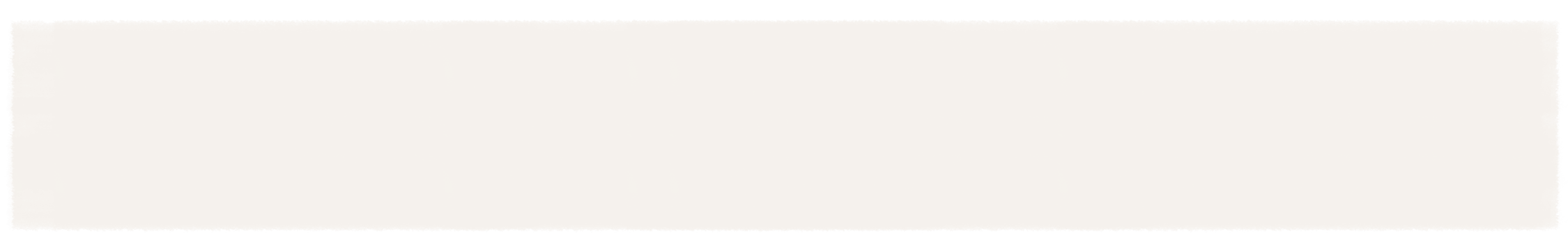
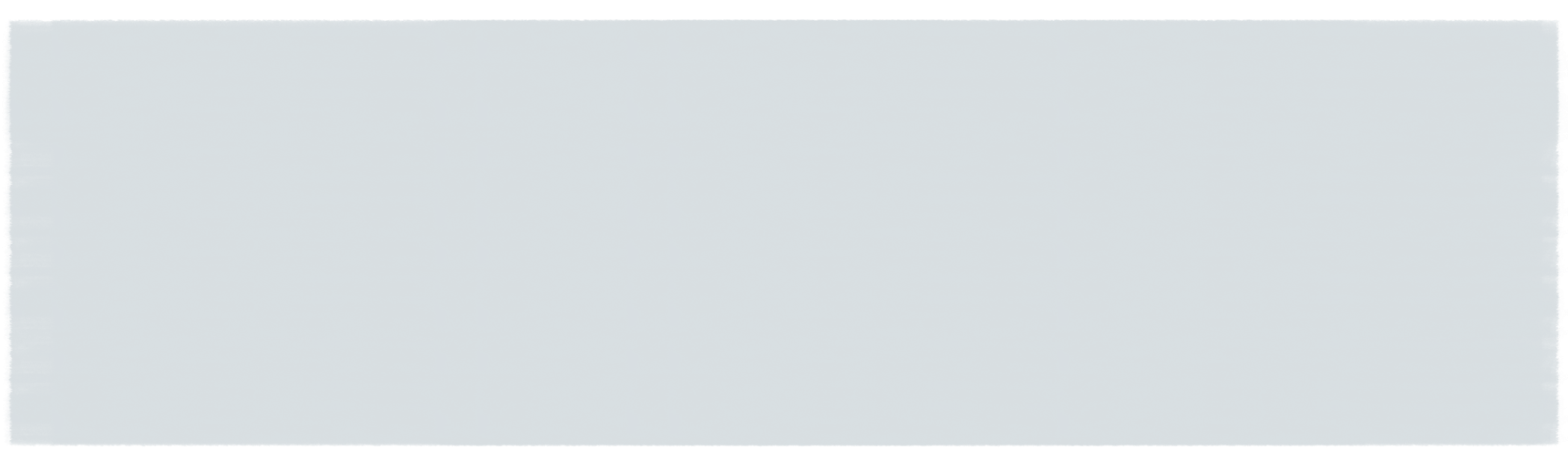
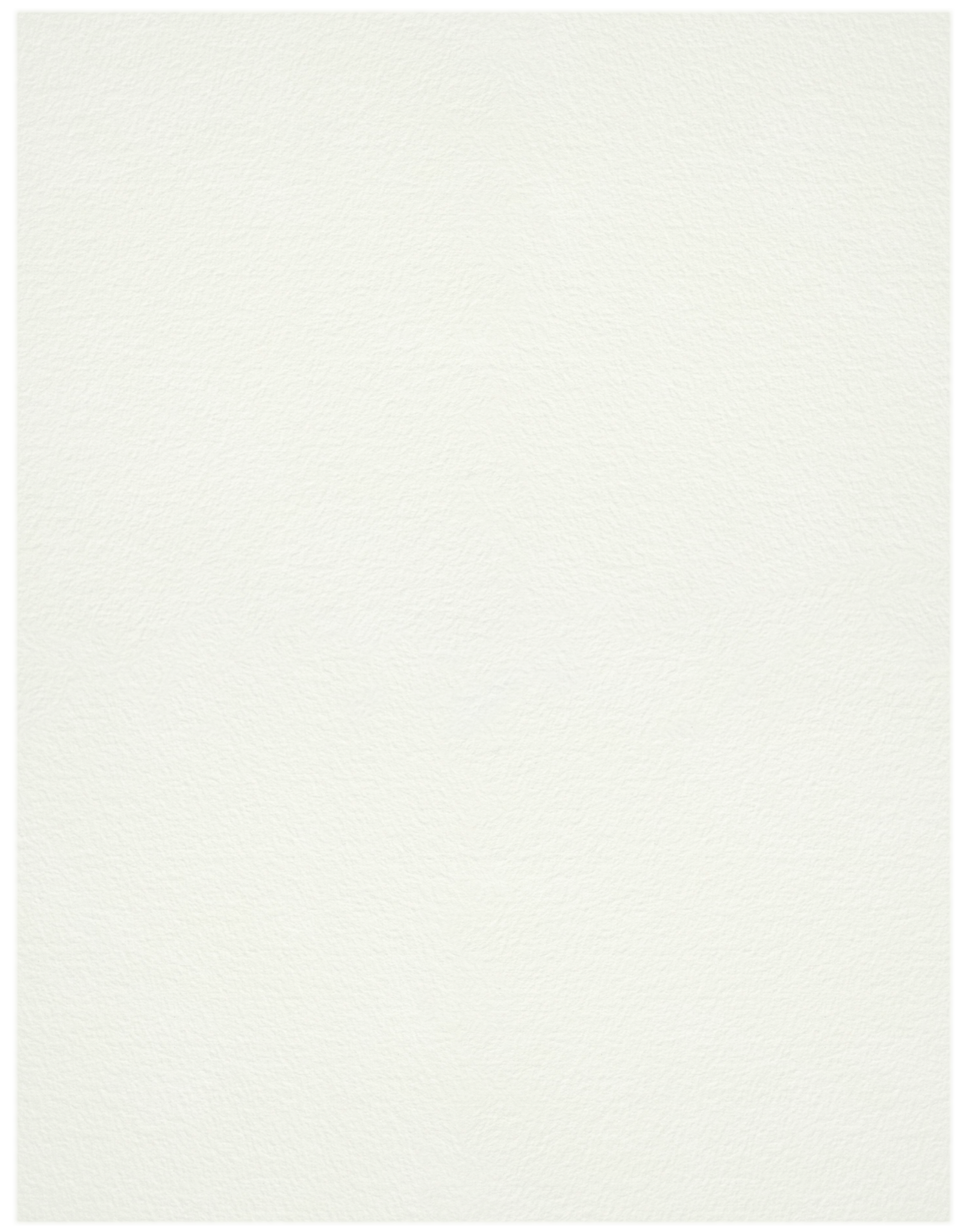
Exit Strategies for Aging Out Orphans in Mozambique



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## ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this study is to compare exit strategies for “aging out youth” in primarily Mozambican orphan-care facilities with those of global best practice.   The desire is to facilitate better outcomes for the flourishing of aging-out orphans and the success of their service provider’s efforts. The study utilized an inductive and emic-based research design incorporating the hermeneutical approach of Transformational Conversations used in urban missiology.

