

**Strengthening National Responses: Southern Africa Workshop
on Orphans and other Vulnerable Children
Maseru, Lesotho 10–14 November 2003**

WORKSHOP REPORT

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1. Executive Summary

The overall goal of the Maseru Workshop was:

To facilitate effective action within participating countries, to substantially improve the situation of orphans and vulnerable children, by enhancing the capacity of those countries to conduct situation analyses, establish national consultative processes, formulate policies, develop national action plans, design coordinating structures and implement strategic initiatives that are properly costed, monitored and evaluated.

The five-day Maseru workshop was a follow on to previous regional meetings on orphans and other vulnerable children (Lusaka 2000, Windhoek 2002) as well as the UNGASS on global HIV/AIDS. Specifically, the workshop was held in response to requests for support in building skills to meet commitments made during UNGASS and the regional meetings.

Ten countries were invited to participate, namely: Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Each country was invited to bring a delegation of eight members, made up of senior technocrats from government and civil society. Ninety delegates were registeredⁱ.

The workshop agendaⁱⁱ was divided into five thematic areas: participatory situation analysis; national action plan; monitoring and evaluation; policy and legislative review; and national consultation and coordination. A set of “Technical Briefing Papers”ⁱⁱⁱ on each theme was sent to the country teams before the workshop, to prepare delegates and guide theme-related sessions. Each country was asked to prepare a “Country Report”^{iv} on their progress in each of the five areas.

During the workshop a full day was devoted to each of the first three themes, with the remaining two being covered on the fourth day. Much of the discussion took place in structured small group sessions, including inter-country groups, country-teams and mini-plenaries – a total of 73 sessions excluding the plenaries.

Some of the key issues emerging within each of the five theme areas included:

- Participatory situation analysis – involving children and youth; defining “participatory”; identifying orphans and vulnerable children; options for coordination; and the challenges of data collection.
- National action plans – focusing on all vulnerable children (not just orphans, some of whom may not be vulnerable); the movement away from institutional care; and costing national action plans.
- Monitoring and evaluation – the need for countries to define their own indicators; collecting qualitative and quantitative data; and integrating monitoring and evaluation into national action plans.
- Policy and legislative review – the difficulties of merging international commitments to children with traditional norms and practices; reconciling outdated colonial policies, legislation, and practices; and free and compulsory schooling.
- National consultation and coordinating structures – consultation and coordination should not cause delays in programme actions; skills and resources from all sources must be harmonized; communication is a pre-requisite for coordination; coordination does equal representation; and meaningfully involving the community.

Five technical areas that received a lot of attention included:

- Participation – how do we involve key stakeholders, especially children and people living with HIV? To quote a participant, “I think we still have a lot to learn from each other about how to work with children rather than just having children as beneficiaries of our programmes.”
- Ownership of programmes was also a big issue – not only ownership by governments and organisations, but by communities and children.
- Advocacy was also prominent – both on specific issues and in relation to key stakeholders such as government ministries, donors and implementing partners.

- Financial resources: How to ensure that resources actually reach children, how to advocate that children's issues are built into proposals submitted to the Global Fund, how to recommit ourselves to see that children benefit from funding that is coming into the countries
- Process: “Do we have to do the situation analysis first, and after that a national consultation, and then policy and legislative review, and M&E and so forth? We’ve heard that maybe there is no single way.”

A primary output of the workshop was a matrix of “next steps”^v which each country team developed during the course of the week to guide their actions on their return home, and to which they committed themselves on the last day of the workshop. These matrices focus on the five thematic areas, but the actions proposed by each country team are specific to their own situation.

2. Introduction

The purpose of this report is to give an overview of the workshop – why it took place, who attended, how it was structured, and what was discussed. Readers requiring more details can download country reports, case studies, technical presentations and tables of next-steps to be taken at country level, from the internet. The URLs for these documents (web-addresses) are listed at the end of this report. A “lessons learned” document is also available to assist those planning similar workshops elsewhere.

As stated above, much of the discussion took place in structured small group sessions. It was not practical to report on these sessions in any depth, but the resource people compiled bulleted lists of key issues emerging from those discussions which are summarised in this report.

3. Background

To understand the context, goals and structure of the Maseru workshop it is necessary to recall several earlier meetings, beginning with the second regional meeting on orphans and vulnerable children in eastern and southern Africa, held in Lusaka in November 2000^{vi}. It was in Lusaka that five key elements of an effective national response to orphans and vulnerable children were first proposed and debated. These elements have evolved since then, and are now usually described as:

- Conducting a participatory situation analysis;
- National consultation and the establishment of a coordinating structure;
- Development of a national action plan;
- Policy and legislative review; and
- Monitoring and evaluation.

The value of each of these elements has been demonstrated in a number of countries, and they were adopted as the themes of the Maseru Workshop.

A second meeting which is directly relevant to the Maseru workshop was the United Nations General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) on the global HIV/AIDS pandemic, held in June 2001. The Declaration of Commitment adopted at that meeting binds all countries to a range of actions on HIV/AIDS. Three articles in the Declaration specifically relate to children orphaned and made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS, and have become known to people working in the field as “the UNGASS goals”. They are:

65. *By 2003, develop and by 2005 implement national policies and strategies to: build and strengthen governmental, family and community capacities to provide a supportive environment for orphans and girls and boys infected and affected by HIV/AIDS including by providing appropriate counselling and psycho-social support; ensuring their enrolment in school and access to shelter, good nutrition, health and social services on an equal basis with other children; to protect orphans and vulnerable children from all forms of abuse, violence, exploitation, discrimination, trafficking and loss of inheritance;*

66. *Ensure non-discrimination and full and equal enjoyment of all human rights through the promotion of an active and visible policy of de-stigmatization of children orphaned and made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS;*
67. *Urge the international community, particularly donor countries, civil society, as well as the private sector to complement effectively national programmes to support programmes for children orphaned or made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS in affected regions, in countries at high risk and to direct special assistance to sub-Saharan Africa.*

The third meeting on orphans and vulnerable children in eastern and southern Africa, held in Windhoek in November 2002, adopted as its theme: “Implementing the UNGASS goals for orphans and other children made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS”. At the conclusion of the Windhoek workshop delegates from 20 countries listed the actions they would take on their return home to ensure their countries met these goals. They agreed to be held accountable for their commitments, which were captured in “country matrices” attached to the official workshop report^{vii}.

