

Exploring the Experiences of Young Adults Emerging from Child-headed Households in Alice, South Africa

Getrude Shava¹, Constance Gunhidzirai¹ and Elvin Shava²

**¹Department of Social Work/Social Development Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities
Private Bag X1314 University of Fort Hare Alice, Eastern Cape South Africa, 5700**

**²Department of Public Administration Faculty of Management and Commerce, University of
Fort Hare, P.B. Alice, Eastern Cape South Africa, 5700**

KEYWORDS Experiences. Orphans. Child-headed Households. HIV/AIDS

ABSTRACT This paper is aimed at exploring the experiences of young adults emerging from child-headed households in the Alice community in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. Using a qualitative research design, interview schedules and focus group discussions were administered to young adults to assess their survival strategies as orphans in child-headed household prior to parents' death as result of HIV/AIDS. The sample was drawn from 10 young adults emerging from child-headed households in Alice community. Data was transcribed to verbatim and analyzed thematically depending on the flow of the paper's objectives. The paper revealed that senior members from child-headed households are compelled to drop out of school to look for employment to fend for the younger siblings. The paper indicated that child-headed households face a myriad of psychosocial and economic challenges such as hunger, starvation, high school dropouts, trauma and stress, exploitation, and vulnerability to various forms of abuse. The paper concluded by recommending the government to introduce various developmental initiatives to assist child-headed households.