Data was gathered in a qualitative study by participant observation and through conducting semi-structured interviews with key informants and orphanage directors throughout the nation, as well as in neighboring Swaziland and South Africa. Case studies from twelve child-care organizations were connected to biblical themes and triangulated against secondary global and local literature regarding orphan exit strategies.

Results indicate that worldwide there are serious difficulties “care-leavers” experience due to insufficient resources and life skill training. My research revealed the following categories of care needing additional attention: Psychosocial, Community/Cultural, Economic, Vocational, Educational, and Spiritual. Without well-thought out and implemented exit strategies addressing these themes, evidence suggests most orphans transitioning out of their childhood living situations face significant struggles.

This study’s findings imply that life skills programming for aging out youth need to be initiated earlier if effective and transferable skills are going to be acquired before leaving care facilities. A stable relationship with a community member or mentor is crucial in strengthening the “connection” factor required for a successful transition. Improving overall exit strategies and networks is crucial for the future success of aging out youth.

The results from this study have implications beyond Mozambique’s borders. As the local issues interfaced with the relevant global theory, universal principles became apparent. Thus, this research can act as a resource to assist global orphan care-providers seeking to improve the outcomes for aging out youth.

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# Abbreviations and Definitions

ACRWC African Charter for the Rights and Welfare of the Child

AIDS Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

ARV Anti-retroviral  
AU African Union

CCI Child Care Institution

CCF Child Care Facility

CEC Children in extreme circumstances

CDC Children in dire circumstances

CEDC Children in extremely difficult circumstances

CHH Child headed household

CIAC Children in adverse circumstances

CRC Convention on the Rights of the Child  
CRBA Child Rights Based Approach

GoM Government of Mozambique

HIV Human Immune Deficiency Virus

MDGs Millennium Development Goals

MINED Ministry of Education

PARPA Action Plan for the Absolute Poverty Reduction

NGO Non-Governmental Organization  
NPA National Plan of Action for OVC

OAC Orphans and Abandoned Children  
OVC Orphans and Vulnerable Children  
OVCY Orphans, Vulnerable Children and Youth

PSS Psychosocial Support

SADC Southern Africa Development Community  
SDCS Southern Development Community Secretariat

TVET Technical and Vocational Education and Training

UNCRC United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

UNICEF United Nations Children’s Fund  
USAID United States Agency for International Development

WHO World Health Organization

# Definitions

Careleavers Orphans or abandoned children leaving residential or

institutional care

Family-Based & Kinship Care Private arrangement usually whereby the child is looked after by relatives or friends

Orphan A child aged under age18, who has lost one or both parents

Orphanage Residential institution devoted to the care of orphans

Institutional/residential care Care provided in any non-family-based group setting

## Chapter 1

## Introduction

***If all we are doing is rescuing children to feed, water and educate them until***

***they are eighteen so they can end up with survival choices as prostitutes or criminals as adults, then something is seriously flawed with our vision.***

*Tom Davis, former CEO of Children’s HopeChest (orphan-focused NGO)*

Consider the following dialogue:

**Santos:** *I wish I could go back to my childhood.*

**Melinda:** *But Santos, why would you want to go back there?? You lived in an orphanage with 500 other children and no parents. There wasn’t anyone to even tuck you in at night. Your childhood doesn't seem like something dreams are made of.*

**Santos:** *Mana Melinda, when I was a child, I didn't have to worry. Everything was taken care of at the orphanage and I could play and be carefree. Even though I was an orphan, I was happy. My future doesn't look happy as an adult. I don't know how I will survive. I don’t have a job, money for food, or any ability to finish my education.*

‘Santos’ is one of an estimated 1.6 million orphans in Mozambique’s population of 25 million (UNICEF, 2014). The dire conditions he faces is partially reflective of what faces the citizens at large. The United Nations Human Development Index, places Mozambique as 185 out of 187 countries and among the four countries on the African continent with the highest incidence of poverty in the world, only ahead of Niger and the Democratic Republic of Congo (UNDP 2013). With an overall unemployment rate of 27%, whether you are an orphan or not, life in Mozambique is not easy for most.

It’s hard to be a young person in Mozambique,” says Rui Pedro Cossa, a 24-year-old geography student at the University Eduardo Mondlane in Maputo. “Normally in youth, you‘re supposed to gain experience for the future,” he says. “But here you have more problems than opportunities. There’s no way to overcome the obstacles” (UNFPA, 2011).

Certainly though, for those who are orphans, the already precarious position most Mozambicans find themselves in becomes infinitely more dangerous in the daily fight for survival. Aging Out (AO) orphans often experience the effects of political, economic, and social crises within their countries more severely than adults, and many lack the adequate institutional support to address their special needs. UNICEF documents that amongst AO orphans between the age of 14 and 18, 20% will commit suicide within a year of leaving (Hope International, 2013).

It is for these reasons and more that I have approached this topic. I understand that Jesus seemed attracted to the discarded and the marginalized, and the AO population certainly fits that definition. (Note: According to the United Nations, the definition of an orphan is anyone that loses one parent, either through death or abandonment

(UN, 2011).)

I have been involved in orphan care ministries for more than two decades, and during that time, I have become aware of a blindspot in its ranks. In fact, a simple internet search highlights the fact that Orphan and Vulnerable Children (OVC’s) are often the focus of attention, whereas Orphan and Vulnerable Youth (OVY’s ) get much rarer consideration. Great effort and media concentration is given to attending to the needs of young orphans, but once they approach adulthood, they are often abandoned once again. The results are tragic, as recorded by this AO orphan care advocate:

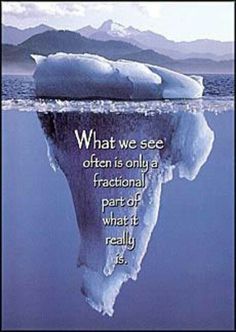
*Most of the kids were forced to leave the orphanage at fifteen to sixteen years of age. 15% of those kids would end up committing suicide in two years, 70% of the girls would end up as prostitutes and 80% of the boys would end up on the streets or in jail* (Bond, 2012).



Figure 1: It is realities such as these that persuasively drew me into the direction of this research study.

### Country Context

Mozambique is situated in the southern part of Africa, bordered by Tanzania, South Africa, Swaziland, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Malawi. The total population is 27.2 million (Kaneda & Bietsch, 2016). The fact that Mozambique occupies the 182nd place out of 188 nations on the Human Development Index is a clear indicator of serious suffering (Jahan, 2016). This is certainly the case, easily evidenced by more than 85,000 children dying before their fifth birthday, putting the country at position 172 on the child survival list (Vanormelingen, 2014). The under-five mortality rate at 142 deaths per 1000 live births is the highest of those amongst all six of Mozambique’s neighboring nations, and twice the number of the 2015 Millennium Development Goal target (WHO, 2010, p 54). Amongst those children under-five that do live, 47 percent are stunted by chronic malnutrition (WHO, 2010, p 32). Maputo, the capital city, has one of the highest rates of malnutrition in the world **(**Louw-Vaudran, 2014)**.**

1 out of every 33 Mozambican babies dies before reaching its first birthday (Vanormelingen, 2010). That last fact can also be correlated with 56 percent of Mozambican girls marrying before they turn 18 years of age (International Center for Research on Women/ICRW, 2010). The country has the sixth highest child bride rate in the world. Such early marriages are notorious for creating additional health problems, which include greater risk of domestic abuse (ICRW, 2010) and higher likelihood of contracting HIV. Mozambique ranks eighth in the world among nations plagued by the HIV/AIDS epidemic (Vanormelingen, 2014, p 22). Pregnancy is the leading cause of death worldwide for girls ages 15 to 19 (ICRW, 2010).

