
Learning Unit 18:

Orphans and vulnerable children

**GUIDANCE
TRACK ONLY**



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Introduction

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The child, for the full and harmonious development of his or her personality, should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding. The child should be fully prepared to live an individual life in society – in the spirit of peace, dignity, tolerance and freedom, equality and solidarity. Every child has the right to their childhood – a hopeful existence free of exploitation, violence, neglect and extreme poverty. Children need education, health services, and consistent support systems as well as love, hope and encouragement; all these things and more are required in order to experience childhood to the fullest, and to eventually develop into healthy, capable adults. (Excerpt from the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child, 1990.)

How often do you pass a street child on your way to work or to the shops? Focus on one specific street child that you often see. When you pass this child again, look at him or her and imagine what this child's life must be like, for example:

- Does he or she still have parents?
- Does the child get any form of education?
- Where does he or she sleep at night?
- Is the child properly dressed for the weather?
- Does the child look healthy and happy?
- What forms of abuses do you imagine the child suffers?



You may even consider stopping and talking to the child.

Read the introductory paragraph of this learning unit again and consider to what extent this child is deprived of what is deemed to be the right of every child. What role do you think Aids has played in this child's situation? What can we do to help?

In this learning unit we will discuss the rights and needs of children, the vulnerability of children affected by HIV and Aids, and the psychosocial support that vulnerable children need to enable them to develop into healthy, capable adults.

Key Questions

Use the following questions as pointers to ensure that you retain your focus on the important issues in this learning unit:

- Theory: What are the rights and needs of children?
- Reality: Why are children who are affected by HIV and Aids so vulnerable?
- Support: What psychological support can we offer children to enable them fulfil their fundamental needs.

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Key Concepts

Pay attention to the following concepts:

United Nations Convention on the rights of the child	Singular satisfiers
Transcendence	Synergistic satisfiers
Destroyers	Supported living of orphans
Pseudo-satisfiers	

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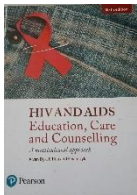
The rights and needs of children

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Before we can talk about the plight of Aids orphans and other children made vulnerable by Aids, we need to consider a few *definitions* (e.g. what an orphan is), what children's *rights* are, as well as the basic *needs* of children that should be fulfilled by parents, society and the government. Go to your prescribed book to read more about this.



Study



Prescribed book: pp. 530-534

Introduction: Read about the havoc that Aids has caused in the lives of the children of the world. Make sure you know the definition of an orphan. If you are not a South African citizen, find out how your country defines an orphan.

Section 18.1: The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Familiarise yourself with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Use the following to guide your reading:

- What are the four guiding principles upon which the convention is based?
- What are the four main categories into which the rights of the child can be grouped?

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is a legal document that sets minimal acceptance standards for the well-being of all children. (Go to <http://www.unicef.org/crc/> to learn more). Note that the South African government adopted the Convention in 1995, which means that it is legally bound to obey the rules as set out in the Convention. Ask yourself if you can see any application of any of these rules in the life of the street child you pass every day on your way to work.

Go to the following website <http://www.youthforhumanrights.org/> to download short videos illustrating 30 human rights with specific reference to children and young people. The videos are very useful in schools to make children aware of their rights.

Section 18.2: The needs of the child. Write down the ten fundamental human needs. Indicate if a specific need is physical, emotional, social, spiritual or intellectual. You will get the chance later to apply the theory to the real-life situation of the street child you see on the corner.

Section 18.3: Satisfiers of needs. Name the five types of satisfiers that can be used to satisfy the fundamental needs of a child. Give an example of each satisfier. Can you see that the money or jersey you may give a street child can be classified as a singular satisfier? Can you also see that what the child really needs is a synergistic satisfier? What do you think of Max-Neef's definition of poverty ?





Children disrupted by war

Let's go from theory to practice by doing the following activity.

ACTIVITY 18.1 - THE RIGHTS AND NEEDS OF A STREET CHILD

This activity will give you the opportunity to apply what you have learnt so far to a street child's situation. Go to [Activity 18.1](#).

Feedback: It was probably obvious for you to see which children's rights were being violated.

We have now looked at the theory concerning the rights and needs of children. In the next section, we look at the reality of Aids orphans and other vulnerable children by investigating their vulnerability.

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The vulnerability of children

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Let's assume that the street child you see every day on your way to work is an Aids orphan. What do you think the challenges that this child has faced, and is still facing every day, are? Write down at least three possible challenges before you go to your prescribed book.



Study



Prescribed book: pp. 534-536

Section 18.4: Vulnerability of children affected by Aids. Read the challenges that orphans and other vulnerable children face, as described by Kluckow. Think of more challenges and add them to Kluckow's list.

Enrichment box 'Stigmatisation of children orphaned by Aids': Do you agree with Stein that our use of the word "Aids orphan" stigmatises children whose parents have died of Aids? Why do you agree or disagree with her? How can the use of acronyms such as OVCs and CABAs contribute to the stigmatisation of orphans and other vulnerable children? (See grey box in Section 18.4)

Watch this YouTube video <http://goo.gl/8E8epQ> on the plight of Aids orphans.



