



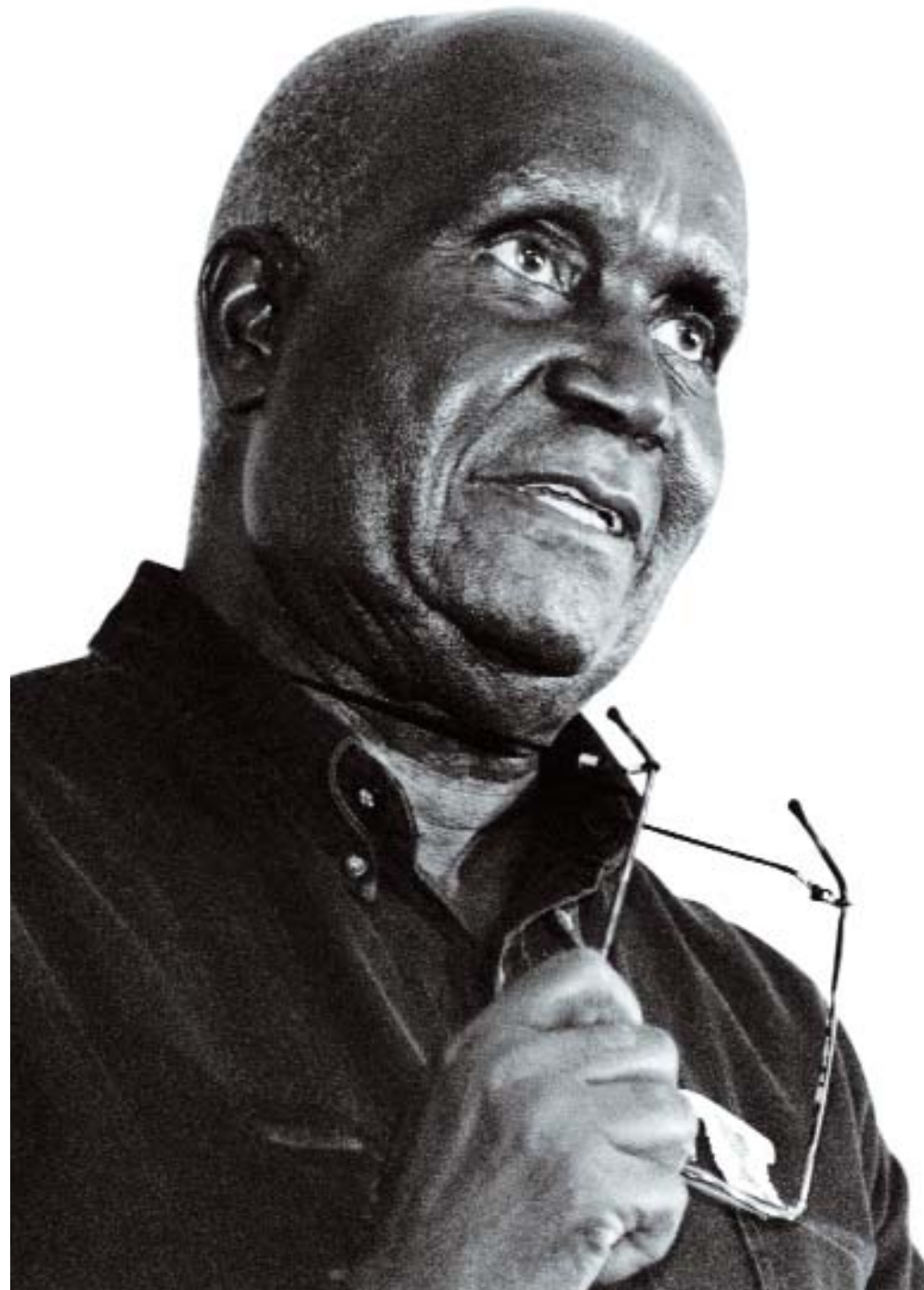
Telling our Stories:
Children Deal with Loss, Grief and Transition.



a project undertaken by CARE International Zambia
with guidance from Family Health International
through funding by USAID

Table Of Contents

Foreword	5
Acknowledgements	7
1. Collecting Children’s Stories	9
Introduction	9
Overview of the Process	9
The Design in Detail	11
Ethical Considerations	13
Summary	14
2. The Children Tell Their Stories	17
3. Dealing with Loss, Grief and Transition	58
How do Children Experience Grief?	58
Grief Comes in Stages	59
How can Adults Help?	60
<i>When the Family is Healthy and Things are Still Normal</i>	60
<i>When a Parent is Terminally Ill</i>	61
<i>When a Parent Dies</i>	61
<i>Attending Funerals</i>	62
<i>Remembering Parents</i>	62
<i>The Importance of Extended Family</i>	63
<i>Providing Long-term Emotional Support to Families</i>	63
A Final Word	64
Annex 1: Consent Form	67



Dr Kenneth Kaunda
First President of Zambia and Founder of the Kenneth Kaunda Children's Foundation

Telling our Stories: Children Deal with Loss, Grief and Transition.

Foreword

Zambia's first known AIDS case was recognised in 1984 at UTH. Little at that time were we aware that the future would bring a nightmare so large and horrific. Today, nearly twenty years later Zambia is facing an HIV prevalence of nearly 20% and burying nearly 200 persons daily because of AIDS. Many of these persons are in the prime of their lives. In the early days of the epidemic, we never imagined HIV would take such a terrible toll to society.

However, it does not stop with just the death of individuals, as horrible a loss to our nation as that is. Countless, nearly 1.2 million as of 2003, children have been left behind. Community and family members are to be commended for their more than gallant efforts to take in child after child and do their absolute best with those children in the face of continuous hardships.

Dealing with the astronomic number of orphans is a new phenomenon for which we have no evident solution. A new society is emerging absent of parents and the love and nurturing they provide to their children.

Our children are crying for our assistance. They need not only material support and education, but love. Of equal importance, they need an opportunity to grieve and to tell the memories of their parents. We must learn how to help children grieve and to cope with our own grief in order to help children cope with theirs.

The stories in this book will make you cry. Let our tears not just be tears but a call to action. Together as one nation and one people, we can overcome HIV. We can stop it and we can stop the impact of this terrible pandemic on our nation.

One Africa. One hope. One Zambia. One Nation.
Together we can fight and conquer AIDS.

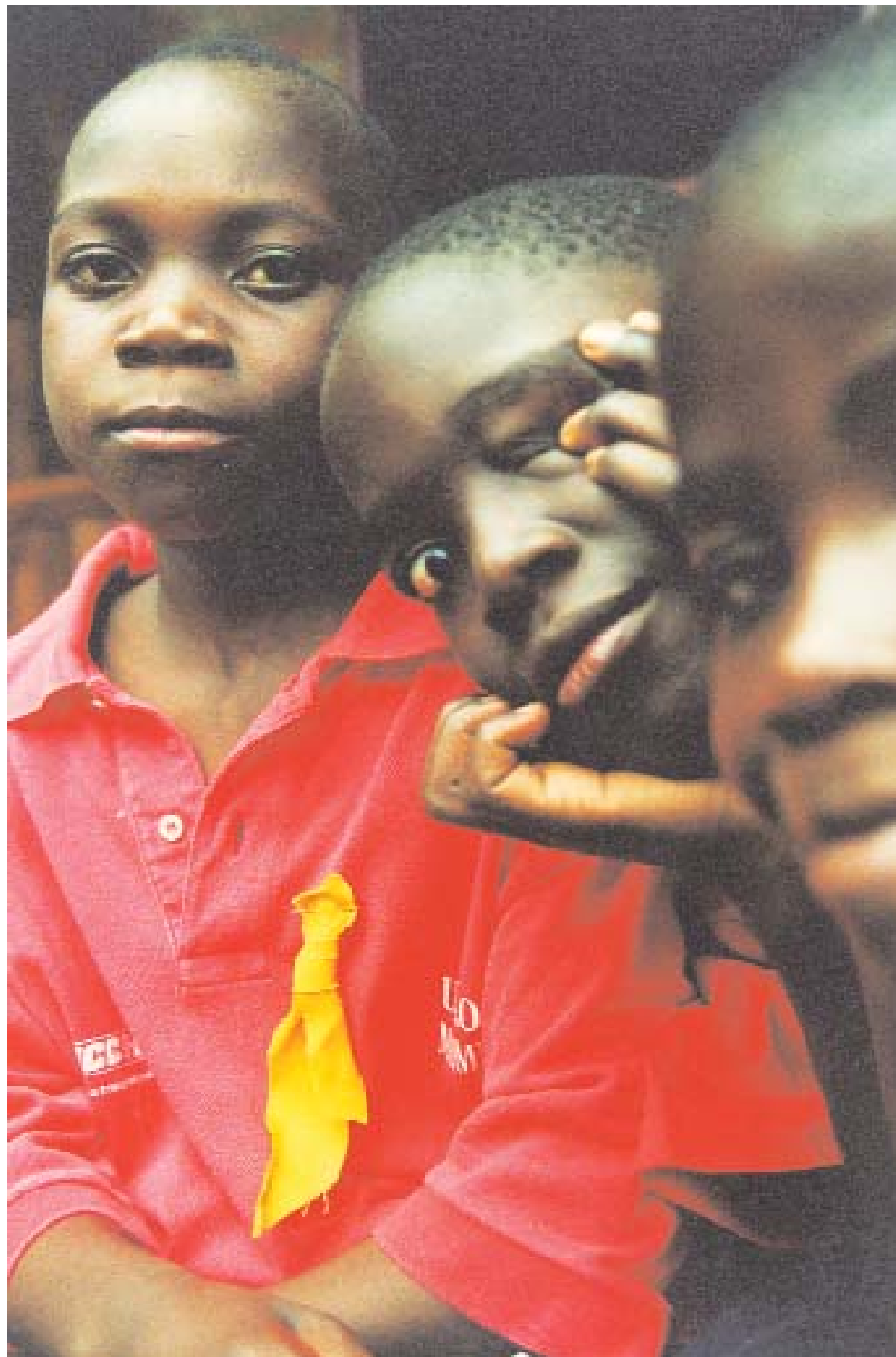
A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "K.D. KAUNDA". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Kenneth D. Kaunda
First President of Zambia
Chairman, Kenneth Kaunda Children of Africa Foundation

Acknowledgements

Many people have contributed to this book and we wish to thank them all:
Firstly, our thanks go to Felly Nkweto Simmonds, the Project Leader and author, who shaped the initial idea into a well-designed and worthy project. Felly inspired us all with her passion for this work and with her personal commitment to the well-being of every child;
Felly was supported by a strong project team:
Project Counsellor, Angela Gondwe Malik; Photographer, James Howlett;
Counsellors Abson Gondwe, Claire Tembo and Viola Kachingwe;
the 'Radio Assassin' Jabulani Chiwaula; Artist, Paul Chongo and Editorial Assistants Victoria Murgatroyd and Don Craft.
Each contributed to the success of the project in a unique way and we are grateful for their skill and commitment;
Many thanks go to the staff at the Pestalozzi Children's Trust in Kasisi for providing the most wonderful space and supportive environment for the project workshop;
Our grateful appreciation also goes to all the parents, guardians and carers who gave us permission to talk to their children;
Most of all, we are indebted to those children who took part in this project. Their courage, resilience and spirit are an inspiration to us all.
This book is dedicated to the memory of all the parents we have lost.

Kate Greenaway	Karen Doll Manda
Assistant Country Director	Country Director
CARE International Zambia	Family Health International Zambia



Telling our Stories: Children Deal with Loss, Grief and Transition.

Chapter One: Collecting Children's Stories

Introduction

The HIV/AIDS pandemic has had a devastating effect on families in Zambia. The number of orphans is growing daily. Many of these children live in the poorest households and do not have access to adequate shelter, food, health care and education. Under the most difficult circumstances, many families are struggling to provide for increasing numbers of orphaned children in their homes.

Children are suffering on both economic and emotional levels. This suffering begins long before parents actually die and continues long afterwards. Some children not only lose their parents but also may eventually lose their siblings, their homes and perhaps, most tragically, their contact with extended families. Children are increasingly traumatized by this new phenomenon of multiple loss and they need both psychosocial and material support.

This book is the product of a psychosocial project for a group of orphaned and vulnerable children in Lusaka. It is intended as a tool for discussion and reflection, to help children acknowledge and share their own experiences of loss and to enable guardians, parents, teachers and caring adults to help children deal more effectively with emotional issues. It contains not only stories but practical tips and information about the grieving process and how to help children through these difficult times.

The children of this book tell us of the loss of their parents and their memories of them. They challenge us with their courage and candid words. Some speak with anger and sadness of caring for ill and dying parents and of witnessing their deaths. Some share their worries and concerns for surviving parents, and others relate their experience of family breakdown, of ending up on the street and of being abandoned by parents who were no longer able to cope.

The children's stories speak to us of the fundamental need to honour and nurture the memories of all the parents we have lost as a nation. These memories are the building blocks of Zambia's future - a future where Zambians know who they are and where they come from; where language, customs and traditions are remembered and honoured; where parenting skills and good citizenship are passed from generation to generation and where children light up our lives.



Children at the workshop

Overview Of The Process



Project counsellor during home visits



Workshop counsellor and his home group

Through years of working with children in AIDS-affected countries, CARE and FHI staff have witnessed and experienced the impact of the pandemic on children and their caregivers. In mid-2002, as an outcome of extensive research on the psychosocial needs of children conducted by Family Health International and CARE, we decided that it was important to document children's experiences of loss, grief and transition in order to learn how to help each other heal. The book is intended not only to educate people about the realities faced by our children but to serve as a starting point for discussion, advocacy, information-sharing and healing.