Though outwardly Mozambique had shown signs of becoming a booming and prosperous country with one of the world’s fastest growing economies, over half its population remains in absolute poverty, surviving on less than a dollar a day (Jessop, 2014). Corruption scandals involving the government, international banks and large foreign investors have contributed to growing inequality (Lalá & Reisman, 2010, p 18). The Gini coefficient (measuring inequality) has risen to 45.6, making it one of the most unequal countries in the world (Lalá & Reisman, 2010, p 18).

### The Chosen Population

*Humanity’s greatest advances are not in its discoveries –*

*but in how those discoveries are applied to reduce inequity.*

Bill Gates, 2007



Are some people less valuable than others? The very question assaults the foundation of Christian thought from which we are told all people are created in the image of God. Yet an honest appraisal of the world at hand would lead an objective observer to think that some people matter more than others.

In a world of increasing inequalities, this question takes on even greater significance. And in the country of Mozambique, this question is not theoretical, but real and raw for aging out orphans who seem to be ignored, in spite of the fact that the Constitution of the Republic of Mozambique of 2004 (Article 90) declares that all citizens have a right to live in a satisfactory environment (Allen & Jossias, 2011, p 3). If “poverty is the absence of shalom in all its meanings” as Bryant Myers (2004, p 86) contends, does that mean the shalom of God is being denied to the aging out orphan population of Mozambique who seem to be forgotten, and consequently, impoverished?

I truly believe it does not have to be, and it is one reason I moved my physical presence here. I believe there is some stock in Hunter’s (2010) theory of ‘faithful presence’ being necessary to initiate transformational changes in society and its unjust structures. Conceptually, I can see how this overlaps and supports Grigg’s theory of revival movements, as well as his understanding and promotion of an incarnational type of evangelism (2009).

This also fits with the Living Theory methodology regarding transformative learning processes advanced by Leighton (2016) in her doctoral thesis, *Incarnational Reality as an Approach to Missional Theological Education and Training.* Though Leighton’s thesis is not so much a leadership or movement theory, as it is a pedagogical approach, her premise is based on her experience of “God in loving union with us, the embodiment of spiritual reality enfleshed through our lives, empowered by the Holy Spirit in our participation and engagement with God in the world” (p. i). I believe this type of engagement and transformation can most certainly initiate a Kingdom-based movement amongst the aged-out orphan population of Mozambique.

### Aging-Out Orphan Facts and Challenges

*Although the world is full of suffering, it is full also of the overcoming of it.*

Helen Keller

There is no way to accurately count all the orphans in the world. Statisticians and NGO’s like to throw around figures stating there are 150 million orphans, no wait, there are 137 million, or perhaps we meant 165 million (Medefind, 2015). Is fake news alive and well in the orphan care world? Probably, but this is not so much a case of malicious intentions to deliver falsehoods, but merely a matter of no one really knows. After all, do you just put out a memo and tell them to all line up so they can be counted? People sometimes don’t think much about the obstacles involved in counting worldwide a vulnerable population that include those who are in armed conflicts, trafficked, and in unknown locations that even Coca-Cola hasn’t reached.

This is why various organizations and statisticians are going to come up with their best estimates, and they are bound to differ, because this is not an exact science. But this much I do know: **one orphan is one too many**. God designed us for families, so anything less than that is less than God’s ideal.

It is worth noting that the Bible refers to the fatherless as orphans, so we shouldn’t be surprised when we discover that the 150+ million orphan figures that are often batted about refer to children who have lost one parent. These are also called “single orphans.’” “Double orphans” make up a much smaller slice of the pie, 17.6 million (Christian Alliance for Orphans 2015, p 3).

Though many people are aware there is “an orphan problem” in this world of ours, few think of those orphans as anything over 17 years of age. But when you turn 18 and must leave your orphanage (in some nations, the age is earlier), do you suddenly become ‘de-orphanized?’ ‘Of course not’ is the obvious answer, but often forgotten. In actual fact, at this most critical transition time of their lives, these young adults often feel like more of an orphan because suddenly those who were caring for them are no longer there. Once again, they’ve been abandoned, and for too many, re-traumatized.

**Statistics to note.** In too many nations of this world,10-15% of aged-out orphans will commit suicide before they turn 18, 70% of boys will turn to drugs and crime to survive, and up to 60% of girls will turn to prostitution to survive, or find themselves involved in sex-trafficking (Bond, 2012). Kaggwa (2016), an orphan care movement leader who in three years has mobilized 2333 churches to care for orphans in Uganda, said that 70-90% of AO’s end up in prison, which matches the statistics for AO’s/ foster care kids in the USA.

Additional relevant statistics reveal that compared to children in male-headed traditional families where their natural parents are married to each other, children living in any other environment, deprived of their natural fathers, are:

-

- 8 times more likely to go to prison

- 5 times more likely to commit suicide

- 10 times more likely to have behavioral problems

- 20 times more likely to become rapists

- 32 times more likely to run away

- 10 times more likely to abuse chemical substances

- 9 times more likely to drop out of high school

- 33 times more likely to be seriously abused

- 73 times more likely to be fatally abused

- One-tenth as likely to get A’s in school

- On average, have a 44% higher mortality rate

- On average, have a 72% lower standard of living.

(Rodriguez, 2014, p 42-43)

Each year 14,505,000 children grow up as orphans and age out of the system by age sixteen (Orphan Hope International, n.d.).

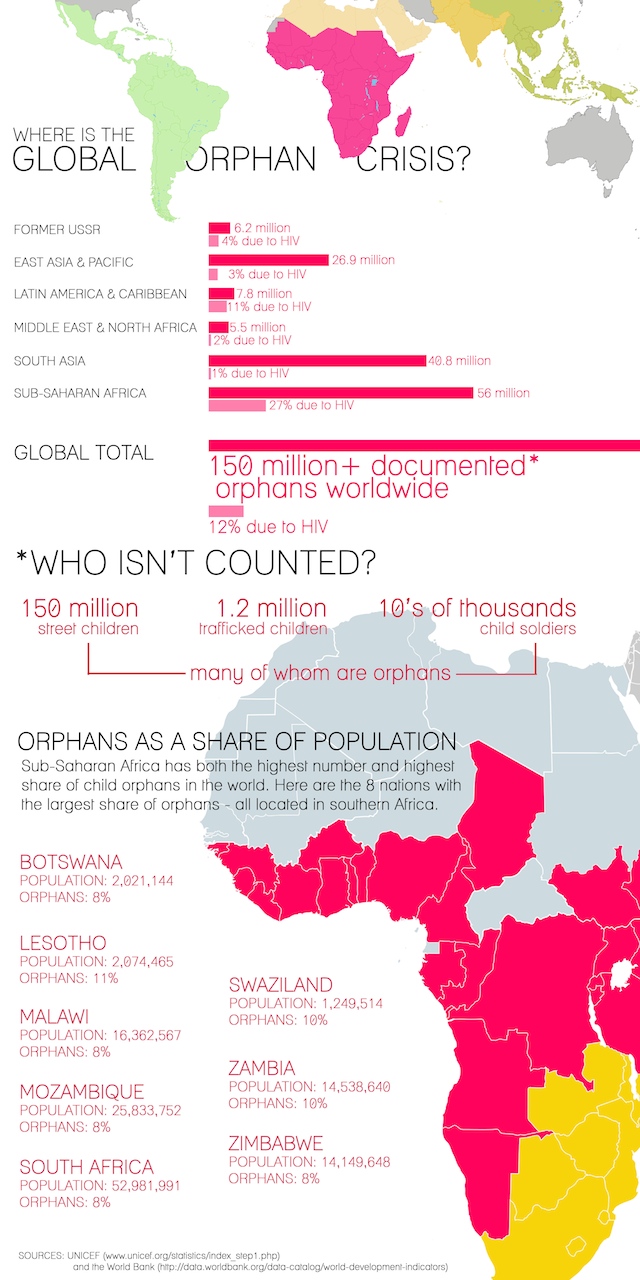


Figure 2: Numbers of orphans in select African nations

## Chapter 3: Research Findings

## Organization Stories

### Orphan Care Provider A (OCP-A) - Southern Mozambique

OCP-A implements an exit program starting around 14 years old. The Mozambican government mandate is to exit at 18 years old. The exit plan is designed around education and activities that help prepare the young person to integrate into community and life on own. This entails visits to community and family. If there is family (family of origin or extended family) children are sent to visit and spend time with them. The visits start out short and over time, if the child is handling well, the visits will be extended for weekends and holidays.