Following Windhoek, a number of countries reported that they were experiencing difficulty in achieving the fundamental steps of national programming for orphans as a result of a lack of technical skills and capacity, and the idea of a sub-regional skills-building workshop was born. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) provided funding for the Maseru workshop, which was channelled through Family Health International as the convening agency. UNICEF also provided financial, technical and logistical support through their regional and country offices.

The Government of Lesotho was approached as a potential host since their country is severely hit by the HIV/AIDS pandemic and has a high proportion of children orphaned by HIV/AIDS. According to the best available data¹, by 2010 Lesotho will have the highest proportion of orphans in the world, with 25.5% of all children having lost one or both parents – more than 80% of those due to AIDS. It was also believed that holding the workshop in Lesotho could infuse new energy into the government’s and donor agencies’ plans for scaling up their response to orphans and other vulnerable children.

4. Structure and facilitation

The participating countries included some that are among the world leaders in responding to orphans and vulnerable children. Rather than imposing the views of outsiders, countries with the most effective responses were therefore encouraged to provide technical guidance to neighbours who were still developing their own policies and interventions. Technical experts were simply asked to set the scene on each topic^{xii} and to moderate plenary discussions.

Each plenary session featured between two and four country case studies^x on a particular theme, presented by those countries which felt they were strongest in that area. This was followed by a panel discussion, where questions submitted by the audience were consolidated and put to the panel, with delegates being invited to contribute to the discussion from the floor.

In terms of group work, resource people were assigned to each of the 10 working groups. They acted mainly as rapporteurs, providing limited prompting where appropriate. All groups were given topic guides^{viii} to help them facilitate their own discussions but they were not confined to the questions raised in those guides.

The primary output of the workshop was a matrix of “next steps”^{ix} developed by each country team during the course of the week to guide their actions on their return home, and to which they committed themselves on the last day of the workshop. These matrices focus on the five thematic areas, but the actions proposed by each country team are specific to their own situation.

¹ “Children on the Brink 2002” jointly published by UNAIDS, UNICEF and USAID.

Highlights of the opening ceremonies [this to appear in box, not in the main text]

Ms Scholastica Kimaryo, UN Resident Representative in Lesotho

“Previous workshops provided a panorama of issues confronting orphans and vulnerable children, and helped keep the issues alive on national agendas. However, many of the countries who participated subsequently felt they lacked the requisite technical skills to scale up their response to meet the challenge. This is why the skills development focus of this workshop is important.

“It is becoming increasingly clear that the rapid rate of orphaning does not allow for conventional approaches, with the future of millions of children being at stake. This is why the health and well-being of orphans has to become everybody’s business, starting from the very top echelons of society.”

Mr Robert Loftis - Ambassador of the United States

“The important thing is not to say: ‘we are going to do something’ but: ‘I am going to do something.’ Each of us has to take responsibility for a specific part of the problem.

“I can’t think of too many things worse for a child than losing a parent, except perhaps to be told afterwards that, because their mother or father died from AIDS, somehow there was something morally reprehensible about them. It just adds tremendously to the burden that these children face. So when we go home it’s absolutely imperative that we do everything we can to fight the stigma and discrimination associated with HIV/AIDS.”

Dr Motloheloa Phooko - Minister of Health, Lesotho

“This workshop provides fertile ground for the exchange of best practices, experiences, lessons learned and identifying opportunities to take forward the agenda to realise and fulfil the rights of orphans and vulnerable children within the context of the global goals.

“My government recognizes at the highest levels that we are risking the future of the next generation if we do not take timely action to reach orphans and other vulnerable children. We also acknowledge that we urgently need to acquire the appropriate technical knowledge, skills and financial resources to successfully scale up the fight against HIV/AIDS.

“The nature of the pandemic is such that efforts need to be multi-sectoral and collaboration is the key, since no one sector, institution or organisation can tackle this crisis alone. As such we welcome this meeting as a step in the right direction.”

5. First Session

The first session was introduced by Lesotho’s Director of Social Welfare Limakatso Chisepo. Mrs. Chisepo welcomed the opportunity for participants to build on the conceptual framework set by the earlier workshops for orphans and other vulnerable children, to develop practical skills for responding to the growing orphan crisis. However she acknowledged that follow-up activities from earlier workshops were hampered by lack of related skills.

Setting the scene for the workshop, Peter McDermott for USAID said that because of AIDS the number of orphans in sub-Saharan Africa was increasing dramatically. “Today 34 million children in the sub-continent are orphaned, 11 million of them due to AIDS. By the year 2010 the numbers will be vast: 42 million orphans, 20 million due to AIDS, and 70% of those children will be in just 12 countries, 10 of which are in this room today.”

Increasingly HIV/AIDS was becoming an orphan crisis. Yet, 20 years into the HIV/AIDS pandemic, “...it’s clear the response has really not been satisfactory nor commensurate with the size of the problem. Turning the tide requires an urgency that we are still not seeing across the continent, and requires an immediate, sustained and committed response at all levels – government, civil society, international agencies and religious groups.”