If you look back at the United Nations quotation at the beginning of this learning unit, you will see that children need to grow up in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding within a family environment to ultimately develop into healthy, capable adults.

ACTIVITY 18.2 - THE FUTURE OF THE STREET CHILD

Explore the future that might await a child if they are deprived of the love and care of a family by going to [Activity 18.2](#).

Feedback: Were you guilty of stigmatising orphans and other vulnerable children by classifying them as future delinquents, thieves and murderers? Go to <http://goo.gl/YhJrT6> to watch this video on the lives of street children in South Africa. Also watch this video <http://goo.gl/86eDDS> on a day in the life of a street child in Kampala, Uganda.

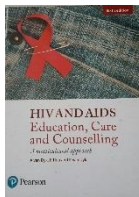
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Psychological support for vulnerable children

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This section will deal with the support we should give orphans and other vulnerable children to satisfy their needs in a synergistic way. We will also look at the models of care and support that are used in South Africa. Note that we look at orphan care in a different way in this course. Instead of asking: “Where should the child be placed?” we ask: “What is the best way of meeting the child’s physical, psychological, emotional, educational, spiritual and social needs in a synergistic way?”

Study



Prescribed book: pp. 537-543

Section 18.5: Psychosocial support. Table 18.1 in your prescribed book summarises the fundamental needs of the child, the potential deprivation of these needs due to Aids, and the psychosocial support required to fulfil the child’s needs in a synergistic way. Study this table carefully. List and give examples of the resources that communities and governments should establish to provide psychosocial support for children.

Section 18.6: Models of care and support. Critically evaluate each one of the six models of care for orphans and other vulnerable children as identified by the South African Law Commission. Also read the Enrichment box ‘The effect that suffering children have on caregivers in South Africa’.



Orphanage in Kenya

If you are interested volunteering your services, do the following activity.

ACTIVITY 18.3 - VOLUNTARY PROJECTS TO SUPPORT VULNERABLE CHILDREN

Get involved in a voluntary project to help Aids orphans and other children made vulnerable by HIV and Aids. Go to [Activity 18.3](#) for guidelines.

Feedback: By now, you know that this course strives to be different from any other course that you will do at university. I hope that we are teaching you to be an activist and to fight for the recognition of the basic human needs and rights of children in your community who cannot speak for themselves.

You are now finished with this learning unit. Click on [Assessment](#) to do some self-assessment questions.

Study Reflection

After completing Learning Unit 18 (Orphans and vulnerable children), you should have acquired the following knowledge and understanding and be able to:

- Recognise the shortcomings in our government, health and private systems to support children made vulnerable by Aids in sub-Saharan Africa.
- Think of ways to satisfy the ten fundamental human needs of children made vulnerable by Aids.
- Offer your services as a volunteer to an NGO that works with vulnerable children.
- Assist your community leaders in developing and implementing an integrated community care programme for children made vulnerable by Aids.

Self-Assessment 18



Click on [Self-Assessment 18](#) to do a few questions on this learning unit. Please note these self-assessment questions do not contribute to your year mark or your admission to the exams. The feedback to the questions will be given to you immediately after completing each question.

You are now finished with the assessment. Go to Learning Unit 21.

APPENDICES

- Activities
- Self-Assessments
- Glossary

ACTIVITY 18.1 – THE RIGHTS AND NEEDS OF A STREET CHILD

At the beginning of this learning unit we referred to a street child that you may pass on your way to work. Did you by any chance stop your car to have a conversation with the street child? Maybe you know his or her name. Consider the life of this child and think about the following:

- To what extent are this child’s ten basic needs fulfilled?
- What are your reasons for saying so?
- Which rights of the child are being violated?

Use the table below to organise your thoughts.

- Column 1 lists the ten basic needs of the child. Start with the need for subsistence.
- Column 2 contains a fulfilment scale ranging from 0 (not at all fulfilled) to 5 (fully fulfilled). Indicate to what extent you think the street child’s basic need for subsistence is fulfilled by drawing a circle around the appropriate number (0 to 5).
- Give the reasons/s why you think this need is fulfilled/not fulfilled in column 3.
- In column 4, write down which one or more of the rights of this child are being violated if the need (e.g. for subsistence) is not fulfilled.
- Complete the table for all the needs.

Table on the rights and needs of children

The needs of the child	Fulfilment scale 0 = Not at all; 5 = Fully fulfilled	Reasons why need is fulfilled or not	Right/s violated
Subsistence	0...1...2...3...4...5		
Protection	0...1...2...3...4...5		
Affection	0...1...2...3...4...5		
Understanding	0...1...2...3...4...5		
Participation	0...1...2...3...4...5		
Leisure	0...1...2...3...4...5		
Creation	0...1...2...3...4...5		
Identity	0...1...2...3...4...5		
Freedom	0...1...2...3...4...5		
Transcendence	0...1...2...3...4...5		

Do this same exercise with your own child, or with the child of a family member in mind, and comment on the differences between your child’s fulfilment scale and that of the street child.

