

One of the outcomes of the AIDS epidemic has been an increased number of children who have been orphaned or whose social and economic vulnerability has been increased because of the serious illness of a parent or other adult in the family. This chapter looks first at the prevalence of orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs) in Zimbabwe. The chapter next examines the extent to which children who are orphaned and vulnerable are disadvantaged in comparison to other children on several key measures of children's welfare, including school attendance. The chapter then reviews information on the care and support given to households in which there are orphaned and vulnerable children.

In reviewing the 2005-06ZDHS results, it is important to remember that the survey obtained information only for OVCs living in households. Children who are living in institutions or other nonhousehold settings, including children living on the street, are not included in the ZDHS OVC results. Thus, the ZDHS results should be considered as a minimum estimate of the problem of OVCs in Zimbabwe.

18.1 ORPHANS AND VULNERABLE CHILDREN

18.1.1 Children's Living Arrangements and Orphanhood

Information was collected in the household questionnaire on the living arrangements and survival status of all children under age 18 resident in the households included in the ZDHS sample. These data are presented in Table 18.1.

Around six in ten Zimbabwean children under age 18 in the households sampled for the ZDHS surveyed were not living with both parents. More than one-quarter of children were not living with either parent. Just under one-quarter of children under age 18 were orphaned, that is, one or both parents were dead.

The percentage of children who were not living with both parents increased with age, from just under half of children age 0-4 years to around 70 percent of children age 15-17 years. Looking just at children who were orphaned, the percentage rises rapidly with age, from 9 percent of children under age 5 to 36 percent of children age 15-17. Rural children (26 percent) were more likely to be orphaned than urban children (19 percent). Harare (18 percent) and Bulawayo (17 percent) had the lowest proportions of children orphaned, and Manicaland and Mashonaland East (28 percent each) had the highest. The percentage of children with one or both parents dead decreased with the wealth quintile.

Earlier ZDHS surveys obtained information on orphanhood only for children under age 15. A comparison of the results from the 1994 and 2005-2006 surveys for this age group indicates that there has been a dramatic increase in orphanhood. The proportion of children orphaned, i.e., with one or both parents dead, more than doubled between the two surveys from 9 percent to 22 percent. The proportion of paternal orphans, i.e., those whose father had died, increased from 7 percent to 19 percent during this period, while the proportion of maternal orphans rose from 3 percent to 9 percent between the 1994 and 2005-2006 surveys. The proportion of children with both parents dead increased from less than 1 percent to 6 percent.

Table 18.1 Children's living arrangements and orphanhood

Percent distribution of de jure children under age 18 by children's living arrangements and survival status of parents, and the percentage of children with one or both parents dead, according to background characteristics, Zimbabwe 2005-2006

