

The effect of orphanhood on primary school attendance reconsidered: the power of female-headed households in Tanzania

Ulli S. Huber and William T.S. Gould

ABSTRACT

The common presumption that orphans are less likely to attend school than non-orphans is re-examined using survey data from two regions in Tanzania. It is argued that orphans should not be compared simply with non-orphans since there are other vulnerable groups of children. Further, with particular reference to place of residence, it is argued that orphans should not be viewed as a homogeneous group. In Tanzania both orphans and a second, sizable, also potentially vulnerable group of children - children who have not lost a parent, but who live with only one or neither of their parents ('children from disjointed families') - are less likely than other children to attend school in urban and roadside settlements but hardly so in rural areas. This is explained by most orphans and children from disjointed families residing in female-headed households, and by female-headed households struggling more in urban/roadside than in rural areas, because of the different histories of women's economic activity and different livelihood structures between those areas.

INTRODUCTION

Since the rise of studies of the impacts of HIV/AIDS, substantial attention has been drawn to the difficulties orphans face (e.g. Foster and Williamson, 2000; Guest, 2001; Mukyogo and Williams, 1991; UNAIDS, Unicef and USAID, 2002; Unicef, 1999a), fostering a public perception of orphans as a severely disadvantaged group.

A prominent sub-group of this literature examines the effect of HIV/AIDS on education. It argues that children in HIV/AIDS affected households are likely to drop out of school temporarily or permanently for one or more of the following reasons: having to care for sick relatives (Kelly, 2000), being stigmatised and bullied at school

(Ndamugoba et al., 2000; Unicef, 1999a), and having an increased domestic and productive work load to compensate for lost family labour (Kelly, 2000). In addition, the household may suffer from diminished resources and hence no longer be able to afford school related expenses (Cohen, 1999; Kelly, 2000; Mukyogo and Williams, 1991; Unicef, 1999a). A few studies have found empirical evidence to support this argument: e.g. Bicego et al. (in press) in five East and West African countries, Lloyd and Blanc (1996) in Kenya and Malawi, Mueller and Abbas (1990) in Uganda, Mukyogo and Williams (1991) in Tanzania, Ndamugoba et al. (2000) in Tanzania and Sengendo and Nambi (1997) in Uganda.

However, what is less well-known is that many recent studies of the relationship between orphanhood and education have found either a mix of negative and positive associations for different age and sex groups (e.g. Ainsworth et al., 2000 in Tanzania; Lloyd and Blanc, 1996 in seven sub-Saharan African countries; Urassa et al., 1997 in Tanzania), no association at all (e.g. Ainsworth et al., 2002 in Chad and South Africa; Katabaro, 1999 in Tanzania), or even a positive relationship, i.e. orphans being more likely to attend school (e.g. Ainsworth et al., 2002 in Nigeria and Tanzania; Kitonsa et al. 2000, in Uganda, cited in Ainsworth et al., 2000; Lloyd and Blanc, 1996 in Namibia and Tanzania).

These apparently anomalous findings have been generally explained by the continuing strength and ability of the extended family to absorb children whose parents have died (Ainsworth et al., 2000; Bicego et al., in press; Lloyd and Blanc, 1996; Kitonsa, 2000, cited in Ainsworth et al., 2000; Urassa et al., 1997). Urassa et al. (1997) remind us that adult mortality levels were high before the HIV/AIDS crisis, and child-fostering was common practice (whether the parents were alive or not), which is why support structures are today in place and functioning.

Tanzania is a country which stands out as a place where repeatedly researchers have not found a significant association between orphanhood and school attendance, or where they have even found a positive association.

Exploring authors' survey data from two regions in Tanzania, this paper aims to help to clarify, first, whether orphanhood really does not adversely affect primary school attendance in Tanzania; and second, it aims to explore the validity of the most commonly assumed explanation for the lack of association: strong extended family networks.

At the same time the paper aims to address what have become apparent as two major flaws in the orphanhood literature. First, studies have tended to compare the socio-economic well-being of orphans simply with that of non-orphans (e.g. Ainsworth et al., 2000; Bicego et al., in press; Katabaro, 1999; Lloyd and Blanc, 1996; Makame et al., 2002). This is ethically problematic, because the underlying assumption that orphans are the most vulnerable children disregards other children who may be equally disadvantaged. At the same time it can bring about a statistical conundrum: if there is a large number of disadvantaged non-orphans (as there may well be in populations in Africa and other developing continents), studies can come to the erroneous conclusion that orphans are doing well, simply because they have been compared with a large number of equally vulnerable children.

A few recent studies have started to voice the failure to focus on vulnerable non-orphans (e.g. Ainsworth et al., 2002; Foster, 2002; Unicef, 1999b; Urassa et al., 1997). For instance, Urassa et al. (1997) draw attention to the large number of poor children who are not orphans: in their analysis of the 1994-6 Kisesa Community Study (Mwanza Region of Tanzania), they find that amongst the 3253 children who lived in households classified as very poor, only 10 per cent were orphans. Moreover, in an analysis of the relationship between orphanhood and education, mainly through Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) data of twenty-eight countries from around the world, Ainsworth et al. (2002) find that poverty is a stronger determinant of a failure to go to school than orphanhood. In many countries orphans do not have a worse attendance record, and even when they do, 'in the majority of cases the size of the orphan enrollment gap is dwarfed by the gap in enrollment between children at the bottom and the top of the income distribution' (Ainsworth et al., 2002: 3).

In addition to poor children, a second group of children to which attention has been drawn as deserving equal concern to orphans are children whose parents are alive but who are living with only one or neither of them (Unicef, 1999b and Urassa et al., 1997 - both studying Tanzania). Unicef (1999b: 22) call these 'social orphans,' believing that (considering that most of these children reside with their mothers) '[t]he absence of a male breadwinner affects children equally, whether the man has died or abandoned his family.' Urassa et al. (1997), who call them 'foster children' and compare their school attendance with other children, have some evidence to support this view: at most ages for both boys and girls, they find enrolment rates to be similar between orphans, foster children and children living with both parents; however, among boys 13-17 years, orphans and foster children have significantly lower enrolment and higher dropout rates than boys living with both parents.