Mr McDermott acknowledged that sub-Saharan Africa was, in many ways, the region least able to cope with the crisis because of limited resources, poor infrastructure and increasing poverty. “Yet those constraints must not be used as an excuse for inaction. The world is beginning to respond – we have never before had so much attention on AIDS, such global mobilisation and, increasingly, so much money.”

He called on participants to realise that children affected by AIDS, and orphans in particular, represented only one – although increasingly large – group of vulnerable children, and that they

became vulnerable long before they were orphaned. “They live with sick and dying parents, move house to house, live on streets, are exploited domestically or commercially, are increasingly abused and suffer from stigma and discrimination.” Mr McDermott concluded by calling on participants to use the workshop to acquire the lessons and skills they needed to ensure their national responses were mobilized, sustained and brought to scale.

6. Participatory Situation Analysis

6.1. Case studies and panel discussion

Case studies^x presented by Namibia, Zambia and Malawi covered methodologies and findings from their situation assessments. Session moderator Renee DeMarco noted that each country had assessment experiences or plans to share. She encouraged delegates to identify key issues and to submit them, on cards, for further discussion during the subsequent panel discussion.

Panellists from Lesotho, Zimbabwe and Botswana responded to the issues raised, with delegates from other countries contributing from the floor. Key issues to emerge from the discussion included:

- The importance of involving communities in a situation analysis. Not involving grassroots organisations and traditional authorities from the outset can lead to a disastrous failure to cooperate, or to unrealistic expectations that all the problems raised will be solved. A balance between “bottom up” and “top down” management of situation analyses is the ideal.
- The challenges of involving children in situation analyses – the prospect of causing unintended harm (keeping children out of school so they can participate, exposing them to emotional stress); the importance of empowering children to participate (by establishing suitable forums, training etc.); training the research team to work with children; the obligation to respect and reinforce children’s rights, and to follow up with feedback and action.
- Where to begin the process of conducting a situation analysis – the importance of involving consultants from an early stage to ensure proper design, and of pairing them with local people to build national capacity; the value of a reference group or steering committee drawn from the highest levels of government and civil society (and that the key to their effectiveness is that they are genuinely committed to the process) to ensure that key stakeholders own the findings and recommendations.
- How to identify orphans and vulnerable children in a situation analysis: the importance of clear and shared definitions; the difficulties of defining vulnerability (and, therefore, on collecting data on vulnerable children); the potential for involving communities in identifying vulnerable children according to their own criteria.
- The difficulties of collecting data, the importance of collecting both qualitative and quantitative data (to “get beyond the statistics”); the importance of the recommendations of the situation analysis (and of recommendations that are action-oriented and achievable); the importance of comprehensive data (eg: enumerating street children, children in institutions, child labourers and child-brides).

“If we are sure that education is free and compulsory, then we start to address the issue of poverty reduction and child vulnerability. If we start to consider provision of health services to OVC and mothers, then we start to look at poverty reduction.” John Zulu, Zambia.

“‘Vulnerability’ overrides the definition of an ‘orphan’ because a child who is an orphan may not necessarily be vulnerable.” Willard Manjolo, Malawi.

“You go to a house and find maybe 10 children who are vulnerable, maybe two or three because they are orphaned by HIV/AIDS. It’s a household – you can’t say I’ll just assist the three; you must look at vulnerability in the home. They are children, they are vulnerable, we must look after them.” Kapasa Sikazwe, Zambia.

“In Angola we already have a large number of children whose parents have died from HIV/AIDS, almost equivalent to the number of orphans due to the war – that’s why its necessary for vulnerability to be seen in a broader context.” Maria Lucia Furtado, Angola.

“When involving children we can abuse them in that involvement. At times we involve children just to entertain the adults, so (the challenge) is to make sure their involvement is not tokenistic.” Nellie Dhlembeu, Zimbabwe.

“In Malawi we find that most vulnerable children are not made vulnerable by the death of their parents, but by the general poverty around them.” Penston Kilembe, Malawi.

6.2. Inter-country groups

Key themes emerging from the 10 working groups included:

What is working well:

- Data helps to inform programming and policy formulation, helps to prioritize issues and mobilize resources, and is useful for advocacy on issues relating to orphans and vulnerable children.
- Situation analysis is essential as a baseline for measuring future activities and interventions, identifying gaps in services, roles and responsibilities of stakeholders.
- Consultative and participatory approaches are working well. Involving key stakeholders – including children, communities, traditional authorities, government departments – ensures they take ownership and avoid unrealistic expectations.
- Development of an inventory of who is doing what, as part of the situation analysis, is very useful.

Critical elements:

- Multi-sector participation including children, communities, high levels of government (eg: reference groups, ministries involved with children). Involve people who work directly with children – not just researchers/academics.
- Ensuring strong coordination and adherence to deadlines – get official recognition for the coordinating structure, use “commitment” as a requirement for membership of the coordinating group.
- Conducting a literature review before collecting data (fieldwork).
- Preparing budgets for the recommendations to understand cost implications. Building monitoring and evaluation into the recommendations.

Challenges:

- Defining who are we focusing on in a situation analysis – all children, all vulnerable children, orphans, children affected by HIV/AIDS, children orphaned by AIDS?
- Mobilising resources, financial and technical, both for the situation analysis and to implement the recommendations. National resources are often scattered in different ministries. Getting ministries to collaborate can be difficult.
- Making sure the situation analysis meets the needs of the country, along with the requirements of donors.
- The role of consultants – who, when to involve them, how to define their terms of reference, how to ensure they act as facilitators without usurping the role and input of key participants.

