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Umamkhulu Place: a place for orphaned and vulnerable children

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HIV/AIDS has affected the lives of many people in South Africa, having the strongest impact on children. These children are stigmatised due to ignorance on the HIV/AIDS pandemic

The key effect of HIV/AIDS on children has been a violation of their rights and dignity. The orphaned and vulnerable children (OVC) are left destitute and are left to care for their siblings and consequently lose their childhood. Some of these children are placed in residential care were their family units are potentially split while other children remain within the community.

Care should be taken to provide institutions that safe guard the OVC family unit. My project will focus on housing of the OVC and providing community based care facilities in a sustainable manner. It should be a project that is embedded within the community.



25 000 000 people died worldwide



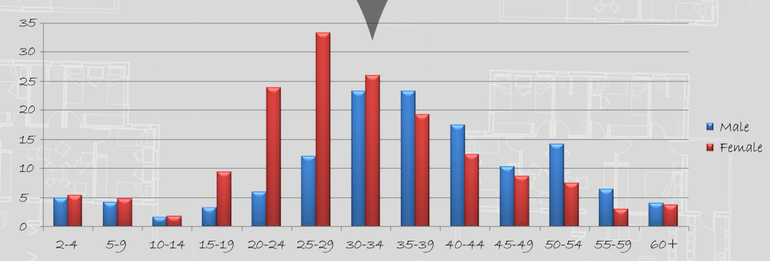
40 000 000 people living with HIV/AIDS worldwide



2 500 000 people died in South Africa



5 600 000 people living with HIV/AIDS in South Africa



HIV/AIDS infection prevalence in South Africa as a percentage in the various age groups according to gender
What is evident is that there is a high infection statistic amongst the 20 to 45 year olds. It is these individuals make up the largest sector of the working class

(From South Africa HIV § AIDS Statistics 2009)

The statistics show that "over 25% of people aged between 15 and 49, in South Africa, are living with HIV/AIDS, a statistic unparalleled in the world" (Cherpitel 2008:5)50% of all new cases are young adults aged 15 to 25

This leaves behind the legacy of a decimated workforce of our currently productive. society.





This results in a fractured, impoverished community comprised of inexperienced youth and the frail aged.







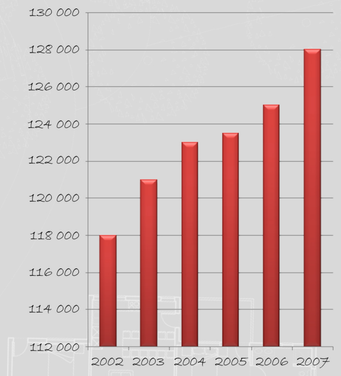
The children's guardians are infected with HIV/AIDS and become ill

The children's guardians die or become too ill to care for them, effectively leaving the children orphaned

The extended family, already overburdened by the rest of their families OVC, is not able to provide care and protection for such large proportions of orphans and vulnerable children

The children are left to fend for themselves in a child-headed household. Often these children are forced to leave school to look after their families resulting in the loss of their childhood. Their survival, care, protection and development are compromised

Research into the HIV/AIDS pandemic has revealed an ever increasing number of child headed households, this has a psychological affect on children often leading to adverse behaviour, social segregation and substance abuse. It therefore becomes evident that these children need to be cared for emotionally and physically to minimize the negative effects of their situation and to improve their social and emotional well being. The environment should display family safety and community interaction.



OVC increase from 2002 to 2007.
(From Dutschke [et al.]. 2008:68)



What happens to these orphans?





Youth Care Centre



Children's Home



Foster Home

The family is torn apart making the situation more agonizing. By removing them from their communities their roots are also removed.



The family remains together in formal or informal housing



Formal housing
Rights violated:
Right to be children, right to be cared for by their caregivers, food and education



Inormal housing
Rights violated:
Shelter, protection, right to be children, right to be cared for by their caregivers, food and education

Children's Home



Defining Characteristics and problems:
High walls and gates
Signage are a labeling device
No one sees in or out
Large recreational fields
Children and care givers are often separated
Children often split into age and gender
A communal dinning hall stopping child to adult bonding
It threatens a child's normal developmental process, primarily through a lack of individual attention and opportunities for attachment with adults

Foster Care



Defining Characteristics and problems:
Simulated home environment
Physical and sexual abuse due to overburdened foster parents
Feelings of abandonment by the birth parent when they are removed due to the parents being too ill to care for them
It threatens a child's normal developmental process, primarily through a lack of individual attention and opportunities for attachment with adults
Often exposes children to overcrowding and lack of privacy