



GETTING STARTED!

RUNNING A JUNIOR FARMER FIELD AND LIFE SCHOOL





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**Empowering
orphans
and vulnerable
children
living in a world
with HIV and AIDS**





Foreword

In 2006, an estimated total of 39.5 million people were living with HIV/AIDS, out of which 37.2 million were adults and 2.3 million were children under 15 years. Sub-Saharan Africa is the most affected region and home to more than 60 percent of all people living with HIV. An estimated 2.8 million people in the region became newly infected in 2006. During the same period 2.1 million adults and children died of AIDS, representing 72 percent of global AIDS deaths.¹

Among its many devastating impacts, the pandemic has made millions of children orphans or vulnerable. The most impacted region is sub-Saharan Africa, where in 2003 43 million children between 0-17 years were either single or double parent orphans. An estimated 28 percent of these children, or 12.3 million, were orphans resulting from the pandemic. Further, it is predicted that the number of orphans will rise over the next decade as parents living with HIV become sick and die from AIDS.² A large majority of orphans are living with a surviving parent or are taken care of by their extended family. For many reasons, children orphaned by AIDS are more likely than other orphans to be at risk from malnutrition, disease, abuse, stigmatization and sexual exploitation. The risk of sexual exploitation is particularly significant for those left alone to cope with poverty and who are forced to adopt adult roles and ensure food for the rest of the family. As parents and family members become ill, children take on greater domestic, agricultural and income generating responsibilities. HIV/AIDS has a particular impact on girls who are left to care for ailing parents, or who have to become the heads of households upon the death of caregivers. Also, as many parents are dying at a young age orphaned children are growing up without the necessary knowledge and skills for their future livelihood.

Orphaning is not the only way in which HIV/AIDS affects children. Other children who are vulnerable because of the epidemic include children whose parents are so ill they no longer are able to care for them. The World Bank estimates around 5 million children have been socially orphaned by HIV/AIDS.³ Equally, HIV/AIDS is not the only cause of children's vulnerability: other factors include extreme poverty, exploitation and conflict. According to United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCR), 4.6 million people were refugees and 5.8 million internally displaced in sub-Saharan Africa in 2003. More than half of these refugees and internally displaced people are children. Further, the International Labour Organization estimates 600,000 African children are engaged in the so-called "worst forms" of child labour like trafficking, slavery, bonded labour, prostitution, pornography, soldiering and illicit activities. These numbers exclude the many children working in risky labour situations such as children working in mines and quarries, in commercial agriculture involving the use of agrochemicals and machetes, and children working as domestic servants.

¹ UNAIDS/WHO. 2006. *AIDS Epidemic Update: December 2006*. Geneva, Switzerland, UNAIDS

² UNAIDS/UNICEF/USAID. 2004. *Children on the Brink 2004: A Joint Report of New Orphan Estimates and a Framework for Action*. Washington, DC, USAID

³ World Bank. 2005. *OVC Toolkit for SSA*. Washington, DC, World Bank

In response to the growing number of orphans and vulnerable children, the Gender, Equity and Rural Employment Division (ESW) of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), in close collaboration with the World Food Programme (WFP), has supported the development and implementation of Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools (JFFLS) in various countries of East and Southern Africa over the past several years. In the process, information and training materials have been developed, and reports produced. This JFFLS Getting Started! manual is the culmination of experiences of many individuals, communities, and organizations in Kenya, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, and is the result of a significant commitment by numerous organizations and individuals over the past few years.

The core team of writers includes Esther Wiegers, Catherine Hill, and Patricia Colbert. Other individuals contributed substantially to the chapters, case studies and annexes. These include: Carol Djeddah, Una Murray, Mary Njoroge, Brian Griffin, Michele Tarsilla, Valérie Ceylon, Mundie Salm, Jaap van de Pol, Edwin Adenya, Dave Masendeke, and Naoko Mizuno.

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Special thanks are given to John Hourihan who has been a driving force in the JFFLS programme.