Next steps (for countries which have already done a participatory situation analysis):

- Develop an action plan! Mobilize resources to implement the action plan. Make more noise about results, and pressure government to take action.
- Use the findings as the basis for policy formation, and for monitoring and evaluation.
- Evaluate your first participatory situation analysis to inform the next one. Do it again, update your data through existing/ongoing studies.
- Sustain the coordinating structure, “recycle” it as a coordinating structure for implementation of national programmes, communication with orphan stakeholders

7. National Action Plans

7.1. Introductory presentation

Peter McDermott of USAID^{xi} began by describing global initiatives to understand and respond to the orphan crisis facing sub-Saharan Africa. He listed seven programmatic principles which should be addressed in any national action plan:

- Focus on the most vulnerable children, not just those orphaned by HIV/AIDS.
- Define community-specific problems and vulnerabilities, and pursue locally determined intervention strategies.
- Involve children and young people in the interventions in a meaningful way, appropriate to their age and context.
- Give particular attention to the roles of boys and girls, and address gender discrimination.
- Strengthen partnerships and build coalitions.
- Link HIV/AIDS prevention activities, and care and support for people living with HIV/AIDS, to programmes for orphans and other vulnerable children.
- Use external support – carefully! – to strengthen community initiatives and motivation.

He said a national action plan must be grounded in reality: “Don’t make it so aspirational that it’s useless”. In particular, the plan should be based on solid data, and should give practical guidance on the way forward: “Can you do a national plan of action if you have not already done a situation analysis to tell you how many children you have, where they are, who is responding to them, what resources are required? And can you do a national action plan if you haven’t had a national consultation with all your stakeholders, to understand where they are working?”

He listed a series of questions which needed to be answered in the national action plan:

- What is your strategy for scaling up? Do you want every agency to do a little bit more – an incremental response? Or are you looking for something radically different – an exponential response?
- How do you allocate resources, assuming you don’t have enough resources to fulfill everybody’s needs immediately? Will you target the areas you think have the most orphans? Or the areas which have the poorest people? Should everybody get an equal share of the resources you have, or should they go to those most in need? How much money should go into education, versus psycho-social support, versus food, and what are your criteria for selection?
- Are there certain children who are more vulnerable than others and who should be given priority – for example those in child-headed households, children living with elderly caregivers etc.? Do all children need all the same services? Does an orphan in the capital city need the same as a child living in a township, shanty, peri-urban area, rural area or village? And how do we make that determination?
- What do you understand by “participatory”? Should regions and districts come up with their own action plans to inform the national action plan, or should you create a national action plan at national level first and then flesh it out with the communities?
- How much of your response is going to be based on hard evidence in your country, rather than a hypothesis “we think it’s good”. How will your action plan link to other plans such as those for HIV/AIDS and national development? And will your action plan help you to meet the UNGASS goals?

“Finally, on costing, I don’t think there is one government here today that has enough money to meet the needs of all its vulnerable populations. How much will it cost us to assist all of these orphans? It comes down to the question of what you are planning to provide to which children. Most countries really don’t have a figure, but national action plans need to make some assumptions.”

Mr McDermott was asked about the definitions of orphans and vulnerable children. He said the international community was harmonising its data to reflect the situation of children up to the age of

18. Disaggregation by maternal, paternal and double orphans was important because there was no historic precedent for the number of double orphans emerging in sub-Saharan Africa. Maternal orphans were particularly important because a high proportion of children lived in single-parent households, while the death of a father could result in a disproportionate impact on the family.

7.2. Case studies and panel discussion

Case studies were presented by Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Swaziland^x. Namibia, Zambia and Malawi made up the panel for the panel discussion.

Key points to emerge from the discussion included:

- National action plans should not be restricted to orphans but should target all children who are vulnerable. But each country (and possibly each district or community) needs to define vulnerability according to conditions, expectations and resources.
- Institutional care of children – orphanages – should be used only as a last resort. Governments should have clear policies and regulations on accreditation, standards and monitoring of institutions. Reintegration of children from such institutions into their communities is critical.
- Costing of national action plans for orphans and vulnerable children remains a major challenge to many countries. Dividing scarce resources among competing priorities seldom leaves enough to meet all the government's commitments to children. Investing in children needs to be seen by government planners as an effective means of addressing poverty. Donors need to be brought on board to supplement government resources.
- Other issues included targeting, reach, coverage and quality of services.

"The whole issue of orphans has become an income-generating activity in Namibia, because we have the social grant system where people are getting a small amount for taking in a children. You think you are solving one problem, but you are creating another." Doris Roos, Namibia.

"Is the mushrooming of initiatives and institutions a good thing, or is it capitalising on the situation of vulnerable children? It can be taken both ways. I would want to take advantage of it. It's only up to us, realising that many players have come on board, to ask ourselves how we can make the best of that situation." John Zulu, Zambia.

"We can learn about the de-institutionalisation of orphans and vulnerable children from Ethiopia, where more than 15 orphanages have been turned into vocational training centres and (the children have been) integrated into their communities." Nyararai Magudu, Mozambique.

"We need to redefine current programmes instead of always trying to find new money for them. If we go down to grassroots level, if we involve people and ask them what they can do, we find even now they do a lot of things without money. All they need is to be organised, mobilised, assisted with capacity." Rosina Mabakeng, Namibia.

"When we talk about costing plans for orphans and vulnerable children, we must decide – do we want a targeted intervention, or do we say we know the majority of children under 15 are vulnerable in one way or another, and we should provide a national programme which makes services available to all of them and hope by an 'error of inclusion' that we are less likely to miss?" Paramente Phamotse, Lesotho.