We recognized through our work in the field that in order to reach children, it is necessary to support and sensitize the adults that interact with them. The key purpose of this book is to help the guardians, parents and caregivers of children to understand and assist children to cope with the distressing changes in their lives.

In order to to assist children in dealing with their loss, and to simultaneously capture the information we needed, a psychosocial intervention was designed. Our aim was to offer a supportive and therapeutic environment in which the children could speak about their experiences, which would allow us to capture their feelings and memories and record them in a book of their own words. The project leader contributed greatly to the design of this work and to the implementation of the psychosocial intervention.

Twenty children were recommended to the project by individual sources and child welfare agencies familiar with its purpose. After several meetings with the project leader, twenty children were accepted for participation in the project on the basis of their ability to articulate their histories and feelings, the support of their guardians and the ease of access to on-going psychosocial support for each child.

During the preparatory phase of home visits and discussions, the project team designed a five-day residential workshop programme that would provide the children with professional support and planned exercises aimed at enabling them to explore their memories and feelings. The purpose of the workshop was to elicit and capture each child's story for use in this book. Music, art, dance and other creative exercises were used to help the children to express their feelings.

Subsequent to the workshop, small support groups were formed and on-going psychosocial support from the relevant community-based projects/individuals was provided to ensure on-going support to the children and their families following the workshop.

The Design in Detail
Selection of children

The design of this project began in August 2002. By November, twenty children, aged between ten and fourteen years old, had been identified to participate in the project. Due to logistical considerations for the project and in an attempt to provide longer-term support to the children and their families, the children from this book were drawn from communities in and around Lusaka only. All the children were either orphaned or otherwise vulnerable. The rationale for the age category was based primarily on the ability of the children to articulate their changed circumstances due to the death of a parent or both parents and/or the loss of another close family member. One of the key criteria for identifying those children to take part in the project was the assurance that they would have access to psychosocial support both during and after the project.

The project leader then approached all the children's parents/guardians to explain the aim and methodology of the project and how the children would be involved. This provided an opportunity for parents/guardians to ask questions and voice their concerns, as well as an opportunity for the project leader to meet the children for the first time. The project leader was always accompanied either by a project counsellor or by carers and staff from the participating organisations.

The Workshop Setting

Several weeks of interviews and preparation culminated in a 5-day residential workshop where children and the project team met together to work on the book. The venue, Pestalozzi Children's Trust (PCT) at Kasisi, was chosen as the site for the workshop because it provided a safe, secure and welcoming environment. Located in a rural setting just outside the city of Lusaka, PCT provided a sense of novelty and adventure.

Several experienced resource people were contracted to help with the workshop, many of whom came from those centres familiar to the children. This was organised in a deliberate attempt to ensure post-project counselling support for the children. Before the workshop, the children were divided into four groups, known as 'home groups'; each identified by a colour -- yellow, red, blue or green -- with a counsellor assigned to each.

On the first day, children were collected from designated meeting places. Each child was welcomed onto the bus by the workshop resource people, introduced to their counsellor and given a coloured ribbon denoting their 'home group'. By the time the group arrived at workshop, everyone knew their counsellor and the other members of the 'home group' so that no one felt isolated. The rest of the first day was taken up with games and activities that enabled everyone to get to know each other. By the end of the day, it was hard to imagine that the children had only met earlier that day; such was the camaraderie between them.



Picking up children for workshop



Children pressing paper during a paper-making workshop.



Sunday walk to the lake



Project leader and lead counsellor recording children's narratives

Memory Work Sessions

For the project leader and counsellors, the 'memory work' sessions were core to the workshop experience. Each child spent a dedicated half an hour or more with the psychologist talking about their parents. A few of the children brought photographs of their parents to the session. Nearly all the children broke down as they remembered their parents, but they talked willingly and openly about how they felt and about their lives. Only the children whose parents had died when they were babies, those who had no clear memories, found the sessions difficult. As one girl explained, no one had ever talked to her about her mother before. She hoped that she would be able to talk to her relatives about her mother in future.

After the workshop, counsellors were on hand to talk to and comfort the children. Most of the children took the experience in their stride and resumed their creative activities with little fuss. When the children were asked to draw how they felt, during the art session, those who had found it hardest to express themselves verbally created the most dramatic and colourful paintings.

Creative Work

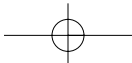
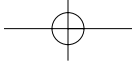


Drawing class

For the children, their main experiences of participating in the workshop were the creative work and their interaction with the other children. All the children enthusiastically took part in all the activities such as beadwork and paper art work, games and other group activities such as singing, dancing and going for walks.

On the first day, each child was given a disposable camera. The idea was to enable the children, who had been the 'subjects' of the camera for the project, to learn how to create their own photographic images. Some of the more enthusiastic had taken all their shots by the end of the first day. The photos taken by the children themselves, together with some taken by the project photographer, have been compiled into individual albums and given to each child as a memento of their participation in the project.

Both A radio journalist and popular local radio DJ was on hand during the workshop activities to record the children's words and to provide additional 'in house' entertainment. The children enjoyed all the musical activities, which included listening and dancing to tapes and CDs, as well as making music themselves. Our resident DJ and radio journalist also recorded words and songs from the workshop, which they later edited into a tape with a copy for each child. In the evenings after supper, the project team joined in with the group activities, which were often centred on singing hymns led by the children themselves.



Photographs

As well as their stories, the entire workshop was documented in photographs. The children adapted to the presence of the camera, so much so that they hardly noticed that photos were being taken. During the course of the workshop, the children became visibly more relaxed and this transformation is clearly seen through the photographs that were taken throughout. Some of the children are barely recognisable as the same children, from the photographs taken when we first met them at their homes.



Children taking photos

Endings

Over the five days spent at the workshop, the children formed great bonds between one another. On the final evening, each child drew a name out of a hat and a card was made for the person whose name each child had picked. These cards were then presented at the farewell session.

The final morning was filled with the playing of games, the exchanging of cards and the taking of final photographs. The atmosphere was relaxed and happy as children said their goodbyes to each other and to the staff at Kasisi. Music played throughout the morning as we cleared up and packed, ready for the journey home.

The journey home was a mixture of joy and sadness. The children sang all the way. At each stopping place, even the most brave shed tears of farewell.



Farewells

Ethical Considerations



Remembering the children

A publication of this nature, one that exposes the innermost feelings of children, raises important ethical considerations related to consent and the right to privacy.

CARE Zambia and Family Health International considered the ethical issues around the development of this book very carefully. From the outset, consent to include the selected children was sought from their parents/guardians. Both they and the children were made aware that what the children might say would be used in the book and that their words would be accompanied by photographs. A consent form was designed to protect the families, the children, the sponsoring organisation and its donor.

The consent form clearly details:

- The background to the project;
- The benefits to the children as well as the potential disadvantages;
- The project methodology and what would happen as part of the project;
- That photographs would be taken of the children and the limitations on their use;
- That the children would be invited to participate in a five-day supervised residential workshop.

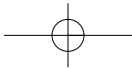
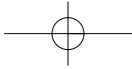
Accompanied by either the project counsellor or a teacher, the project leader met with every parent/guardian to go through the consent form. Parents/guardians were given the opportunity to keep the consent form for a few days to go over it with other family members before they signed it. Despite the detailed discussions about consent, which outlined both the potential benefits and disadvantages, parents and guardians overwhelmingly supported their child's participation in the project.

Putting children's words in a public document raises questions about what should and should not be included. Some of the issues that the children disclosed were far too personal for publication and others had implications for surviving parents, guardians and carers. We have not included personal information about parents, guardians or carers that might be viewed as detrimental to them.

Despite consent being given by each of the children's parents/guardians, we do acknowledge that members of the extended family may feel aggrieved by some of the private experiences that the children have brought out into the public domain. We hope that people who do feel aggrieved will also understand the value of this transparency, to all of us, as we learn to speak out about HIV and its impact on our lives.

Photographs could be considered as an invasion of privacy. Great care has therefore been taken to ensure that the photographs have been used to enhance the quality of the life story and guarantee the integrity of the children in them.

In this publication, we have added the names of deceased parents. These names (and the consent to print them) were given to us by the children and their guardians. This information was viewed as important in a book about remembering parents - that we acknowledge parents as individuals and not as vague statistics.



Summary

The project team worked with the children over a period of three months. During this time, the children received individual attention from a group of qualified adults who were able to provide focused emotional support in a friendly environment. Many of the children were shy and withdrawn when we first met them. Some of the children were not confident speaking to us even though these early interactions took place with parents/guardians, carers or teachers present. During subsequent visits, children became more relaxed and outgoing.

The changes in the children's behaviour became even more dramatic at the workshop, away from the home environment. These transformations demonstrate the potential for children to heal and grow through a planned therapeutic intervention.

p10.2 playing with new friends

Our experience in this project suggests that guardians and parents are aware of their limitations in providing support to their children. Many parents/guardians face tremendous challenges in providing the material needs of their families and have little time and energy left to attend to the psychosocial needs of the children in their care. They too are struggling and need both material and psychosocial support.

We recognize that both children and their parents/guardians need help. We hope this book will help both children and adults to explore the issues surrounding loss and grief. We hope the information and suggestions will provide a basis for facing some of these issues and identifying healthy ways to resolve them. The strength of our suggestions is that they can be learned, and they don't cost money. While economic issues remain, we know it's possible for caring adults to meet many of the psychosocial needs of children when guidance and support are available.

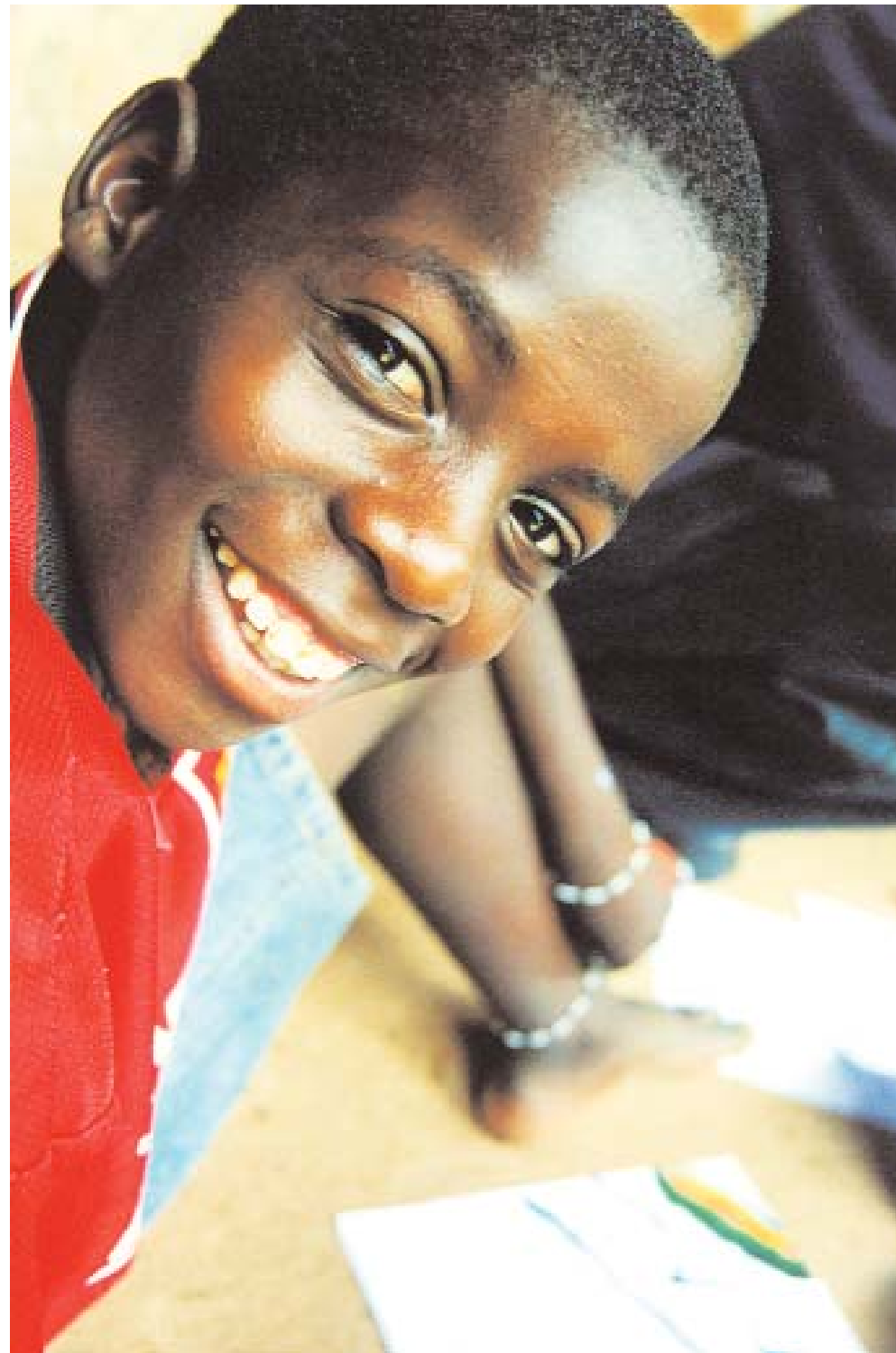
Telling our Stories: Children Deal with Loss, Grief and Transition.

Chapter Two: The Children Tell Their Stories



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mangos & Paul + beads, roll 11 foot
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Paul Lundofu

Paul was born in Mazabuka, Southern Province, in 1990. He wants to be a DJ.



