South African Journal of Education

Vol 26(3)457–472

Identifying asset-based trends in sustainable programmes which support vulnerable children

Liesel Ebersöhn and **Irma Eloff**
lebers@hakuna.up.ac.za

In this article we argue that the asset-based approach is one explanation for sustainability in programmes supporting vulnerable children. We structure our argument by formulating five questions and then pursuing tentative answers to them. We start our contention by highlighting the particularity of the challenges faced in schools to support vulnerable children. We then consider the common denominators in programmes that have shown evidence of sustainable practices for supporting vulnerable children. This is followed by a deliberated link of the identified sustainability factors (e.g. common denominators) with the asset-based approach as a theoretical framework. Subsequently, we consider why the asset-based approach can be considered in terms of supporting vulnerable children in education. We indicate the similarities between the asset-based approach and current discourses focusing on the notion of schools as nodes of support and care.[1] *We conclude by suggesting that knowledge of asset-based good practices could be shared with families in school-based sessions, thereby developing schools', families' and communities' capacity to support vulnerable children.*

Keywords: collaborative support; inclusive education; schools as nodes of care and support

Introduction

The support of vulnerable children in education is no doubt one of the greatest challenges faced in educational transformation. For any learner school can be a source of joy, a place to acquire skills, to meet and interact with others and to learn about themselves. Conversely, it can be a place of stigma, of discrimination, a place where full participation is prevented and learning and recreation is inhibited. The challenges of supporting vulnerable children can often create tensions.

These conflicting poles are also present in examples of failures and successes in accommodating vulnerable children. It is not our intention in this paper to focus on the former — as the negatives are often researched, documented and disseminated. Previously we have expounded the overwhelming statistics of infection rates, deaths, devastating projections and the number of children affected (Ebersöhn & Eloff, 2002; 2003; Eloff & Ebersöhn, 2001; Eloff, 2003). Currently we aim to reflect on another reality in education: those interventions that have been effective and sustainable in supporting vulnerable children. We are intrigued to ascertain why these practices have been successful in providing education to vulnerable children.

Therefore, the questions driving this study are: Who are vulnerable children? What educational measures exist to support vulnerable children? Why are some educational practices and programmes successful and sustainable in addressing these challenges? If common denominators exist between effective and sustainable interventions, can these be linked to a theoretical framework? How can this knowledge of good practices be utilised in schools to empower educators, families and communities? In the subsequent sections we will address these issues.

What are the challenges to support vulnerable children in education?

In this article we decided to use the concept of vulnerable children. Vulnerability is construed

differently by diverse authors, and in varying contexts, and disciplines (Bellamy, 2003; Department of Social Development (DoSD), 2004; Richter, Manefold & Pather, 2004), but in general refers to physical, psychological and sociological circumstances (Reber & Reber, 1995). As such the issue of common understanding of what vulnerability entails already presents a challenge in terms of educational support. Smart (2003a) identifies the following groups of children as being vulnerable:[2] children with disabilities; children with chronic illnesses; children infected and affected by HIV/AIDS; children without care-givers; children living in poverty-stricken conditions; children who have been abandoned; children who work; children working as sex-workers; children living on the streets; children who are being neglected; children who are being/have been abused; children who are refugees and illegal immigrants; children used as soldiers.

Vulnerable children are a reality in South Africa. Educators will increasingly need to deal with this diversity in their classrooms. These challenges are evident in the description of who the vulnerable learner is, as well as in the types of challenges faced by these learners, their educators, schools and families.

The multi-layered challenges facing vulnerable children have been widely documented in intersecting bodies of literature, e.g. the global literature on inclusive education, HIV and AIDS, poverty, and illiteracy. Some of the better-known negatives are (Akintola & Quinlan, 2003; Department of Education (DoE), 2001; Goliber, 2000; Harris & Schubert, 2001; Hepburn, 2001; Hunter & Williamson, 2001; Kelly, 2000; Sands, Kozleski & French, 2000; Smart, 2000; Smart, 2003a):

- negative attitudes and stereotyping of difference;
- stigmatising and discrimination;
- inappropriate or inadequate support services;
- inadequate policies and legislation;
- non-recognition and non-involvement of parents;
- increasing numbers of learners at risk and in distress due to the escalating HIV and AIDS pandemic;
- traditional family structures and models of surrogate care (such as kinship systems) are unable to accommodate the above increase;
- schools are experiencing the stresses related to higher education turnover rates;
- unqualified educators and overcrowded classrooms;
- educator attrition due to the HIV and AIDS pandemic;
- diverse age ranges and range of skills in classrooms;
- educator absenteeism and mobility;
- poor communities struggle to informally care and support for children without outside support;
- shame and fear are still strongly associated to vulnerable children — be it those infected or affected by HIV and AIDS, those with disabilities, those struck by poverty.