7.3. Inter-country groups

Key issues emerging from the 10 groups included:

What is working well:

- A consultative planning process leads to ownership by all stakeholders.
- Using existing structures to develop and implement action plans.
- Some action plans are putting emphasis on previously ignored areas – material support, psychosocial support and legal issues.
- Action plans are being used as a tool for pressuring governments to address gaps in policy.

Critical elements:

- Representation of stakeholders in the planning process is key. Political will, particularly, needs to be mobilised to ensure acceptance and implementation of the plan. Children should be both seen and heard during the process!
- The ministries responsible for national planning and finance must be involved to avoid clashes with other national plans and to ensure resources are made available for implementation.
- Planning needs both a bottomup and top-down approach. Without one you will have lack of community ownership; without the other you will have a lack of political commitment.
- It is important to have a lead organisation responsible for oversight and coordination of the plan (such as a multi-sectoral national coordinating body).

Challenges:

- Dealing with conflict of interest between top-level stakeholders.
- Shrinking resources, growing number of children needing help.
- Consultation during the development of the plan, and dissemination of the plan after completion.
- How can a national action plan on OVC exist without a national plan on all children?

Next steps:

- Developing mechanisms to budget and to monitor expenditure.
- Use data to advocate for government to deal with issues of OVCs.
- Plan a meeting to mobilise other stakeholders and share what has been learned here.
- Use this workshop report to mobilise stakeholders at country level.
- Replicate this workshop format at country, district and local level.

8. Monitoring and Evaluation

8.1. Introductory presentation

Eileen Kwamboka Mokaya of Hope for African Children Initiative introduced the theme^{xiii} by covering basic questions such as: What are monitoring and evaluation (M&E) generally and in the context of UNGASS? Why do we monitor and evaluate programmes? What are M&E strategies, frameworks and plans? Why is national M&E necessary, and who should be involved?

In addition, Dr Kwamboka described selected UNGASS indicators on orphans and vulnerable children in the areas of policies and strategies; education; health; nutrition; psycho-social support; family capacity; community capacity; resources; protection; and institutional care and shelter.

8.2. Case studies and panel discussion

Botswana and South Africa provided case studies^x in the monitoring and evaluation of national programmes for orphans and vulnerable children.

South Africa's presentation focussed on a spreadsheet monitoring tool that they are using, and which they are prepared to share. Botswana's presentation described their Botswana HIV/AIDS Response Information Management System (BHRIMS) and Social Benefits Payment & Reconciliation System (SOBERS).

Much of the discussion following these presentations centered on the UNGASS definition of a vulnerable child as "a child living in household where there has been a chronically ill person (adult or child) for 3 out of the past 12 months." This definition was currently being field tested to see if it was appropriate for monitoring purposes.

Panellist and USAID senior advisor on HIV/AIDS Daniel Kabira stressed that this definition was still "work in progress" and that it did not preclude countries and communities from having their own definitions. "Your reaction (of dissatisfaction) when you heard this definition is typical of what we have come across whenever this indicator is discussed, but this definition was created after a lot of

research and debate among people in the field; and its value and/or inadequacies will emerge from the field testing, which is under implementation”.

Key points emerging from the panel discussion were:

- Different organisations working in the field of orphans and vulnerable children have their own programme indicators. However, data from these indicators should be consolidated at national level to provide an overall picture of progress in the country. The national action plan should define what the national objectives are, how progress towards them will be measured, and who is responsible for gathering the necessary data.
- The difference between performance indicators and performance standards: performance indicators keep track of what you are doing, while performance standards provide a yardstick against which you can review the quality of your effort.
- It is important to achieve a balance between qualitative and quantitative indicators. Qualitative indicators can provide descriptive data on interventions and the problems they seek to address, while quantitative indicators measure progress in numerical terms. The numbers are required to convey the extent of the problem and related responses.
- Monitoring and evaluation need to be an integral part of an action plan, starting at the same time as the plan is implemented. Similarly, communities need to be involved from the outset, since they will be expected to cooperate in the collection of data, and they need to see the benefits to themselves of participation.

“Qualitative data, which is descriptive, tells us why we are seeing some of these trends which are being represented in numbers.” Eileen Kwamboka, HACI.

“There is a tendency of collecting more information than we need. If you don’t know why you are collecting that information, there is no point in collecting it.” Daniel Kabira, USAID.

“The use of volunteers (in conducting monitoring and evaluation) is very important. We have to make use of more and more volunteers, but many times we can’t find enough of them. We have to look at the needs of volunteers, why they are not participating and what we can do to encourage them.” Henry Platt, Namibia.

8.3. Inter-country groups

Key issues from the working groups included:

Why have a National M & E Strategy?

- As a tool for advocacy, fundraising, planning, building consensus, measuring impact, evaluating programmes

What steps are needed:

- Review currently available tools e.g. situation analysis, national action plans
- Adaptation of international goals (UNGASS, Millennium Goals)

What existing sources of data are there?

- Census tools
- Demographic and health surveys
- Databases from organisations that work with children

What kind of resources are needed?

- Technical resources – in form of consultant
- Transportation
- Equipment (computers)

What are the challenges?