We lived in Livingstone until my mother died. I don't think she was sick. One day I was at home with my mother and my father was at work. My mother said to me, 'I'm going to sleep, wake me up if someone comes'.

When my father came back, he asked me where she was. I told him that she was asleep. He went into the house and I was surprised when I heard him crying. Then a neighbour came and told me to go and play with friends.

At first, I didn't know what had happened and thought that maybe my father was crying because my mother had become ill. Then many people started to come to the house. They were all crying. It was only then that I realised that my mother was dead. Nobody told me.

A short while after my mother died, my father and I left Livingstone. My father did not tell me where we were going; he just told me that we were leaving. We went on the train all the way to Mbeya, in Tanzania.

In Mbeya, we got off the train and went to the bus station. Then my father said to me, 'Wait here, I will be back.' I waited until dark, but my father did not come back.

A boy who had seen me waiting started to talk to me in a language that I didn't understand very well. He asked me what I was waiting for and I told him I was waiting for my father. The boy looked after me, and kept asking me if my father was back. When it got dark, he took me to his home. His mother and father looked after me for four months.

At first, they said I could stay with them and go to school until my father came back. When he did not come back, the father brought me back to Zambia and took me to Kabwata police station in Lusaka. The police looked after me until they took me to the YWCA where I stayed for four months. After that, I was brought to live at the Anglican Children's Project.

When I think of my father I feel very sad because of the way he left me at the bus station in Mbeya. I feel sad about my mother's death.

I think my father was from Mbeya. If he came back, I wouldn't say anything to him. I don't want to see him. Sometimes when I feel sad, I cry.

Paul's mother, Misodzi, died in 1998 and his father, Felix Lundofu, disappeared in Tanzania soon afterwards.



A caring community will remember that...

Children need to know members of their extended family and where they live. Parents can make sure that children know who their relatives are. Members of the extended family are also responsible for the welfare of the children in the wider family. When parents cannot cope, the whole family can help to protect them.



Fridah Cubby

Fridah was born in Kitwe, Copperbelt Province, in 1991. She wants to be a lawyer.



My mother liked to have photographs taken of us together. The photographs are with my grandmother. My grandmother says that she will give them to me when I grow up. I'm not happy that I have to wait for them. I would like to have them now. If I had them, I would stick them on the wall by my bed.

My mother was brown, tall and slim with long hair. She had her hair done at a saloon in Northmead. My mother often took me into town to buy clothes and shoes. I like trousers. I don't like dresses.

My mother wanted to be a lawyer, but she got sick. When she was sick, she asked me what I wanted to be when I grew up. She told me that she had wanted to become a lawyer to help

Zambia develop. She said that it would be good if I became a lawyer. That is when I started thinking about becoming a lawyer. Now I want to become a lawyer. I think my mother would be very pleased. I want to do something that my mother wanted me to do.

When my mother was sick, I looked after her. One day she was very ill and I found a taxi to take her to the hospital. She died in the taxi on the way to the hospital. Before she died, she said goodbye and kissed me.

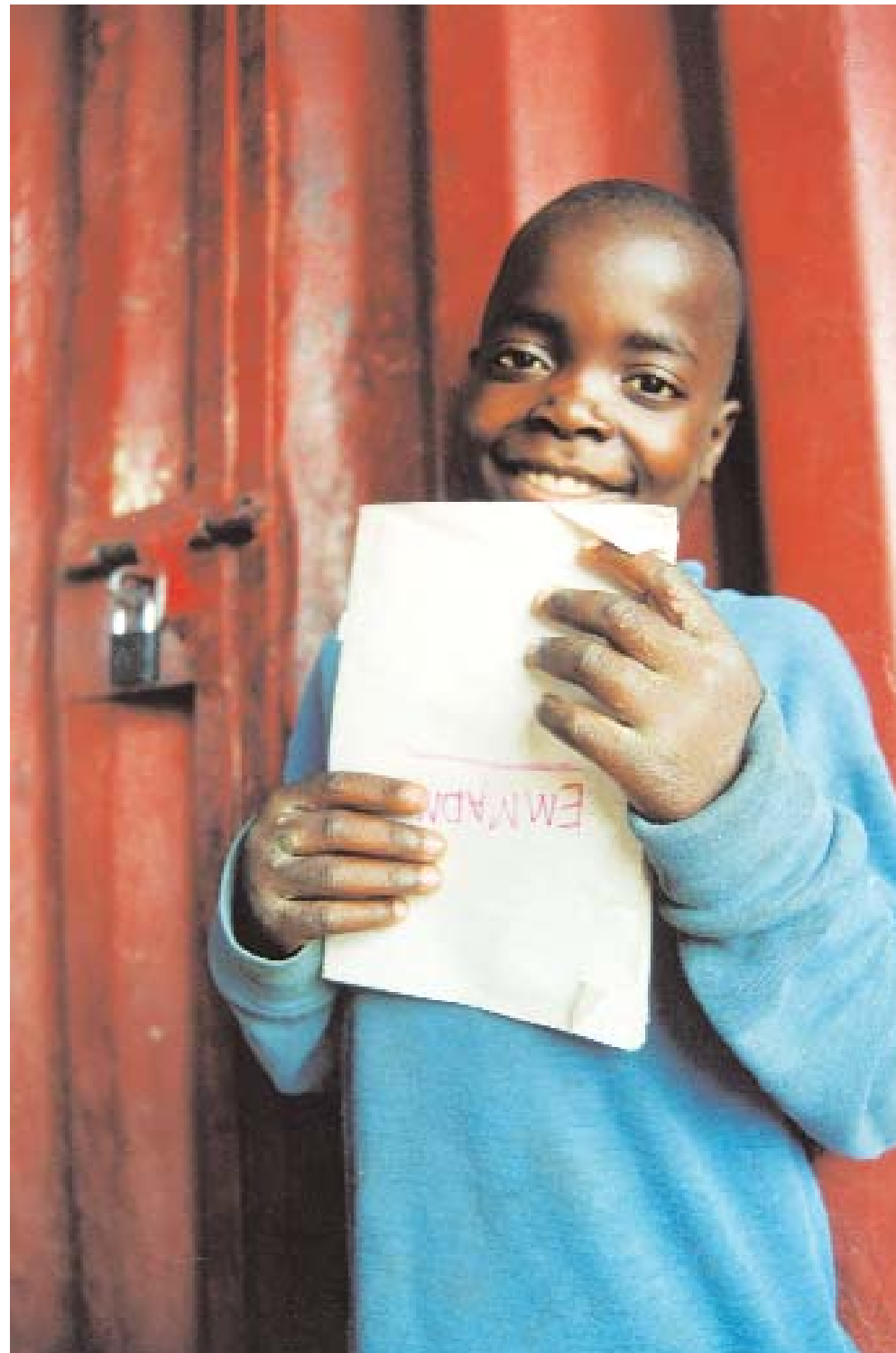
She said, 'You should concentrate on going to school'. That was the last thing my mother said to me. She loved me very much because I was her last-born child. I really loved my mother. I still love her. I miss her very much.

Fridah's mother, Annie Chikolokoso, died in 1999.



A caring community will remember that...

The family of a parent who is dying can help the parent to accept that they may not live much longer and encourage them to talk to their children about the future. A parent's wish for a child's future is important in guiding the child to set goals and have a positive vision of the future. However, parental guidance should not be used to force children to do things that they do not want to do.



Sunday Phiri

Sunday was born in Chipata, Eastern Province, in 1991. He wants to be a bus driver.



My mother and father were not staying together when she died. When my mother and father divorced, I lived with her in Kanyama compound. We lived by ourselves.

My mother was sick and then she died. After she died, I lived with some neighbours for a week but they said that they didn't have enough food to feed me. That is when I went to live on the street because I had nowhere to go.

On the first day, I slept near the city market in a cardboard box. I had no money and nothing to eat. There is no sharing on the street. I used to beg for money in town near Hungry Lion and City Market. Later I joined a group of boys and moved around with them. I stayed on the street for one year.

We begged for money to pay for food and clothes. Sometimes, when our clothes were old, we begged for some money and bought new clothes. We threw away our old clothes.

Workers from Fountain of Hope took me from the street. Now I feel good that they took me because life is hard on the street.

I don't want to go back to the street because you can get into trouble. If the small ones make money, the big boys take it away from them. If they refuse, they are beaten. I was never beaten because each time the big boys asked for money, I gave them all my money.

When I think about my mother, I miss her. I don't know where my father is. I only know that he is in Chipata. If someone knows where my father is, I would like to see him and my brother.

Sunday's mother, Mary Phiri, died in 2001.



A caring community will remember that...

Children are everyone's responsibility. When a child loses both parents, the extended family and the community can help children who have nowhere to live. If children do not have any family to go to, a community should know where to take children so they will be cared for. These can be government departments responsible for the welfare of children, church groups or non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that look after children.



Lucy Tembo

Lucy was born in Mumbwa, Central Province, in 1990.
She does not know what she wants to do when she grows up.



I don't remember how we used to live before my parents became sick.

I remember my mother. She was brown. She used to buy me clothes, shoes and dresses. I remember when she could see and when she became blind. My mother became blind after my father died. After my mother became blind, I went with her to the market to beg for food if we had no money. Sometimes I took her to visit her friends. I used to collect water for her.

I remember my father. He was also brown. He was short. He used to work for his friends. My father also became blind before he died.

I stopped going to school when my mother died. Now I stay with my uncle, auntie and my grandmother. I stay at home to look after the children. I also clean the house.

I don't know what I want to do when I grow up.

**Lucy has lost both parents.
She does not remember when they died.**

A caring community will remember that...

Children who suffer severe trauma may require special interventions to cater for their specific needs. Information on local resources, such as child counselling, special needs education programmes and other state interventions should be available in the community.





Jones Mbewe

Jones was born in Lusaka, in 1988.
He wants to be an accountant.



My father was born in a family of five. He had three brothers and one sister. I have five sisters and four brothers. Before my father died we all lived together. My father used to do temporary work and earn enough money to buy food for the family. Then he became sick. When he was sick, he had to go to the hospital many times. When my father was alive, his brothers were very helpful. They bought medicine for my father and food for us.

What I remember best about my father is that before he was sick, he took me on many journeys. Once we went on a long journey by bus from Lusaka to Chipata to see my grandmother. We had to wake up at 04.00 hours and catch the bus at 05.00 hours. It was a kind of adventure we took together. Before he died, my father had promised to take me on a journey on the Independence holiday, 24th October 2000. However, he became very sick and at 1100 hours on the 17th October 2000, he died.

My father was buried on 21st October at Chingwerere cemetery. I was not allowed to go to my father's burial. My young brother and sister were not allowed to go either. We were taken to some relatives in Chilenje. I felt sad because I wanted to go to the burial.

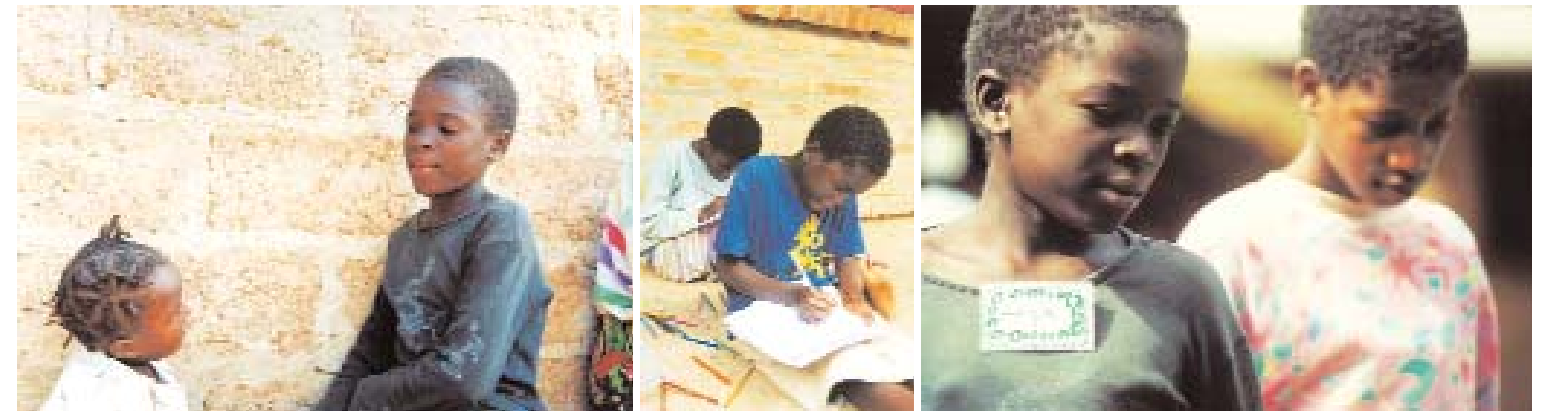
The death of my father has turned everything upside down. We used to live together as one big family. He has left my mother sick and helpless. Now my mother lives in Matero, in our house, with one of my sisters and two of my brothers. My mother has not been well since my father died. She is on TB treatment. My father's relatives help my mother to buy her TB medicine.

These days I am worried about my mother because she is very ill. I'm praying for my mother to recover.

**Jones' father, Jones Mbewe, died in 2000.
It is with sadness that we acknowledge the passing away of Jones' mother,
Agnes Zulu Mbewe, on 30th January 2003.**

A caring community will remember that...

