Understanding the experiences and challenges of child-headed households and the role of social grants in South Africa

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Abstract
Research conducted in South Africa in the past two decades has played a key role in understanding the experiences and challenges of children living in child-headed households (CHH). The government of South Africa has taken steps to address the plight of CHH by establishing relevant policies. This article reports on the progress made in this regard and identifies gaps that require attention. It is based on a qualitative study conducted in the North-West province of South Africa in 2011. The aim of the study was to establish whether the government efforts had translated into an improvement in the lives of the children living in CHH. The results showed that the main challenges of children living in CHH revolved around accessing of basic needs. This study proffered a number of recommendations including that authorities should ensure that the CSG is made more accessible, heads of CHH should be allowed to receive the grant directly and that social workers should be empowered to effectively deal with CHH.

Keywords
Child-headed households, orphans, HIV/AIDS, social grants, social workers.