Skills training - life skills and job skills - are also high on the preparation for life post orphanage. Being in a orphanage can cause dependency and so OCP-A’s organisation provides skills activities that teach them how to cook, clean rooms, buy food, manage money and work. These are important skills sets needed to integrate well.

For OCP-A the ideal storyline for the young adult aging out is to have a sound faith in and love for Jesus Christ that endures when they leave; that they can live on their own and have a family; continue studies if needed, find a job and share the love of Christ with others.

Once a child exits it is not a simple matter for them to return to the center. They can come for the church services on Sundays, but are not encouraged to return. They need to ask permission (usually granted), but government is not keen on this activity.

Transition time can be difficult and if a young person is having a hard time coping OCP-A says that they help with connections to churches, perhaps build a house, and/or involve a social welfare team to do follow up.

OCP-A believes that their strengths in helping orphans with their future are in their efforts to instill in the youth good character - honesty, integrity, hard work, study habits, moral boundaries, and relationship with God. It’s the relationship with God in Christ that influences their approach most. Do what Jesus did! meet the needs of the total person - spiritual, mental and physical. It’s that relationship that hopefully will help them have strength when they encounter the unique challenges they have as compared to other young people who come from a family home. The challenges are: loneliness, lack of community, joblessness and isolation. Within Mozambique three things are tougher for orphans than in other non-African contexts: 1) lack of social welfare benefits, 2) lack of counseling, and 3) lack of work.

In most organizations there are successes and failures. One young man in particular has done well in life...he is married, serves as a pastor, studies Business Administration at university, and walking well in life! Some others have been caught up into drugs, alcohol, unwanted pregnancies, & family abandonment - these have made serious failures out of some. Some are in prison.

If there were no limitations of resources the biggest priority for OCP-A would be skills training and ability to get them jobs when done.

### Orphan Care Provider B (OCP-B) - Northern Mozambique

OCP-B has a unique perspective in the interviews conducted...she, herself, was an orphan in Mozambique. And continues to work in the orphanage setting, working with the youth. She went through the reintegration process not too long ago.

At this care facility the kids are told early that this is not their permanent home, a time will come at 18 and they will have to leave. Preparations usually begin about 6 months in advance. Some will be reintegrated with family others may be given a house with some furnishings. It all depends on the character and circumstances of each young person.

As with many OCPs, the vulnerable children in their care come with varying levels of school experience. Therefore, an 18 year old may only have a year 7 education. If they are motivated and demonstrate the right character, this OCP will provide continued education through to university. But not all want to continue.

Education is a key component in transition to community integration. Life skills...how to manage home, how to shop, wash clothes, etc…, these are important. Job skills are certainly important. There had been a transition house at one time, unfortunately it closed because the Landlord sold it. It provided a place where they could learn all the life skills and some job skills.

Still, for OCP-B, one of the key strengths in her mind of what this facility provides is opportunity...if you wanted it (esp education) and “to follow Jesus” and to “meet other people from other nations.”

The latter is central to the identity of the organisation. It is not forced to have to go to church, but expected to be respectful and have some attendance. But still man feel they are forced to go. If one is not obedient to house rules, the schools and in church then one could be reintegrated earlier than the center would like. OCP-B says quite matter of factly, “...if I want to do good things, I will do good things!”

What could be done differently to help the transition time? Find educators/tias who truly do care for the children and it’s not just a job. We need hose who will “sit with them...talk about relationships” Be good if the tias would talk about life with the kids: “How are you feeling? What is your future that you want? What do you want life to look like when you grow up?” “It’d be very good to pay attention to the kids and know how they are feeling.” OCP-B thinks that maybe a time could be set aside each week or month to talk about such things.

One other disturbing problem as she sees is: “Mamas/tias at the houses are not really Christians but just say so to work there, but they can’t even help with Bible homework.”

There are success stories and unfortunately, some not so good one. OCP-B mentions that some who have had homes built have done well and made it good and have kept the goods that come with the home. Then there are others who just sell the house and possessions and now have nothing.

**Orphan Care Provider C (OCP-C) - Southern Mozambique**

OCP-C has one of the more varied histories in orphan care settings than the others in the interview group. Her experience spans several continents with a cumulative history of about 25 years as an OCP. She has 15 years experience in Mozambique in two care facilities. and is an university trained social worker with a heart for children with AIDS.

OCP-C does not have a definitive exit plan or program because, as she says, “Kids are so different.” Some who are 18 are still in primary school. Her exit plan then is on a child-by-child basis taking into account where each child is when they arrive. She also plays it somewhat loose with the Mozambican government regulations for the 18 year old requirement. She runs her facility a bit more fluidly since she has the latitude. To date, her social worker hasn’t enforced the regulation.

Regarding survival skills needed by the children once they exit, her views mirror those of the other interviewees...job skills & job, house/home, financial skills, moral grounding (especially regarding sexual issues). She educates girls particularly about babies and finances...real life! Those who can do school get to continue as long as they can. Being able to sustain connection to the center is important for successful transition - particularly for the girls. They go out and have babies (then reality sets in) and they need help. They will drift around a bit, but she is happy to help when they come back. Sometimes the older ones are good examples.

For kids with AIDS, her ideas of the minimum skills for them to be successful are: “(They) need to be faithful to hospital visits, disciplined about taking their medications ***every day*.**” It is vital for them. Additionally, for all the kids, she says they need life skills: housekeeping, cooking, financial literacy. However she makes note about the financial skills: “We gave up on that. They deal with money the way they want. (They) will be out of money 1/3 of the way through the month. They don’t like planning the way Westerners do.”

One of the dreams she has for the kids would be a good job with decent salary. It does depend on the child though. Some can go on to university but she can’t provide money for that. She does search for sponsors for the individual kids - and some do have them, but not all.

She believes the strengths of her program for the kids is that they can have a strong spiritual life - trusting the Lord for their future. Also, they are good at relationship because they are a smaller operation. They are more flexible with the individuality of each child.

The unique challenges she sees for orphans versus intact family is that there is NO family, especially for many with AIDS. Family, even extended family, is important to every child’s future. Family frequently can provide access to land for a home, but often they family will keep it from the orphan, particularly those with AIDS. Here is Mozambique so much of the challenge is about simply “surviving”. It is hard to deal with dreams at that level. But God does big things.

For her, if there were no financial limitations, more job training is top priority. More money for Mozambicans doesn’t make a difference in her estimation. They want their own life - you have to allow it. They can have that freedom with job training.

**Orphan Care Provider D (OCP-D) - Central Mozambique**

OCP-D has a long history in orphan care, 23 years. He has maintained a long-term commitment to his vision for orphan care. His vision is boys only facility, with no co-ed living situation. He does have a woman who works with them and they have an active widows ministry as well that is conducted from the orphanage.