Background characteristic	Living with both parents	Living with mother but not father		Living with father but not mother		Not living with either parent				Missing information on father/mother ¹	Total	Percentage with one or both parents dead	Number of children
		Father alive	Father dead	Mother alive	Mother dead	Both alive	Only father alive	Only mother alive	Both dead				
Age													
0-4	53.0	27.4	4.3	1.0	0.3	9.0	1.0	1.7	1.0	1.2	100.0	8.5	5,809
<2	57.7	33.4	3.3	0.5	0.1	3.1	0.4	0.3	0.2	1.0	100.0	4.4	2,265
2-4	50.1	23.6	5.0	1.4	0.4	12.8	1.3	2.6	1.5	1.3	100.0	11.1	3,544
5-9	39.8	17.6	7.6	3.2	1.1	15.6	2.0	5.8	4.8	2.5	100.0	22.0	6,283
10-14	33.1	13.9	11.8	3.4	1.7	13.4	2.7	7.2	10.7	2.0	100.0	35.0	6,083
15-17	28.3	11.5	11.7	3.2	2.2	16.8	3.1	7.4	11.3	4.4	100.0	36.4	2,734
Sex													
Male	40.5	18.3	8.7	2.8	1.3	12.7	1.9	5.4	6.2	2.1	100.0	24.1	10,561
Female	39.6	18.6	8.2	2.6	1.0	13.9	2.2	5.1	6.4	2.4	100.0	23.6	10,344
Residence													
Urban	48.8	14.6	7.9	4.6	1.4	11.5	1.7	3.7	4.1	1.7	100.0	19.1	5,413
Rural	36.9	19.8	8.7	2.0	1.1	13.9	2.2	5.9	7.1	2.4	100.0	25.6	15,495
Province													
Manicaland	34.6	21.5	10.6	2.0	1.1	11.8	2.0	6.1	7.8	2.5	100.0	28.2	2,751
Mashonaland Central	45.4	17.0	7.2	1.2	1.1	10.4	2.8	4.9	8.0	1.9	100.0	24.7	2,305
Mashonaland East	33.8	20.7	10.7	3.0	0.8	13.5	2.6	6.9	6.4	1.5	100.0	27.6	1,949
Mashonaland West	45.1	13.1	9.6	3.3	1.6	11.6	1.7	4.8	6.6	2.7	100.0	25.0	2,126
Matabeleland North	36.6	19.8	7.3	2.9	0.5	16.0	1.9	6.1	4.8	4.1	100.0	21.3	1,653
Matabeleland South	24.3	24.8	7.3	2.4	0.9	19.9	2.4	7.0	6.9	4.1	100.0	25.2	1,214
Midlands	42.2	18.3	6.7	2.9	1.4	14.9	2.3	5.0	5.0	1.4	100.0	20.8	3,037
Masvingo	35.4	21.0	9.7	2.2	1.4	12.6	2.1	5.6	7.9	2.0	100.0	27.3	2,610
Harare	54.5	12.9	7.4	3.3	1.6	10.2	1.3	2.8	4.3	1.6	100.0	17.9	2,183
Bulawayo	42.1	16.2	7.0	4.7	1.0	17.9	1.2	3.8	3.7	2.5	100.0	17.1	1,079
Wealth quintile													
Lowest	41.1	19.1	9.0	2.1	1.8	11.2	1.9	4.6	6.4	2.9	100.0	24.5	4,758
Second	39.2	20.1	7.0	1.8	0.7	13.7	2.5	6.2	6.9	2.0	100.0	23.9	4,625
Middle	29.1	20.4	10.0	1.2	0.9	17.0	2.6	7.5	8.7	2.6	100.0	30.4	4,495
Fourth	44.9	16.6	9.2	3.9	1.2	11.8	1.5	4.1	5.0	1.7	100.0	21.4	3,609
Highest	48.9	14.7	7.0	5.3	1.4	12.4	1.5	3.4	3.5	1.8	100.0	17.1	3,421
Total <15	41.8	19.5	8.0	2.6	1.0	12.8	1.9	5.0	5.6	1.9	100.0	22.0	18,174
Total <18	40.0	18.5	8.5	2.7	1.2	13.3	2.1	5.3	6.3	2.3	100.0	23.9	20,908

Note: Total includes 3 children for whom information on sex is missing.

¹ Includes children whose mother or father may have died but who were missing information on living arrangements

18.1.2 Orphaned and Vulnerable Children

Children whose parents are ill for an extended period or who live in households where other adults suffer from chronic illness can experience significant hardships, as serious illness may limit the resources available to feed, clothe, and educate a family's youngest members. The ZDHS included several questions to determine if any adults in the household (including the child's parents) had been chronically ill during the 12-month period before the survey. Members of a household were considered to be chronically ill if they had been very sick, i.e., too sick to work or do normal activities, for a period of at least three months during the 12-month period before the survey. Questions were included for children whose parents were not living in the same household at the time of the survey to determine if the parent(s) had been chronically ill in the 12-month period before the survey.

Table 18.2 presents the proportion of children considered vulnerable because of chronic illness of a parent or other adult during the 12-month period prior to the ZDHS. The table also shows the overall proportion of children identified in the ZDHS as orphaned or vulnerable. As Table 18.2 shows, among children under age 18, 4 percent had a parent who was chronically ill during the year prior to the survey, 6 percent lived in a household in which at least one adult (a parent or other household member) was chronically ill during the period, and 4 percent lived in a household where at least one adult who had been chronically ill had died during the 12 months preceding the survey. Overall, 1 in 10 children under age 18 was considered as vulnerable, i.e., they lived in a household in which at least one adult had been chronically ill during the year before the survey or they had at least one parent living in the household or elsewhere who had suffered from a chronic illness.