When a parent dies, children too need to grieve. They may want to attend the burial and to take part in the funeral rituals. Attending funerals help children to take part in a family's expression of loss. When children participate, a caring adult can give them emotional support and explain what is going on, so that they understand what is happening. Preventing children from participating can cause more sadness and confusion later on.



I remember both my mother and my father but I remember my father best. My father died in 1998. My mother died in 1999.

When I was small, I remember that my father used to give me a bath. If he wanted some water, he would send me to get it. My father had a job but I don't know what he did. He looked after us very well and bought food and clothes for the family.

I remember that my mother used to look after me. She bought me clothes and washed my clothes.

When my mother smacked me, I thought that she was bad. Now I think she was good because

I was quarrelsome and used to fight. I have stopped fighting because my auntie has told me to stop.

I think that if my mother were alive, I would live in the same house with her. Now, I move from home to home. Sometimes I stay with my grandmother in Kalingalinga or with my auntie in Ng'ombe or with my uncle in Kalingalinga. I like staying with my grandmother because she doesn't beat or scold me. I don't really like it when I have to keep moving to a new place.

When I grow up I want to be a nurse because they help the sick and give them medicine and injections.

**Leya's father, Charles Kamanga died in 1998.
Her mother Selina Phiri died in 1999.**

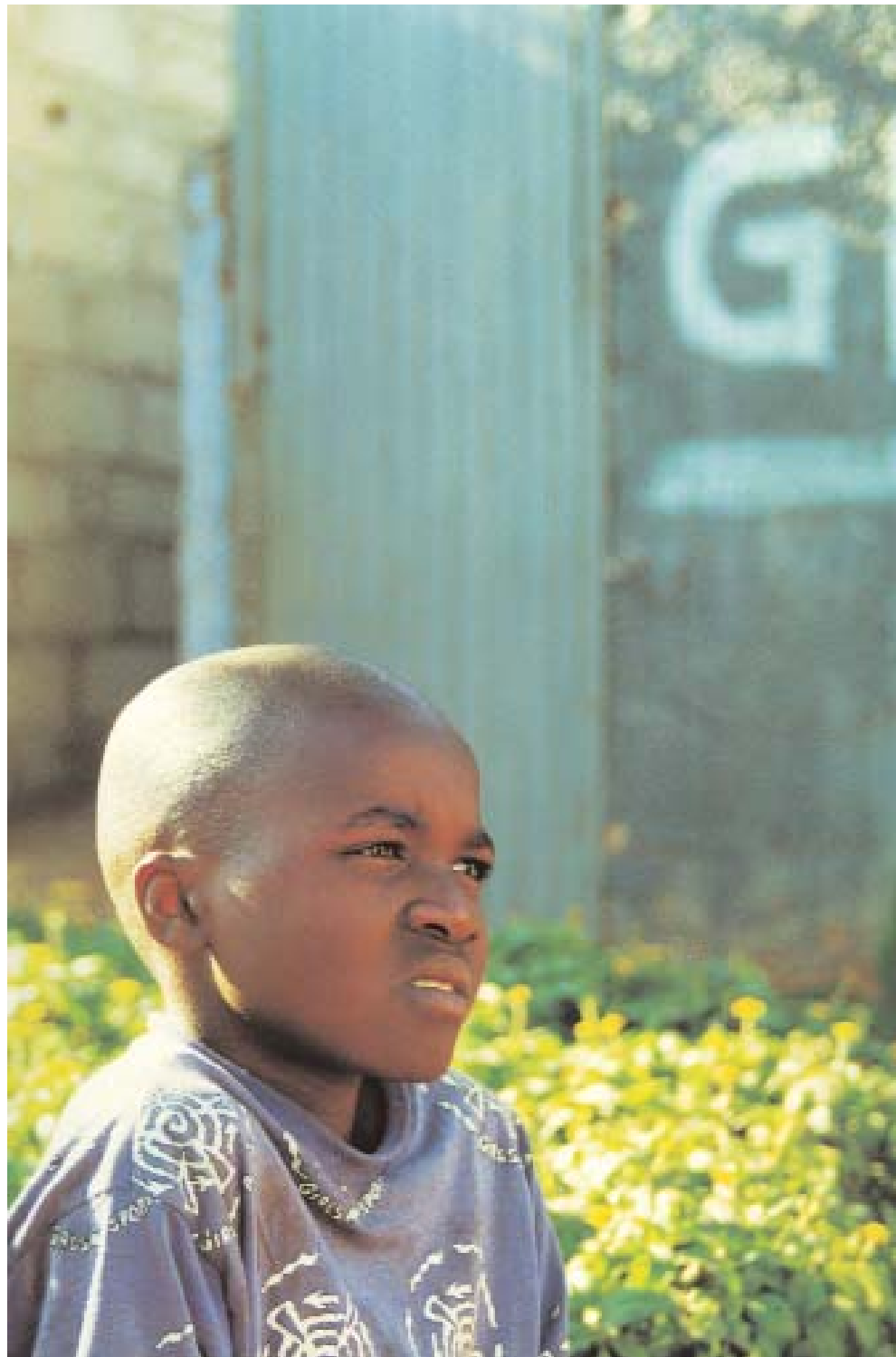
Leya Kamanga

Leya was born in Lusaka in 1990.
She wants to be a nurse.



A caring community will remember that...

Children need a stable home in which to live, especially if both parents have died. Families need to decide where a child should live after taking into account that a stable, long-term arrangement is best for the child. As far as possible, the child should be involved and helped to understand why a particular decision is made. When a guardian is chosen, arrangements can be made within the extended family to ensure adequate material and emotional support are provided to the appointed guardian.



Kaleb Zimba

Kaleb was born in Chama, Eastern Province, in 1989. He wants to be President of America.



I was three years old when my father left my mother and me in the village, to come to Lusaka. When he found a job as a security guard, we joined him. We lived in George compound.

Both my father and my mother were sick. My aunt took my mother to her house, to look after her and my sister Betty. I stayed with my father. My father was sick for just a short period. He had pneumonia. We were going to shift from the house that we lived in because we had been evicted, when he died.

This is how it happened. My father slept on one side of the room and I slept on the other. One night I was scared to sleep on my side of the room and I moved to where my father was. When I called out to him, he did not answer. I went to a neighbour's house to tell them that my father was not talking. They told me to go back and shake my father to see if he was awake. When I shook him, I felt that he was stiff

so I went and told the neighbour. The neighbour came and told me that my father was dead. I felt very bad and I started crying. In the morning I walked from George compound to Lilanda to tell my mother and my auntie that my father was dead. I found my mother was very sick and couldn't move.

After a year, my grandfather took my mother to the village, where she died. I did not see my mother before she went to the village. I feel bad about that. I would like to see her.

I liked my father because he always wanted to take us to town. Sometimes my mother would refuse to come with us. My father liked buying us clothes and having our photos taken. I don't know where the photos are.

I wish that my parents were alive. I loved both my father and mother. I feel sad when I think about them.

**Kaleb's father, Godfrey Zimba died in 2000.
His mother, Lucy Phiri Zimba died in 2002.**



A caring community will remember that...

Death and dying is a topic that parents should talk about with their children even when they are well, so that children can understand that it is a natural part of life. When parents are terminally ill it is important that family members help them to talk to their children and to prepare them for dying. Family members and the wider community, such as church elders and Home Based Care volunteers, can help parents and their children with this communication.



Monde Yuyi

Monde was born in Mongu, Western Province, in 1988. She wants to be a nurse.



I used to live with my mother in Mongu. My uncle brought me to Lusaka to live with him and his wife and children. I didn't like staying with them but when I told him I wanted to go back to my mother, he told me that I would stay with them until I get married. He wanted me to get married to a man in Mtendere. I was ten years old. He said I was eating his food and needed to get married so that my husband would feed me. I felt bad.

My uncle was sick for a long time. He died in 1999. When he died my aunt wanted me to stay with her and get married. But I didn't want to because I was still young. That's when I ran away.

I left early one morning and started walking on the Great East Road to town because I wanted to go to Mongu. Then I came across a man who asked me my name and where I was going. He asked me to go with him and said that he would take me to Mongu. He said that if I slept with him, then he would take me to

Mongu. I refused. He tried to force me but I ran away crying until I found a bush to hide under and prayed to God that I would find somebody to take me to Mongu.

Later I found a policeman and asked him for the road to Mongu. He then took me to the Social Welfare Department and I stayed with the policeman and woman for two weeks. Then he took me to my aunt and asked her why she was keeping me. The police then took me to the Anglican Children's Project in Kabwata. Later we moved to Chelstone.

My mother doesn't know where I am but my grandmother knows. I visit my grandmother in Mongu. I want to visit my mother. I have not seen her for four years. I will be very happy when I see her.

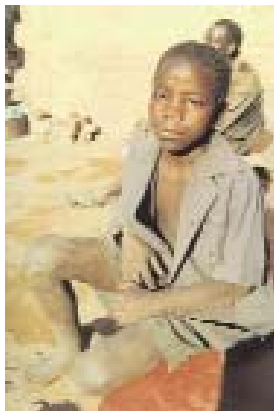
I saw my father two years ago when I went to his house but he just asked me what I was doing there. He did not want me to stay at his house because he has another wife now.

**Monde's father lives in Lusaka.
Her mother lives in Mongu.**



A caring community will remember that...

Even children who have living parents can be vulnerable because of family circumstances. Many children who do not live with their biological families are longing to be with them. It is important that links with living parents and the extended family are maintained, even when children are cared for by charitable organisations. Extended family support to parents who are having problems can be instrumental in helping to reunite children with their parents.



I was a baby when my mother died. I don't remember her. After my mother died, my father married another wife.

I remember my father. He was short, dark and a bit fat. We lived in Ng'ombe compound. My father was self employed and repaired radios.

I don't think my father was sick. They say that my father went mad and left the house. He never came back and has never been found. I think he died. After my father died, I came to live with my grandmother. I like where I stay because we live well.



My stepmother still lives in Ng'ombe. Sometimes I see my stepbrother. When I see my brother, I feel good. I also see my stepmother.

When I think about my father I want to cry. He used to look after me well and we ate well. He used to buy me clothes and everything. He paid for me to go to school.

I want to be a taxi driver so that I can have money to build a house and to buy things.

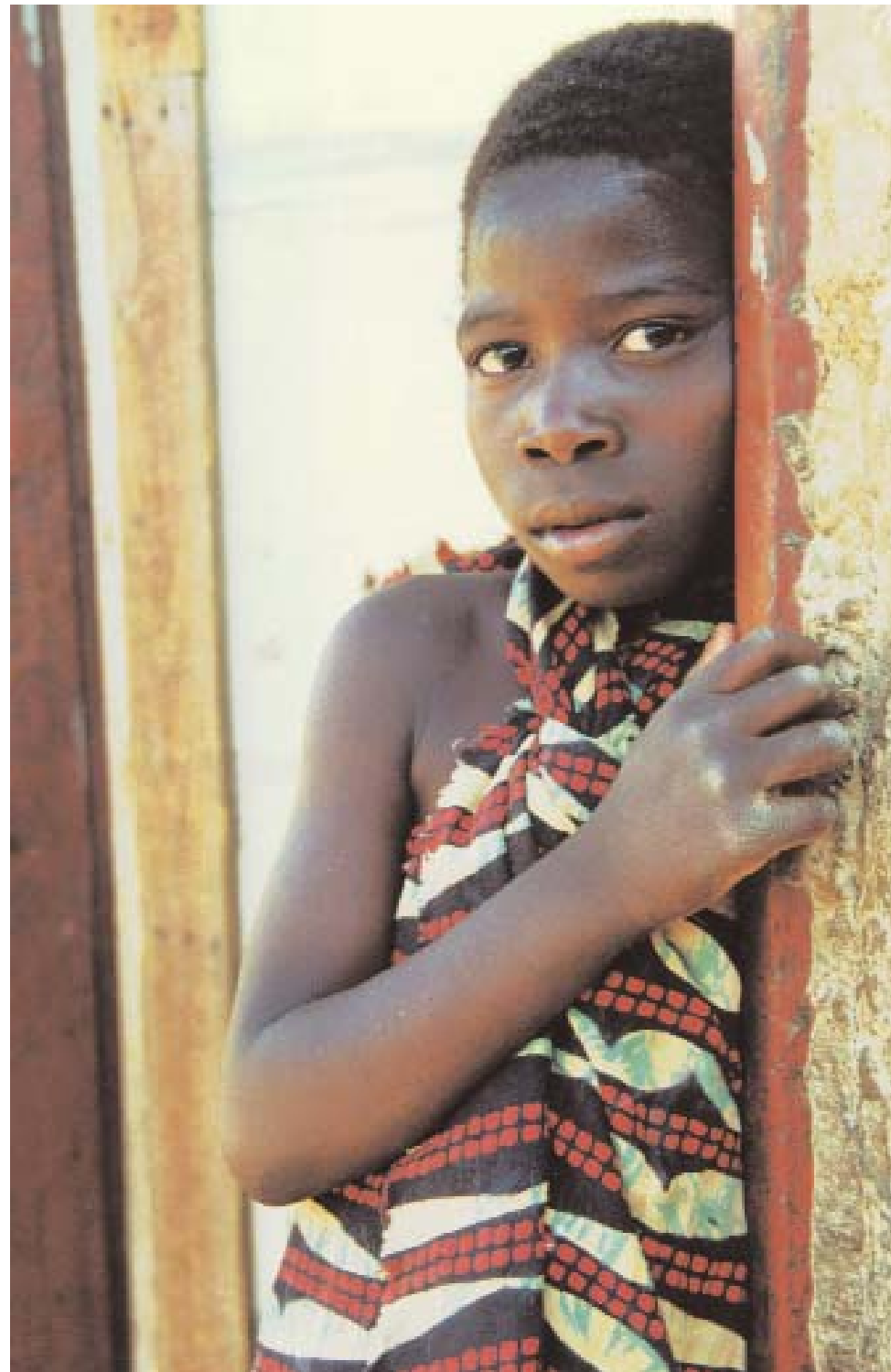
Benson's mother, Brenda Zimba died in 1995. His father, Sunday Zimba, disappeared in 1998.