He begins the exit process for his orphans immediately. They learn quickly that they will leave the facility. They see the older boys leave and it is discussed openly. They start learning life skills as soon as they enter. They have responsibilities for cooking, cleaning, building project participation, grounds keeping, and gardening.

His exit plan program is to be intentional about giving them skills for independent living. He does try to give them ownership by allowing them to decide what they want to do, what professional training in particular, and ultimately where they want to live.

When it comes to minimal skills for the orphan to make a successful transition he also mirrors most of what other interviewees say: cooking, cleaning, managing money, gardening, and some building skills.

An ideal storyline for the kids in his estimation would be: they learn to participate in the house building training, then they can get a job. Each one can select their own home and either buy and refurbish, or rent. But they have the skill to do so. It is a primary need.

His orphans are free to come and go after they leave because it is his intent that the place is considered their home of origin, “We function as a family.”

When those who have left find themselves in hard times, he operates with a tough love philosophy. He considers them adults and they MUST take responsibility for their decisions, they don’t leave the center until they are properly set up. If they ended up homeless, it would be the result of their own actions. They have to sort it out.

The strengths OCP-D sees they provide the kids with is that they have received vocational training and independent living skills. These are given to help with what he sees as the primary challenge facing the aging-out orphan - moving out. It is not an obligation in the intact family in Mozambique. But the intact family expects the young adult boy to start taking a provider role and caring for them.

The basic theological principles follow from this simple idea from James: to take care of widows and the orphans. The Tanach provides guidelines for independent living.

As with all there are successes and failures. Some have gone on to be managers of operations - they embraced the learning and made effort to become skillful. Those who only chose moderate engagement could not stick it out in jobs and it is only their hunger that teaches them to press on.

If resources weren’t a limitation he would like to build his operation into a small village where the boys could live and build homes and keep the community going.

**Orphan Care Provider E (OCP-E) - Southern Mozambique**

This OCP chose a global path to initial training. She chose to visit several different countries to survey the practices of orphan care and learn how it was being done. “(The) what, why, and how in various countries…” She found that family style homes were best and children did well in schools. She began her organization in Mozambique 15 years ago with the intent of doing it as a smaller, home-style operation. Somehow 15 kids ended up with her. She is now on 4th group of kids.

For her, the younger she can have them come in the better for their long-term prospects. She has found that older children have many more “issues” to deal with and are more challenging because of the additional complexity.

Her home facility is deliberately in a Mozambican neighborhood. She wants them to grow up in a community. It feels more like a family situation then. They are not isolated so much. The kids don’t get labeled so easily as “orphan.” It helps them socially, especially in school. She is the first to talk directly about intentionally working to mitigate this for children in her care.

With her “family home” idea the goal is to help them live with a more realistic idea of family life, they get to do the chores: clean, cook, make beds - anything a normal family would do. According OCP-E, when kids are in orphanages they have a tendency to migrate to being their “own authority.” It becomes difficult to do well in a job or relationships.

She finds that her children have assimilated much better because of the family environment. She brought in a “grandma” to help teach them how Mozambicans act when they receive visitors. The grandma helps them learn the cultural norms so that they don’t disrespect others without knowing it.

The children are capable of making transitions better because life is pretty much what they lived in her home. So it’s not challenging. They know how to make life in the home work. They are not promised a lot of “things”. She doesn’t want them to adopt the orphan mentality of “receive, receive, receive”. They will have learned the value of caring for themselves at her place.

Family is a big deal and if the child has family she promotes visiting and if possible they can live with them when they turn 18.

OCP-E takes a fairly aggressive approach to developing independence. Until 14 years old she tells them how they will live, after that “it depends on you.” This is very important for successful empowerment. This is essentially her exit strategy for the kids. All she does is intended to support this.

Putting them in that position when they are 14 is important. They need to get to 10th grade, it’s critical for job and training. This point of decision making at this time is passed on to the younger kids. She makes it a matter of discussion all the time. “Where are you going? What do you believe? When you go on your own, what are you going to do, believe?” Even making the decisions in advance, you really only learn once you start do it yourself. Rapid transition is destructive in her view.

Money and budgeting is difficult to teach in Mozambique. Using small jobs helps to teach them. They can open their own bank account and buy own clothes. They are teenagers, they aren’t thinking about tomorrow. Must help them think outside the box. Help them find out what they like...otherwise they will have to take what comes their way for a job. Repeating this is very important. She says “If they make a bad choice it won’t be because they weren’t informed, but because they made a bad choice.”

For her, the minimum skills are the household skills and vocational training. According to her, “You can give them land and a house, but they can sell it and have no skill. Education is key. Job is key.”

The ideal storyline would be something like this: “Finish high school, university, get married and have a family.” It’s fairly straight. So far, she says, a fairly high percentage of her kids have done that. It’s not that the goal is for them not to come back for help, but many orphanages create dependency, and that’s what she wants to avoid. Give them personal autonomy but still be connected to the family. If they have problems empower them to solve independently. But if need help they can get it.

One thing that is challenging for aging-out orphans is that they are often too trusting, especially the girls. So people steal their stuff. They need to remain aware...they are not always street smart. They are often quite naïve and trusting. They need to learn to be cautious with what they hear. They learn that here in Mozambique “people are prepared to take you for everything.” Additionally, poverty is challenging. Starting with almost nothing.

The other challenge here is that often you have to “pay” for a job. You have to pay as much as $1000 US to get job, $200 US to have someone look at your application. A bank job might cost you 30-50,000 meticals.

The strengths she believes her kids have when they leave are: “they have every tool to be successful, better than most intact family homes here. You have the necessary tools, if you aren’t successful that will be your choice.”

The theological basis for what she does… “It’s a calling. If it wasn’t, I wouldn’t do it. It’s not a job. You couldn’t pay me enough to do this.” According to her “broken people are not usually going to thank you so as a Christian you want to have grace for it.”

If resources weren’t an issue what would she want to do? Provide more educational opportunities. Pay for more tutoring through school for the kids. She would open an English school, computer school, sewing...workforce needs educated people.

**Orphan Care Provider F (OCP-F) - Southern Mozambique**

OCP-F has a total of 28 years in orphan care work. She has spent 16+ years in Mozambique, 14 years of that operating her own organization. She also worked for a combined 10+ years in Romania and Brazil.

They begin to implement preparations measures for aging-out as soon as they receive the children. While the children are institutionalized in one sense, they are living in a smaller family type home that is part of a community: Church, school, skills training day center. “We work with them on job skills, computer studies, interview skills, timeliness.”

“We send older kids to be with older missionaries at a transition house. It reduces amount of people in the house. We give these kids ownership with having to care for their rooms. If they don’t buy bread they don’t get any. Would like to start earlier with technical skill training. One guy we got a job but he was so scared they’d treat him badly that he didn’t go. Lost the job. For others, if you’re desperate, you stay with the job. But they were unhappy if they didn’t have holidays. They had problems with jobs.”

“When it comes time to transition out, they will look very excited on the outside, but inside they are terrified. The day they leave, they admit it. OCP-F would like to see a stronger link made to family much earlier if possible. There is the difficult issue of being on your own all of a sudden after living with more people. Better to send them out in twos and into a community where they know people. They help the young people to get bank accounts set up, get an i.d. card. Once they are on their own, it’s important to go see them when they are in church.”

To empower the kids to take initiative in their development they start right away talking to them about “what do you want to be?” We tell them they can be anything. Always empowering and encourage them to dream. “If you just want to sell tomatoes...fine.”