Lastly, a number of authors (e.g. Bicego et al., in press; Foster and Williamson, 2000) feel that HIV/AIDS has a knock-on effect, and that those non-orphans affected by HIV/AIDS need to be considered too. For instance children may experience a reduction in their quality of life because a substantial amount of their parents' time or resources is channelled to supporting a sick relative who lives elsewhere (Foster and Williamson, 2000).

A second common flaw in the literature is that orphans are treated as a homogeneous, disadvantaged group, overlooking that children of different age, gender, social status, ethnic group, place of residence, etc., will experience orphanhood in different ways.

These two problematic tendencies of the orphanhood literature (orphans having been depicted as the most vulnerable and homogeneous group) have led to some highly contentious policies which are targeted exclusively at orphans - and, what is more, often even only HIV/AIDS orphans. For instance in Benin it is AIDS orphans at whom support consisting of food security, clothes and free education is targeted (Smart, 2002).

To identify both all the most vulnerable children and all sub-groups of orphans who may experience orphanhood in different ways is a difficult task, which goes beyond the scope of the present study (see Smart, 2002). However, the analysis below will explore one further (assumed) vulnerable group of children and divide orphans (and other children) along one important characteristic.

The additional group of children scrutinized here are those children who live with only one or neither of their parents even though both parents are alive. Our suspicion that these might be as vulnerable as orphans (because they normally live in households of the same composition as orphans) has been confirmed by tentative findings by Unicef (1999b) and Urassa et al. (1997) (see above), and hence warrants further exploration, particularly since this group constitutes a very large proportion of children in Tanzania: making up 25 per cent of children in this study, 34.1 per cent of children in the Kisesa Study (Urassa et al., 1997) and 21 per cent in the Kagera Health and Development Survey 1991-4 (Ainsworth et al., 2000). Their large numbers are likely to be a result of large-scale internal mobility and migration, high levels of relationship break-up (Koda, 1995), and a tradition of child fostering (Urassa et al., 1997; Omari, 1995).

Here, neither Unicef's (1999b) term 'social orphans', nor the term used by Urassa et al. (1997), 'foster children', will be used to describe these children. The former term seems to imply an invariably disadvantaged life and the latter (though different in meaning in different parts of Africa) normally includes all children, including orphans, who are being looked after by people who are not their biological parents. Instead, the term 'children from disjointed families' will be used, which is designed to express the spatial separation of the child from at least one of his or her biological parents.

The main characteristic by which children are compared in this study are different geographical areas. In the survey children were sampled first from a region with, by Tanzanian standards, a particularly high antenatal HIV/AIDS prevalence rate, and a region with a particularly low prevalence rate, assuming that high levels of HIV/AIDS prevalence would erode the coping capacity of kinship networks (Baylies, 2002). Secondly, within each region, children were sampled from urban areas, roadside

settlements (on major roads at 30 to 60 km from the nearest town) and rural areas (within 8 to 30 km off major roads). This geographical differentiation assumes that the very different ways in which people earn their livelihoods in those three types of areas will have an influence on childcare.

Below, first, a background of levels of HIV/AIDS, orphanhood and primary school enrolment in Tanzania will be given and the data will be introduced. Then the relationship between orphanhood and school attendance will be explored (with particular reference to children from disjointed families and the geographical location of the households). It is found that both types of children who do not live with both their parents (i.e. orphans and children from disjointed families) are similarly disadvantaged in urban and roadside settlements, but hardly so in rural areas. The next two sections examine why this is the case. It is found that most of these potentially vulnerable children live in female-headed households, whose heads tend to be the sole contributors to the children's education. The final section explores why female-headed households appear to be coping better in rural areas than in urban and roadside settlements.

LEVELS OF HIV/AIDS, ORPHANHOOD AND SCHOOL ENROLMENT IN TANZANIA

Median HIV/AIDS prevalence from antenatal clinic attendees in Tanzania rose from an overall 3 per cent in 1987 (UNAIDS and Economic Commission for Africa, 2000) to a median of 15.5 per cent of the rural and 16.7 per cent of the urban female population (15-49 years of age) in 1999 (UNAIDS, Unicef and WHO, 2002). These rates are consistent with other rates in East Africa, which tend to lie between the relatively low West African and the very high South African rates.

High adult mortality due to high HIV/AIDS infection has led to increasing numbers of orphans. According to UNAIDS, Unicef and USAID (2002) the estimated number of orphans¹ in Tanzania nearly doubled from 1990 to 2001 from 1.1 million to 1.9 million. In 2001 42.3 per cent of orphans were estimated to be AIDS orphans; 5.7 per cent of Tanzanian children under the age of 15 were estimated to be maternal orphans, 8 per cent paternal orphans, and 1.8 per cent double orphans.²

Primary education in Tanzania is notionally compulsory, and children are expected to attend school from age 7 to age 13. Enrolment rates have undergone great fluctuations: they were low during the colonial period (e.g. in 1947 less than 10 per cent of the school age population was enrolled); rose to an impressive 93 per cent in 1980 as a result of Nyerere's strong drive for universal primary education (UPE) in the 1970s; fell steeply in the 1980s to a net enrolment rate of 47.3 per cent in 1988³ (Peasgood et al., 1997) (largely due to structural adjustment policies, which led to a cut in public spending and an increase in poverty), and have only recently started to recover, following the adoption of the 'Dakar Framework for Action, Education for All: Meeting Our Collective Commitments' which envisages primary education for all by 2015 (UNESCO, 2001). According to the Minister for Education and Culture, in December 2002 a net enrolment rate of 'up to 85 per cent' had been achieved (Integrated Regional Information Network, 18 December 2002).

DATA

The study was conducted from November 2001 to February 2002 in rural and urban Districts of Iringa and Dodoma Regions. These regions were selected since the 1999 mean prevalence rates for female and male blood donors were with 14.7 per cent and 14.4 per cent respectively for Iringa, and 5.0 per cent and 6.7 per cent for Dodoma, towards the opposite ends of the range of Tanzanian regional prevalence rates of

¹ The methods for estimation are reported in detail in Grassly and Timaeus (2002) and UNAIDS Reference Group (2002) (both cited in UNAIDS, Unicef and USAID 2002).