A caring community will remember that...

In many cases when both parents die, different members of the extended family look after the children. Children can deal more easily with the loss of their parents when they are helped to keep in touch with their siblings. In cases where one parent dies and the surviving parent remarries, children still need to maintain links with brothers and sisters and visit them whenever possible.

Benson Zimba
Benson was born in Lusaka, in 1990.
He wants to be a taxi driver.



Fisyani Ngulube

Fisyani was born in Lundazi, Eastern Province, in 1991. She wants to be a teacher.



My mother was light and short with long hair. She was fat. My mother died after she was sick. My father still lives in the village. He is not well because he was in a car accident. He cannot come to see me.

Before my mother was sick, my older brother and I lived with her in Lundazi. She looked after us. She used to sweep the house, wash our clothes, cook, and clean the plates. She used to give me a bath.

My mother worked in the fields with my brother. They grew maize, beans, pumpkins and sweet potatoes. It was good and we could eat all the things she grew.

If my mother were alive today, I would live well. In the mornings and evenings, she would give me tea, and rice or nshima. She would buy me clothes. I would like to have skirts, dresses and shorts.

If my mother were alive, I would be in school. I feel sad when I talk about my mother.

Fisyani's mother, Lucy Ngulube, died in 1999. Her father lives in Lundazi.



A caring community will remember that...

It is normal for children to feel sad when they remember their parents. Children express this sadness in different ways and must be helped to process this sadness appropriately. Talking about the parents that they have lost is one way to do this, even if it makes them cry. Guardians and surviving parents can reinforce happy, loving memories by talking with children, giving them a sense of history, belonging and identity.



Komani Banda

Komani was born in Livingstone, Southern Province, in 1988. He wants to be an accountant and a pastor.



When I was a baby, my grandmother in Livingstone looked after me. My mother was a businesswoman. She used to go to Zimbabwe to buy things to sell in Zambia. When my mother's business was not going well, she took me to Kitwe to live with my uncle and his wife.

My uncle died in 1992 and my aunt did not look after me well. She used to stay away from the house and leave me to do the housework even though I was small. I spent most of the time with my friends wandering around town, especially the market.

In 1994 when I was 6 years old, I ran away from Kitwe with my friends. We went to Lusaka on a train. Because we had no money to buy tickets, we hid in a toilet on the train and locked the door.

In Lusaka, we met more friends who lived on the street. At first, my friends and I lived on Cairo Road. When we could sleep, we slept on

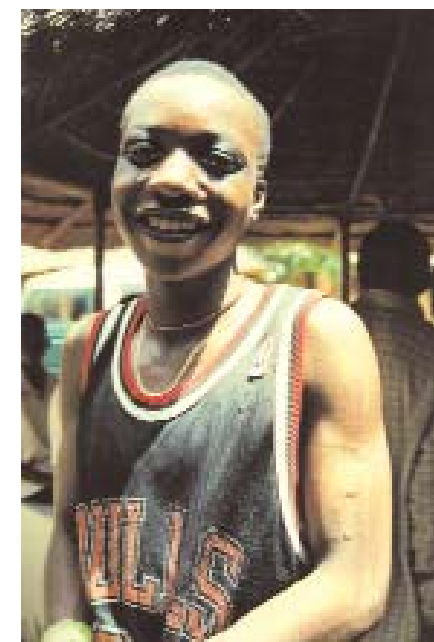
benches. Sometimes we slept in trenches under the roads. We cooked and ate on the street. We begged for money to buy food and drugs.

Most of the time, we did not sleep and used the drugs to stay awake because it was dangerous to keep sleeping. We used many things to stay awake; things like 'ichamba', petrol and glue. Sometimes a businessman would give us cocaine, but he didn't want us to tell anyone where we got it from. We sold cocaine for him and he gave us money and cocaine in return. Life was very dangerous on the street. Some of the boys were run over by cars.

I was taken to Jesus Cares Ministries in 1999. I lived there until 2001, when I moved to the Anglican Children's Project.

God has helped me to change. That is why I want to be pastor so that I can bring people to the way of God, in the way that I was helped.

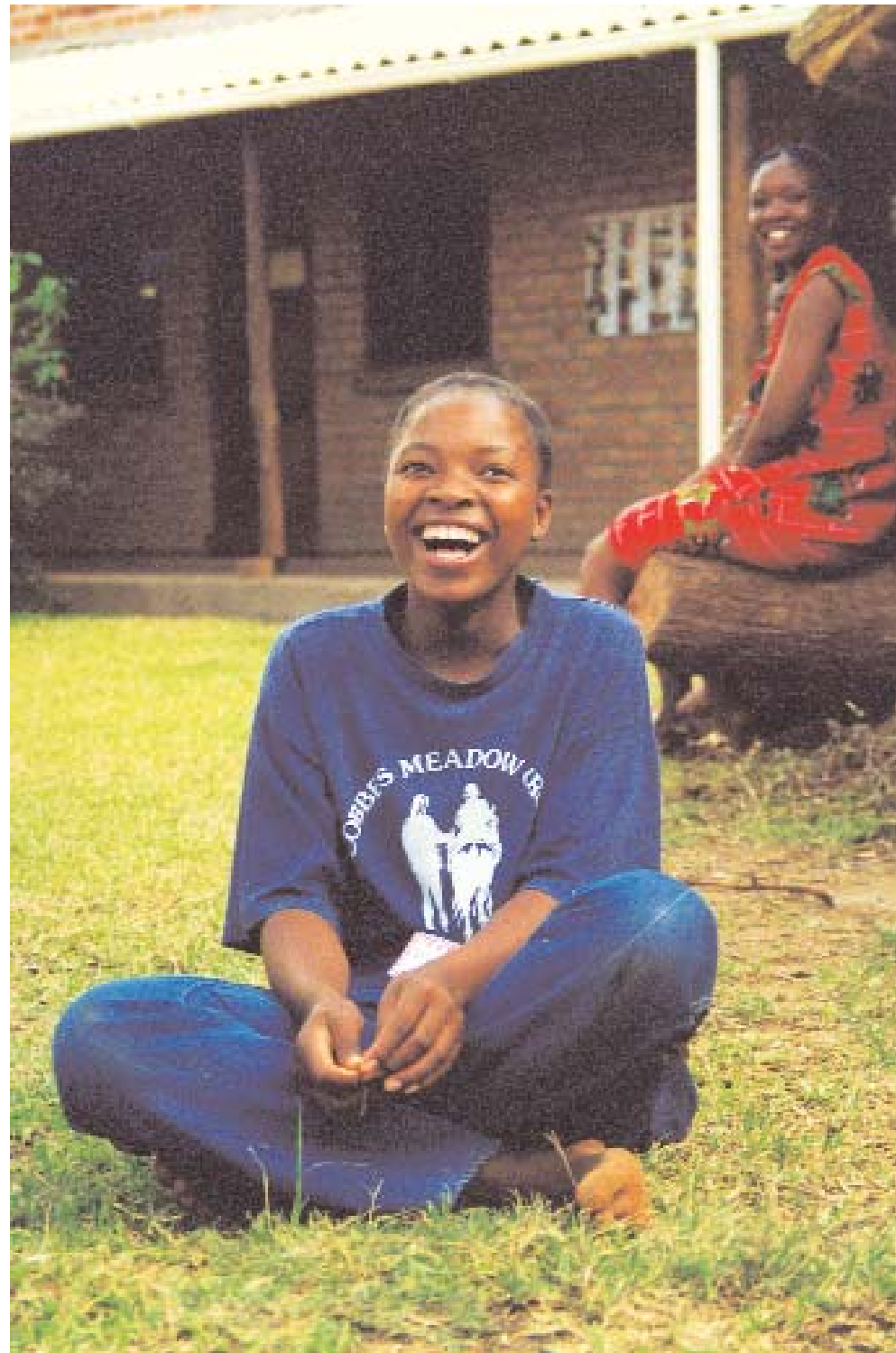
**Komani's father, Elias Mushililo, died in 1990.
His mother, Rachael Mwila, died in 2001.**



Body Art

A caring community will remember that...

Children, like adults, need a connection to their spiritual selves. Prayer has a tremendous role in helping children to cope with grief and loss. Church communities have an important role to play in providing emotional and spiritual support to orphaned children and their families.



Elizabeth Chaanga

Elizabeth was born in Lusaka, in 1988.
She wants to be a nurse.



I don't remember my mother because she died when I was two years old. I live at home with my father and my stepmother. My stepmother is my mother's younger sister. For a long time, I used to believe that my stepmother was my real mother. She has looked after me since I was a baby.

I did not know that my stepmother was not my real mother. I found out this year, in January 2002.

This is how I found out. One day my brother and stepmother were quarrelling and then he said that she was not my mother. When I heard

what my brother said, I did not believe what he said. I could not believe that my mother was dead. I was sad and angry. When I asked my father about it, he was angry.

There are some photos of my mother with my grandmother in the village but I have never seen them. I don't know what she looked like. I can't ask my father for them because he doesn't like to talk about my mother.

One day, I hope to see photos of my mother so that I can know what she looked like. I want to know if she looks nice and to see if her face looks the same as mine.

Elizabeth's mother, Charity Chiobeka Chaanga, died in 1990.



A caring community will remember that...

When a child loses a parent when they are very young, the surviving parent or guardian needs to tell the child as soon as she or he can understand this. Children have a right to know the truth about their biological parents. This information should be given to them as soon as they begin to ask questions about family relationships. Experience has shown that children will always find out the truth eventually and that they can be traumatised when they hear it from strangers, or in moments of anger.



When my parents were alive, we lived in Mulobezi. My father was a fisherman. My mother went fishing with him as well. My father taught all his children how to fish. Even I went fishing with him when I was very small.

One day in 1996, my parents went fishing. None of us children went. When they got to the middle of the river, the boat capsized. My father drowned but some people rescued my mother.

After my father died, we went to live with my grandmother, my mother's mother. She was also a fisherwoman and we continued to catch fish.

That's when my mother became sick. She didn't like to eat much. One day she was so ill that she didn't eat any food at all. My grandmother told us not to sleep in the house that night. My mother died alone, in the night.

After she died, they took her body away before I could see her. I would have liked to see her body before they took her to the mortuary. It makes me very sad that I didn't see her.

They did not let me go to the funeral. They said to us, 'you are children and you are not supposed to attend a funeral'. I was very angry because even when my father died we did not go to the funeral. I don't even know where they buried my father and my mother. I often think, 'if this can happen to my mother and father, what will happen to me when I die?'.

After my parents died, I lived with my grandmother. Then I became sick. My stepsister came from Lusaka and took me to hospital. When I was better, she brought me to Lusaka to live with my cousin, but he didn't want me to stay with him. He said he didn't want to look after me. That is how I came to live with my stepsister. I miss my parents.

**Siyanga's father, Mboma Mzoka, died in 1996.
His mother, Mabel Mzoka, died in 1997.**



A caring community will remember that...

One way that we all deal with the loss of a loved one is by attending funerals and taking part in the rituals. Attending funerals helps children to better deal with the anger and helplessness of losing a parent. It also helps them to understand the finality of death. This is part of the grieving process.

Siyanga Mzoka

Siyanga was born in Mongu, Western Province, in 1991. He wants to be a pilot.



Melody Sakala

Melody was born in Lusaka, in 1990.
She wants to be a nurse.

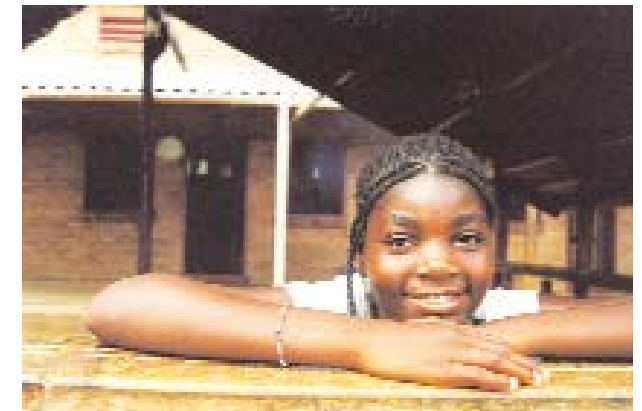


My father died in 2000 after being sick for five years. I helped to look after him. When he needed water, I used to fetch it for him. I also went to the market to buy his medicines.

My father often said that he was dying. He told us to obey our relatives and listen to them. He told me that when I grow up I should look after my relatives and not separate from them. I did not feel good when he said this but I knew my father was trying to help me understand. It made me very sad and I would cry.

When I asked him who would look after us, he said, 'Your mother will.' My father died in hospital. It was my grandmother that told me that my father was dead. I felt bad and I cried.

What I think is that if my father were still alive he would look after us well. He would buy us food, clothes and shoes, which we don't have now.



I live with my grandmother and my sister. My grandmother looks after us. She sells vegetables and fish at the market. She also sends me to the market. I help her in the house, washing plates, fetching water and washing clothes. We also sell some things like vegetables and salt at the house. Sometimes I don't go to school because I have to do the selling.

