

# **Child-headed households and community social networks in Hogsburg area, Eastern Cape Province.**

**By**

**Tafadzwa Mabemba, PhD student  
Supervisor: Professor P. Tanga  
Department of Social Work  
University of Fort Hare  
P.B X1314, Alice 5700, South Africa  
Email: 20110535@ufh.ac.za**

*Presented at the Social Work Conference 2017- ASASWEI-ASSWA-DSD. Birchwood Hotel and OR Tambo Conference Centre-Boksburg, Gauteng, South Africa. October 8-11 2017.*



# OUTLINE OF PRESENTATION

- **Introduction**
- **Methodology**
- **Major findings**
- **Major conclusions**
- **Recommendations**



# INTRODUCTION

- Child-headed households are households head by children below the age of 17. Caused by HIV/AIDS pandemic, poverty, war, natural disaster, political instability, broken down of extended family circles etc.
- 150 000 CHH in South Africa (Statistics South Africa,2012), Eastern Cape is one amongst three poorest provinces with an alarming number of CHH.
- It has the second highest percentage of children living in income poverty (77%) compared with national figure of 68%.



## Cont.

- Despite the government's effort to rectify CHH imbalances in all provinces as enshrined in national and international instruments, they are still short falls in Eastern Cape Province (Hogsback area).
- Two types of community social networks which are formal and informal community social networks
- Informal community social networks are of great importance in the lives of the children as they provide and look after the children.
- Formal community social networks they lack a strong relationship with the community as such there is less interference with child-headed households.



# STUDY AREA AND METHODOLOGY

## Study area

- This study was carried out in Hogsback area, which is found in the central-southern part of South Africa in the centre of Eastern Cape Province.
- The area has many villages that survives on farming and receiving grants from the government.
- The most common type of social grant being received Child Support Grant , followed by Old Age Pension.

## Research Design

- This study employed a qualitative research method.



# Sample and Sampling Strategy



University of Fort Hare

- The target population for the study was children from child-headed households and community members. The study was made up of 25 participants who were purposively selected.

## Data Collection and Analysis

- In depth interviews and focus group discussions was used to collect data from the participants and it was composed of open-ended questions. Analysis was thematically.

## Ethical Considerations

- Regarding ethical considerations, firstly an ethical clearance certificate, child assent and parent/guardian form was obtained from the university to conduct the study.



## MAJOR FINDINGS

### **Biographical information for child-headed households**

- 10 females and 4 males
- The majority (11) were between 15 and 17 years
- Four were between 10-12 years old
- Eleven between the ages of 15-17 years old

**Table 1: Duration in child-headed households**

<b>Number of Years</b>	<b>Number of Participants</b>
<b>0-5</b>	13
<b>6-10</b>	2
<b>Total</b>	15



## Biographical information for community members

- 7 females and 3 males
- The majority (6) were between 50-65 years
- Four were between 30-45 years old



## Table 2: Years of experience

Number of years	Number of participants
0-5	5
6-10	3
10 and above	2
Total	10

Theme One: Why children live in child-headed household?

- Death of parents and close relatives

*Before they...become into child-headed households...they have gone through such a series of deaths. Not only have they lost their parents to HIV and AIDS...They lose their mother and we take them to their uncle, the uncle passes on and they get removed again. They've been taken to their aunt somewhere, the aunt passes away as well and then finally when all of their family fiber has been taken away... they end up being on their own. ( community member)*

- Neglect, rejection and discrimination from relatives and community members.
- Migration in search for employment

**Theme Two: The relationship between community social networks and child-headed household.**

- The majority of the participants confirmed that child-headed household rely on informal community social networks as compared to formal community social networks.

*The food and clothes we have we get from our neighbor and we don't get donations from NGO/government and if they do come the resources wont be enough for us all ( 17 year old boy).*

*In this area we do not see any NGOs assisting the children as compared to other provinces. The last time I remember is when they come assisting youths on projects that sustain their livelihoods. For instance piggery project and garden projects (61 year old woman).*

All the twenty five participants were of the opinion that community social networks should be effective in supporting child-headed households. Some of the opinions raised are highlighted in the responses below:

•**Material and non material support**

*With the support we get from our chief contributed so much for child-headed households in our community. Monthly they are various donations that are given to the children. The chief's spokesperson goes around all the houses who pledges anything for the child-headed households and then the donations will be given to the children. This type of community involvement upholds “ubuntu” towards the children and they felt welcomed and being part of one big family”(community member).*





## MAJOR CONCLUSION

- **Children's positive and negative experiences about child-headed households**
- **Positive attributes for being part of a child-headed households**
- **Responsibility and tolerance for child-headed households**
- **Behavioural difficulties of child-headed households**



## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Government through social development and civil organization should enhance a good working relationship that uphold to their development.
- Recognize CHH as a family unit on its own.
- Increase number of social workers working with CHH in Hogsback area.
- Linking and allowing non governmental organization to work with CHH in Hogsburg area regardless of political affiliations.
- Educate the community, SAPS, nurses, teachers to treat CHH as a evolving household like any other well known households.

# THANK YOU!