When it came to the question about what she sees as the ideal storyline she starts crying while saying “That makes me cry.” “To be part of a family.” Have people to see for holidays, weekends…. It’s the original dream she had.

Kids coming back is an open door. But she doesn’t allow them to push the boundaries too hard. Social Welfare says at 18, she says “We all want them to be healthy and out, but reality is some aren’t ready (at age 18).”

The big challenge here in Mozambique is always “poverty”. Opportunities, not so many. The cultural issues as well...what’s expected of them. (For instance girls have babies when 16+, having sex outside marriage).

If resources weren’t limited she would like to expand the transition house into houses and get a couple to live there and oversee.

**Orphan Care Provider G (OCP-G) - Southern Mozambique**

OCP-G has been in Mozambique for about 5 years. Before that she worked in South Africa on and off in different facilities. Her vision is to be able to care for HIV orphans and abandoned children. She would like to have family style homes in community. Even though she hasn’t been at it as long, her answers were very insightful and thorough.

They begin to prepare the kids to depart at about 16 years old. The goal was to get them out at 18 originally, then we realised that they wouldn’t graduate and tried to extend it to when they finish school but then realised some won’t be done until 25. So we went back to a 18 years old. Many children started school late because the family was too poor and had no money.

OCP\_G says they start with life skills and technical training. They recently discovered the government has technical training centers but it’s limited. Girls have very limited options. Government works with some NGOs and hope to start connecting with these. We have some volunteers who teach sewing lessons.

While they go to technical training, which could be on-the-job, she says they found it better that they remain at the center for 6 months while they start working. We did find before this that we would get boys a job without skills and work and they would struggle to do 8 hours of work. She says this, “What we discovered is that we get them skill training and then a job and then they work and then we transition out. The ones we gave a job and new home too, they didn’t cope well. If they move in with a grandmother they even cope better. It’s too much for them to make all the transition at once.”

When they are looking to move them out, they don’t place them out alone, it doesn’t work because they are used to group living. Will put two boys together or put into a church family that keeps an eye on the and be like mother and father. But never alone, they get lonely without other person.

In preparing the kids to leave they attempt to give them some ownership. First they consider the child and their talents, abilities, and interests and then present them with options. “They have not had dreams and think they have not choice about their life.” In school they are taught sales, that’s it. We ask the kids about their dreams and what they want to do. We then discuss what the steps are to get there. “They start to realise you don’t just ‘be’ a teacher, it takes work, it takes steps.” It seems then that they start to work harder in school when they realise it takes more than they thought. “The purpose seems to give them motivation.”

When queried about minimum skills needed to be successful she answers: “We find skills training to be more important than school. Maybe because the children have experienced abandonment and rejection, and because of their emotional wounds they have learning difficulties. They come late to school, they struggle, they fight often, some are handicapped. Original idea was to do school as most important and now we are not so inclined. They can still do but will take you a long time. (So) keep a job. Be able to survive. Any job where they will also train you in something so you can work yourself up. Not a job where you will be stuck at the same position.”

They brought in an art therapy specialist who works with all the kids. Identifies issues to be worked on with the younger ones. With older ones she works out learning difficulties and she sets up a course for them to learn how to study. The kids have never learned how to study. They do some goal setting exercise too. Additionally, they started a dream project where they learn how to make progress toward dreams by making plans, etc… Learn that God will help them to achieve and give them opportunities.

Some of the challenges that face orphans specifically are related again to lack of real “family” issue. OCP-G gave a rather lengthy, impassioned response worth fully quoting here: “The kids don’t really know how family works. Boys don’t know how to be dads nor girls know how to be moms. Institutions seem to create a dependency that leads to a spoiled attitude. They have it easier than other Mozambican kids. In a real family the kids have to do small chores and progress as get older. But orphans don’t have to do all those things. They are given almost everything.. When they realise they have to work 8 hours a day, it’s not so easy. When there are no more hand-outs...it’s difficult on them. Growing up in a family they learn they have to go out and work. Kids in an orphanage just don’t seem to understand that. I don’t know why they would think that they don’t have to work. They are not motivated to go and work. They want to be free from us and the rules. They don’t want the responsibility of the work. And if they help for an hour or two, they want to be rewarded too much. They say they have worked hard and I tell them next you are going to work 8 hours, not just 2 hours. It’s a difficult concept to get to them. I think also foreigners don’t always help them when they help them. They give them things. And then when they wee white people they think everyone will give me things. They always expect to receive. Although people mean good, they don’t know...it hurts. That drains me. That when they see me it’s always about me giving them something. It makes me tired, really tired.”

Continuing the theme she says further, “ The abandoned child doesn’t seem to have a limit with things, eating (especially). They don’t know when they are/should be satisfied. They will keep eating and eating and eating. The children will keep asking the staff for food. On days of parties, the kids will eat too much and get sick. They don’t seem to know when they should be satisfied. They will finish things off even if they don’t need it - the complete tin of something. The little ones will eat more than I can eat as an adult. Maybe it’s about the adults after the war…(once) the tias put out the chips and biscuits for them after they had already eaten too much. Saving for another day isn’t normal. It is in adults too. They don’t think about saving til another day - get it for now. Children will eat until their stomachs are swollen.”

For her the ideal story for the aging-out child would be: go back to a family, live with them, finish school, study something, get a proper job. For girls, maybe get married and have a good husband and kids, with a decent job and a house. Not being materialistic. Wait to have the babies until they are in their 20s. Not the typical 16-17 years old, or even earlier. We are proud that our 18/19 years olds are not pregnant or with kids already.

They have had good and bad transitions. For the good it’s fairly typical, gets job, home, family...for bad she says that its difficult to watch but you have to let them fall and do it hard at times. Some want you to forgive, but really there has to be tough love - which is not about forgiveness. She’s learned that you don’t give up hope!

Regarding the 18 years old and you’re out rule. For boys pretty solid adherence. For girls it is not so easy. For instance, if they put girls out in a house together, people in the community will assume they are prostitutes because only prostitutes live together alone.

The strengths their kids have are that they are good at community living. They are willing to trust people, maybe too much at times. They do feel loved and they have a certain amount of confidence. They expect people to bless them...they expect the best from people. They have had good experiences with us, even if hurt in the past. But they do learn that you can’t just trust everybody even though you want to do so. Otherwise you have problems.

The theological basis for their work is the 2 commandments of Jesus. Love for God, love for family, love for others… “We always talk discuss and talk about love each other - it is a family. We do impart spiritual life...church life...how to cope using God’s Word.” We try to let them know that God cares enough about them to make their dreams come true.

If there were no limitations on resources what would she do? Would want them to be trained in more about life skills with volunteers and mentors. Would like to have more adults who could spend time with the kids. Be nice if church people could step up to do it. She says that when teams come to visit it’s been helpful when they talk to the kids. The kids will tell them things that they don’t tell OCP-G. She is shocked at times. The person from outside is more objective. The person from outside isn’t necessarily “preaching” at them when they tell the kids stuff that we’ve been saying for a long time. It really works well when it comes from someone within Mozambican culture. They accept it even more.

**Orphan Care Provider H (OCP-H) - Central Mozambique**

OCP-H has been involved in orphan care in Mozambique for 13 years. She is the founder of this particular organisation. She no longer resides in Mozambique but carries out care activities through involvement with the organisation’s board. The current care activities are focused on how to help the young adults from her orphanage make successful community integration and transition to full adulthood.

The age they implemented measures to prepare the youths for exiting was 16 years old. It lasts for 2+ years. Per usual, they found that you have to deal with each child as an individual and similar to other organisations, the kids arrive with differing levels of education for their age.