Background characteristic	Percentage of children who are considered vulnerable:					OVC children	
	Orphaned children Percentage of children with one or both parents dead	Have a very sick parent for at least 3 months in the past 12 months ¹	Live in a household where at least 1 adult has been very sick for at least 3 months in the past 12 months ²	Live in a household where at least 1 adult died in the past 12 months and had been very sick for at least 3 months before he/she died ²	Have a very sick parent or live in a household where an adult has been very sick or died in the past 12 months ²	Percentage of children who are orphans and/or vulnerable	Number of children
Age							
0-4	8.5	3.4	5.0	3.6	8.8	15.2	5,809
<2	4.4	2.9	4.3	3.3	7.8	11.0	2,265
2-4	11.1	3.7	5.4	3.8	9.4	17.9	3,544
5-9	22.0	4.5	6.3	3.8	10.6	28.9	6,283
10-14	35.0	4.7	5.9	4.5	11.0	40.7	6,083
15-17	36.4	4.6	5.1	4.5	10.4	42.0	2,734
Sex							
Male	24.1	4.3	5.9	3.9	10.2	30.4	10,561
Female	23.6	4.2	5.4	4.2	10.2	30.0	10,344
Residence							
Urban	19.1	2.9	3.8	2.3	6.6	23.2	5,413
Rural	25.6	4.7	6.3	4.6	11.4	32.7	15,495
Province							
Manicaland	28.2	5.3	7.4	3.7	11.6	35.4	2,751
Mashonaland Central	24.7	4.3	6.4	2.7	9.4	31.2	2,305
Mashonaland East	27.6	2.3	2.6	4.1	7.3	31.3	1,949
Mashonaland West	25.0	5.3	6.9	5.9	12.2	32.6	2,126
Matabeleland North	21.3	3.0	5.3	6.2	11.3	29.1	1,653
Matabeleland South	25.2	5.0	7.4	3.5	11.0	32.9	1,214
Midlands	20.8	3.9	5.1	3.0	9.1	27.0	3,037
Masvingo	27.3	4.8	5.3	5.9	12.2	33.7	2,610
Harare	17.9	4.6	5.9	2.7	9.5	24.1	2,183
Bulawayo	17.1	3.1	3.5	2.4	6.1	20.6	1,079
Wealth quintile							
Lowest	24.5	6.0	7.9	5.5	13.5	33.4	4,758
Second	23.9	4.5	6.1	4.5	11.1	31.0	4,625
Middle	30.4	4.3	5.9	5.0	11.7	37.3	4,495
Fourth	21.4	3.5	4.2	2.8	7.4	25.9	3,609
Highest	17.1	2.2	3.1	1.6	5.2	20.2	3,421
Total <15	22.0	4.2	5.8	4.0	10.1	28.5	18,174
Total <18	23.9	4.2	5.7	4.0	10.2	30.2	20,908

Table 18.2 also shows that, taken together, three in ten Zimbabwean children are orphaned or vulnerable. The percentage of children under age 18 who were orphaned or vulnerable increased markedly with age, from 11 percent of children under age 2 years to 42 percent of children age 15-17 years. Rural children (33 percent) were more likely to be orphaned or vulnerable than urban children (23 percent). Bulawayo (21 percent) had the lowest proportions of children orphaned and vulnerable and Manicaland (35 percent) had the highest. The percentage of orphaned or vulnerable children decreased with the wealth quintile.

18.2 SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC SITUATION OF ORPHANED AND VULNERABLE CHILDREN

Information collected in the ZDHS household questionnaire can be used to look at several important aspects of the social and economic situation of orphaned and vulnerable children including information on school attendance, possession of items considered basic for meeting a child's material needs, residence with siblings, and nutritional status. These results provide a means for assessing the impact on children's welfare of the chronic illness and/or death of parents or other adult household members and of monitoring and evaluating OVC programmes (UNICEF, 2005).

18.2.1 School Attendance

Orphaned and vulnerable children may be at greater risk of dropping out of school. This can happen for many reasons, such as the inability to pay school fees, the need to help with household labour, or to stay at home to care for sick parents or younger siblings. Table 18.3 presents data on school attendance rates among children age 10-14. The first several columns of the table contrast the situation among the two groups of children at the extremes of the orphanhood continuum—children whose parents are both dead and children whose parents are both alive and the child is living with at least one parent. The final columns compare school attendance for the entire population of OVCs to that of children who are neither orphaned nor vulnerable.

The results in the table indicate that, in general, orphaned and vulnerable children are only very slightly disadvantaged with respect to school attendance in comparison to other children; 89 percent of OVCs were currently attending school, compared with 91 percent of the other children. Double orphans (i.e., children whose father and mother are dead) are also only slightly less likely than children whose parents are both alive and who live with at least one parent to be currently in school (88 percent and 92 percent, respectively).

Table 18.3 School attendance by survivorship of parents and by OVC status

For children 10-14 years of age, the percentage attending school by parental survival and by OVC status, and the ratios of the percentages attending school for parental survival and OVC status, according to background characteristics, Zimbabwe 2005-2006