² UNAIDS defines maternal orphans as children under age 15 whose mothers, and perhaps fathers have died. Paternal orphans are children under age 15 whose fathers, and perhaps mothers, have died. Double orphans are children under age 15 whose mothers and fathers have both died.

³ This is an estimate derived from 1988 census data; the Ministry for Education and Culture figure for the same year was 55 per cent (Peasgood et al., 1997).

blood donors (Ministry of Health Tanzania Mainland, 1999).⁴ The large differences in prevalence rates between the two regions were supported by our data: in Iringa, 39 per cent of our sample children of ages 7-17 year were orphans, defined as children whose mother or father or both biological parents are dead, in contrast to ‘only’ 18 per cent in Dodoma.⁵ Data on the cause of death of everybody who had died in the households in the 5 years preceding the survey was collected from an adult in each sampled child's household. Of our total sample of children, 6.5 per cent had lost at least one parent to AIDS/TB in the five years preceding the survey, and a further 5.1 per cent had lost at least one parent to an illness with symptoms commonly experienced by HIV/AIDS sufferers.

However, there are two indicators which go against the hypothesis that high HIV/AIDS prevalence will erode community coping mechanisms and hence make it more difficult for children to go to school: first, at an aggregate scale, that the net enrolment rate in 2001 for Iringa (74 per cent) was much higher than that for Dodoma (56 per cent) (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2002). This is consistent with Ainsworth et al.'s (2000) finding that amongst six Sub-Saharan African countries the countries with higher HIV prevalence had higher enrolment rates (with the exception of Malawi). Secondly, a preliminary exploration of the data revealed that even though there were differences in factors influencing school attendance between the two regions, differences were much more pronounced between rural areas, roadside settlements and urban areas. Thus the analysis presented below concentrates on differences between the types of areas rather than between the regions.

In consultation with the District Education Offices six primary schools were selected in each region (two schools in each rural, roadside and urban area). To make possible an exploration of schooling of children from a range of socio-economic backgrounds, in urban areas data were collected from a particularly well performing school and a particularly badly performing school. Urban schools were selected with the help of recent school mapping reports which contain indicators ranging from the quality of

⁴ Prevalence rates of blood donors, rather than the conventional antenatal prevalence rates are compared here, because there are no recent antenatal prevalence estimates for Dodoma.

⁵ The levels of orphanhood in our sample population are much higher than the UNAIDS estimates quoted above, because firstly, some of the schools we sampled were in areas with particularly high HIV/AIDS prevalence; secondly, our rates are based on older children (7-17 years, rather than <15 years), who have lived longer and hence are more likely to have experienced the death of a parent; and thirdly because (as a result of our stratified sampling strategy) we are likely to have over-sampled the disadvantaged group of irregular attenders, amongst whose families the epidemic is likely to be more widespread.

the buildings, over the availability of teaching materials, to pass rates of students (Dodoma Municipal Council, 2000; Iringa Municipal Council, 2000).

A combination of quantitative and qualitative data was collected. However, the qualitative data - which were collected in the form of in-depth interviews with guardians and drawing-sessions with children - will be used only on the fringes of this analysis.

For the collection of the quantitative data, to enable a comparison between groups of children with different attendance statuses, a purposive sample was drawn, initially with the intention of interviewing equal numbers of regular attenders, irregular attenders, dropouts and never attenders. Definitions for attendance groups can be found in table 1.⁶ The sample was drawn from the same cohorts, Standards I to VI at schools in Iringa (in November at the end of the school year) and from Standards II to VII at schools in Dodoma (in January/February at the beginning of the next school year). Regular and irregular attenders were identified through attendance records, and dropouts and never attenders through snowball sampling.

Three or four questionnaires were completed for each household; first the selected children (hereafter called index children) were interviewed at school about their education experience; then they were accompanied home, where an adult from the child's household was administered a general questionnaire about the socio-economic characteristics of the household and a specific questionnaire about the education of the index child; lastly a second child from the household (referred to as 'sibling', even though it could be any eligible child from the household) was interviewed about his or her education experience. The sibling was chosen preferably but not necessarily to have a different attendance status to the index child to enable us to explore reasons for intra-household differences in school attendance. If there was no second eligible child in the household, no second child was interviewed. Each respondent was interviewed alone, without the presence of the other interviewees. To make the logistics feasible, interviewers targeted up to two households located in close walking distance from each other.

⁶ To get a more complete view of children's schooling ideally it would have been helpful to ask questions on children's attainment at school in addition to their attendance; however, in this study we felt that the respondents would have been overburdened with yet longer questionnaires.

In practice, since it was very difficult to find equal numbers of index children for the four groups, the sample had to be adjusted. Dropouts and never attenders were more difficult to find because many dropouts had migrated after dropping out, and families of never attenders were often reluctant for their children to be interviewed. The main adjustments made were to reduce target numbers of non-attenders and, in order to boost numbers of non-attenders, to count non-attenders who were siblings as index children (because the same data was collected on both).

The numbers of index children and siblings interviewed from each attendance group are shown in columns 1 and 2 of table 1. Column 3 shows the numbers of children in each attendance category used for the analysis below. In this column, in order to come as close as possible to equal proportions of regulars, irregulars and non-attenders, the numbers of problematic attenders are maximised. Also, to avoid bias which would arise because of double-counting of households, only one child per household is included. In the analysis presented here we are not examining intra-household differences.

Table 1 Children's sample

		1	2	3
	definitions	index children	siblings	children used for principal analysis
regular attenders	(missed ≤ 15 % of school days in 2 months preceding the survey)	186 (41.1%)	187 (61.3%)	169 (37.8%)
irregular attenders	(missed > 15 % of school days in 2 months preceding the survey)	146 (32.3%)	66 (21.7%)	135 (30.2%)
non-attenders:	currently not in school	120 (26.6%)	52 (17.0%)	143 (32.0%)
a) dropouts	<i>missed at least 2 months in a row</i>	74 (16.4%)	29 (9.5%)	84 (18.8%)
b) never attenders	<i>never attended school</i>	46 (10.2%)	23 (7.5%)	59 (13.2%)
total		452 (100.0%)	305 (100.0%)	447 (100.0%)

ORPHANHOOD AND SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

An initial exploration of the data led to findings similar to those of other studies conducted in Tanzania: a comparison of the school attendance of non-orphans and orphans did not yield significant differences.