- Skilled human resources (disparity of skills levels)

- Making the current monitoring efforts into a strategy
- Evaluating current programmes (greater focus on monitoring than evaluation)
- Securing of political commitment
- Financial resources (funding priorities); government budget allocations
- Co-ordination and leadership
- Consensus building (varied expectations)
- Participation of all stakeholders

9. Policy and Legislative Review

9.1. Introductory presentation

In her introductory remarks ^{xii} session moderator Rose Smart said that, rather than speaking of a single document as a “policy”, it was best to see it as a package of various components, which, together, would protect all orphans and vulnerable children. These components might include:

- Adequate laws to protect the rights of all children, including those who are orphaned or vulnerable, coupled with policies and interventions which were specific to orphans and vulnerable children;
- A situation analysis and needs assessment of orphans and vulnerable children, identification of service providers, and mechanisms to define and identify vulnerable children to ensure they receive services;
- Ensuring that other initiatives identify and address the needs of children – for example HIV/AIDS strategies and interventions, free education, food security, development and poverty reduction;
- Advocacy, targeted and issues-based, to ensure children are on the agendas of decision makers, donors and all relevant ministries and sectors;
- National consultations, held regularly to review policy and track progress, coupled with communication, coordination, monitoring and evaluation of activities through multi-sectoral structures.

Ms Smart pointed out that various countries in southern Africa had undertaken, and in many cases excelled at implementing components of the policy package and all were willing to share their experience and expertise.

9.2. Case studies and panel discussion

Angola, Malawi, Lesotho and Swaziland^x each presented a case study. The same countries made up the panel for the discussions which followed.

- Malawi described the process they had undergone in policy development, and in establishing implementing structures from village to national level;
- Swaziland focussed on the process they had undergone to come up with a draft policy, and the process they needed to follow to get approval of the policy;
- Lesotho spoke about their legal review process, which was consultative and capacity building, so when their bill becomes law people will know how to advocate for their rights;
- Angola is placing orphans and vulnerable children in the broader context of their recovery from 27 years of war, and their fight against HIV/AIDS.

Key points to emerge from the panel discussion included:

- The difficulties of merging international commitments to children, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (inheritance rights, the right to be heard, the right to education etc.), with traditional norms and practices (early marriage, child labour, girls being denied education etc.). In

most countries progress was being made toward changing or modifying traditional customs where they were negative, or in conflict with these commitments, and in some cases the media was misrepresenting the real situation.

- Reconciling outdated colonial policies, legislation and practices – such as definitions of children, registration of births and deaths, institutional care of orphans and vulnerable children – was also an area of great difficulty, which was still being addressed in some countries.
- Free schooling – the consensus was that free and compulsory education for all children is still work-in-progress in most countries. Most provide nominally free primary schooling, but schools charge levies to supplement government grants. Most countries have programmes to exempt or support learners who cannot afford these fees, but admit they are not always successful.

“We are mobilising traditional systems to discourage (negative) practices that are there. We are also supporting local committees on violence against women and children to intervene in cases of property grabbing, and we are training para-legals to look at the issues where a dispute has arisen with relatives.” Willard Manjolo, Malawi.

“We have undertaken a land reform process, centred around the traditional authorities, so when parents die, the children still own the land and the property which they left behind. Secondly we have adopted a policy which says that by and large children should be cared for within their communities and, specifically, should be kept in their homes.” John Kunene, Swaziland.

“The big problem comes in through estate grabbing – we don’t have any measures to protect children against property grabbing. Most countries don’t have anything in place at the moment.” Elsie Beukes, Namibia.

“People are saying that the right to schooling should be made enforceable in law, so that people can claim this right in court if necessary. If we start to entertain the issue of lack of resources, then we will continue to deny children their rights.” John Zulu, Zambia.

“In our culture death and dying are things that are not discussed openly. With the writing of wills and property grabbing, it is necessary to discuss this issue at family level. It’s not enough to intervene after death, it’s like the whole system is waiting for parents to die.” Goitseone Mabua, Botswana.

10. National consultation and coordinating structures

10.1. Case studies and panel discussion

- Swaziland and Zimbabwe provided case studies^x. Namibia, South Africa and Malawi were represented on the panel. Session moderator Mark Loudon said that consultation and coordination should not be seen as separate events, but as interwoven elements of an ongoing process.^{xii}

Key issues emerging from the discussions included:

- Consultation and coordination are vitally important, but they must not be an excuse for inaction. The situation of orphans and vulnerable children is an emergency. Concerns about process need to be balanced against the need for urgent action. Often consultation and coordination can take place alongside programmes, and the programmes can be adjusted as information becomes available.
- It is important to harmonise the skills and resources available from government, and those available from NGOs, which can bring critical competencies and values to the table. It is sometimes argued that when you talk to NGOs, you are effectively talking to the communities in which they work, but we need to acknowledge that this is not always the case.
- Communication is a pre-requisite for coordination. Most organisations and government departments react badly to being “told what to do” but are very receptive to sharing their plans, and modifying them to fill gaps and avoid duplication – which is what coordination is all about.
- Coordination should not be confused with representation – not everyone needs to sit on the coordination body, although everyone should be able to communicate with that body. National organisations are not well placed to coordinate action at community level.
- Involving the community (top down, bottom up). Interventions do not work well, without the approval of traditional leaders. The initiative does not always need to come from them. The idea

can be born at the central level and refined at community level, but their participation and approval is crucial.

- Governments have a responsibility to lead, but they should do this collaboratively.

“We must be guided by ‘the best interests of the child’. While we are talking, are children eating and going to school, or are we too busy talking to help them? Anything that facilitates support to orphans and vulnerable children, in the best possible way, as fast as they need it, should be something we support.” Ntjantja Ned, South Africa.

“NGOs and CBOs are always born free, and are often in conflict with the government. As the department or ministry responsible for such activities, you must come up with clear guidelines on how you want your relationship to operate, and this should be through a consultative process of course.” Penston Kilembe, Malawi.

“When we had a national consultation we brought in a lot of people to participate, but the level of interpretation was so poor that issues were not carried across properly and clearly. There is a gap, especially when we use English as a language of communication.” Rosina Mabakeng, Botswana.