How can these children be supported in schools? Various policy documents and accompanying initiatives have been developed to address some of the accompanying challenges. Signposts for Safe Schools (2004) is an example of a combined initiative between the departments of Education and Safety and Security to counter violence in schools in terms of discriminatory acts like bullying. The National Policy on HIV/AIDS for Learners and Educators in Public Schools and Students and Educators in Further Education and Training Institutions (DoE, 2001) is a policy document focusing on HIV- and AIDS-related vulnerable children. In the past

decade South African education has also been characterised by a strong movement towards inclusive education as reflected in numerous national committee activities and legislative documents (Department of National Education (DNE), 1997; DNE, 1999; DNE, 2001). Inclusive education compels the development of a single, inclusive system of education that has the capacity to provide support (appropriate ways and means to facilitate learning and meet the needs) to all learners. Inclusion therefore implies both societal and educational transformation. It does not seem, however, that these policies are widely or effectively implemented (Zuberi, Ebersöhn, Mampane, Maritz, Lubbe, Mboweni & Pieterse, 2006).

In terms of educational transformation the move towards inclusive education also refers to the inclusion of vulnerable learners — also those made vulnerable by HIV and AIDS. In South Africa, the White Paper No. 6 on Special Needs Education (DNE, 2001) states on the matter of HIV and AIDS and other infectious diseases that:

> The Ministry will, on an ongoing basis, analyse the effects of HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases on the education system, and develop and implement appropriate and timely programmes (DNE, 2001:34).

In the following section we focus on some educational interventions that have been effective and sustainable in addressing educational challenges with regard to vulnerable children.

Why are some educational practices and programmes successful and sustainable in addressing the challenge of accommodating vulnerable children?

A fundamental challenge has been to develop sustainable programmes in providing educational opportunities to vulnerable children. Many have described such endeavours as co-ordinated, multi-sectoral interventions that make a difference over the long haul and at a scale that approaches the magnitude of educational challenges in the context of the HIV and AIDS pandemic (Dawes, 2003; Donahue, 2002; Giese *et al.*, 2003; Richter, 2003; Smart, 2003b; UNESCO, 2003). Others note that sustainability with regard to programmes for vulnerable children can be further enhanced if they are child-centred, as well as family- and community-based (Germann, 2002; Harris & Schubert, 2001; Hunter, 2001; Roberts & Cairns, 1999).

These sentiments are also resonated in the White Paper No. 6 on Special Needs Education which states:

> These programmes will include special measures, such as strengthening our information systems, establishing a system to identify orphans, co-ordinate support and care programmes for such learners, put in place referral procedures for educators, and develop teaching guidelines on how to support orphans and other children in distress (DoE, 2001:34).

We studied various presented and documented programmes noted for their sustainability in including vulnerable children in educational opportunities[3] (Dawes, 2003; Donahue, 2002; Germann, 2002; Giese *et al.*, 2003; Hunter & Fall, 1998; Mohlabi, 2003; Richter, 2003; Roberts & Cairns, 1999; Skweyiya, 2003; Smart, 2000; UNESCO, 2003). In analysing these programmes we aimed at determining whether or not certain common denominators exist across the programmes that could possibly be an indication of their sustainability. An analysis of their shared characteristics is presented in Table 1.

