

**Psychosocial care and support of aids orphaned children in
Mwanga and Lembeni wards in Mwanga district
Paulina Daniel Nahato
Master of Arts (Applied Social Psychology)
University of Dar es Salaam, College of Social Sciences, 2006**

In Tanzania, Psychosocial care and support of orphaned children before and after AIDS onset has undergone drastic change. Very few studies have been undertaken to determine the various ways psychosocial care and support were offered to orphaned children before the coming of AIDS. The purpose of this study was to analyse and examine the psychosocial experiences, care and support for orphaned children after AIDS onset in Mwanga District, Kilimanjaro Region. Four objectives guided the study. The first focused on how orphaned children in Mwanga were cared for before and after AIDS set in the community. The second objective was to analyse psychological problems faced by A TPS orphaned children, while the third objective was to determine ways of preparing children to adjust to life after their parents' death. Finally, it was to analyze the available psychosocial care and support services for AIDS orphaned children in the community. A qualitative research approach using semi-structured interviews was used in this study. Two wards, Mwanga and Lembeni provided, 74 participants comprising of parents, teachers, counsellors and orphaned children. All participants interacted with orphaned children at various periods and contexts in the community. The results indicated that AIDS brought changes such as an increased number of orphaned children due to increased parent's death rate, that led to stigma, scarcity of resources, family disintegration and orphan discrimination. From the study it was concluded that AIDS orphaned children received various psychosocial care and support services from families, schools, NGOs and the community. AIDS orphaned children faced a number of psychosocial problems such as depression, sadness, avoidance, anxiety, fear and withdrawal. The current psychosocial care and support provided, though inadequate, included material, social and psychological support services. Provision of these services was affected by level of knowledge of caregivers, cultural norms, which allow stigma, discrimination and isolation against AIDS orphaned children. From the study it was recommended that there is a need to replicate the findings to different stakeholders dealing with AIDS orphaned children and HIV/AIDS victim centres in various parts of Tanzania. Materials, social, and psychological support services were provided by

NGOs, CBOs and religious institutions to a limited extent because of lack of resources, capacity and personnel. Caregivers need to be supported and trained by government and other stakeholders.