FEEDBACK 18.1

The street child probably scored very low on most of the needs and you probably did not have any difficulty giving reasons for this. Was it obvious to see which children's rights were violated? If you battled with the activity, this example may help: Let's take the need for *leisure*.

- I would give the street child "1" or maybe "2" for the fulfilment of the need for leisure scale.
- My reason would be that I sometimes see the child playing with other street children, but the kind of play is not very constructive or educational. Most of the time he is standing on the street corner begging for money, food or clothes.
- The children's right that is being violated is the child's right to *development*. Children need ample time, space and stimulation for constructive play and leisure (as well as for education, art and culture) to ensure normal physical, emotional and psychological development.

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ACTIVITY 18.2 - THE FUTURE OF THE STREET CHILD

If you look back at the United Nations quotation at the beginning of this learning unit, you will see that children need to grow up in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding within a family environment to ultimately develop into healthy, capable adults. With the next activity we will explore the future that might await a child if they are deprived of this love and care.

1. According to Max-Neef's theory, "a child whose needs are not fulfilled lives in poverty, and each poverty has the dire consequences of generating pathologies". What do you think the future holds for your street child if nobody intervenes to offer psychological support?
2. If you were to advise government on care for Aids orphans and other vulnerable children, what synergistic satisfiers would you recommend to satisfy the needs of these children?

[\[FEEDBACK\]](#)

FEEDBACK 18.2

You probably mentioned some emotional, psychological, physical, behavioural and social problems that the child might have in future. Check your answer against the points given in your prescribed book. Were you guilty of stigmatising orphans and other vulnerable children by classifying them as future delinquents, thieves and murderers?

If you cannot remember what a synergistic satisfier is, go back to your prescribed book to read more on the topic.

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ACTIVITY 18.3 - VOLUNTARY PROJECTS TO SUPPORT VULNERABLE CHILDREN

Would you like to do something to help Aids orphans and other children made vulnerable by HIV and Aids? Then the following activities may be just for you:

1. Start Saturday morning empowerment workshops for young girls made vulnerable by Aids. See the activity box in your prescribed book (Section 18.5) for instructions.
2. Devise an experiential learning exercise for teenage boys with the purpose of learning a new life skill in a fun way. See the activity box in Section 18.5 in your prescribed book for an example.
3. Start a memory book project. Read the enrichment box 'Memory projects' in your prescribed book for ideas on memory books.
4. Volunteer your services to an organisation that takes care of Aids orphans and other vulnerable children. If you decide to do this activity, go to Learning Unit 17 first and read Activity 17.2, points 2 and 3.

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SELF-ASSESSMENT 18

Question 1

Choose the correct statements about the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

1. The South African government signed the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1996, which means that it is legally bound to obey the rules as set out by the Convention.
2. The Convention on the Rights of the Child takes into account only the political rights of children.
3. The views of children should be respected and taken into account in all decisions concerning them.
4. There are five guiding principles upon which the convention on the rights of the child is based.

Question 2

Kluckow (2004:24) identified some of the challenges that children affected by Aids often have to face due to their parents' illness and deaths. Which of the following is one of the challenges that a child faces as their parents become more dependent on them?

1. Role changes.
2. Dropping out of school.
3. Loss of childhood.
4. Loss of learning.

QUESTION 3

According to Max-Neef (1991), human needs are:

1. The same, few and classified.
2. Few, finite and classifiable.
3. Constant
4. Vague.

[\[FEEDBACK\]](#)

FEEDBACK 18

Feedback Question 1

The correct answer is the views of children should be respected and taken into account in all decisions concerning them (alternative 3).

Feedback Question 2

The correct answer is role changes (alternative 1).

Feedback Question 3

The correct answer is that human needs are few, finite and classifiable. (alternative 2).

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Transcendence

The belief that we are part of something bigger than ourselves, and that the world is more than a physical reality. Many people have a need for spiritual awareness and connectedness.

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Destroyers

Satisfiers that address one need but end up stifling both that need and other needs as well. Child labour and prostitution are examples of destroying satisfiers. Child labour may provide a vocation and a certain type of identity for children, but it stifles other needs such as affection, participation and freedom as well as the development of a healthy identity.

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Pseudo-satisfiers

These are “satisfiers” that are appealing and that promise to fulfil needs – but don’t. They generate a false sense of satisfaction. Examples include the allure of the city and freedom, which pull many vulnerable children into prostitution, drugs and alcohol.

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Singular satisfiers

Satisfiers that satisfy one need in a child's life while ignoring others. The indiscriminate distribution of food to poor children is an example of a singular satisfier that satisfies the need for subsistence in a non-synergistic way.

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Synergistic satisfiers

Satisfiers that satisfy a given need and also stimulate and contribute to the fulfilment of others. Synergistic satisfiers therefore meet several different needs at once. For example, an educational game that satisfies the need for leisure also stimulates and satisfies the needs for understanding and creation.

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Inhibitors

Satisfiers that satisfy one need but inhibit another, for example, an overprotective family provider.

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