Background characteristic	Percentage attending school by survivorship of parents					OVC		Not OVC		
	Both parents dead	Number	Both parents alive and living with at least one parent	Number	Ratio ¹	Percentage attending school	Number	Percentage attending school	Number	Ratio ²
Sex										
Male	84.6	311	92.5	1,520	0.92	87.3	1,243	90.6	1,774	0.96
Female	90.9	342	92.3	1,544	0.98	89.8	1,232	92.2	1,833	0.97
Residence										
Urban	88.9	103	96.8	839	0.92	93.1	466	96.3	985	0.97
Rural	87.7	550	90.7	2,224	0.97	87.5	2,010	89.6	2,622	0.98
Province										
Manicaland	89.2	107	94.2	364	0.95	91.3	388	93.3	408	0.98
Mashonaland Central	74.7	92	85.6	346	0.87	78.4	282	83.8	383	0.93
Mashonaland East	94.5	67	94.8	311	1.00	93.7	293	94.0	371	1.00
Mashonaland West	85.7	75	89.6	306	0.96	85.2	268	86.9	345	0.98
Matabeleland North	(89.0)	39	85.2	265	1.04	85.0	183	84.7	326	1.00
Matabeleland South	(85.6)	41	94.6	159	0.91	87.3	156	93.4	226	0.93
Midlands	91.8	83	94.1	472	0.98	87.0	313	93.1	559	0.94
Masvingo	89.5	89	92.9	361	0.96	90.1	330	92.6	419	0.97
Harare	(95.7)	41	97.4	311	0.98	97.0	177	97.2	333	1.00
Bulawayo	*	18	96.7	167	0.94	95.4	85	96.1	237	0.99
Wealth quintile										
Lowest	83.6	152	86.1	727	0.97	82.5	603	86.2	809	0.96
Second	90.9	160	92.1	682	0.99	89.5	604	90.0	777	0.99
Middle	86.4	202	92.8	558	0.93	90.0	651	92.3	716	0.97
Fourth	86.4	89	94.0	499	0.92	89.7	366	91.1	595	0.98
Highest	(100.0)	49	98.5	597	1.02	95.6	252	98.3	709	0.97
Total	87.9	653	92.4	3,063	0.95	88.6	2,476	91.4	3,607	0.97

Note: Table is based on de jure household members, i.e., usual household members. Figures in parentheses are based on 25-49 unweighted cases. An asterisk indicates that a figure is based on fewer than 25 unweighted cases and has been suppressed.

¹ Ratio of the percentage with both parents deceased to the percentage with both parents alive and living with a parent

² Ratio of the percentage for OVC to the percentage for not OVC

18.2.2 Basic Material Needs

The ZDHS obtained information as to whether or not the minimum basic material needs of children age 5-17 were being met. Basic material needs were considered to have been met if the child had a pair of shoes, two sets of clothes, and a blanket. Table 18.4 shows that basic minimum material needs were met in the case of only 61 percent of all children age 5-17. In terms of the basic items, children were least likely to have a pair of shoes (64 percent) and most likely to have two sets of clothes (85 percent).

Table 18.4 Possession of basic material needs by orphans and vulnerable children

Among children age 5-17 years, the percentage possessing three minimum basic material needs, the percentages of OVC and non-OVC who possess all three basic material needs, and the ratio of the percentage for OVC to the percentage for not OVC, according to background characteristics, Zimbabwe 2005-2006

Background characteristic	Among children 5-17 years of age, percentage possessing:					OVC		Not OVC		Ratio ²
	Shoes	Two sets of clothing	Blanket	All three basic needs ¹	Number of children	Percentage possessing all three basic needs ¹	Number	Percentage possessing all three basic needs ¹	Number	
Age										
5-9	63.0	85.3	83.1	59.9	6,283	47.0	1,817	65.1	4,465	0.72
10-14	61.5	85.7	83.2	59.0	6,083	50.5	2,476	64.8	3,607	0.78
15-17	69.5	84.9	83.1	66.7	2,734	62.0	1,147	70.1	1,587	0.89
Sex										
Male	62.8	84.9	83.0	60.0	7,650	50.3	2,771	65.6	4,879	0.77
Female	64.4	85.8	83.2	61.5	7,446	53.3	2,666	66.0	4,780	0.81
Residence										
Urban	90.1	92.4	90.6	87.8	3,855	84.7	1,102	89.1	2,753	0.95
Rural	54.5	83.0	80.6	51.5	11,244	43.4	4,338	56.5	6,906	0.77
Province										
Manicaland	62.4	92.3	90.6	60.4	1,998	54.7	832	64.5	1,167	0.85
Mashonaland Central	64.5	92.4	91.9	63.3	1,641	56.0	620	67.7	1,021	0.83
Mashonaland East	54.4	73.2	67.8	51.5	1,465	44.1	548	55.9	917	0.79
Mashonaland West	56.7	78.5	74.7	51.7	1,523	38.9	579	59.6	944	0.65
Matabeleland North	50.6	76.6	77.0	47.4	1,221	39.3	408	51.4	813	0.77
Matabeleland South	51.7	65.7	62.1	45.4	908	31.6	340	53.7	568	0.59
Midlands	73.9	94.0	92.1	72.2	2,169	64.7	705	75.9	1,464	0.85
Masvingo	46.1	84.4	81.4	42.7	1,863	36.2	753	47.1	1,110	0.77
Harare	87.6	89.9	87.7	85.1	1,504	81.2	456	86.9	1,049	0.93
Bulawayo	94.8	95.2	95.0	93.1	807	90.1	200	94.1	607	0.96
Wealth quintile										
Lowest	39.6	79.2	75.9	36.5	3,375	30.8	1,317	40.1	2,058	0.77
Second	51.8	81.0	79.9	48.2	3,322	38.7	1,227	53.7	2,096	0.72
Middle	62.5	86.0	82.4	60.1	3,376	53.5	1,475	65.2	1,901	0.82
Fourth	83.8	91.0	88.9	80.4	2,512	75.4	817	82.8	1,694	0.91
Highest	92.6	93.2	92.4	91.2	2,514	87.5	605	92.4	1,910	0.95
Total	63.6	85.4	83.1	60.7	15,099	51.7	5,440	65.8	9,659	0.79

