EXPLORING THE FEASIBILITY OF FOSTER CARE AS A PRIMARY PERMANENCY OPTION FOR ORPHANS

By

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DECLARATION

I declare that *Exploring the feasibility of foster care as a primary permanency option for orphans* is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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Summary

In the wake of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, welfare organisations in Vryheid situated in northern KwaZulu-Natal have noted dramatic increases in requests for foster care placements for orphaned children. In many instances, orphans have lived by private arrangement with extended families for several years. However, families are increasingly overwhelmed with the burden of overextending scarce resources, forcing them to seek welfare assistance.

Community-based responses to the crisis are regarded as top priority. This study examines literature regarding child care alternatives for orphans, focussing on foster care as the primary option. A study was conducted which explored community perceptions towards the local orphan crisis and foster care in particular. Findings revealed that although the adage 'Blood is thicker than water' still applies, foster care cannot stand alone. Alternate forms of care-giving need to be found to avoid plunging orphan care into further crisis.

Key terms

Foster care, foster parent, foster carer, kinship care, orphan, orphaned and vulnerable children, AIDS orphan, permanency planning, HIV/AIDS, reunification, community responses, child care options, child care alternatives, Child Care Forums, Child Care Act, institutional care, primary caregiver.