Table 1 illustrates the characteristics of sustainable programmes aimed at accommodating vulnerable children. We found these common denominators to be community-based intervention, building and strengthening internal capacities, community resource mobilisation, networking and establishing links, advocacy, using embedded (indigenous) knowledge and

Table 1 Shared characteristics of programmes implemented to accommodate vulnerable children

Shared characteristics	Programmes
Community-based participation	FACT / FOCUS (Zimbabwe) — community based monitoring of orphans and vulnerable learners in stead of institutional care. Masiye Camp (Zimbabwe) — community-based orphan care. Goelama Programme of the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund (South Africa) — work with and through community structures such as local congregations, faith-based organisations, traditional leaders, local committees and government structures. Fost Programme (Commercial Farms — Zimbabwe) — involved farmers, farm schools, church groups, educators, caregivers, welfare staff, pre-school leaders, community leaders, volunteers, youth and learners. SCOPE-OVC (Zambia) — mobilise community networks and organisations on district levels. National Integrated Plan for learners infected and affected by HIV/AIDS (South Africa) — develop minimum standards for home/community care. Catholic Relief Services — strengthening community safety nets.
Building and strengthening internal capacities	FACT / FOCUS (Zimbabwe) — volunteers provide moral support and encouragement. Masiye Camp (Zimbabwe) — empowered youth to facilitate psycho-social support to learners. Goelama Programme (South Africa) — support community initiatives. Fost Programme (Commercial Farms — Zimbabwe) — capacity building of volunteers, community leaders and youth to provide psychosocial support. SCOPE-OVC (Zambia) — economic empowerment activities, community schools and educators training. National Integrated Plan for learners infected and affected by HIV/AIDS (South Africa) — strengthening the capacity of families and learners. Catholic Relief Services — strengthening households' economic safety nets.
Community resource mobilisation	FACT / FOCUS (Zimbabwe) — community mobilisation through orphan home visitation. Masiye Camp (Zimbabwe) — youth mobilisation. Goelama Programme (South Africa) — mobilise local organisations and supportive structures: NGOs, private sector, learning institutions. Fost Programme (Commercial Farms — Zimbabwe) — establish income generating projects and women's clubs. SCOPE-OVC (Zambia) — help communities identify and appreciate locally available resources. National Integrated Plan for learners infected and affected by HIV/AIDS (South Africa) — mobilise resources and involve district structures and local government. Catholic Relief Services — asset mapping of community skills and talents, physical resources and resources controlled by external parties. Community groups facilitate community participation and mobilsing of resources.

Table 1 continued

Shared characteristics	Programmes
Networking and establishing links	Goelama Programme (South Africa) — mobilise supportive structures such as governmental departments, funding agencies, the media. Fost Programme (Commercial Farms — Zimbabwe) — co-operation between existing administrative and farm structures. Network with other organisations to develop programme responses to build the capacity of youths within farm communities and offered skills training. SCOPE-OVC (Zambia) — strengthening multi-sectoral committees, establish or strengthen community networks that promote collaboration. National Intergrated Plan for learners infected and affected by HIV/AIDS (South Africa) — networking with various organisations. Catholic Relief Services — coalitions between neighbours, traditional leaders and church groups; links producers and markets.
Advocacy	FACT / FOCUS — volunteers acted as "lay child advocates". Fost Programme (Commercial Farms — Zimbabwe) — advocacy and lobbying at national , provincial and district level. SCOPE-OVC (Zambia) — advocacy for the rights of orphans.
Use embedded (indigenous) knowledge and practice	Goelama Programme (South Africa) — uses existing organisations, traditional leaders. FOST Programme (Commercial Farms — Zimbabwe) — participate in existing forums, lobby with farmers to recognise leadership structures and to work with them. SCOPE-OVC (Zambia) — communities worked out community-based responses. National Integrated Plan for learners infected and affected by HIV/AIDS (South Africa) — innate embedded (indigenous) practices are reclaimed and strengthened.
Information sharing	FACT / FOCUS (Zimbabwe) — trained volunteers. Masiye Camp (Zimbabwe) — trained youth. Fost Programme (Commercial Farms — Zimbabwe) — trained educators, community leaders, welfare staff and learners. SCOPE-OVC (Zambia) — information dissemination and sharing. Catholic Relief Services — provide market information.

practice, and information sharing. Subsequently we address the issue of theoretically framing these shared characteristics.

Can these common denominators be linked to a theoretical framework?

In this section we explore the asset-based approach as one theoretical framework against which these generic characteristics can be understood. We acknowledge that many such frameworks exist, but have chosen to focus this inquiry on the asset-based approach. The rationale for this choice is based on our theoretical assumption that constructs synonymous with the asset-based approach is echoed in the identified common denominators of sustainable interventions for vulnerable children.