“At central level sometimes we are obsessed with coordination – with activities, meetings, planning and so forth. But how about the actual service delivery at district level? That’s why you have to look at your structure, and how it can best be replicated at lower levels, down to the community.” Penston Kilembe, Malawi.

“It’s not necessarily a bad thing that consultation starts from the top, or from the grassroots. It’s really about the intent, and the commitment to be as inclusive as you can as the process unfolds, and to allow the diversity of voices to inform that process as it unfolds. We have experienced it both ways and, I think, in either case it has had positive outputs.” Ntjantja Ned, South Africa.

11. Closing session

11.1. Mobilising financial resources and political will

Mark Connolly from UNICEF headquarters in New York told delegates that only two of the 10 countries at the workshop had reported to the Secretary General of the United Nations that they had met the UNGASS goal of having a policy for orphans and other children made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS by mid 2003. However, southern Africa was the leading region in the world in terms of orphan interventions – with eight of the 10 countries having completed a situation analysis, and six having a national coordinating mechanism in place.

The next goal was implementation of the UNGASS goals by 2005. “That basically means next year is the year to meet the goal, to get the plan in place and get it underway,” he said. “I’m not as worried as some others in New York or Geneva may be on this region meeting that goal. It may be a little difficult to put a policy together and get all the legislation approved, and to hammer out a plan like you’ve been doing at this workshop, but the bottom line is that there’s no region in the world that has been taking more action on orphans and vulnerable children than the countries represented here.”

Turning to the mobilisation of political will, Mr Connolly gave two case histories from other regions:

- In Brazil the government decided eight years ago to give free anti-retroviral drugs to everyone who needed them. This decision was motivated by their ministers of Finance and Health, who realised it would cost less to provide the drugs than to hospitalise people with AIDS.
- In Kenya, the newly elected government ruled that no child should be excluded from school because of a lack of money. This decision was in fulfilment of a promise made during the election campaign, which unseated the previous government, when it became obvious that the issue of 1.2 million children not attending school was a key concern for voters.

“So we have our champions for anti-retroviral drugs, and for free schooling. But I think it’s fair to say that we’re still searching for the head of state who is recognised around the world as the champion of the orphans. I think we need to help our leaders to assume that role.”

Mr Connolly also reported on a costing exercise by Geoffrey Sachs, development economist from Columbia University in New York and the UN Special Advisor on the Millennium Goals, who was

asked to come up with a price tag on what it would cost to address the issues of 14 million orphans, heading towards 20 million orphans, around the world today.

“The Sachs team used the broadest definition of what every child has a right to, and came up with a price tag of a little over \$10 billion which, for many people in the donor community, was a staggeringly large number. But his response was: ‘look at the war in Iraq – \$87 billion just to rebuild one country so every child can go to school, every parent can have a drivers licence, every community can have a library’.”

Some of the issues emerging from the subsequent plenary discussion included:

- There is a need to move resources more efficiently to communities. One mechanism is to reduce the “overhead” imposed by donors, where a large proportion of the funding must be spent on meeting donors’ expectations in terms of reporting and accounting. Another is to make a deal with communities that, in return for agreed resources, they will ensure all children are in school.
- Representations have been made to the Global Fund for favourable consideration of proposals which provide for orphans and vulnerable children, and even to make such components a pre-requisite for all proposals. However, the Global Fund reports that very few countries are asking for funding for orphan interventions. The exception was Swaziland, which received funding in June for programmes with a substantial orphan component. In the last three months, the only other proposals with an orphan component had come from Jamaica and Honduras.

“Countries need to be talking about the orphan issue as an economic necessity, instead of saying this is a human right or a charity issue. The survival of the economies of these countries depend on the assistance they give to vulnerable children.” Carol Culler, Mozambique.

11.2. Workshop evaluation

Questionnaires submitted by delegates revealed that:

- Delegates were overwhelmingly positive regarding the workshop content, structure and facilitation, singling out the inter-country group work for special praise.
- Negative features were the short notice period given for the workshop, and difficulties getting to Lesotho (lack of capacity on the only scheduled airline service, difficulties with road transport). The conveners were also criticised for “moving the goalposts” by informing country teams that they would be asked to present case studies only when they arrived in Maseru, and for handing out the next-steps matrix form only toward the end of the workshop.
- The international community was asked to provide more resources, more technical support, and more opportunities for interaction.

The resource team conducted their own critical analysis of the workshop^{xiii} to assist conveners of similar workshops.

11.3. Workshop overview

Sara Bowsky from FHI said the workshop organisers had witnessed a solidified commitment to maintain the best interests of children and their families. She said some of the main areas that came up during the week included:

- the importance of keeping children in school,
- the protection of inheritance rights,
- the importance of psychological and emotional and spiritual support,
- the importance of maintaining the positive elements of cultural foundations that had been laid over centuries,
- maintaining optimal health of children and their families,
- and: “Most importantly, we’ve heard continuously the importance of keeping parents alive and of keeping children alive”.

“One of the questions that we asked ourselves and that we’ve heard from you this week is: how much of what we’re doing is new? How much information do we already have? There has been a lot of discussion about how can we build on what we already have instead of reinventing the wheel.”

Ms Bowsky singled out five technical areas that had received a lot of attention:

- Participation – how do we involve key stakeholders, especially children and people living with HIV? “I think we still have a lot to learn from each other about how to work with children rather than just having children as beneficiaries of our programmes.”
- Ownership of programmes– not only ownership by countries, but also ownership by communities and children.
- Advocacy was also prominent, not only on specific issues but also in relation to specific stakeholders, such as government ministries, donors and programme partners.
- Financial resources: “How do we see that resources actually reach children, how do we advocate that children's issues are built into proposals submitted to the Global Fund, how do we recommit ourselves to see that children benefit from funding that is coming into the countries?”
- Process: “Do we have to do the situation analysis first, and after that a national consultation, and then policy and legislative review, and M&E and so forth? We’ve heard that maybe there is no single way.”