However, differences emerged when children's school attendance was examined by their place of residence, and whether they lived with both parents, whether their family was disjointed, or whether they were orphans. Table 2 supports the claims put forward in the introduction, that orphans are neither a homogeneous group nor are they the only vulnerable group. The table shows that whether orphans are less likely to go to school depends strongly on their place of residence. Whereas in rural areas orphans are only very slightly over-represented amongst irregular attenders and never attenders, both in roadside settlements and in urban areas they are strongly over-represented amongst dropouts and never attenders. In roadside settlements orphans are significantly more likely never to have attended school, and in urban areas they are significantly more likely to have dropped out of school than children who live with both parents.

As anticipated, a group with similar attendance records to orphans are children from disjointed families. They also show no particular attendance problems in rural areas, but are significantly more likely than children who live with both their parents to be irregular attenders and never attenders in roadside settlements, and drop outs in urban areas. In urban areas, among dropouts, combining these two sets of children in one group increases the significance level of difference with children living with both their parents. Numbers are small, but clearly indicative.

Considering that these patterns only emerged when children from disjointed families were examined as a separate group, table 2 also supports the claim voiced in the introduction that not taking other vulnerable groups into account can obscure the disadvantaged situation of orphans.

Table 2 Primary school attendance by place of residence, parental living arrangement and parental survival status

		regular attender	irregular attender	drop out	never attender	total
rural	a) child living with both parents	34 52.3%	23 52.3%	6 54.5%	7 50.0%	70 52.2%
	b) child in disjointed family	15 23%	8 18.2%	2 18.2%	3 21.4%	28 20.8%
	c) orphan	16 23%	13 29.5%	3 27.3%	4 28.5%	36 26.8%
	b) and c)	31 47.7%	21 47.7%	5 45.5%	7 50%	64 47.8%
	<i>total rural</i>	<i>65</i> <i>100.0%</i>	<i>44</i> <i>100.0%</i>	<i>11</i> <i>100.0%</i>	<i>14</i> <i>100.0%</i>	<i>134</i> <i>100.0%</i>
roadside settlement	a) child living with both parents	31 63.3%	23 46.0%	11 37.9%	5 21.7%	70 46.4%
	b) child in disjointed family	5 10.2%*	13 26%*	6 20.7%	8 34.8%**	32 21.2%
	c) orphan	13 26.5%	14 28%	12 41.4%	10 43.5%**	49 32.5%
	b) and c)	18 36.7%♣	27 54%♣	18 62.1%	18 78.3%**	81 53.6%
	<i>total roadside settlement</i>	<i>49</i> <i>100.0%</i>	<i>50</i> <i>100.0%</i>	<i>29</i> <i>100.0%</i>	<i>23</i> <i>100.0%</i>	<i>151</i> <i>100.0%</i>
urban	a) child living with both parents	25 52.1%	17 44.7%	11 26.2%	6 31.6%	59 40.1%
	b) child in disjointed family	11 22.9%	13 34.2%	17 40.5%*	7 36.8%	48 32.7%
	c) orphan	12 25%	8 21%	14 33.3%*	6 31.6%	40 27.2%
	b) and c)	23 47.9%	21 55.3%	31 73.8%**	13 68.4%	88 59.9%
	<i>total urban</i>	<i>48</i> <i>100.0%</i>	<i>38</i> <i>100.0%</i>	<i>42</i> <i>100.0%</i>	<i>19</i> <i>100.0%</i>	<i>147</i> <i>100.0%</i>

Notes:

- ♣, * and ** means significantly different from reference group (child living with both parents) at the 0.08, 0.05 and 0.01 levels respectively.
- In the chi-square tests regular attenders were compared with irregular attenders, and drop outs and never-attenders with attenders.

That orphans and children from disjointed families are struggling with their education in roadside settlements and urban areas but not in rural areas is initially surprising, since in the country as a whole (as in most other countries) urban school enrolment rates are much higher (and increasingly so) than rural ones (Al-Samarrai and Reilly, 2000).

The next two sections will explore the reasons behind the pattern that table 2 describes: first, by examining who these children live with and who supports their education, and secondly by searching for the roots of rural and urban/roadside differences.

WHO DO ORPHANS AND CHILDREN FROM DISJOINTED FAMILIES LIVE WITH, AND WHO SUPPORTS THEIR SCHOOLING?

As stated above, an argument which has repeatedly been brought forward to explain why orphans may not be more vulnerable than other children is the strength of the extended family. This line of reasoning, in addition to the familiar claim that rural areas are the stronghold of extended families and that extended families structures are being eroded in urban areas (e.g. Koda, 1995; Montgomery and Kouame, 1993 - cited in Lloyd and Blanc, 1996; Foster and Williamson, 2000), could be used to explain the above findings.

However, this explanation does not appear to hold true for this sample. Table 3 shows that the largest proportion, around 40 per cent of orphans and of children from disjointed families, live in households headed by their mothers rather than by members of their extended families. Table 3 also shows that around 30 to 40 per cent of these mothers are the only adults above the age of 18 years in the household - suggesting that they manage the household on their own (probably with help from their children). Moreover, table 4a and 4b indicate that few of them are receiving outside help for their children's education. The average number of contributors to a child's education is just above one.