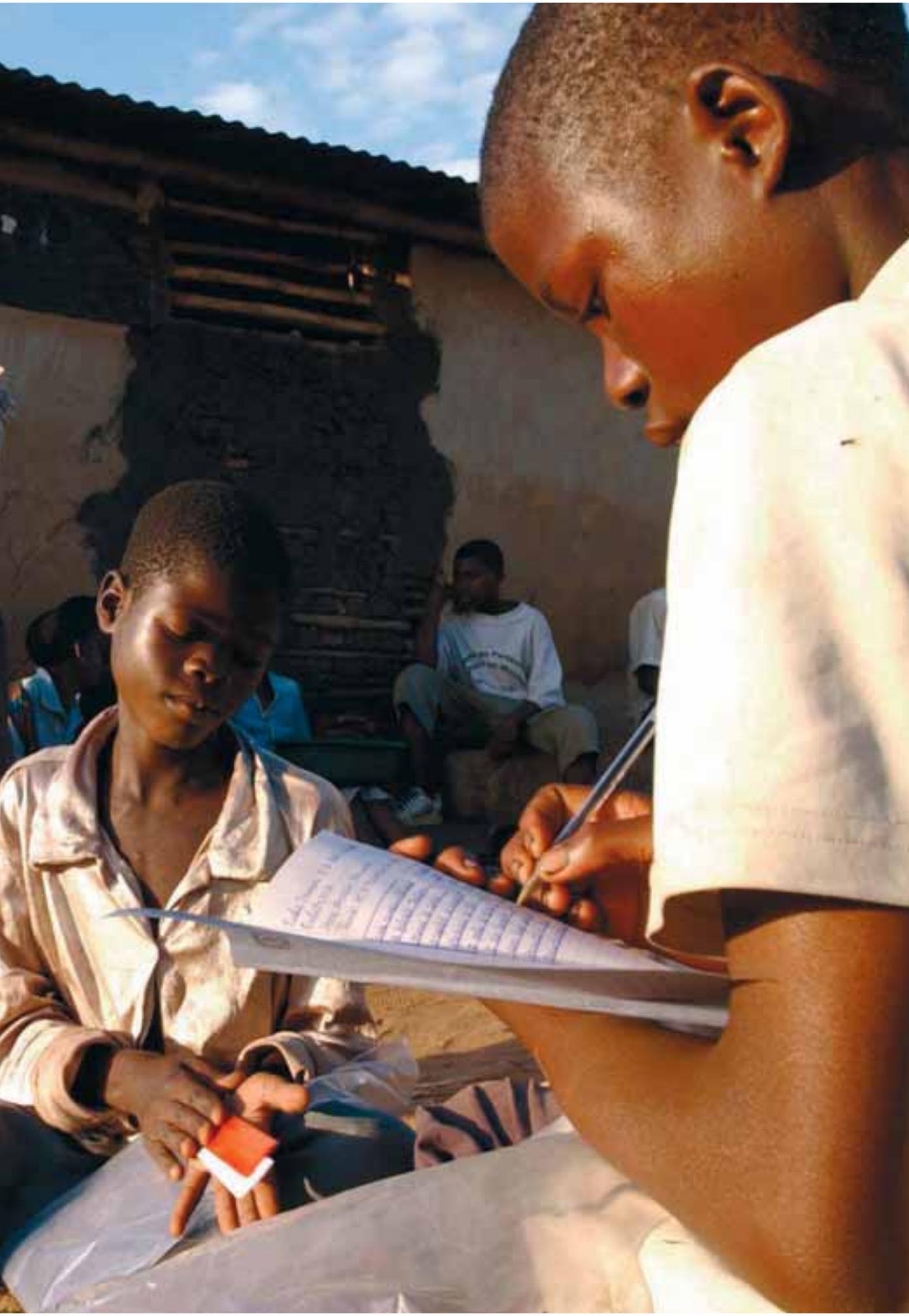
Above all, tribute is paid to the boys and girls, facilitators, parents and guardians, resource people and communities where JFFLS have been implemented to date. It is with the participation of all these people that the experiences and lessons of the JFFLS have been learned and documented here, and from which others can learn and develop their own schools.

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Acronyms

ART	Anti-retroviral therapy
ACT	African Conservation Tillage Network
AESA	Agro-ecosystem analysis
AIDS	Acquired immune deficiency syndrome
CABA	Child(ren) affected by AIDS
CBO	Community-based organization
ESW	Gender, Equity and Rural Employment Division, Fao
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FBO	Faith-based organization
FFS	Farmer Field School(s)
FFLS	Farmer Field and Life School(s)
FLS	Farmer Life School(s)
HIV	human immunodeficiency virus
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
IIRR	International Institute of Rural Reconstruction
ILO	International Labour Organization
IPEC	International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour
IPM	Integrated pest management
JFFLS	Junior Farmer Field and Life School(s)
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OVC	Orphans and vulnerable children
PM&E	Participatory monitoring and evaluation
PRCA	Participatory rural communication appraisal
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PTA	Parent–teacher association
RAAAP	Rapid assessment, analysis and action planning
SMART	Specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound
SPICED	Subjective, participatory, interpretable, cross-checked, empowering and disaggregated by gender
STI	Sexually transmitted infection
SWAP	Sector-wide approach
TB	Tuberculosis
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

