

Comparing the needs of orphans and vulnerable children in five municipalities, in the district of Lejweleputswa

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BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

Since 2008 PEPFAR has funded HDA to implement Circles Of Support (COS), a project that identifies and supports orphans and vulnerable children. COS operates in 90 schools in five municipalities – Matjhabeng (38), Masilonyana (13), Nala (18), Tswelopele (14) and Tokologo (7). The objective is to create networks and partnerships between schools and community resources.

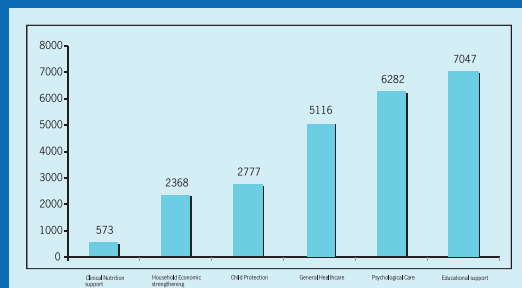
METHODS

All schools have registers of orphans and vulnerable children, who are referred to COS school based facilitators. These facilitators are community volunteers trained to assess children for eligibility into the project. Needs assessments are conducted through the use of child intake questionnaires that are administered to eligible children and parents/guardians. During home visits siblings are also assessed. Non-eligible children are directly referred to relevant service providers.

RESULTS

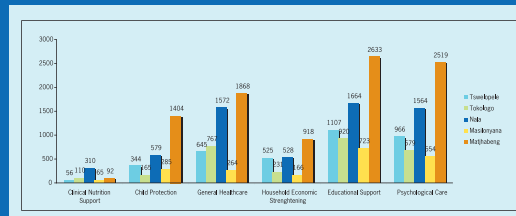
According to the 7863 completed assessments, needs range from one to more than six services. Figure 1 shows the categories in order of need.

OVERALL SERVICES NEEDED BY CHILDREN AS PER NEEDS ASSESSMENTS CONDUCTED FROM OCTOBER 2008 TO APRIL 2011



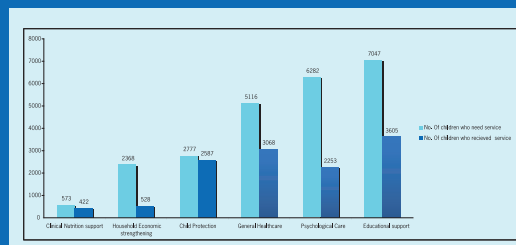
Services sub-categories	
Clinical Nutrition Support	Household Economic Strengthening
Nutritional assessment and counselling	Social assistance (grants)
Clinical nutritional supplementation	Asset growth and protection
Child Protection	Income growth
Birth certificates	Educational Support
Identity documents	School uniform and other materials
Memory work	Homework support
General Healthcare	Psychological Care
Immunisation	DoE counselling
Other healthcare service	Therapeutic sessions
	Support groups

FIGURE 2. SERVICES NEEDED BY CHILDREN PER CATEGORY AND DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY FROM OCTOBER 2008 TO APRIL 2011



The most needed services are educational support, psychological care and general healthcare in Matjhabeng and Nala. These two municipalities have the highest number of schools participating in the programme.

FIGURE 3. COMPARISON OF SERVICE REQUIRED BY CHILDREN AND SERVICES PROVIDED FROM OCTOBER 2008 TO APRIL 2011



Clinical nutrition support appears to be the lowest needed service because COS lacks the health professionals to assess clinical nutrition requirements. COS is making efforts to build partnerships with relevant service providers.

Circles of Support's current partners include: Free State Department of Education, Lesedi Lechabile Hospice, Family and Marriage Association of South Africa, Monyakeng Aids Group and Cancer Association of South Africa. At present the programme is working at obtaining partnership with the Goldfields hospice. The project works closely with the Free State Department of Home Affairs and the Department of Health to ensure that children in the project receive the right to citizenship as well as routine primary health care.

CONCLUSION

There is a substantial gap between children in need of services and those receiving them. This data will be shared with the Free State Departments of Education, Social Development, Home Affairs and Health, humanitarian organisations, communities, local municipalities and the 90 schools to inform future planning. COS will also conduct an assessment to establish the causes of service provision gaps. We aim to raise awareness of the impact of HIV and AIDS on children in schools, seek policy change towards addressing the root causes and expansion of service provision.