Note: Table is based on de jure household members, i.e., usual household members. Total includes three children for whom information on sex is missing.

¹ Shoes, two sets of clothing, and a blanket

² Ratio of the percentage for OVC to the percentage for not OVC.

Table 18.4 shows that rural OVCs were much less likely than urban OVCs to have all three minimum basic material needs met (43 percent and 85 percent, respectively). There was also a very marked difference by province in the likelihood that basic needs of OVCs were being met. Matabeleland South (32 percent) had the lowest proportion of OVCs whose needs were being met, and Bulawayo had the highest proportion (90 percent). Wealth clearly determined whether or not the basic needs of OVCs were met; the percentage with all three basic needs met increased from 31 percent among those in the lowest quintile to 88 percent in the highest quintile.

Orphaned and vulnerable children were more disadvantaged than other children; all three basic material needs were being met for 66 percent of non-OVCs compared with 52 percent of OVCs. Looking at the ratios in Table 18.4, the gap between OVCs and other children was greatest in Matabeleland South.

18.2.3 Orphans Living with Siblings

Sibling connections are particularly close in situations where a parent dies, and maintaining these bonds can be particularly helpful in assisting children to deal with the loss of a parent. Table 18.5 assesses the success of families and communities in keeping orphaned siblings together. Overall, 27 percent of orphans were not living with all their siblings under age 18. Maternal orphans and double orphans were much less likely than paternal orphans to be living with all siblings under age 18. The likelihood that an orphan was not living with all other siblings under age 18 increased with the child's age, was somewhat greater among urban than rural children, and tended to increase with the wealth quintile although the pattern was not uniform. Matabeleland South (16 percent) had the lowest proportion of orphans living apart from other siblings under age 18, and Bulawayo and Mashonaland East had the highest proportion (35 percent each).

18.2.4 Nutritional Status

Table 18.6 considers the effect of orphanhood on the nutritional status of children under age five. Twenty-one percent of OVCs were underweight, compared with 16 percent of other children. Urban OVCs, particularly those living in Harare, were particularly disadvantaged with respect to their nutritional status compared with rural children. Looking just at the status of OVCs, the percentage underweight was greatest in Mashonaland Central (33 percent).

Table 18.5 Orphans not living with siblings

Among orphans under age 18 years who have one or more siblings under age 18 years, the percentage who do not live with all their siblings under age 18, by background characteristics, Zimbabwe 2005-2006

Background characteristic	Percentage of orphans not living with all siblings	Number of orphans living with one or more siblings
Age		
0-4	19.5	338
5-9	23.9	956
10-14	28.1	1,436
15-17	34.9	654
Sex		
Male	27.8	1,703
Female	26.9	1,681
Orphanhood status		
Maternal orphan	36.7	471
Paternal orphan	21.7	2,125
Both parents dead	37.1	788
Residence		
Urban	30.1	679
Rural	26.7	2,706
Province		
Manicaland	27.0	520
Mashonaland Central	31.9	382
Mashonaland East	34.5	364
Mashonaland West	26.5	381
Matabeleland North	32.9	260
Matabeleland South	15.9	191
Midlands	24.4	433
Masvingo	24.6	500
Harare	22.2	246
Bulawayo	34.9	107
Wealth quintile		
Lowest	23.7	832
Second	28.1	769
Middle	25.6	888
Fourth	31.1	532
Highest	33.0	364
Total	27.4	3,384

Note: Table is based on de jure household members, i.e., usual household members.