The two options presented to kids for exit plan were either to continue school through to college/university or technical skill training in the field of their choice. To empower them in the process, they are encouraged to do research into differing fields of interest and also to start making connections with family members for living arrangements. When they are ready to transition out, we often would pay the first three months rent so they could save up and keep going.

As for the minimum skills she thinks necessary for making a successful transition: cooking, money management, relationship skills, taking responsibility for their living situations. Sometimes they end up back with family and, if the child is working, families will take advantage them. They didn’t care about them before, but now that they might be a source of income, they feign caring. (One boy we had…nobody in family cared about him until he got out. Also, same with friends, nobody was his friend until he had a job.) This is a real issue for them, very hard on their emotions.

Money management is an overarching problem issue in their lives. It is very difficult issue in the Mozambican culture - very deep problems. Resource sharing is expected. It is ‘understandable’ when you have a hungry family to “eat the seed”, but to help your family long-term and not just short-term, it requires almost counter-cultural thinking. A society that has been living on the brink of survival for multiple decades often acquires an outlook more akin to “eat, drink, and be merry for tomorrow we die.” This makes it hard to plan ahead and sacrifice because of cultural values that make community care standards dominant.

For OCP-H the ideal storyline would be: that they know God and are aware that He has a plan for their lives. She would like that they be connected to a healthy church. They must be active by helping others and serving God in some loving way. I have found that if just given money to help them without some sort of responsibility they fail and develop a “welfare” mentality.Making sure relationships are carefully chosen - especially with mates - and especially for the girls. Need to keep encouraging them that they are loved and have family.

This brings up a difficult issue. She would love for them to be involved with church people but when it was time that the orphanage was to close operational activity it was non-church social workers who took in the remaining children. The church that was responsible for managing the orphanage was not an under-resourced church and had many people who attend...1000’s. After a presentation in front of the church not a single church family showed any interest at all in having the kids with them. She states, “Something is missing with a church that doesn’t understand the mandate to take care of orphans.”

In regard to government policy that dictates what to do with aging-out orphans she believes that some of the policies are misguided. They are so because they have been adopted from Western practice standards that don’t necessarily fit the lifestyle of an orphan in a developing country.

As for the strengths the kids gain from having grown up in her center: English language skills, loving relationships, a sense of family unity, discipline and direction for the future, and support for higher education and technical training.

It’s a similar story as to other interviewees as to the challenges that face her orphans when they leave. They lack the support of intact family and therefore don’t possess a certain sense of belonging that comes with family members that care about you. They have difficulty finding work due to late start in education. If they are successful others may take advantage of them.

**Orphan Care Provider J (OCP-J) - South Africa**

OCP-J has 10+ years of orphan caring. He has spent 4+ years in his current role in South Africa. The previous 6+ were in Mozambique.

There is no particular age for implementing measures to prepare the youth for exit. It

is generally understood that the kids will be moving on, just as they would eventually from a real family. They are living in a home but will be moving on.

The young men think we are tough on them. We tell them they have no idea what it is like outside, especially if they are not prepared. It’s a wake up call...even at 10-12 years old. We are always teaching them, help them learn to make blocks. Even if they aren’t going to do it for the their job in the real world. They need to learn the day-to-day life.

Self-empowerment to make decisions about their future happens when they make the kids do their list of chores, etc…. We tell them they are growing up and not babies anymore. You know to take a bath, do it! Take the same approach with your grades and keeping your room. Try to live a dream.

He thinks the minimum skills needed to be successful in transition have to do with them being able to find what they enjoy doing. Some want to sit in an office because it sounds like a position of power, but not exactly. Skills are needed and find what you like. Be willing to work hard and be focused. Attitude is something he presses on as well.

His ideal story for a kid would be getting them at a younger age so can have more influence. It’s not about me, it’s about respect for others. When they are older it is more difficult due to them being set and to persuade to change.

OCP-J believes that one of the strengths they provide at the orphanage that the kids can take with them when they leave is that they were cared for by this “family.” Often they come having not been cared for by their family of origin and their extended family. While it’s imperfect to be without mom and dad this family are the sisters and brothers.

The challenges are that the kids have much less opportunity when they leave, very, very limited opportunity. There are good kids with good attitudes who weren’t lazy but they are sitting at home and can’t get jobs because there’s no opportunity.

If he had unlimited resources to work with he would be opting for more nutritious food. “Better salaries to get better quality workers!!!!! You don’t get the best type of person. People say that you need people with a psych degree...but really you need people 50+ years old with life experiences, who love children and willing to impart their wisdom and life experiences.”

**Orphan Care Provider K (OCP-K) - Central Mozambique**

OCP-K is a stand out member of this group of interviewees. So while this is not technically an orphanage, they do provide care giving to orphans who are in process of aging-out of their orphanages. It is an extension, and function, of the aging-out program of their orphanage. OCP-K’s organisation provides technical skills and has chosen to establish an on-campus hostel facility to house girls who grew up in orphanages. This function was very deliberate on their part because they knew that most orphanages did not have a program for girls once they reach 17-18 years old.

The orphanages supply resources for since the organisation does not have funding specifically to do this. The finances supply food for the girl. In their hostel setting the girl begins to learn life skills quickly. She is responsible for money management and learns the value of money. Until now, she doesn’t know what it costs to have breakfast or to buy clothes she would like to wear...has never learned how to budget. After a period of time some of the orphanages actually abandon the orphans and do not follow through with their commitments.

This has created a problem because OCP-K’s organisation is not geared to handle the full costs of taking on the girls. The ones who are loyal to the girls always are the Catholic missionary priests and nuns. The really take care. Once they send out a girl they follow-up until she finishes adjusting, they do all that is needed. He doesn’t see this with other organisations.

Orphanage life creates challenges for the kids as he sees it: overprotection, new clothes, don’t engage civil life as other poor people around them do, i.e. walk to hospital. This is not fair to the child. In a poorer family the youngster learns to adjust to lack. In most orphanages they lack vision for the future with children, can’t let go of them when time to leave the nest. There is a lack of strategic planning. Maybe it is because they don’t want to face it. Just like someone doesn’t want to face dying. Want to stay blind to it. When orphans have to finally leave and go on their own, it is a rude shock. Even people who work with rhinos and lions when they have been in sheltered atmosphere, gradually train them to introduce the animal into the wild. We train all students, including hostel residents, in skills of hand (for self-reliance), skills of mind and heart (to live with dignity), and skills of soul (to live with purpose). All students must take a entrepreneur business course.

Their inspiration came when he and his partner observed that many organisations will work with street kids but there were hardly 1 or 2 catering to youngsters after they reached the age of 18. A Catholic organisation they worked for, Don Bosco, was doing work with 18-23 year olds. This was the group they wanted to work with.

Their work does have a theological underpinning. For them personally, it is Christian, and it is a calling...their secret contract with God. In the life skills we promote dignity, how to stand up for oneself, how to benefit me, us, others, and God. God is not the just the Christian God, but is more about spirituality, so applies to Muslim, Hindus, animists, and Christians… OCP-K says “Almost all those who are passionate about helping with youth have a sense of God in their life and are decent human beings.”

The challenges of Mozambique for orphans, or any child really, is that education is a problem. Teachers here have no commitment to education, nor do parents. World Bank report from 3 years ago says of 192 school days only 90 days are completed. Ultimately, the child picks up on those ethics.

**Orphan Care Provider L (OCP-L) - Southern Mozambique**

OCP-L is the head of a transition facility that one of the OCP organisations operates. They have a piece of land that they have built homes on and which, ultimately, can belong to a young man if he fulfills the requirements. There was nothing there when he took the job except for a house with no water or electricity. He was already a pastor with a church in another community but, according to him, “...God was inviting me”, so he and his family moved there. There was no employment, no market, no church. Then they started receiving the young men, 1 at a time for reintegration into community. It’s been going about 10 years. They have had up to about 20 young men there, but it usually about 12+.

