

**Child-Headed Households and Educational Problems in
Urban Zimbabwe: The Case of Dikwindi Primary
School in Masvingo Urban**

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ABSTRACT The present research investigates the educational problems faced by child-headed households in Masvingo, Zimbabwe. These households are a result of challenges such as divorce, domestic violence, and parental deaths (mainly due to HIV and AIDS). Since Zimbabwean families are traditionally extended, the increase in the number of orphans puts pressure on relatives who have to fend for additional children. Child-headed household arrangements seem to represent a new coping mechanism for orphans in Zimbabwe. Community-based organizations (CBOs) also help extended families to carry the burden of orphans. Using a qualitative research methodology and a case study design, the paper investigates the impact of child-headed households at Dikwindi primary School in Masvingo urban. Stratified random and purposive sampling techniques were used to select participants. Data were collected through interviews, questionnaires and observations. Research findings established that HIV/AIDS was the major cause of child-headed households. It was also established that child-headed households face a number of socio-economic problems. Thus, it was recommended that child-headed families should be supported by government and other 'parapublic' institutions. The present research contributes to the burgeoning body of knowledge on child-headed families and poverty.