Table 18.6 Underweight orphans and vulnerable children

Percentage of de jure children under age five years who slept in the household the night before who are underweight, total and by OVC status, according to background characteristics, Zimbabwe 2005-2006

Background characteristic	Children under age 5		OVC		Not OVC		Ratio ²
	Percentage of children under 5 who are underweight ¹	Number of children	Percentage underweight ¹	Number of OVC	Percentage underweight ¹	Number of non-OVC	
Age							
<1 year	8.2	823	9.1	79	8.1	744	1.13
1-2 years	21.1	1,851	24.9	281	20.4	1,570	1.22
3-4 years	16.2	2,082	21.4	376	15.0	1,706	1.43
Sex							
Male	17.2	2,386	21.8	367	16.3	2,019	1.34
Female	16.2	2,370	21.0	369	15.3	2,001	1.37
Residence							
Urban	11.3	1,160	18.5	123	10.5	1,036	1.77
Rural	18.4	3,596	22.0	613	17.7	2,984	1.25
Province							
Manicaland	16.1	627	17.8	115	15.8	512	1.13
Mashonaland Central	22.5	569	33.4	87	20.6	482	1.63
Mashonaland East	21.1	408	28.4	53	20.0	356	1.42
Mashonaland West	15.4	454	21.4	82	14.0	372	1.53
Matabeleland North	15.7	371	22.7	63	14.3	308	1.59
Matabeleland South	14.7	265	18.1	51	13.9	214	1.30
Midlands	17.2	748	19.0	99	17.0	648	1.12
Masvingo	16.8	636	14.3	108	17.3	527	0.83
Harare	10.0	480	22.3	59	8.3	421	2.70
Bulawayo	13.7	198	*	19	12.6	179	1.94
Wealth quintile							
Lowest	20.9	1,162	24.9	219	19.9	943	1.25
Second	19.3	1,090	18.1	172	19.6	917	0.92
Middle	15.4	962	22.8	177	13.7	785	1.67
Fourth	14.8	892	18.7	98	14.3	793	1.31
Highest	9.3	651	19.0	69	8.1	581	2.34
Total	16.7	4,756	21.4	736	15.8	4,020	1.35

Note: Table is based on de jure household members who slept in household the night preceding the interview. An asterisk indicates that a figure is based on fewer than 25 unweighted cases and has been suppressed.

¹ Two or more standard deviations below mean on WHO/CDC/NCHS reference standard for weight by age

² Ratio of the percentage for OVC to the percentage for non-OVC

18.2.5 Sex before Age 15

Teenage orphans and vulnerable children frequently may be at high risk of early sexual activity because they lack adult guidance to help them to protect themselves. Table 18.7 shows that OVCs were somewhat more likely than non-OVC children in the 15-17 year age group to have initiated sexual activity before age 15. This gap was somewhat greater among young women than young men.

Table 18.7 Sexual intercourse before age 15 of orphans and vulnerable children

Percentage of de jure children age 15-17 who had sexual intercourse before exact age 15, total and by OVC status, and ratio of the percentage for OVC to the percentage for non-OVC, by sex, Zimbabwe 2005-2006

OVC status	Women		Men	
	Percentage who had sexual intercourse before exact age 15	Number	Percentage who had sexual intercourse before exact age 15	Number
OVC	6.0	478	7.2	489
Non-OVC	3.4	717	5.5	655
Total	4.4	1,195	6.2	1,144
Ratio ¹	1.74	na	1.30	na

Note: Table is based on de jure household members who slept in household the night preceding the interview
na = Not applicable
¹ Ratio of the percentage for OVC to the percentage for not OVC

18.3 CARE AND SUPPORT FOR OVCs

One of the important challenges in countries like Zimbabwe that have greatly increased OVC populations, principally due to the AIDS epidemic, is the need to assist families to care for these children. The ZDHS obtained several indicators of the extent to which families and communities are recognising and addressing the need to care for young children.

18.3.1 Succession Planning

Succession planning is important in ensuring that children will receive appropriate care and support in the event of the death of a parent or primary caregiver. Table 18.8 looks at the extent to which women and men who identified themselves as primary caregivers for at least one child under age 18 had identified a guardian for the child(ren). Overall, 4 in 10 respondents age 15-49 said that they were a primary caregiver for a child under the age of 18. Table 18.8 shows that, among these primary caregivers, 22 percent had made arrangements for care to be provided to a child in the event they were unable to provide care due to illness or death. There was little difference by age and sex in the proportions of caregivers who had made succession arrangements. However, urban caregivers were more likely than those in rural areas to have a succession plan (27 percent and 18 percent, respectively). Matabeleland South (33 percent) had the highest proportion of caregivers who had made succession arrangements, followed by Bulawayo (29 percent).