My mother is ill. She has been in the hospital. Sometimes my mother gets money from my grandmother, my brother and my father's relatives.

When I grow up, I want to look after my mother, my grandmother and my brothers and sisters.

Melody's father, Joseph Sakala, died in 2000.



A caring community will remember that...

Parents need to talk honestly to their children when they know that they are very ill and may not have long to live. Guidance from a dying parent is very important for children, after the parent dies. It is important for children to know that they will still be loved and that they will belong to an extended family even after their parents die. A strong extended family gives children a sense of belonging and security.



George Musanje

George was born in Rufunsa, Eastern Province, in 1991. He wants to be a pilot.



My father was a bus driver. He drove buses from Chelstone to Rufunsa. He was short and a bit fat. He was a happy man and did not beat me.

First, we lived in Rufunsa and then we moved to Chongwe, which is near Lusaka. When my father got sick we moved to Lusaka. We lived in Kaunda Square. Later we moved to Ng'ombe compound.

When my father was dying, he told my mother to look after us. We were all in the house. I was very angry because I didn't know why he was talking like this. I didn't know then that he was dying. Then my father said, 'Take me outside, I want some fresh air.' After a little while, he said, 'Take me back in the house, it's finished'. We took him inside the house and then he died. I saw my father die. I was angry and I cried.

When my father died, my father's relatives took everything from the house. They took our beds, mattresses, plates, pots and some clothes. My mother couldn't do anything to stop them. She had to start selling vegetables, oranges and mangoes to get money to buy pots and plates again.

We had to move out of the house and find another house to rent. We had no money. Then my mother found a plot with a small house in Ng'ombe Extension. Later the house was demolished. We now live in Ng'ombe in a temporary shelter.

What I remember most about my dad is that he used to buy me many things such as clothes, toy cars and shoes.

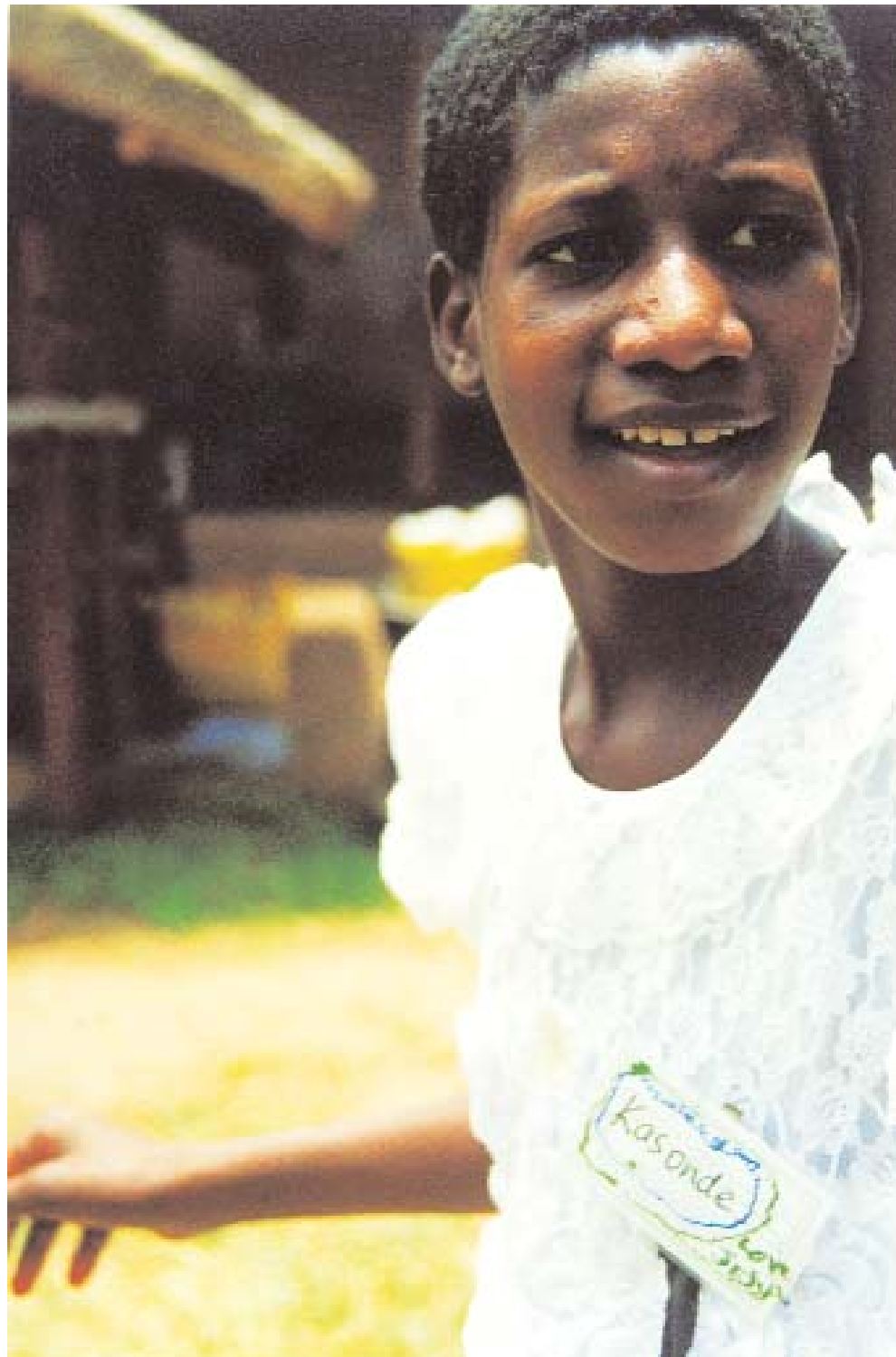
I love my mother and I loved my father.

George's father, Dyson Musanje, died in 2001.



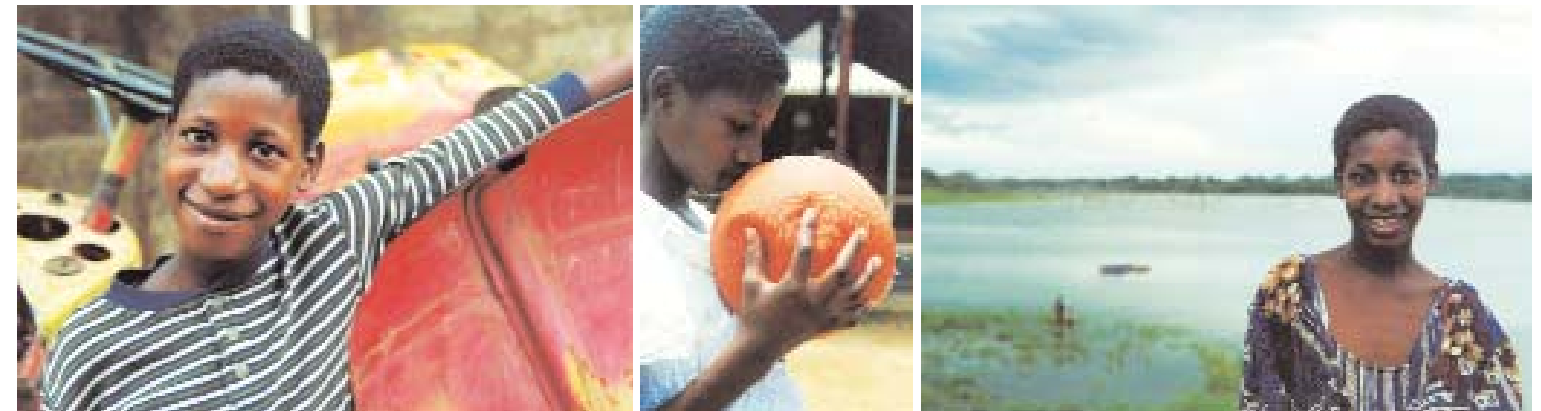
A caring community will remember that...

When parents are seriously ill, the family and community need to help parents plan for the future. Other adults can help dying parents express their wishes clearly, even through verbal instructions, so that everyone knows what will happen to the children and the household assets. A written will is even better. Failure to plan can leave children and surviving parents vulnerable and even destitute.



Kasonde Chanda

Kasonde was born in Lusaka, in 1991.
She wants to be a teacher.



My mother was brown and fat. She was a businesswoman. My father was short and thin. He was a policeman at the High Court and used to travel abroad to America with his boss and friends. He used to bring me clothes, shoes, and food.

I know that my parents looked after me well. They bought me everything. They bought dresses and shoes. My mother used to take me to her friend's hair saloon so her friend would braid or set my hair. The best thing that my mother bought for me was a green suit with lace on the skirt and arms. I used to wear it to church. My suit is still at home, where my grandmother lives. My mother also bought me black shoes.

Before my mother became ill, she sold tomatoes, onions, maize meal and cooking oil. She had money. She paid my fees to go to

school. When she became ill, she could not sell anything and she had no money. I had to stop going to school.

I helped to look after my mother when she was ill. If she needed a drink, I gave her water to drink. I would make a fire and warm her bath water. I felt happy that I could help her.

After my mother died, I was taken to Jesus Cares Ministries by my church so that I could go to school. My grandmother agreed to this. I'm happy that I now go to school. My grandmother lives in my parent's house with my sister and brother. I still miss my brother and sister and would like to stay with them even though I know I'm lucky to be going to school.

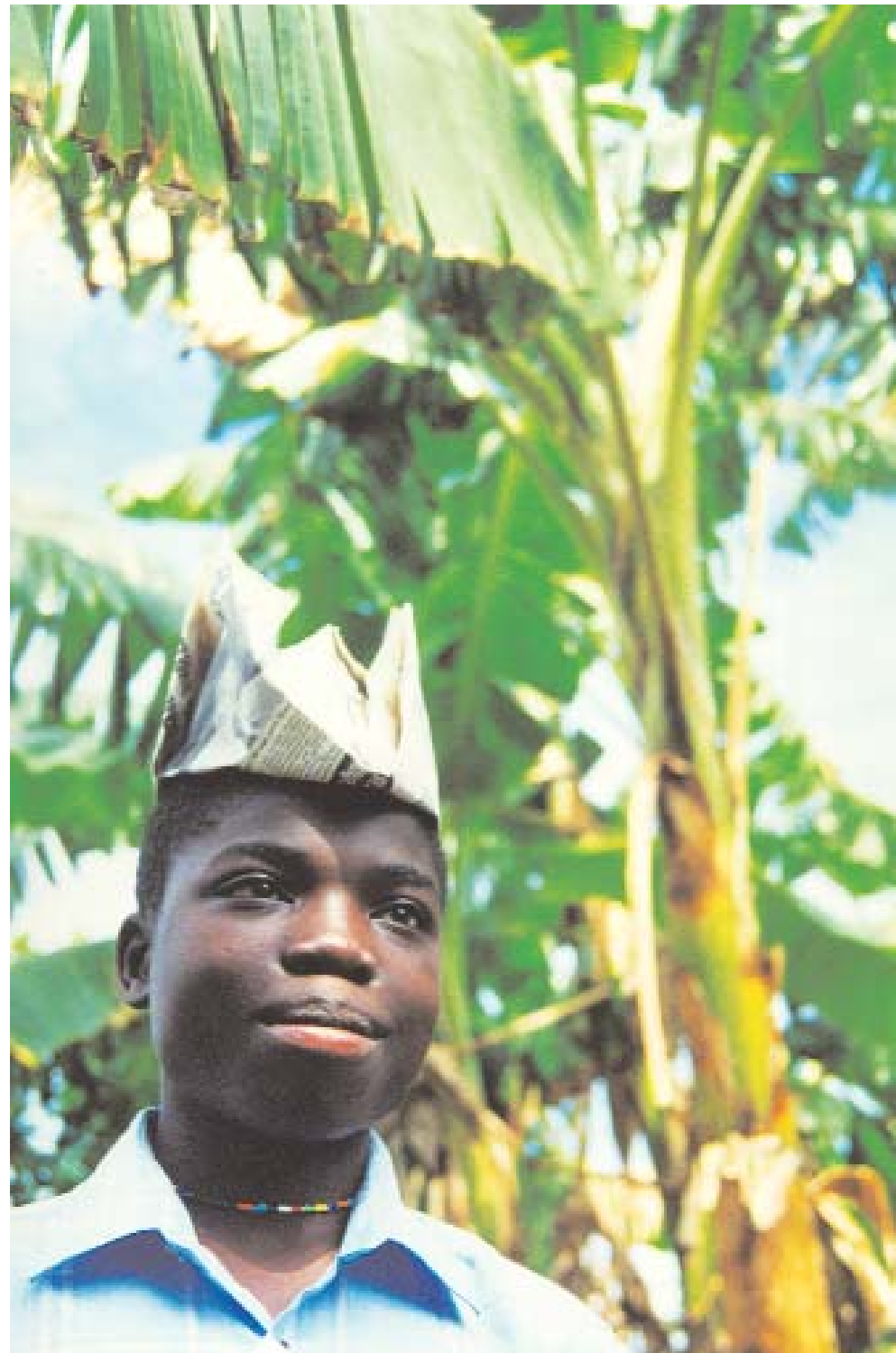
I miss my mother the most. I miss what she used to do for me, looking after me and feeding me.

**Kasonde's father, Chanda Chisanga, died in 1998.
Her mother, Angela Mulenga, died in 1999.**



A caring community will remember that...

When children lose both parents, church communities can help extended families to find options for the care of children, such as enabling them to continue going to school. If a child has to live away from the extended family, it is very important that the links between brothers and sisters are maintained and that siblings see each other as often as possible.