PART A: INTRODUCTION TO THE JFFLS APPROACH

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PART A:

INTRODUCTION TO THE JFFLS APPROACH

A.1 HIV/AIDS and the orphan crisis

In 2000, 147 Heads of Government attended the largest-ever gathering of world leaders at the United Nations Millennium Summit. At that summit, governments committed themselves to the Millennium Declaration and its associated Millennium Development Goals (MDGs, Box A.1), which are intended to improve living conditions and remedy key global imbalances by 2015. Among other goals, the world's governments have committed themselves to combating HIV/AIDS and other diseases. Addressing the needs of orphans and other vulnerable children is paramount to meeting this goal.

In 2006, an estimated 39.5 million people worldwide were living with HIV, of whom 37.2 million were adults and 2.3 million children under 15 years of age. The most affected region is sub-Saharan Africa, where more than 60 percent of these people live. The pandemic has left millions of orphaned children: at the end of 2003, there were 43 million orphans in sub-Saharan Africa, an estimated 12.3 million of whom had been orphaned by AIDS. This number will increase over the next decade as parents infected with HIV become ill and subsequently die from AIDS.

Losing parents is not the only way in which HIV/AIDS affects children. Other children who are vulnerable because of the epidemic include those with an ill parent, those who live in poor households hosting orphans, and those who are discriminated against because a family member is HIV-positive or because they have HIV themselves. Most of the orphans and children made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS live with a surviving parent and/or are taken care of by their extended families.

Children are impacted by HIV/AIDS in several ways. For a child who understands the finality of death, the illness and death of a parent or other

Box A.1: The Millennium Development Goals

The UN MDGs, issued by the UN Secretary-General in 2001, are a "road map" for implementing the Millennium Declaration. The MDGs comprise eight goals, supplemented by 18 numerical and time-bound targets and 48 indicators, intended to improve living conditions and remedy key global imbalances by 2015.

The goals are:

- MDG 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.
- MDG 2: Achieve universal primary education
- MDG 3: Promote gender equality and women's empowerment
- MDG 4: Reduce child mortality
- MDG 5: Improve maternal health
- MDG 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- MDG 7: Ensure environmental sustainability
- MDG 8: Develop a global partnership for development

Source: www.un.org/millenniumgoals

close family member may cause fears of loss and abandonment. When a family breaks down because of the disease, children may lose their sense of belonging, self-identity and security. They may also feel resentment and anger towards the deceased parent or family member. Furthermore, the stigma attached to the disease can ruin a child's relationships with peers, placing him or her in isolation. Some children may not express their worries and anxieties directly, and may appear to be coping when underneath they are depressed and feeling hopeless.

In addition to experiencing trauma, orphans and children who are made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS are at greater risk of malnutrition, disease, abuse, stigmatization and sexual exploitation. Sexual exploitation is a particularly significant risk for those left alone to cope with poverty and for those who are forced to adopt adult roles to secure food for the rest of the family. As parents and family members fall sick and die, children take on greater domestic, agricultural and income-generating responsibilities. As a result, young girls and boys may have to drop out of school, either temporarily or permanently. The hardship caused by AIDS can also deprive children of much-needed recreation and participation in community activities. As many parents die young, orphaned children are also growing up without the necessary knowledge and skills for their future livelihood.

A.2 Empowering children through JFFLS

In response to the growing number of children orphaned by AIDS, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Food Programme and other partners have implemented Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools in some African countries. These are designed to empower orphans and other vulnerable children aged 12 to 18 years who live in communities where HIV/AIDS has had a strong impact on food security. A JFFLS seeks to improve the livelihoods of vulnerable boys and girls and provide them with opportunities for the future, while minimizing the risk of adopting negative coping behaviours. To increase these children's self-esteem and livelihood prospects, a JFFLS imparts agricultural knowledge and life skills to orphaned and other vulnerable girls and boys. The knowledge and skills not only empower the children economically, but also help them to become responsible citizens with positive values regarding gender and human rights. The JFFLS contribute to the MDGs of combating HIV/AIDS and improving the lives of children, particularly in rural areas.

Equal numbers of boys and girls are trained in a JFFLS through a combination of traditional and modern methods. The agriculture component

of JFFLS has a practical bias that covers both traditional and modern agricultural practices for field preparation, sowing and transplanting, weeding, irrigation, pest control, use and conservation of available resources, use and processing of food crops, harvesting, storage and marketing skills. The schools pay particular attention to teaching local agricultural production skills that have not been passed down because of the early death of parents. They can also help to recover or sustain traditional knowledge about indigenous crops, medicinal plants, biodiversity, etc., and can be useful in finding innovative solutions to current agricultural labour constraints, such as low-input agricultural production activities and labour-saving technologies and practices.