Table 18.8 Succession planning

Among de facto women and men age 15-49 who were primary caregivers of children under age 18, the percentage who have made arrangements for someone else to care for the children in the event of their own inability to do so due to illness or death, by background characteristics, Zimbabwe 2005-2006

Background characteristic	Percentage of women and men who are primary caregivers of children under age 18	Number of women and men 15-49	Percentage of caregivers of children under age 18 who have made succession arrangements	Number of primary caregivers of children under age 18
Age				
15-19	6.7	4,051	22.3	272
20-29	42.2	5,959	21.8	2,516
30-39	66.6	3,595	21.4	2,393
40-49	68.3	2,166	21.0	1,479
Sex				
Male	37.3	6,863	21.5	2,561
Female	46.0	8,907	21.5	4,100
Education				
No education	59.1	468	13.6	276
Primary	46.2	4,685	17.0	2,164
Secondary	38.8	9,943	22.6	3,854
More than secondary	54.4	675	43.1	367
Residence				
Urban	44.0	6,270	27.0	2,762
Rural	41.0	9,500	17.7	3,899
Province				
Manicaland	29.4	1,835	17.3	540
Mashonaland Central	53.0	1,507	12.4	798
Mashonaland East	39.6	1,285	18.6	509
Mashonaland West	45.6	1,520	23.7	693
Matabeleland North	45.7	952	13.7	435
Matabeleland South	41.1	746	32.7	306
Midlands	36.3	2,149	22.0	780
Masvingo	40.8	1,908	22.0	778
Harare	51.0	2,711	25.5	1,383
Bulawayo	37.8	1,158	28.9	437
Wealth quintile				
Lowest	44.1	2,594	14.9	1,145
Second	43.9	2,636	15.8	1,158
Middle	36.0	2,740	20.6	987
Fourth	44.5	3,897	22.7	1,734
Highest	42.0	3,903	29.6	1,637
Total	42.2	15,770	21.5	6,661

Note: Table is based on de facto household members, i.e., who slept in the household the night preceding the interview

18.3.2 External Support for Households with OVCs

The ZDHS collected information on the extent to which free external care and support services are reaching OVC. Table 18.9 first shows the percentage of adults age 18-59 who were chronically ill or died after a chronic illness during the year before the survey whose households had received certain types of free external support during the month prior to the survey (or to person's death). The table shows that medical support was received in the case of 18 percent of these individuals, 23 percent received emotional support, and 19 percent received social or material support. Only 3 percent got all three types of support, and 59 percent did not receive any medical, emotional, or social or material support. Support was somewhat more likely to have been received in the case of women than men. Support was also somewhat more common in rural than urban areas.

Table 18.9 External support for very sick persons

Percentage of women and men age 18-59 who have been either very sick or who died within the past 12 months after being very sick whose households received certain free basic external support to care for them within the past year, by background characteristics, Zimbabwe 2005-2006

Background characteristic	Percentage of very sick persons whose households received:						Number of persons
	Medical support at least once a month during illness	Emotional support in the past 30 days ¹	Social/material support in the past 30 days ²	At least one type of support in the past 30 days	All three types of support in the past 30 days	None of the three types of support	
Age							
18-29	15.2	21.3	17.5	36.1	2.9	63.9	177
30-39	19.1	25.5	15.7	42.0	2.8	58.0	264
40-49	21.9	22.5	19.9	43.3	2.8	56.7	199
50-59	15.4	21.8	23.5	41.8	2.9	58.2	164
Sex							
Male	18.9	18.7	14.5	35.6	1.7	64.4	316
Female	17.7	26.0	21.5	44.5	3.5	55.5	488
Residence							
Urban	13.9	25.3	16.1	38.6	2.9	61.4	188
Rural	19.5	22.4	19.5	41.7	2.8	58.3	616
Province							
Manicaland	18.8	25.9	23.3	45.2	3.5	54.8	123
Mashonaland Central	11.5	15.3	24.5	39.5	1.5	60.5	82
Mashonaland East	19.1	17.1	22.2	34.2	3.5	65.8	60
Mashonaland West	15.9	31.3	17.0	42.0	3.1	58.0	96
Matabeleland North	24.5	22.3	17.2	38.5	5.7	61.5	60
Matabeleland South	25.9	17.0	11.8	42.4	3.5	57.6	51
Midlands	18.7	28.8	18.5	45.5	2.9	54.5	95
Masvingo	25.3	23.3	22.7	46.1	4.0	53.9	106
Harare	13.9	24.8	12.1	39.8	0.0	60.2	95
Bulawayo	3.6	10.0	8.0	17.6	0.0	82.4	37
Wealth quintile							
Lowest	19.9	22.0	16.2	40.8	2.2	59.2	208
Second	19.0	20.0	20.5	39.8	2.9	60.2	178
Middle	16.8	25.0	24.1	44.2	3.0	55.8	201
Fourth	19.7	19.5	13.0	35.6	3.4	64.4	141
Highest	12.1	35.2	18.0	45.8	2.7	54.2	76
Total	18.2	23.1	18.7	41.0	2.8	59.0	805

Note: Table is based on de jure household members, i.e., usual household members who were very sick (unable to work or do normal activities) in the past 12 months or who died in the past 12 months and were very sick at least 3 of the 12 months before death. Support in the past 30 days includes the past 30 days for living persons and the 30 days preceding death for dead persons.