Ms Bowsky concluded by saying the matrices of next-steps that each country had developed during the workshop were described in some group discussions as a monitoring tool within itself, a way of tracking progress and challenges, not merely an action plan, but something that can allow countries to move forward with their action plans.

11.4. The participants’ perspective

Speaking on behalf of delegates Swaziland’s Principal Secretary in the Ministry of Health Dr John Kunene said that although some countries in the region were a bit sluggish in reaching the UNGASS goals, this was not a reflection of lack of commitment. “This week it has become very clear what some of the constraints and limitations are in dealing with issues of orphans and vulnerable children.”

He issued a challenge to donor agencies to consider hosting a similar workshop specifically for policy-makers. “Indeed the policy makers who assist the ministers to come up with appropriate policies and budgets would, I think, benefit immensely from participating in a workshop such as this. They also need their skills upgraded and sometimes built from scratch.”

Dr Kunene committed himself as chairperson of Swaziland’s country coordinating mechanism for the Global Fund to raising the issue of orphans at the next meeting of his peers from other countries, and to recommending to them that children’s issues should be reflected in their submissions to the Fund.

He stressed the importance of helping governments to meet their commitments. “At the end of the day it is governments that have to account for the welfare of the orphans and the vulnerable children. I think it is incumbent upon us not to say ‘government should do this or that’, but rather to ask ourselves: ‘what have we done to remind them, through the various structures that we have?’ I can assure you that when our Heads of State make these declarations it is with the best intentions, but translating those good intentions into visible practice requires that we support them at policy and technical level.”

Dr Kunene ended with a challenge: “It was surprising and sometimes quite shocking this week to discover that there are so many activities taking place in your own backyard that you may not be aware of. There are excellent initiatives that we should be proud of. I want to challenge us, especially as we go back to our member states, to work hard to communicate and better coordinate our activities.”

11.5. The donor’s perspective

In his concluding remarks, Peter McDermott of USAID identified five key challenges:

- Ultimately we need to do one thing, and that is keep parents alive as long as possible. If we keep parents alive we won’t have orphans. We have the technology, and it can be made available.

- The second issue is the “five point plan” – the themes of this workshop. It doesn’t matter which comes first, and you don’t have to do them in a linear or sequential manner. But it is important that we complete the plan. In those countries which have made the jump from an incremental to an exponential response, these five processes have been key.
- The big challenge is scale – how can we go from assisting tens of thousands of children for a year, to helping millions of children for decades? Getting the resources is only one part of the equation: how we use the money is equally important. And we have to have a means of measuring progress – unless we can show we are moving forward, the resources will not continue to come.
- Partnerships: it is clear when we work together, we work more effectively. And we must be sure we do not displace the authority of national governments. At the same time governments have to understand that if we are going to reach millions of children they cannot be the single entity in providing services – we need the faith based organisations, we need the NGOs, and we need the international assistance.
- Finally, the voice of children. We have seen this huge mobilisation, especially on treatment. But children are nowhere in the debate. No one is representing children other than the people in this room. We have to find a way of hearing that child’s voice in our deliberations. Sometimes we get so busy that we forget who we are doing it for.

11.6. Closure

In closing the proceedings the Director General of Health Services in the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare Dr T Ramatlapeng said the workshop has given Lesotho the impetus to scale up the work they were doing on orphans and vulnerable children and had provided a framework for well-focussed action in our region.

“I therefore promise you all that when we next meet we will be reporting to you some very big achievements in Lesotho. The fact you were here has given us the motivation to track down all those partners who are involved in orphans and vulnerable children, and we are now in position to set up coordinating offices.”

12. Reference documents

For more detail, the following are available for download from the Child Care Notes website:

ⁱ Workshop participants list: www.childcarenotes.org/downloads/workshops/maseru/participants.pdf

ⁱⁱ Workshop agenda: www.childcarenotes.org/downloads/workshops/maseru/shortagenda.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ Technical briefing papers: www.childcarenotes.org/downloads/workshops/maseru/techbrief.pdf

^{iv} Country reports: www.childcarenotes.org/downloads/workshops/maseru/countryreports/index.html (listed by country)

^v Next-step matrices: www.childcarenotes.org/downloads/workshops/maseru/matrices/index.html (listed by country)

^{vi} Lusaka workshop report: www.childcarenotes.org/downloads/workshops/lusaka.pdf

^{vii} Windhoek workshop report: www.childcarenotes.org/downloads/workshops/windhoek.pdf

^{viii} Thematic topic guides: www.childcarenotes.org/downloads/workshops/maseru/topicguides/index.html (listed by theme)

^{ix} Next-step matrices: www.childcarenotes.org/downloads/workshops/maseru/matrices/index.html (listed by country)

^x Case studies: www.childcarenotes.org/downloads/workshops/maseru/casestudies/index.html (listed by theme and country)

^{xi} Technical presentations: www.childcarenotes.org/downloads/workshops/maseru/techpresent/index.html (listed by theme)

^{xii} Technical presentations: www.childcarenotes.org/downloads/workshops/maseru/techpresent/index.html (listed by theme)

^{xiii} Lessons learned: www.childcarenotes.org/downloads/workshops/maseru/lessonslearned.pdf

If you are unable to download or access any of the documents referenced above, contact Susan Mathew of Family Health International at smathew@fhi.org