Table 3 Household headship by parents' survival and living status and children's place of residence (%)

heads of household:	living with both parents			living in disjointed family			orphans			both parents dead			all orphans	
	rural	urban and roadside		rural	urban and roadside		rural	urban and roadside		rural	urban and roadside		rural	urban and roadside
mother	0	3.1		50	39.0		68.3	67.3		0	0		41.7	39.4
father	97.2	96.9		7.1	15.6		0	0		75.0	41.2		8.3	10.1
aunt	0	0		3.6	5.0		4.5	9.6		0	0		2.8	10.1
uncle	1.4	0		3.6	3.8		0	1.9		0	11.8		2.8	11.2
grandmother	1.4	0		14.3	11.6		18.2	3.9		0	29.4		24.9	11.2
grandfather	0	0		3.7	7.8		4.5	3.9		25.0	5.8		5.6	5.6
child's generation	0	0		10.7	7.8		0	0		0	11.8		8.3	6.8
other head	0	0		7.1	9.1		4.5	13.4		0	0		5.6	5.6
household composition:														
only 1 person	0	0		42.9	36.3		40.9	32.7		25.0	23.5		38.9	23.6
age 18+ in hh														
N	70	129		28	77		22	52		4	17		36	89
	(100.0%)	(100.0%)		(100.0%)	(100.0%)		(100.0%)	(100.0%)		(100.0%)	(100.0%)		(100.0%)	(100.0%)

Notes:

1. In contrast to the UNAIDS definition of paternal, maternal and double orphans cited in footnote 2, here categories of orphans do not overlap, i.e. a child in the category of having lost a father has not lost a mother, and a child in the category of having lost a mother has not lost a father.

2. 'Head of household: 'child's generation' refers to households headed by the child him-or herself, a sibling, or a brother-or sister-in-law of the child.

Table 4a Who contributes to children's schooling (rural areas) (%)?

contributors to children's education	child living with two parents		orphans and children from disjointed families									
	head		head									
	father	other	father	mother	aunt	uncle	stepparent or employer	g'mother	g'father	child's generation		
mother	53.6	33.3	27.8	85.4		50	83.3	9.1	20	14.3		
father	90.7	0	72.8	9.8	0	0	0	0	0	14.3		
stepmother	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
stepfather	0	0	0	0	0	0	16.7	0	0	0		
aunt	0	33.3	0	0	50	50	0	0	0	14.3		
uncle	1.0	33.3	0	4.9	0	50	0	0	0	0		
grandmother	0	33.3	0	4.9	0	0	0	90.9	40	0		
grandfather	2.1	0	0	2.4	0	0	16.7	0	0	0		
sister	3.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	42.9		
brother	4.1	0	0	4.9	0	0	0	0	0	0		
brother-in-law	0	0	0	4.9	0	0	0	0	0	42.9		
child	1	0	9.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
loan	0	0	0	4.9	0	0	0	0	0	0		
mean number of contributors (std. dev.)	1.4 (0.829)	-	1.0 (0.426)	1.12 (0.448)	-	-	1.67 (0.816)	1.08 (0.641)	1.0 (0.632)	1.29 (0.756)		
N	97	3	11	41	2	2	6	11	5	7		

Note:

1. This question was given only to guardians of children who attended school for the whole of the previous year. The respondents were asked whether each of a long list of relatives had contributed to the child's education; they were also given the opportunity to mention people/institutions not listed by the interviewer.

Table 4b Who contributes to children's schooling (urban and roadside settlements) (%)?

contributors to children's education	child living with two parents		orphans and children from disjointed families						
	head father	mother	head father	mother	aunt	uncle	g'mother	g'father	child's generation
mother	43.6	100	66.7	86.70	0	7.7	0	0	100
father	89.7	100	66.7	26.7	0	15.4	50	0	100
aunt	0	0	0	6.7	38.5	38.5	33.3	0	0
uncle	5.1	0	33.3	6.7	7.7	38.5	16.7	0	0
grandmother	2.6	0	33.3	6.7	7.7	0	66.7	0	0
grandfather	2.6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
sister	0	0	0	6.7	0	0	0	0	100
brother	0	0	0	6.7	0	0	16.7	0	0
mean number of contributors (std. dev.)	1.38 (0.667)	-	1.5 (1.732)	1.24 (0.752)	0.54 (0.78)	1.0 (0.82)	1.67 (1.003)	1.33 (0.516)	-
N	39	1	3	15	13	13	6	6	1

Note:

1. See note 1 of table 4a.

The second most important group of heads of household who care for orphans and children from disjointed families are indeed members of the extended family, namely grandmothers and aunts. Together they look after 20 to 30 per cent of orphans and around 17 per cent of children from disjointed families. However, rather than the image that the word 'extended family' conjures (namely one of large supportive families, with the members looking after each other) just like the mothers, most of the grandmothers tend to be the only adults in their households (table 3) and both grandmothers and aunts tend to receive no help for the schooling of the children from other people (table 4a and 4b). Grandmothers play a larger role than aunts.

The only other two noteworthy categories of heads who look after these children are fathers and uncles. If mothers die, fathers are disproportionately most likely to take on their children. However, because there are many fewer maternal than paternal orphans in Tanzania, in our survey in total only 10 per cent of orphans lived in households headed by their fathers. It is likely that more children lose their fathers than their mothers because of large age differences between husbands and wives and overall higher male adult mortality rates (Ainsworth et al., 2002; Lloyd and Blanc, 1996). Uncles come into the picture particularly in urban areas when both parents have died. Similar to fathers, overall they are head of household to around 10 per cent of orphans. Children from disjointed families live in father and uncle-headed households only in 10 and 4 per cent of cases respectively.

Not only are there not many men who head households with orphans and children from disjointed households, but also men in this position are much more likely to be helped by the mothers of the children, or their wives, in paying for the children's education, than women in the same circumstances are helped by men. In rural areas 27.8 per cent of fathers who live with their child without the corresponding mother get a contribution from the latter; whereas only 9.8 per cent of mothers in the same position receive help from the men. Similarly, even though numbers are small, tables 4a and 4b indicate that uncles heading households with orphans or children from disjointed families tend to get support for the children's education from a variety of sources, in particular their wives, whereas aunts tend to cope on their own.

The data offer no evidence that the extended family is more supportive in rural than in urban and roadside areas. The proportion of children looked after in households headed by members of the extended family is, at around 35 per cent, similar in both areas. Also, the mean number of people (generally just one!) who contribute to a child's education are similar; they even tend to be slightly higher in urban and roadside areas. Amongst extended families, in rural areas grandmothers are most important in taking on vulnerable children; in urban areas it is aunts and uncles.