In the life skills component, the JFFLS address such issues as HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention, gender sensitivity, child protection, psycho-social support, nutrition education and business skills. Experience from JFFLS has shown that the schools provide a safe social space for both sexes, where peer support and community care allow youths to develop their self-esteem and confidence.

What the JFFLS is and isn't about

A JFFLS is:

- a sustainable response to empower orphans and vulnerable children living in a world with HIV and AIDS;
- a way to improve the self-esteem, livelihood options and long-term food security of vulnerable boys and girls living in rural areas;
- a means to institute gender equal attitudes, improve nutrition, agricultural knowledge and life-skills among children in a participatory way thereby reducing their risk of pursuing HIV-risky survival strategies;
- an important instrument in promoting respect for the sustainable use of the world's natural resources;
- based on the real and locally identified needs of orphans and vulnerable children;
- an attempt to be inclusive of both in- and out-of-school youth.

A JFFLS is NOT:

- a top-down and authoritarian approach;
- a means to stigmatise orphans and vulnerable children;
- a means of exploiting child labour or harming children in other ways;
- an approach that further marginalises children but rather an opportunity to give vulnerable children a possibility to become a knowledge resource for their community;
- a vegetable garden where children sing but an approach where children learn to understand complex issues and how they interconnect through a combination of experimental learning methods, learning by doing, and culturally sensitive methods such as role play, drama and music;
- a replacement for formal education or meant to take children out of school;
- a way to promote subsistence agriculture as the only livelihood option for the children; rather it encourages and supports livelihood diversification for better food security and sustainable futures.

Food support plays a central role in the JFFLS, both as an attendance incentive for the children and their guardians/parents and to ensure that the children have enough energy to participate actively.

A JFFLS is run by a small group of local facilitators, often including an extension worker, a teacher and/or a community animator. These facilitators are trained prior to initiation of the school. The community plays an integral role in monitoring and implementing the schools, including providing land and volunteers to help school activities.

A.3 The origins of JFFLS

The JFFLS approach is an adaptation of the following two successful participatory training programmes for adult farmers.

Farmer Field School (FFS). An FFS is a field-based training initiative in which a group of farmers meet regularly to study a particular topic. Topics covered range from integrated pest management, animal husbandry and soil husbandry to income-generating activities. The training follows the natural cycle of the topic covered, for example, an entire cropping season. There are no lectures at FFS; instead farmers learn by doing and experimenting with the problems encountered in the field.

Farmer Life School (FLS). FLS are based on the same learning approaches as FFS. In an FLS, adult farmers discuss the problems that threaten their livelihoods, identify the root causes of these problems and make informed decisions about what actions they should take to overcome them. Issues addressed in an FLS include poverty, HIV/AIDS, landlessness, domestic violence and children's school attendance.

The FFS and FLS approaches have been successfully adapted to the needs and situations of vulnerable children. Like the FFS and FLS, the JFFLS approach is based on experiential learning whereby children learn good agricultural and life practices through observing, drawing conclusions and making informed decisions.

A.4 JFFLS guiding principles

Guiding principles provide a group or organization with some rules or standards to follow as it carries out its work. The JFFLS have a set of guiding principles that draw heavily on the Convention on the Rights of the Child⁴ and include the following.

Child protection and security

Of all the human rights agreement in the world, the Convention on the Rights of the Child has been ratified by the most countries. It details the rights of children and how these rights should be applied. “Child protection” refers to protection from violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect. The convention says that children, regardless of gender, origin, religion or possible disabilities, need special care and protection because they are often very vulnerable. It also says that governments must take action to ensure that children’s rights are respected. Violations of child protection are human rights violations, which are underreported barriers to children’s survival and development. Successful protection increases a child’s chances of growing up physically and mentally healthy and of achieving confidence and self-respect. It also makes a child less likely to abuse or exploit others, including her or his own children.

The convention is guided by four fundamental principles: non-discrimination; the best interests of the child; survival, development and protection; and participation. Authorities must protect children and help ensure their full physical, spiritual, moral and social development according to these principles. Above all, any actions affecting children must be in their best interests and should benefit them in the best possible way. One of the objectives of JFFLS is to support and protect children by providing a protective environment for learning, social support and relief from the children’s daily cares and stress. Children are developing into adults, and protecting them from destitution and the threat of HIV/AIDS creates the conditions for them to reach their potential.