Nathan Mulenga

Nathan Mulenga was born in Kitwe, Copperbelt Province, in 1988. He wants to be a pilot.



When I was younger, I lived in Kitwe with my mother and father. We lived in our own house. My father worked for a milling company and my mother was a businesswoman. She used to sell clothes, dried fish and maize.

One day I stole some money from my mother so I could go and watch a video with a friend. When my mother asked me if I had taken the money, I denied it but she knew that I had taken it because I had some left. My mother told me that she would take me to live with my grandmother so that I didn't become a thief.

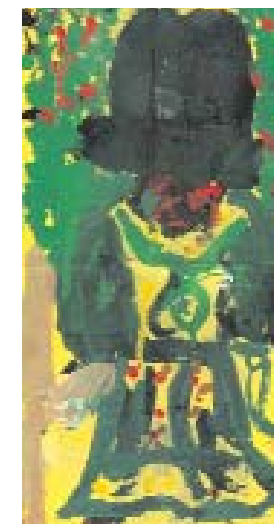
However, I had bad friends who used to take me to town to beg for money. I also started to smoke cigarettes, hash and sniff glue. One day a blind man wanted someone to escort him to Ndola. I went with him. Later I escorted him to Lusaka. This is how I came to Lusaka. The blind man was not a good man. He got money from the church and promised to give me some. However, he never did, so I left him and went to town where I started to beg. One day I was hit by a car and was taken to hospital by workers from Fountain of Hope. Even then, I used to run into town to beg for money because I had a plaster cast on my leg.

Later I asked if I could move to Jesus Cares Ministries in Mtendere because some of my friends from Kitwe were there. However, before I could get really settled there, another friend took me back to the street and left me there. I didn't want the people from Jesus Cares Ministries to find me, so I went to Livingstone by hiding in a train. I had no money to pay the fare. I wanted to see the Victoria Falls.

In Livingstone, I met some other friends from Kitwe. When I became ill, I was taken to a children's project but I did not like it because I was bullied. I left and came back to Lusaka. I lived under the bridge near Manda Hill for six months, begging for food and money. We slept in the tunnels under the roads. I used to sniff glue.

One day my friends left me. I had no money. It was then that I agreed to go back to Jesus Cares Ministries. I'm happy there and my mother came to visit me. I had not seen her for four years. I was happy when she came. I hope I can go and visit her.

Nathan's parents live in Mansa.



A caring community will remember that...

Many families find it difficult to maintain discipline in the home. Some children will look for what they think is the easy or exciting way out, not realising what danger they are putting themselves in. Parents and guardians should aim to discipline children without propelling them on to the streets. Children need the support of the family to resist negative peer pressure.



Gwazani John Nkoma

Gwazani was born in Kabwe, in 1991.
He doesn't know what he wants to do when he grows up.



I don't remember my mother and my father. They died when I was a baby.

After they died, my brother and I lived in Kabwe with my grandmother. Then my grandmother became sick and died. She died in 2002.

After my grandmother died, my brother and I moved from Kabwe to Lusaka because we had nowhere to stay in Kabwe.

We live in Bauleni compound in a rented room. When my brother finds some money, he pays the rent. He cannot work because he cannot walk very well. He had polio.

My brother looks after me. We have nobody in the family to help us. I help in the house and fetch water from the stand. I think we stay well.

I don't remember my parents. We have no photos. I think they were burnt. We have some things that our grandmother left but they are in Kabwe.

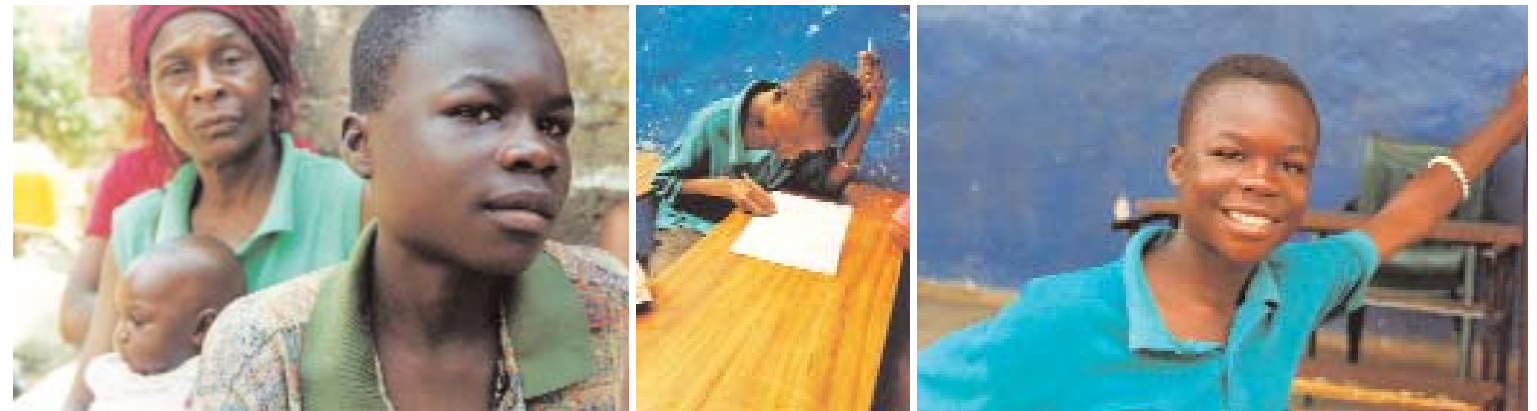
I don't go to school. I have never been to school. My brother is looking for a school for me.

**Gwazani has lost both parents.
He does not know their names or when they died.**



**A caring community will
remember that...**

Some children will react to the loss of parents by blocking out painful memories, and some will never have had the chance to develop memories at all. When children do not express any memories of parents, family and community members need to help them to build their history by telling them about their parents. This will help children to feel connected to their roots and to gain a sense of belonging. Showing them photographs can be very helpful. Any memorabilia that parents leave should be kept safely for children and given to them when they are older.



I can't remember my father very well because he died when I was young. He died before my mother. After my father died, my mother and I lived with my grandfather. Then my grandfather died. After he died, we moved to a rented house because we had no money.

Before my grandfather died, my mother was a businesswoman. She used to travel to Zimbabwe and bring goods like blankets, and clothes to sell. She brought me many clothes from Zimbabwe.

After my grandfather died, my mother stopped travelling to Zimbabwe. She worked as a waitress in a jazz club. My mother liked music. She liked jazz and country music.

My mother was a very friendly and caring person. She did everything for me. Her death has made me suffer. If she were alive, I wouldn't be suffering as I am.

When my mother died, I went to live with my aunt. When my aunt lost her job, we had to move in with my grandmother. My grandmother had no money to pay my school fees, so my aunt took me to Mapode Informal School where I go to school and get free education.

I was filled with grief when I first went to Mapode because I had lost both my parents. I thought I was the only person that this has happened to but when I talked to my friends I realised that many parents are dying. There are many children like me whose parents have died.

When I grow up, I want to be a counsellor so I can help others.

**Sylvester's father, Joe Luchinga, died in 1994.
His mother, Anne Mulengwa, died in 1996.**



**A caring community
will remember that...**

Many children who lose parents feel that they are the only ones who have had this experience. Orphaned children will feel less isolated in their loss and grief if they can share experiences with others who have lost their parents. Older children, for example, can be enabled to form support groups and trained in peer group counselling.

Sylvester Mulengwa

Sylvester was born in Lusaka, in 1988.
He wants to be a counsellor.



Mbangweta Muyambango
Mbangweta was born in Lusaka, in 1990.
She wants to be a nurse.



My father was not sick; he was shot by thieves who wanted to steal charcoal from him.

My father used to sell charcoal, which was kept outside our house. One night, some men came and knocked at our door. When my father went outside, they told him that they wanted some charcoal to take to a funeral. They said my father should take the charcoal to the funeral house, but my father refused. They had an argument and then the men shot my father. He died outside the house. We all woke up and my mother was screaming but the men told her to keep quiet or else they would shoot the whole family. Then they run away without the charcoal.

Later we heard that the man who shot my father is also dead. He was shot when he tried to steal from a farmhouse in Makeni.

Before he died, my father had told me that he was going to buy me some new clothes in the New Year, but he was shot before he could buy them.

Before my father died, we lived in Lilanda. After he died, my mother and my brother and sisters moved to Misisi Compound. That is where we live now. We have all the things in the house that my father left for us.

What I miss most about my father is that he used to look after us well and buy new clothes for us. We don't talk about my father at home but sometimes I think of him.

Mbangweta's father, Richard Muyamango, died in 2001.



A caring community will remember that...

It is important for children to talk about parents they have lost if they want to. Surviving parents and guardians can help children to deal with their loss and grief by responding to children when they ask questions. Children need to be given truthful information and should not be discouraged from asking questions.

Chapter Three: Dealing with Loss, Grief and Transition

How Do Children Experience Grief?

Children feel loss and change as much as adults do, though they may have different ways of expressing it. Adults will notice that a child's behaviour is unusual compared to what is normal for that child. A grieving child may display more emotional outbursts than usual, such as crying. They may worry excessively about the health of a surviving parent and become more dependent on them. They may refuse to go to bed, have trouble sleeping or become anxious about sleeping in the house where a person has died.

Grief in children can also be displayed in ways that make it hard for adults to recognise it as grief. Grieving children may:

- appear to completely deny a parent's death;
- express anger towards the surviving parent or other relatives;
- withdraw from normal activities;
- lose interest in going to school;
- start wetting the bed;
- start fighting, lying, or stealing;
- display precocious or promiscuous behaviour;
- display other forms of 'bad' behaviour.

Often adults interpret what is actually the expression of grief in children as simply 'misbehaving'.

Grieving can take days, weeks, months or even years. Eventually we all recover from the loss of a loved one, but to do this we have to go through the process of grieving. Children have to go through this process too. Adults have an important role to play to help children express their grief as it occurs.

The grieving process is important for us to adjust to life without a loved one. If we do not do grieve, we can be left with unresolved pain, anger and sadness. Children who don't resolve the death of a parent can find it difficult to attach themselves to another adult caregiver or, when they become adults, may have trouble trusting others and forming lasting relationships.

Parents, guardians, carers and teachers can learn to recognise the ways in which children display grief in order to help them recover from the loss of a parent or loved one.

Grief Comes In Stages

There are stages we all go through when we lose someone we love, but it is important to remember that these stages do not happen in a neat and orderly way. Children often experience more than one stage of grief at a time. It is important to know that eventually children will experience all of these stages and that they may express different behaviours at every stage. It can help to know that these behaviours are normal and healthy and that, with support from friends and family, these stages will pass.

• **Shock.** The immediate effect when a child learns of the death of a parent is one of shock. A child may become hysterical and cry uncontrollably. A child may be so numbed by the shock that they may, initially, not cry at all.

• **Denial.** After the initial shock, children may find it difficult to understand and to accept what has happened. They may refuse to believe that the news of the death is true. They may feel as if they are in a dream and that they are not part of what is going on around them. A child may express denial verbally, or may give the impression that nothing has happened. For instance, the child may simply leave the house to play with friends.

• **Anger and anxiety.** Eventually, children will begin to feel the full impact of the pain and suffering of the loss. Since children may not be able to express their feelings in words, they may cry excessively and display other forms of behaviour such as refusing to eat, bedwetting, having bad dreams, fighting and refusing to go to school.

• **Self blaming and bargaining.** Children may blame themselves for the death of a parent. They may think it has been brought on by something that they have done. Sometimes during this period, children will remember misbehaving when their parents were alive and believe that their parents' death happened because of this behaviour. In response they may begin to act more responsibly, helping out more in the home or making more effort with their schoolwork, especially if they feel that this is what their parents would have wished. While these behaviours may not be unhealthy, adults who recognise them can help children to understand that the death was not their fault.

• **Depression.** Children, like adults, get depressed. However, children cannot always tell us what they feel. Depression in children can be seen in how their behaviour changes. A child who is normally active may become withdrawn and lose interest in things that they usually enjoy. They may have difficulty sleeping. They may lose interest in playing with friends or in going to school. They may want to spend more time with a surviving parent or guardian. They may begin to act younger than they are, for example, clinging to their surviving parent or bedwetting.

• **Acceptance.** Slowly, children will begin to accept what has happened and begin to talk about their parents. Sometimes they may cry as they remember their parents. Slowly a child will begin to have more energy to do what they like doing such as playing with friends.



Shock:
The death of my father has turned everything upside down.



Self blaming:
When my mother smacked me, I thought that she was bad. Now I think she was good because I was quarrelsome and used to fight.



Depression:
If my mother were alive, I would be in school. I feel sad when I talk about my mother.

How Can Adults Help?

The HIV/AIDS pandemic and the resulting deaths are bringing tremendous grief to individuals, families and communities. There is not a single person in Zambia who has not experienced a loss. In many instances a family hardly has time to recover from one loss before another member of the family dies. Such compounded grief makes it very hard for families to deal with their own grief, and that of the other members of the family, particularly that of those children who have lost their parents.

Dealing with grief means that as adults, we have to accept and acknowledge the death. This is hard for adults to do. Adults find it particularly hard to watch children go through this trauma and often feel helpless and unable to make life better for the children. Many adults, therefore, feel the need to protect children from this anguish by not telling them that their parents have died. This is more common when parents die from AIDS-related illnesses because of the silence and stigma surrounding deaths from HIV/AIDS.

It is partly this silence that prevents surviving parents and guardians from talking to children about a death in the family. However, since the number of orphaned children is growing so rapidly in Zambia, there is an urgent need to help children to deal with both the practical and emotional implications of their loss.