To sum up, the credit for looking after orphans and children from disjointed families should go to female-headed households, particularly mothers, but also grandmothers and aunts (who together looked after 60 to 70 per cent of these children in our survey) rather than a generally 'strong extended family'.⁷

CHILDREN'S EDUCATION IN RURAL, URBAN AND ROADSIDE FEMALE-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS

The fact that the majority of orphans and children from disjointed families are looked after by female-headed households is rooted in women's traditional role as nurturers, reinforced by Tanzanian law which generally grants women custody of children under the age of 7 (Tanzania Gender Networking Programme (TGNP) et al., 1997). It is also rooted in women having a greater incentive to look after their children because of their tending to be more dependent than men on their offspring in later years. This is particularly so in polygynous households, where older men may be looked after by younger wives (Fapohunda and Tobaró, 1988 - cited in Lloyd and Blanc, 1996). According to the 1996 DHS, 15 per cent of Tanzanian married men aged 15-59 years were in a polygynous union (Bureau of Statistics Tanzania and Macro International Inc., 1997).

⁷ This proportion is higher than that recorded in other surveys. However, for instance the percentage of orphans looked after by female-headed households found by Bicego et al. (in press) in an analysis of the 1999 Tanzanian DHS is, at 36.1, still substantial. The proportion in our survey is likely to be higher, because according to the 2000/1 Tanzanian Household Budget Survey both Iringa's (31 per cent) and Dodoma's (27 per cent) overall proportions of female-headed households lie above the country's average of 23 per cent. Bicego et al's (in press) figure may also be lower than ours because it does not include children from disjointed families.

But why is it that in the present study female heads of household have been shown to enable children to attend school (i.e. they fulfil their traditional role as child carers) in rural areas, but much less so in urban and roadside settlements?

Most female-headed households have formerly been male-headed. With 21.4 per cent of all household heads, widows nationally constitute the largest proportion of female heads of household, followed by divorced and separated women (13.7 per cent of all household heads); single women (9.3 per cent) constitute the smallest proportion of female heads (Bureau of Statistics, 1994 and Population Census National Profile, 1988 - cited in TGNP et al. 1997). These now female heads of household are unlikely to have had much control over finances when they were still living with a male partner, since there is substantial evidence both from rural and urban areas that when women and men live together it is mostly men who control the household budgets (Campbell et al., 1995; Chachage, 1990 - cited in Campbell, 1995; TGNP et al., 1997).

A combination of women tending to take responsibility for caring for their children, and their spending power being restricted by their husbands suggests that, when they lose their husbands, there is potential for them to care better for their children than before. This has been found by a number of authors in studies from around the world (e.g. Bledsoe, 1976,1980, and Dinan, 1983 in West Africa - cited in Meeker and Meekers, 1997; Chant, 1985 in Mexican shanty towns - cited in Creighton and Omari, 1995). The strength of female-headed households being directly reflected in children's school attendance in Africa has been found by Ainsworth et al. (2000) and Lloyd and Gage-Brandon (1994) in their respective studies in Tanzania and Ghana: they observed that children in female-headed households were more likely to enrol in school than children in male-headed households. Similarly Lloyd and Blanc (1996) found that in seven Sub-Saharan African countries (including Tanzania), after controlling for all other variables including the socio-economic status of the household, children in female-headed households were consistently more likely to be enrolled in school and to have completed grade four than children living in households headed by men.

Whereas Lloyd and Blanc (1996) find that female heads of household disproportionately send their children to school despite their socio-economic disadvantage, in the present study the ability of female heads of household to send their children to school appears to be closely linked to their socio-economic status.

Just as was shown above that orphans and children from disjointed families have problems with their school attendance in urban and roadside settlements but hardly in rural areas, female-headed households in urban and roadside settlements are found to be more vulnerable socio-economically than female-headed households in rural areas (Table 5). In rural areas there are relatively small and not significant differences between female and male-headed households in the proportions with a low quality of dwelling (as recorded by the interviewers) and with serious economic problems (as stated by an adult interviewee). In contrast in urban and roadside areas female-headed households are significantly more likely to have reported serious economic problems than male-headed households, and figures for the quality of dwelling (even if not significant) point in the same direction.

Table 5 Quality of dwelling and serious economic problems by gender of head and place of residence

		low score for dwelling			serious economic problems		
		female head	male head	total	female head	male head	total
rural	yes	79.2%	69.0%	72.7%	65.4%	62.6%	63.6%
	total	48	84	132	52	91	143
roadside	yes	79.2%	66.3%	70.6%	82.4%*	64.6%	70.7%
	total	48	95	143	51	99	150
urban	yes	17.3%	7.4%	11.3%	61.0%*	42.9%	50.3%
	total	52	81	133	59	84	143

Note:

1. * means that the proportion for female headship is significantly higher than that for male headship at the **0.05 level** (chi-square test, Pearson's r).

Considering that an estimated 78 per cent of the Tanzanian population continues to reside in rural areas (Population Reference Bureau, 2002), the finding that in rural areas female-headed households do not lag far behind male-headed households is in turn supported by national data from the 2000/1 Household Budget Survey (HBS): the proportions of male-and female-headed households experiencing poverty are very similar: 35.8 and 35.3 per cent respectively (National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), 2002). However, it is at odds with the generally accepted view that female-headed

households overall (e.g. Lloyd and Blanc, 1996) and in Tanzania in particular (Creighton and Omari, 1995; Mbuguhuni, 1994 - cited in Tungaraza, 1995) are socio-economically disadvantaged.

There are two broad reasons why in Tanzania female heads of household may be worse off socio-economically in urban and roadside settlements than in rural areas and therefore struggle more to send their children to school. First, the history of urban women being engaged in income generating activities is shorter and more problematic than for rural women, and consequently relatively few women are involved in paid work today and under more difficult conditions than in rural areas.

