examples of community solutions, such as home based care programmes, partly arising from Save the Children's own project experience in Mozambique and Angola.

SC UK's Programme Director, Chris McIvor, noted that the report, which is aimed at government policy makers, international and national non-governmental organizations and

donors, comes out at a time when the country is developing more community based solutions to assist vulnerable families affected by HIV / AIDS. He indicated that a key to the success of these programmes is to ensure the adequate participation of vulnerable children so that their needs are taken into account when these projects are designed and implemented:

“Community based programmes need to take more account of the vulnerability of children within affected families, and to find ways in which their views and opinions can be included in the discussions that are taking place on their behalf. If these children are not listened to, then there is a danger that projects will not match what they require. The programmes we have supported globally, where child participation has been done well, show more success in terms of relevance and impact for affected children.”

For more information on the report, please contact:

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