¹ Support such as companionship, counselling from a trained counsellor, or spiritual support for which there was no payment

² Support such as help with household work, training for a caregiver, legal services, clothing, food, or financial support for which there was no payment

Table 18.10 looks at the extent to which free external care and support was received by households that included at least one OVC member. The table shows that around seven in ten orphaned and vulnerable children lived in households that did not receive any type of support. Among those households that did receive some type of support, the household was most likely to have received schooling support for the children, followed by social/material support.

Table 18.10 External support for orphans and vulnerable children								
Percentage of orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) under age 18 years whose household received certain free basic external support to care for the child in the past 12 months, by background characteristics, Zimbabwe 2005-2006								
Background characteristic	Percentage of orphans and vulnerable children whose households received:							Number of OVC children
	Medical support in the past 12 months ¹	Emotional support in the past 3 months ²	Social/material support in the past 3 months ³	School-related assistance in the past 12 months ⁴	At least one type of support	All of the types of support ⁵	None of the types of support	
Age								
0-4	8.2	4.8	9.4	0.0	18.4	0.0	81.6	882
5-9	5.8	5.6	12.1	13.3	28.0	0.1	72.0	1,817
10-14	6.4	6.6	15.1	24.9	38.6	0.0	61.4	2,476
15-17	6.4	6.1	14.3	16.0	30.3	0.0	69.7	1,147
Sex								
Male	6.2	5.7	13.2	16.0	30.6	0.0	69.4	3,212
Female	6.7	6.3	13.3	17.0	31.7	0.1	68.3	3,107
Residence								
Urban	2.6	8.7	10.7	12.6	23.9	0.1	76.1	1,254
Rural	7.5	5.3	13.9	17.4	33.0	0.0	67.0	5,068
Province								
Manicaland	4.3	7.0	17.1	18.1	36.0	0.0	64.0	974
Mashonaland Central	14.0	5.8	7.4	18.8	35.5	0.0	64.5	718
Mashonaland East	5.5	4.8	8.2	17.7	27.3	0.0	72.7	609
Mashonaland West	1.9	5.4	4.4	12.6	21.1	0.0	78.9	693
Matabeleland North	8.4	4.9	6.6	9.4	22.6	0.0	77.4	482
Matabeleland South	6.9	3.7	9.1	9.2	22.9	0.0	77.1	399
Midlands	3.9	6.9	15.2	18.3	33.0	0.1	67.0	819
Masvingo	11.1	4.8	32.5	26.2	49.5	0.0	50.5	880
Harare	3.2	8.3	8.7	8.6	18.7	0.1	81.3	525
Bulawayo	2.8	9.4	7.0	12.3	22.9	0.0	77.1	222
Wealth quintile								
Lowest	7.3	3.7	13.4	15.9	29.1	0.0	70.9	1,589
Second	8.1	7.3	12.7	18.4	35.1	0.1	64.9	1,436
Middle	7.8	4.1	15.2	18.2	34.5	0.0	65.5	1,674
Fourth	2.4	8.6	13.2	16.0	29.7	0.0	70.3	933
Highest	3.6	9.5	9.7	10.1	22.3	0.1	77.7	690
Total	6.5	6.0	13.3	16.5	31.2	0.0	68.8	6,322

Note: Table is based on de jure household members, i.e., usual household members. Total includes three children for whom information on sex is missing.

¹ Medical care, supplies, or medicine

² Companionship, counselling from a trained counsellor, or spiritual support for which there was no payment

³ Help with household work, training for a caregiver, legal services, clothing, food, or financial support for which there was no payment

⁴ Allowance, free admission, books, or supplies for which there was no payment. Percentage calculated for ages 5-17 years

⁵ Four types of support for those age 5-17, three types of support (i.e., excluding school support) received by those age 0-4

The percentage receiving some form of assistance increased with the age of the child, which likely reflects in part the fact that school-related assistance was the most common form of care and support. Rural OVCs were more likely than urban OVCs to live in a household that received some form of support. Orphaned and vulnerable children in Harare were the least likely to be living in a household receiving external support, while OVCs in Masvingo were the most likely to be in a household that had been given some type of support.