There are many ways in which children can be prepared for the death of a parent and helped afterwards to deal with the loss.

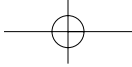
While the Family is Healthy and Things are Still Normal

- It is important for children to understand death as part of the process of living. Before there is illness in the family, it is helpful for parents and other adults to talk about death and dying as part of normal communication with their children as they grow. It is important for children to understand what happens when a person dies. Church communities too can offer explanations about living and dying that can comfort children.

- When someone dies in the community or in the family, this is an opportunity for adults to talk about death and dying to minimise children's fears and to help them to begin understanding the reality of death. Children are more distressed by things that they do not understand.

- When children witness a parent's illness and sense that they may pass away, they frequently experience intense anxiety about their own future. It is critical for adults, regardless of health status, to prepare for their children's future in case of their own death. It is helpful for parents to make plans and to speak with relatives and friends about issues like guardianship of their children and what will happen to the household assets once they have died. Will writing is one way to make sure that things are looked after properly and that children feel secure about their future.

- Children should be raised to know who their other relatives are. It helps to encourage visits to and from extended family and to participate in family gatherings and events. This will lessen the feeling of absolute loss when a close family member dies.



When Parents are Terminally Ill

- Children have a very hard time accepting that a parent has died if they have not been prepared for it. Children who know about their parent's illness and approaching death can begin to prepare themselves. This preparation is part of the grieving process, and having time to adjust before the event helps the child to recover more quickly afterwards.

- Although it is not common in Zambia for parents who are terminally ill to talk about dying to children, it can really help children if a way can be found to do this. Parents themselves, or other members of the family who are close to the children are the best people to talk to them.

- When parents impart instructions to their children on how to live, how to conduct themselves, how to manage relationships with family members and many other topics, children value these words and strive to live up to the wishes of their parents. Although these are difficult conversations for both the adult and the children, research in Zambia shows that children feel parents should talk to them about dying.

- If parents themselves find it too difficult to talk to children, close family members, church members or community-based volunteers may be able to help.

- Children want to be useful and to express their love and respect by contributing to the care of sick parents. Involvement in patient-care and decision-making helps children feel more in control of their situation and to cope more easily with the eventual death.

- Children are naturally anxious about their future and who will care for them when their parents are gone. Children should be involved in discussions about where they will live and what will happen to their siblings, household assets etc.

- Assets of the household must be secured to protect the child's future. Failure to plan ahead can leave children homeless and destitute. Writing of wills is an essential aspect of responsible parenting.

- Extended family or neighbours, who realise that a parent is near death, should intervene to ensure that the children are not left alone with the parent. Children are traumatized by being alone with their parents at the time of their death, or by unexpectedly finding their bodies.

When a Parent Dies

- When a parent dies, children need to be told as soon as possible by the surviving parent or an adult close to them.

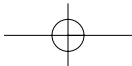
- Failure to disclose the truth about the death of a parent can cause real trauma to the child who finds out later, accidentally. Families who have delayed disclosure have found that children usually find out on their own at some point and their discoveries have been very stressful to family relationships. Children have the right to know the truth.



I helped to look after my mother when she was ill. If she needed a drink, I gave her water to drink. I would make a fire and warm her bath water. I felt happy that I could help her.



...many people started to come to the house. They were all crying... I realised that my mother was dead.



Attending Funerals



They did not let me go to the funeral. They said to us, "you are children and you are not supposed to attend a funeral".
Siyanga: roll 25 workshop

- If children express an interest in attending the burial and other funeral rituals, they should be allowed and assisted to do so. They need the support of a caring adult to explain what the rituals mean.
- It is normal and healthy for children to express their feelings by crying. Funerals are a natural place for children to cry. This can be very intense and difficult to cope with, and children need the support of caring adults.
- Children who are encouraged to express their grief through participating in mourning rituals, with the help of an adult, will recover from their loss more quickly than children who are 'protected' from this experience.
- Children experiencing loss often find comfort in prayer.
- When children have missed funerals and continue to worry about it, it can be helpful to take them to the grave of a parent to pray or to place flowers there. If that isn't possible, someone who was there can describe what happened and help the child to say goodbye by creating a small memorial service at home.

Remembering Parents



What I remember best about my father is that before he was sick, he took me on many journeys.
Jones personal roll 10

- One way that children show that they are beginning to accept the death as a reality is by beginning to talk about the person they lost. It is important that adults help them to do this to help keep their memories alive.
- Sharing stories and memories is an important part of helping children have good memories of their parent. This should be done repeatedly as children grow up and pass through the different stages of their development where memories take on new meaning.
- Mementos of the deceased parent, such as photographs or items that belonged to the parent, should be given to the children. Research shows that children value these mementos at various stages of their lives.
- If children are too young, mementos should be kept and given to them when they are older. Parents who know they are dying can consider writing a letter to their children, which can be kept safely until the child is old enough to read it.
- Young children who go to live with extended families are sometimes not told the truth about their parents. Failure to disclose the truth about real parents can cause real trauma to children who find out accidentally. Children have a right to know the truth and should be told as soon as they start asking questions about their early years or the relationships within the family.
- Many parents may have died as a result of an AIDS-related illness. It is important for those left behind to remember that anyone can contract HIV and that it not helpful to attach shame or blame. The stigma surrounding AIDS must not be allowed to taint a child's memory or love of his/her parents.

The Importance of Extended Family

- Relatives often recognise illness within the family and can be instrumental in assisting that parent to make plans for the care of the children and for the protection of household assets. Reaching out to other relatives, churches or community members with concerns may be helpful in getting the right resources and guidance for the parent and the household.
- It is very important that links with surviving parents, siblings and other members of the extended family are maintained. Children really suffer if they lose touch with other members of the extended family, especially their siblings.
- When children must be separated from their siblings for practical reasons, families should make special efforts to reunite these children on a regular basis.
- Children can be further traumatised if their parents' assets and familiar belongings are taken away from them. The extended family should ensure that children inherit their parents' assets.
- Children need more than material support - clothing, food, shelter, and education - for their growth and development. They need to love and be loved, to care and be cared for, to feel accepted and valued as individuals and to feel a sense of belonging.
- Children of all ages need the help of extended families and elders to consolidate memories of their parents. Happy and loving memories can be reinforced, giving children a sense of history, belonging and identity.

Sometimes I see my stepbrother. When I see my brother, I feel good. I also see my stepmother.
Benson personal roll: 4

Providing Long-term Emotional Support to Families

- Children need stability after the death of a parent. It is important that a child is provided with a stable environment and home. The family can decide where the child is to live and other members of the extended family can give both emotional and material support to the appointed guardian.
- Caring adults within the family can be the most important source of emotional support to orphaned children. In the wider community, teachers and other adults who know the children's circumstances can also provide solace to children. These adults should not underestimate their influence, as role models and advisors, and can seek opportunities to provide guidance and comfort.
- Raising children is challenging. Parents and guardians often struggle to understand a child's behaviour, especially when he/she has experienced a loss. Adults and older children can be assisted to cope with challenging children by sharing their experiences with others - it is helpful to know that you are not alone.
- Guardians and surviving parents need support as well. Relatives, neighbours, community members, church groups and NGOs can provide material and emotional support as well as comfort to the children's guardians.
- It is important to remember that when children are helped to deal with their loss, they grieve for a shorter time than adults. However children who are not helped through their grief may suffer deeply in silence for years. This can have negative impact on their emotional well being for the rest of their lives.



When I grow up, I want to be a counsellor so I can help others.

A Final Word...

The plight of these children presents a grave challenge, but not an insurmountable one. While many of us are feeling tired, worried, frustrated and overwhelmed, we have no choice but to go on...for the children. This may be Zambia's darkest hour, but we must overcome it: we must provide our children with a foundation on which to build the Zambia of the future. We must draw on the strength of our culture and pass this on to our children, a culture that values family and community, generosity and good humour, peace and stability, and the sharing of a meal between friends. This is Zambia's heritage and we are obliged to ensure that our children have access to it.

It is clear that if we draw on what we have learned since 1986, we can overcome the challenges of HIV/AIDS. However, we will do it more easily and more effectively if we do it together. It is not common in Zambian culture to bear our burdens alone - why should this burden of AIDS be unique? We will find strength and support among family and friends by voicing our concerns, by sharing our experiences, by asking for help. Twenty children in this book have started that process. They and their families have shown great courage by telling the truth, by opening their hearts freely. We, the caregivers, owe it to them and to all of Zambia's children, to follow their example. Together, we will fight and conquer AIDS.

fishy leaning out of bus window

Annex 1 - Consent Form

Children's Book Project

Care Zambia And Scope-OVC Publication of
Orphaned Children's Memories Of Parents With Photographs.
Lusaka, October 2002

Consent to take part in the Book Project

SCOPE-OVC is developing a book where children, between the ages of ten and fourteen, who have lost one or both parents, will write about their experiences and memories of their parents. We shall take photographs of the children to put in the book, along with their words. This book will be distributed widely in Zambia, throughout Africa and even overseas.

I am asking you to give us permission to include your child in a children's book for CARE Zambia and SCOPE-OVC. In order to make sure that you are informed about this book and your child's participation in the book, I will ask you to sign or make a mark in front of a witness that you have understood this form and agree to participate in the project. We will give you a copy of this form.

There may be words or concepts on this form that are unfamiliar to you. Please be sure to ask us to explain anything that may be unfamiliar to you.

This book will be important for the children who take part and it will help other children who have lost parents to remember their own parents when they read it. Children will realise that they are not alone in their thoughts and feelings.

This book will also be helpful to parents, guardians, teachers and all those who care for children who have lost parents. It will help all of us to gain a better understanding of issues for children who have lost their parents.

The book will also help teach other people about what is happening to your children and hopefully help raise support for issues related to orphans and vulnerable children in Zambia. SCOPE-OVC will use this book as an advocacy tool to help raise support for children in Zambia.

If you agree that your child will participate in the project, the following will happen.

1. In October and November 2002, the project leader will visit all parents/guardians to explain to you how your child/ward will take part in the book project. You can ask any questions in order to decide whether you want to give your child permission to take part.

All the children will have their photographs taken where they live and/or at school. These pictures will be used in the book.

You will sign another form to give permission for photographs to be taken and used in the book and for anything concerned with the book project.

2. In December 2002, all the children who agree to take part in the project will attend a five-day residential programme, which will be organised by SCOPE-OVC. With the help of counsellors and other project workers, children will be helped to talk or write about memories of their parents. This will be a chance for children to take part in other activities such as art, music and craftwork. Children will be looked after during this programme by trained counsellors. The stories written during this period will appear in the published book. There will be no financial cost to you if you participate in this project. All meals, accommodation and transportation will be provided by SCOPE-OVC.

We think it will be healthy and positive for children to participate in this project. They will be with other children who have lost their parents and will learn that they are not alone in their thoughts and feelings about having lost their parents. They will remember many good and happy times about their parents. They will have an opportunity to write and participate in other fun activities. Overall, It will be a positive and constructive activity for the children.

However, sometimes remembering what has been lost can cause pain and sorrow. It is possible that for a while after participating in the project, the child may feel sad or may exhibit different behaviours.

There are some places where you will be able to go to get some help if needed. We will provide you with a list of organisations in Lusaka that might be able to help you. Children will also be provided with this list when they are participating in the workshop.

Throughout this project, there will be experienced counsellors who can help the children to talk about difficult and upsetting topics. If the children are upset while they remember their parents or previous experiences, we will help them to deal with difficult and upsetting memories.

Since pictures will be included in the book with the stories, you should be aware that there is no confidentiality. Readers of the book will know who the children are and to whom the stories belong.

Guardians and children who take part in the book project, will not be paid for participation but they will get some photographs and receive two copies of the book when it is published.

Participation in the project is completely voluntary. Your child does not have to participate in this project. Refusal to participate will not affect any benefit you may receive from SCOPE-OVC or any other project helping children or families.

You may also stop participating in this project at any time or refuse to allow your child's story to be published. There will be no retributions from deciding not to participate in the project in any capacity.

SCOPE-OVC will not profit from the book in any capacity. If the book is sold, all the money from the sale will be used by CARE Zambia and SCOPE-OVC for projects that help children.

If, at any time, you feel that you or your child have further questions or need more information during the course of this project, please contact the following persons:

Mary Simasiku,
SCOPE-OVC Project Manager,
Mwaimwena Road, Rhodes Park
Lusaka.
Telephone: 255343/252246

Karen Doll Manda,
Country Director,
FHI Zambia,
Off Sable Road, Kabulonga,
Lusaka.
Telephone: 261668/263175

Do you agree to allow your child _____
to participate in this book project?

Signature of parent/guardian/custodian (Date)

Signature of Project Representative (Date)

Signature of Witness (Date)

For the delivery of the book:

PO Address: _____

Physical Address: _____

Consent to use photographs:

I, (Name) _____

Address _____

Being the parent/guardian/custodian of (Name of child): _____

Give permission to the photographers on the book project to take photographs of my child/ward.

I agree that any photographs taken of my child/ward, living or otherwise, for the CARE Zambia SCOPE-OVC children's book project can be used in the book and in any other printed or electronic form as long as this is part of the book project.

No photographs will be used for any other project without further permission being given by me.

No photographs will be sold for profit by the photographers or CARE Zambia and SCOPE-OVC.

Copyright for the photographs will remain with the photographers.

Signature of parent/guardian/custodian (Date)

Signature of Project Representative (Date)

Signature of photographer (Date)

Signature of witness (Date)