What is the asset-based approach and why consider this approach in terms of supporting vulnerable children in education?

The dominant approach to development both in southern Africa and other parts of the world has been needs driven. This approach starts out by focusing on the needs, deficiencies and problems of communities, and accordingly devises strategies to address these needs and problems. Kretzmann & McKnight (1993) however maintain that the needs-based approach creates mental maps of communities that encourage its members to think about themselves as fundamentally deficient and as powerless victims of their circumstances. The alternative, they maintain, is to focus on the capacities, skills and social resources of people and their communities. This is not to deny that communities have problems and deficiencies, but to start out from what the community has, rather than what it does not, have. Therefore the point is to think about potential and about the ways the existing potential can be directed towards available opportunities. This is a very different perspective from the 'needs' perspective. This asset-based approach does not ignore the external context of and constraints on communities, nor does it imply that these communities do not need additional resources from outside. Rather it suggests that outside resources can be more effectively utilised if the community has already identified and mobilised its own resources, as well as defined the agendas for the utilisation of external resources.

The asset-based approach is therefore "internally focused". It means that the development strategy concentrates first of all on the agenda building and the problem solving capacities of the residents, local associations and institutions (e.g. learners, families, schools, NGOs). This internal focus is to stress the primacy of local definition, empowerment, creativity and hope — linking it with embedded knowledge systems. The asset-based approach can also be described as a "bottom-up approach" that shifts the emphasis from a service perspective to an empowerment perspective. By definition the asset-based approach is relationship driven. Relationships need to be built and rebuilt between individuals, local associations and institutions through the process of facilitation, based on the strengths and talents of the individuals involved (Eloff, 2003). In our view this approach offers several returns in terms of ownership, shared responsibility, immediacy, relevancy and practicality of solutions, flexibility, mutual support and a caring environment, as well as individual capacity building (Ebersöhn & Mbetse, 2003).

It is clear that many of the characteristics of the asset-based approach coincide with generic characteristics we identified in programmes implemented to accommodate vulnerable children (Table 1). In terms of the trend of community-based participation it would seem that sustainable education programmes are driven by decentralized leadership and ownership in communities and acknowledgement of embedded local knowledge. Systemic, education programmes building and strengthening internal capacities appear to enhance the maintenance of programme impact. The trend of community resources mobilization signifies sustainability as agency (as opposed to dependency on external expertise) within existing community networks. Thus by networking and establishing links, across resources, implemented programmes with vulnerable children are seemingly strengthened. The asset-based trend of advocacy heightens both community awareness and expectations regarding educational programmes, apparently also impacting positively on sustainability. Hand-in-hand with advocacy is the asset-based trend of information sharing whereby mutual knowledge broadens and deepens longevity of programmes. Applying "tried and tested" beliefs, knowledge, structures in generating educational strategies evidently also correlates positively with sustainability.

In Table 2 we illustrate these asset-based trends.

Table 2 Asset-based trends in sustainable programmes that support vulnerable children

Asset-based trends	Descriptors
Community-based participation	Decentralised power — leadership in communities and schools Eco-systemic perspective Multiple realities Relationships instead of reason and rationality Collaboration instead of fragmented services
Building and strengthening internal capacities	Collect data about assets, capacities and resources instead of problems and disabilities Focus on assets and capacities Professionals are supportive instead of paternalistic Provides funding for pro-activity instead of despondency Salutogenic philosophy
Community resource mobilisation	Community members and parents are change agents Active role of NGOs Cycle of empowerment instead of dependence
Networking and establishing links	Cross-sectoral collaboration Connects individuals to resources as service delivery Functional approach instead of discipline specific approach
Advocacy	Creating public awareness Rights approach and the Constitution of South Africa Openness, disclosure and acceptance Inclusivity instead of exclusivity Holistic understanding instead of labelling and stigmatisation
Use local embedded (indigenous) beliefs, structures, knowledge and practices	Beliefs, systems and practices of communities and individuals are affirmed Communities and individuals are viewed as experts, not clients Individuals are seen as having essential viewpoints instead of being ignorant
Information sharing	Networkers facilitating processes Move away from "expert" knowledge towards shared knowledge Connecting instead of informing

Table 2 indicates that sustainable programmes to support vulnerable children share asset-based attributes. We next reflect on the relevance of this finding for educational purposes.