During the colonial period, it was mainly men who migrated to urban areas for work, leaving their wives and children behind (Tungaraza, 1995). However soon after independence, women started being able to settle in urban areas with their husbands because the preceding 'bachelor wage' policy was replaced by a more generous 'minimum wage' policy (Bryceson, 1995). In the early 1970s most adult urban female migrants were housewives: only 13 per cent were in wage work, compared with 73 per cent of migrant males (Sabot, 1979 - cited in Campbell, 1995). However, the economic crisis of the 1980s, with its steep decline in real wages made it imperative for many women to seek paid work (Tripp, 1992, 1994). According to Tripp (1994) even with a rise in minimum pay, real wages fell by 83 per cent from 1974 to 1988. Households increased their incomes first, by women (as well as children and the elderly) starting miradi (small income-generating projects), such as food and beer producing and vending, chicken raising and selling, hair braiding, tailoring and selling second hand clothes (Rutashobya, 1995; Tripp, 1992); second, by establishing an urban or peri-urban shamba (farm) (Campbell, 1995; Maliyamkono and Bagachwa, 1990; Tripp, 1992, 1994). Consequently at the time of the 1991 National Informal Sector Survey (NISS), women made up 44.1 per cent of the urban informal sector workforce – and this sector provided employment to 56 per cent of the urban population (TGNP et al., 1997). Around the same time incomes from informal activities contributed as much as 90 per cent to the earnings of many urban households (Mbuguhuni, 1994 - cited in Koda, 1995; Tripp, 1992).

Although this increased contribution to household earnings has according to Tripp (1997) substantially improved women's decision-making power and independence, urban women's presence in income generating activities continues to be much less strong than that of men: according to the HBS in 2000/1 still 38 per cent of women in Dar es Salaam and 20.1 per cent of women in other urban areas were housewives with no economic activity (NBS, 2002). Furthermore, despite equal pay for equal work being enshrined in the Tanzanian constitution (TGNP et al., 1997), women's wages both in the formal sector (National Bureau of Statistics Tanzania, 2002) and in the informal sector (TGNP et al., 1997) continue to be less than half that of male earners. Women tend to be discriminated against when trying to enter the formal sector (Shields, 1980 and Mukarasi, 1986 - both cited in Bryceson, 1995; Tripp 1994, 1997); and in the informal sector their efforts in running their own businesses are fraught with difficulties, amongst other things because of a lack of education, managerial skills, capital, credit facilities and time, as well as licensing and tax disincentives and unco-operative husbands (Creighton and Omari, 1995; Rutashobya, 1995; TGNP et al., 1997; Tripp, 1989, 1994).

In contrast, in rural areas, Tanzanian women have a long history of being the principal workers, not only in their home villages, but during the colonial period also as enslaved plantation workers (Bryceson, 1995). Nyerere stated that:

'the truth is that in the villages, the women ... [a]t times ... work for twelve or fourteen hours per day. They even work on Sundays and public holidays. Women who live in the villages work harder than anybody else in Tanzania. But the men who live in villages ... are on leave for half their lives.' (Nyerere, 1968: 244-5 - cited in Caplan, 1995: 118)

While the 2000/1 HBS survey shows that roughly equal proportions (75 per cent of men and women) in rural areas are engaged in farm work (NBS, 2002), a study by the Ministry of Community Development in 1986 (cited in International Labour Office (ILO), 1996) revealed that women worked an average of 2600 hours in farming a year, in contrast to only 1800 hours worked by men. Today, the general pattern is for households to grow both subsistence and cash crops, and for women to be entirely

responsible for farming (and processing) the former, while jointly farming the latter with their husbands (TGNP et al., 1997).

In addition, parallel (if on a smaller scale) to the developments in urban areas, a greater need for cash in rural areas since the crisis in the 1980s has also led to a diversification of rural income sources, mainly in the form of an increase both in the production of cash crops and of off-farm employment. For women an increase in beer brewing and casual labour on other people's farms have been particularly noted (TGNP et al., 1997). According to the NISS (cited in TGNP et al., 1997) in 1991 15 per cent of the rural population was engaged in the informal sector (TGNP et al., 1997) and women made up 30.6 per cent of the labour force of the sector.

A second reason for female-headed households to struggle more outside of rural areas is illustrated with data from the 2000/1 HBS in table 6: to sustain an urban household requires much higher cash expenditures than to keep up a rural household. Whereas most rural households own land, a dwelling, livestock and poultry and grow a large proportion of the food they consume themselves, most urban households do neither own productive assets nor a dwelling, and a large proportion of their consumption expenditure is on food. In urban households education also takes up a higher proportion of the consumption expenditure than in rural areas. In the present survey, the mean total costs of schooling per child⁸ for the year 2001 were with 16,046/- Tanzanian Shillings (TSh), significantly higher in urban areas than in rural areas and roadside settlements (6369/- TSh). Hence it is not surprising that in the HBS 42.2 per cent of households in Dar es Salaam gave high education costs as a reason for children's non-attendance in contrast to only 9.6 per cent of rural households.

Unfortunately, there is no national data for roadside settlements. However the in-depth interviews held as part of the present study indicated that people's livelihoods in roadside settlements resembled those in urban areas more than those in rural areas: many households did not own farms, many lived in rented accommodation, and, being situated next to major roads, there was a greater exposure to, and hence greater temptation, to purchase consumer goods.

⁸ The costs of schooling primarily include money spend on school fees, contributions to building or development funds of the schools, exam fees, and the costs of uniforms and stationary. The fact that from the year 2002 school fees have been abandoned will have substantially lowered schooling costs.

Table 6 Expenditures in urban and rural areas

	Dar es Salaam	other urban	rural	mainland Tanzania
% of households owning dwelling or not paying rent	36	58.3	96.8	87
% of households owning productive assets:				
land/fields	16.9	46.9	89.4	78.1
livestock	2.9	14.1	44.5	37.1
poultry	6.4	26.7	64.5	54.9
mean % share of households' consumption expenditure				
food purchased	52.2	52.8	35.2	38.6
food not purchased	2.1	7.9	31.8	26.8
education expenditure	4.0	3	1.6	2.0

Note:

1. The proportion of households not paying rent is generally small; with 4.1 per cent it is highest in 'other urban areas'.

Source:

Extracted from a number of tables of the HBS 2000/1 Final Report (NBS, 2002: 17, 61, 71).

It is easier to earn the substantial income required to sustain an urban household when many household members contribute. A number of authors have found that since the economic crisis, the need for more cash has meant that in urban areas involving as many household members as possible in economic activity has become a crucial strategy (Creighton and Omari, 1995). This is why urban female-headed households who in many cases include only one adult (see table 3) are at a great disadvantage (Campbell, 1995): not just in terms of it being difficult for one individual to have many income sources, but also because the survival strategy of establishing a shamba is a less feasible option, because shambas tend to be out of town, and at least one adult normally has to start living there (Campbell, 1995).