Gender-equal attitudes

Gender equality means that women and men enjoy the same status. In a JFFLS, gender equality means that girls and boys have equal chances to achieve their human rights, fulfil their potential, contribute to economic, socio-cultural and political development, and benefit from the results. Gender equality exists when a society gives the characteristics, roles and responsibilities of both boys and girls equal value.

⁴ For information about other relevant conventions, see the reference section at the end of this chapter.

Vulnerable children

HIV/AIDS is not the only cause of vulnerability for children: other factors include extreme poverty, exploitation and conflict. Programmes should therefore address not only AIDS-related problems but also the other causes of children's vulnerability. AIDS programmes for children should assist all the most vulnerable children in a community, regardless of the specific causes of their vulnerability.

Source: UNAIDS/UNICEF/USAID, 2004.

Participation

Participation is a process of communication among development agents and local men, women, girls and boys in which local people (including boys and girls) take the leading role in analysing the current situation and in planning, implementing and evaluating development activities. Under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, children have a right to help make the decisions that affect them, and to have their opinions taken into account.

Addressing vulnerability

JFFLS recognize children's rights and freedoms under the convention. Such rights should take into account children's vulnerability and their need for protection from economic or sexual exploitation, cruelty, abuse, violence and abduction or recruitment into armed forces. This means addressing the vulnerability of girls and boys to HIV infection, as well as the specific needs of communities already affected by HIV/AIDS. In households affected by HIV/AIDS or other chronic illness, fewer adults have to support more people, and the burden of care is often shifted to women and girls. Adults and children who lack food and income security often resort to damaging and high-risk survival strategies, such as selling off land or exchanging sex for food or cash. Children are especially at risk and therefore represent specific concerns and challenges.

Removing stigma and discrimination

Stigma marks a person out for separation or isolation from a group. The stigmatized are given the message that they are different and unwanted.

Terminology and creating stigma

The term "AIDS orphan" may contribute to the stigmatization of children. It is therefore better to use such terms as "orphans due to AIDS" or "children orphaned by AIDS". Experience also shows that jargon such as OVC (for orphans and vulnerable children) starts to be used by community members to identify particular children, thus contributing to their stigmatization. When children are asked what they prefer to be called, they say: "Just call us children".

Source: UNAIDS/UNICEF/USAID, 2004.

Stigma is based on lack of information and fear, which turn into judgement and blame. As stigma extends to more people, it leads to discrimination against a whole group; those who are discriminated against are denied their human rights. One of the guiding principles under the convention is non-discrimination. It states that children should neither benefit nor suffer because of their race, colour, gender, language, religion or national, social or ethnic origin, because of any political or other opinion, because of their caste, property, birth or "other status", or because they are disabled. "Other status"

includes children who are HIV-positive themselves or who have parents or care givers who are infected. All children have the right to full access to education, health and social services, and to full inclusion in community life.

Right to food

At the 1996 World Food Summit, Heads of State and Government reaffirmed “the right of everyone to have access to safe and nutritious food” as a basic human right. The right to food takes into account the principles of equality and non-discrimination, participation and inclusion, accountability and rule of law, and that all human rights are universal, indivisible, interrelated and interdependent. Voluntary guidelines have been developed to support States in the progressive realization of this right as part of their obligation to fulfil human rights under international law. In a JFFLS, States and relevant international organizations are encouraged to support the right to adequate food for the vulnerable girls and boys participating in the school through direct food support, training, education and livelihood strengthening.

A.5 *The Getting started!* manual

This training manual was developed by FAO and WFP, with input from people working for agricultural ministries and non-governmental organizations that are involved in JFFLS. The manual was written for the staff of government ministries, NGOs and faith-based organizations (FBOs) working with rural communities in developing countries. It is intended to support their response to the AIDS and orphan crisis by empowering orphaned and vulnerable children through JFFLS. The manual provides details on how to set up, operate and sustain a JFFLS.

This manual incorporates experience from people working with orphaned and vulnerable children living in areas with high HIV prevalence levels in Kenya, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The manual is generic and is meant to be used in different regions of the world. It can be adapted for use in areas where HIV prevalence is still very low but children are made vulnerable by extreme poverty, trafficking and conflict.

This *Getting started!* manual comprises two parts. The first part provides background information on the JFFLS approach, its origins and guiding principles. The second part describes how to initiate and manage a JFFLS. This part is divided into nine chapters, each representing a step that needs to be taken to implement a school.



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www.un.org/Overview/rights.html

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www.unaids.org

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www.theglobalfund.org/en

UN Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. Adopted by the UN General Assembly, 1979.
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