How can this knowledge be utilised in schools to enable educators, families and communities?

In the following discussion we aim to indicate how the asset-based approach is reflected in the current discourses regarding vulnerable children. Global discourses on vulnerable children

propagate the fundamental role the education sector can play in the care and support of vulnerable children (Dawes, 2003; Giese *et al*., 2003; Hunter, 2001; Kilmer, Cowen & Wyman, 2001; Kochhar, West & Taymans, 2000; Richter, 2003; Roberts & Cairns, 1999;). Giese, Meintjes, Croke and Chamberlain (2003) specifically call for the utilisation of schools as nodes of care and support for vulnerable children.

As nodes of care and support, schools would serve as intersection between communities and service providers — resonating with the tenets of the asset-based approach. Schools would therefore not only function as half-day providers of formal education. Social development services, health services and NGOs would have an entry point via schools to vulnerable children, their families and communities at large. Ideally this would mean an in-house (school) nurse (maybe even a clinic), social worker, feeding programmes, access to government grants.

In terms of the asset-based approach communities would also benefit, as these services are not only directed at vulnerable children. People in the community and the context of the community are acknowledged in supporting vulnerable children. A benefit would be care and support services for the broader community. Services and sources are not merely provided at schools. The asset-based approach encourages community participation in these services. An example would be the cultivation of food stocks for use in the schools — making use of community knowledge — as well as labour and seed contributions. Another example could be the identification of care-givers who can participate in extra curricular NGO activities focused on life skill development, homework support, games — something similar to the highly successful Head Start project (Zigler & Muenchow, 1992).

The infrastructure of the schools could also be utilised after hours. Classrooms can serve as bedrooms for children on the streets; adult learners can attend literacy classes in the afternoons or evenings. Schools as such can form clusters to share resources and mutually benefit from collaborative efforts. In this regard it would be prudent to team a good-practice school with other schools currently struggling to support vulnerable children. These are just some suggestions of how schools could utilise the asset-based approach to support vulnerable children in partnership with communities.

School-based dissemination of good practice targeted at families could serve as access point to communities. During school-based meetings[4] families and interested community members can be informed of the asset-based approach as a means to support vulnerable children. Families can be made aware of the need for early identification of vulnerability of children. Identified community leaders (principals, traditional leaders, faith-based leaders) would be pivotal in facilitating knowledge of the asset-based approach. Families can be introduced to examples of sustainable programmes, especially the prevalence of asset-based trends in these. In order to build capacity asset-based concepts such as community-based activities, participation, community resource mobilisation and networking can be illucidated. It would be ideal if professionals from various sectors could be present in the role of partners, facilitators, observers and resources during some of these gatherings. Their future roles would be those of consultants, mediators and resource persons. These school-based meetings between stakeholders could occur frequently in order to strengthen capacity, motivate and support, exchange ideas.

Conclusion

We have presented the asset-based theoretical framework as one explanation for sustainability in supporting vulnerable children in education. Initially we identified asset-based trends in

sustainable educational practices for vulnerable children. We then reflected on the parallels that exist between the asset-based approach and current discourses regarding the care, support and education of vulnerable children. We suggested that families could be empowered with knowledge and skills of the asset-based approach during school-based meetings. The aim of these school-based meetings would be to encourage asset-based activities to support vulnerable children. This has been a theoretical discussion of what is essentially a practical, vibrant and human phenomenon. As such we conclude with the words of a community leader at a school typifying good practice in including vulnerable children (Hlengiwe, 2003; Giese *et al*., 2003):

> *At least if they come to school, we know the children get the food ... So we're not just a school anymore these days, we're a school, a farm, a dairy, a fish farm, and a home*.

Notes

1. Schools as nodes of support and care for vulnerable children was coined by Giese, Meintjes, Croke & Chamberlain, 2003.
2. Smart (2003) based this identification on work in the Centre for International and Comparative Labour and Social Security Law, as well as on the South African national consultative workshop on Children's Entitlement to Social Security, Cape Town, March 2001.
3. 2002 Human Resources Council (SA) and the Southern African Regional Poverty Network Conference regarding Children, HIV and Poverty in southern Africa; 2003 Children's Institute (University of Cape Town) and Human Resources Council (SA) National Education Policy Round Table of schools in the care and support of vulnerable children.
4. We chose to refer to meetings rather than counseling, as a professional should merely facilitate the process. In asset-based terms a community member should take the lead.