In contrast, as Bryceson (1995: 47-8) puts it, the nature of Tanzania's agriculture, most of which rests on hoe cultivation,⁹ means that 'the work process, although facilitated by collective effort, can be readily pursued by single individuals ... [and t]echnically there is nothing stopping women from controlling their own production.' Hence rural households with only one female adult are not necessarily at a disadvantage.

⁹ Only 10 and 6 per cent of Tanzania's cultivated land area are worked by animal power and mechanical power respectively (TGNP et al., 1997).

The 2000/1 HBS gives further evidence that - contrary to popular perception - rural African households do not need to be large to be viable. Small households in Tanzania (many of which will be female-headed) are in fact less likely to be poor and make up a smaller proportion of poor households. Only 11 per cent of households with two members fall below the basic needs poverty line, making up a mere 1 per cent of poor households; whereas 57 per cent of households with ten members or more fall below the poverty line, and they constitute 28 per cent of poor households (table 7). Unfortunately this data is not available broken down by geographical area. However, considering again, that most of the population resides in rural areas, these proportions are likely to represent the state of rural rather than urban households.

Table 7 Distribution of poverty by household size 2000/1 (per cent)

number of household members	headcount ratio	% of poor
1	4.7	0.2
2	11	1.3
3	15.8	4.3
4	21.4	7.6
5	28.1	10.9
6	35.2	13.6
7	46.1	15.5
8	44.8	10.5
9	48.3	8.1
10 or more	56.8	27.9
total	35.7	100

Note:

1. 'Headcount ratio' means per cent of individuals in each category who are poor according to the basic needs poverty line.

Source:

Extracted from table 8.1 of the HBS 2000/1 Final Report (NBS, 2002: 89).

On the other hand it could be argued that the life of rural women after having lost their husbands is not as rosy as painted here, because patriarchal inheritance laws (Tripp, 1994) - though legally banned since the late 1960s (TGNP et al., 1997) - are in many cases still in force, and mean that women can lose their land to their husband's family after his departure or death. It is not the intention here to make problems of land inheritance seem insignificant. However there are indications that the situation is improving: for instance in a 1996 study carried out in Bukoba 34 of the 100 women sampled stated that they had ownership rights to the land they were farming (TGNP et al., 1997). Also, amongst the 20 in-depth interviews with female heads of households conducted as part of the present study, only one lost her land and has now no land to

farm. Further, the woman who did lose her land did so not because it was taken by her husband's family, but because of a dispute with a neighbour, as a consequence of which her husband left the family and later died. Amongst the women we interviewed the norm was for them to either keep their land, or to receive a plot of land from their parents. We also found a number of women who moved from urban to rural areas because they felt it would be easier to make a living in the latter. It is important to note that in Tanzania, in general, there is no land shortage.

Of course, whether a child goes to school is not solely dependent on the gender of the head of household and the head of household's ease in making a living. It will also depend on the cost of schooling, the access to schooling, the quality of schooling, children's and their guardian's perception of the usefulness of schooling, the parents' education, the importance given to other activities the children might have to perform, etc. However, the above analysis does indicate that headship is an important issue for school attendance, and that the ability of female-headed households to cope economically and to send children to school differs strongly between urban/roadside and rural locations in Tanzania.

CONCLUSION

The study gives strength to other recent voices which hold that it is unhelpful to single orphans out as the most vulnerable group of children. Some orphans are well off, and there are other groups of children who can also be vulnerable. Policies targeted exclusively at orphans, and maybe even solely at HIV/AIDS orphans, run the risk of failing other children in need. This is however not to deny that orphans are a group of children with certain particular needs. It is for instance indisputable that the death of parents (often preceded by prolonged periods of severe illness) is likely to trigger psychological problems (e.g. Makame et al., 2002; Mukyogo and Williams, 1991; Sengendo and Nambi, 1997; Unicef, 1999b). A group of children to whom the study draws attention in addition to orphans are children whose parents are both alive, but who live with only one or neither of them: 'children from disjointed families'. They make up a quarter to a third of Tanzanian children and have in common with orphans

that they do not live with both of their parents, which can put them in an equally vulnerable position.

A further issue for opinion shapers and policy makers arising from the evidence presented here is that it is important not to view orphans as a homogeneous group. One of the many characteristics by which orphans' (and other children's) experiences differ in Tanzania is their place of residence. Geographical location is shown to be an important factor in whether orphans and children from disjointed families attend primary school. These children are shown to display worse school attendance than children living with both their parents in urban and roadside settlements, but hardly so in rural areas.

The data show that - contrary to popular perception - most orphans and children from disjointed families are looked after not by the much invoked 'extended family', but by their lone mothers or single female elders (in particular aunts and grandmothers) who tend not to get any support from other people in educating the children in their care. Hence children's differential school attendance in urban/roadside and rural areas is explained to a degree by the extent to which female-headed households are able to cope in those areas. Most female heads of household were formerly living with their husbands, who tend to restrict their financial decision-making powers. When they lose their husbands, women in rural areas tend to cope relatively well and may be able to spend more on their children because rural women have a long history of being the principal farm workers, and have in addition since the 1980s diversified into off-farm employment. This challenges the widely held view that female-headed households are invariably disadvantaged. In contrast, urban women fit better with this stereotype. They only started being engaged in income earning activities on a larger scale in the 1980s and many of them continue to be exclusively housewives. They tend to be discriminated against in entering the formal sector and consequently tend to be dependent on insecure informal income earning activities. In addition the costs of living are much higher in urban than in rural areas, and to sustain a comfortable livelihood in urban areas needs almost certainly numerous income earners (which female-headed household are not likely to have). In contrast in rural areas, the predominance of hoe cultivation means that collective effort helps, but a farm can be

run by one person - woman or man. This last finding throws doubts on the commonly held view that African households need to be large to thrive.

The most important message of the paper is that in Tanzania there is no sign of the generally assumed universal, negative effect of HIV/AIDS and orphanhood on primary school attendance. In this context the school attendance to be most concerned about is only that of orphans and children in disjointed families in urban and roadside settlements. Since these children mainly live in female-headed households their school attendance rates will only increase if women 's employment opportunities and working conditions are improved.

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