References

Akintola O & Quinlan T 2003. *Report to the scientific meeting on the empirical evidence for the demographic and socio-economic impact of HIV/AIDS*. Health Economics and HIV/AIDS Research Division, University of Natal, Durban, 26-28 March.

Bellamy C 2003. *The state of the world's children 2004. Girls, education and development.* New York: The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

Creswell JW 1998. *Qualitative inquiry and research design. Choosing among five traditions*. London: Sage Publications.

Dawes A 2003. Improving children's mental health in an era of HIV/AIDS. Paper presented to the colloquium: *Improving the health of school age children in an era of HIV/AIDS: Linking policies, programmes and strategies for the 21st Century*. Inkosi Albert Luthuli Hospital, Durban, 16-19 March.

Department of Education (DoE) 2001. *Education White Paper No. 6 on Special needs education. Building an inclusive education and training system*. Pretoria: Government Printer.

Department of Education (DoE) 2001. *National Policy on HIV/AIDS for Learners and Educators in Public Schools and Students and Educators in Further Education and Training institutions*. Pretoria: Government Printer.

Department of National Education (DNE) 1997. *Quality Education for all. Report of the National Commission on Special Education Needs and the National Committee for Education Support services*. Pretoria: Government Printer.

Department of National Education (DNE) 1999. *Consultative paper No. 1 on Special Education: Building an inclusive education and training system*. Pretoria: Government Printer.

Department of National Education (DNE) 2001. *Education White Paper No. 6 on Special needs education. Building an inclusive education and training system*. Pretoria: Government Printer.

Department of Social Development (South Africa) 2004. *National guidelines for social services to children infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. A research report by Save the Children South Africa*

Programme. Pretoria: Government Printer.
Denzin NK & Lincoln Y 2000. *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. London: Sage Publications.
Donahue J 2002. Catholic Relief Services. Workshop paper presented at the *HSRC and Save The Children Fund's South African workshop on Children, HIV/AIDS and poverty in southern Africa,* HSRC.
Ebersöhn L & Eloff I 2002. The black, white and grey of rainbow childrens' coping with HIV/AIDS. *Perspectives in Education*, 20:77-84.
Ebersöhn L & Eloff I 2003. *Lifeskills and assets*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.
Ebersöhn L & Mbetse DJ 2003. Exploring community strategies to career education in terms of the asset-based approach: Expanding existing career theory and models of intervention. *South African Journal of Education*, 23:323-327.
Eloff I & Ebersöhn L 2001. The implications of an asset-based approach to early intervention. *Perspectives in Education*, 19:148-156.
Eloff I 2003. Understanding the asset-based approach. In: Ebersöhn L & Eloff I. *Lifeskills and assets*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.
Germann S 2002. Impact of HIV/AIDS on children in Southern Africa. Workshop paper presented at the *HSRC and Save The Children Fund's South African workshop on Children, HIV/AIDS and poverty in southern Africa,* HSRC.
Giese S, Meintjes H, Croke R & Chamberlain R 2003. The role of schools in addressing the needs of children made vulnerable in the context of HIV/AIDS. Paper presented at the *Education Policy Round Table*, Children's Institute, University of Cape Town, 28-29 July.
Goliber T 2000. *Exploring the implications of the HIV/AIDS pandemic for educational planning in selected African countries: the demographic question*. Washington, DC: The Futures Group International.
Gomm R, Hammersley M & Foster P (eds) 2002. *Case Study Method*. London: Sage Publications.
Harris AB & Schubert JG 2001. Defining "quality" in the midst of HIV/AIDS: ripple effects in classrooms. Paper presented at the *44th annual meeting of the Comparative and International Education Society*, Washington, DC.
Hlengiwe S 2003. Doing much with very little. Paper presented at the *Education Policy Round Table*, Children's Institute, University of Cape Town, 28-29 July.
Hepburn AE 2001. Primary education for Eastern and Southern Africa. Report prepared for the *United States Agency for International Development for Displaced Children and Orphans Fund*.
Hunter S 2001. *Reshaping societies. HIV/AIDS and social change*. New York: Hudson Run Press.
Hunter S & Fall D 1998. *Orphans and HIV/AIDS in Zambia. An assessment of orphans in the context of children affected by HIV/AIDS*. Lusaka: UNICEF.
Hunter S & Williamson J 2001. *Children on the Brink. Strategies to support children isolated by HIV/AIDS*. USAID.
Kelly M 2000. *Planning for education in the context of HIV/AIDS*. Paris: UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning.
Kilmer RP, Cowen EL & Wyman PA 2001. A micro-level analysis of developmental, parenting, and family-milieu variables that differentiate stress-resilient and stress-affected children. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 29:391-416.
Kochhar CA, West LL & Taymans JM 2000. *Successful inclusion*. Columbus: Merril.
Kretzmann JP & McKnight JL 1993. *Building communities from the inside out. A path towards finding and mobilising communities' assets*. Chicago: ACTA Publications.
Kretzmann JP & McKnight JL 1996. *A guide to mapping local businesses assets and mobilizing local business capacities*. Chicago: ACTA Publications.
Mohlabi R 2003. Department of Health policies and practices relevant to the care and support of vulnerable children through schools. Paper presented at the *Education Policy Round Table*, Children's Institute, University of Cape Town, 28-29 July.
Mokwena K 1997. Empowerment as a tool for community health development. *CHASA Journal of Comprehensive Health*, 8:66-70.

Reber AS & Reber E 1995. *The Penguin Dictionary of Psychology.* London: Penguin.
Richter L 2003. The impact of HIV/AIDS on the development of children. Paper presented at the *Institute for Security Studies Seminar "HIV/AIDS, vulnerability and children: Dynamics and long-term implications for southern Africa's security*", Pretoria, 4 April.
Richter L, Manefold J & Pather R 2004. Family and community interventions for children affected by AIDS. Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council.
Roberts J & Cairns K 1999. *School children with HIV/AIDS.* Alberta: Detselig Enterprises.
Sands DJ, Kozleski EB & French NK 2000. *Inclusive education for the 21st century.* United States: Wadsworth Thomson Learning.
Skweyiya ZST 2003. Case studies on the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS. Keynote address at the release of Vol. 1 of the *report on case studies on the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS*, HSRC Conference Centre, 27 June.
Smart R 2000. *Children living with HIV/AIDS in South Africa. A rapid appraisal.* Pretoria: Save the Children (UK).
Smart R 2003a. *Children affected by HIV/AIDS in South Africa. A rapid appraisal of priorities, policies and practices.* Pretoria: Save the Children (UK).
Smart R 2003b. *Policies for Orphans and Vulnerable Children: A framework for Moving Ahead.* POLICY, USAID.
Stake RE 2000. Case Studies. In: Denzin NK & Lincoln Y. *Handbook of Qualitative Research.* London: Sage Publications.
Signposts for Safe Schools Workbook 2004. Available at http://www.info.gov.za/speeches/2001/010601245p1006.htm
UNAIDS 2000. *AIDS epidemic update: December 2000.* UNAIDS / WHO.
UNESCO 2003. *Global Curriculum Bank for HIV/AIDS Prevention Education.* Geneva. International Bureau of Education.
Vlachou AD 1997. *Struggles for Inclusive Education.* Philadelphia: Open University Press.
Zigler E & Muenchow S 1992. *HeadStart. The inside story of America's most successful educational experiment.* New York: BasicBooks.
Zuberi F, Ebersöhn L, Mampane R, Maritz J, Lubbe C, Mboweni H & Pieterse J 2006. Construction of safety and risk factors by learners in the Limpopo Province, South Africa. Results of a baseline survey of learners in the Sekhukhune, Bohlabela and Vhembe districts. Pretoria: Unpublished research report, University of Pretoria.

Authors

Irma Eloff is Head of the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Pretoria and School Chair for the School of Educational Studies. Her research focuses on asset-based approaches to educational psychology theory and practice, positive psychology, early intervention, inclusion, and HIV and AIDS.

Liesel Ebersöhn is Faculty of Education Research Co-ordinator: HIV & AIDS at the University of Pretoria. Her research centres on the intersection between positive psychology and the asset-based approach as it pertains to coping in the context of HIV and AIDS, such as safe schools (funded by UNICEF) and resilience in young children of HIV mothers (in partnership with Yale University, funded by NIH).