The transition to his facility is run by the parent organisation and the measures for preparing the young men to exit is beyond his control. He says that they often come unprepared for life there…they used to come with nothing. No job training, no life skills. But now they come with different levels of education, skills and work experience. Though, they are still used to the automatic life of the orphanage, being told when…“when I eat, when I shower”. They do not have a sense of “how do I do things by myself?”

As for the exit plan at his place, it is fluid and there is not a set point in time to exit. This is where real community life begins. They can stay as long as they like. Some will stay and use the tools here to make the most of the opportunity. Some of the young men get married, and if they did it according to rules, they can have the house they are in to raise a family. But, then they are off the purse strings of the organisation altogether. This is one of the rules.

There is skill training in place, they can learn carpentry, painting, and cooking. But also life skills are promoted and taught. They learn to take care of a home, cut the grass, clean house, cook. Those who take a view that the house is their own, they take care of it. Those who don’t treat it as their own, they are lazy and don’t really join in to the community. They also learn about relationships. Here OVP-L promotes this living situation as a family. It’s tight knit. It is difficult for those making the transition, (one day you’re with your “brothers” and the next you are) moving in with strangers. This is especially difficult the longer they are in the orphanage. If they end up physically fighting they will have to sit with him. It can lead to getting kicked out.

Financial assistance is given but is limited to being enough so that they must force themselves to look for some kind of work or job. There is no perpetual help. They must learn to make it work for themselves or they will have to move on. Some are unhappy with this and say it is not enough. He tells them it is a push. “It is to open your eyes that you go out and find a job and make some money.” Constantly giving them money makes them lazy and they will not gain strength to help them with their future.

Sometimes in the past they gave them money to start small business. But 100% of the time it was wasted. All failed. They needed to be taught how to do business.

Besides the challenges they face with finances and work motivation, they are also challenged with opposite sex relationships. They have discovered that young ladies in the local community see the young guy and think “Wow, I can have a house” so they come and get pregnant. Even their parents promote the behaviour. The girls don’t know that it all goes away if not done right. It’s difficult for the young men to have good relationships. When they leave the orphanage it’s like getting out of the cage.

He goes on to say this about challenges they face “its not the institution as much as it is the response to it. For example, in relationship to learning/maturing/chores he’s observed 3 responses: 1) rebellion and interpretation that they were being ‘made’ to do something rather than participating in something to learn, 2) embracing the learning experience as opportunity, or 3) appearing to take responsibility, but in actual fact they are only doing so for the purpose of gaining ‘favor.’ They do not know how they are already favored and part of a family, so their heart is deceived and they believe they have to work or do to be accepted.”

When asked what his dream for the young men would be he points to better education that prepares them for work. In his estimation, after grade 10, all the kids should be made to do vocational training (and learn how to do business). So he would want for them to obtain that earlier than coming to his facility. Provide them with courses on how to run a business, find a way to show them how to do it, and then provide money to start. There are many training courses available.

**Orphan Care Provider M (OCP-M) - Swaziland**

OCP-M has been involved in orphan care with his organisation in Swaziland for 11 years. Due to the political realities of land rights and traditional tribal culture in Swaziland they have a program model that does not involve a residential care facility. They provide care through a large number of localised food, basic healthcare, spiritual formation and tutoring programs. They deliver these care activities to more than 7000 orphans and vulnerable children.

The measures they implement to prepare youth are focused on discipleship for teenagers. It begins when the orphan hits Form 1 and continues through to Form 5.

Because it’s not a residential program the exit concept doesn’t fully apply. But they do have ongoing transition relationships that they engage in with young adults. But there is a more intensive program currently going that only a few qualify to enter. According to OCP-M, “We invite 12 per year to enter our 3 year leadership development/apprenticeship program.” For others there is no concrete exit plan. They have recently started vocational training for a small number of boys. They have a mobile woodworking trailer and there is a missionary who takes on some boys and trains them in carpentry as well as entrepreneurial skills like business planning and simple finance.

If he could write an ideal storyline for the youth he believes that providing the masses of kids with life skills would be central. Their work currently emphasize spiritual discipleship, but adding life skills would also complement what they receive in secondary school. The kids leave Form 5 with no real options.

The unique challenges that these kids face compared to intact family kids it that the absence of a supportive family doesn’t help these young people to stay focused on their development past Form 5. There ends up being a lot of hopelessness when the poverty cycle is sustained.

When queried about successes, he is pleased to tell that some have “excelled academically and this has carried them into success – professional job like nursing.” There is one boy who didn’t start school until he was 12 and finished 12 years of school in 9 years as the #1 student in the nation. They don’t take credit for his success but they did help him by assisting him with the process to get into school. The failures he notes follow the typical pattern we have heard from others, teen pregnancy, dropping out of school, etc…

If resources weren’t limited he would like to provide improved “mentoring/life skill development as well as more tutoring during those school years. Then I would take almost all of them and give them further leadership/character development/spiritual formation training after school. This would help them grow up and mature before they face next steps. If we also had a scholarship program for them to pursue studies (based on their increased self-knowledge, value system, and maturity) I think we would see a new Swaziland in 10 – 15 years.” The current leadership program involves 12 students per year. He would like to see that increase to 500.

To understand the reason for such a large scale program here are some facts about Swaziland’s humanitarian crisis and why it has the unenviable title “Nation of Orphans.”

Orphaned and vulnerable children comprise more than 20% of Swaziland’s population, 47% of all child deaths are HIV-related, 70% don’t have access to food each day. 12% of the nation’s population are orphans, and 90% of children will not live to be 30 years of age.

**Orphan Care Provider N (OCP-N) - Southern Mozambique**

OCP-N is seeking to pioneer a foster care style program in Maputo. The desire stems from watching the orphans in the institution where they worked “hit the age of 18 and try and transition into community living and, because they had grown up in a children's centre their whole life, they couldn't do it. Many of them had been institutionalised. We were particularly upset watching child after child, or young adult, end up in prison." Additionally, “We've constantly been disturbed by the lack of exit strategy in place (in institutions) for care-leavers, and I would totally agree with the studies findings - about the need for both having a community mentor in place, as well as initiating the life-skills training much earlier. In fact, I had a good conversation last year with a Director of Social Welfare in a local district and he wanted to see exactly that - earlier skills training.”

It’s not that an institution is worse than a child having to live on the streets, but parent-to-child ratio that is family sized is better. Hence, they believe that a “foster care (program) will be more effective than setting up another orphanage as local youngsters will be able to grow up in a family setting.”

They have been conducting focus group meetings once per month, he states “In these gathering with mums and dads from local communities, we discuss the issues of abandoned children in their neighborhoods, what happens to them, who looks after them and who pays for their care, if indeed any care at all. We also touched on the merits and un-merits of NGOs caring for them.”

Additionally, they have been talking to Social Welfare Directors, Social Workers, NGO Directors who look after children, and number of other experts. He has taken it upon himself to do a self-translate of the alternative-care procedures that are legally permitted in Mozambique. To his knowledge, in Mozambique, there is only one initiative in central Mozambique that is overseen by a South African foster agency.

Listed below are a few comments recorded from a community focus group that he led, 35 members of the community attended and 28 had completed a parent training course they offer. There were 7 couples, 1 male parent and 20 female parents.

The first question asked is “what is an abandoned child?” The answers can be disturbing.

One woman responded by stating that mums have been known to leave their baby child at the dump. But they are also left in the communities. Police are contacted and they take the child to a local hospital to check for health problems. It is unclear what happens to the child from there. If there are abandoned children like this it is a problem to take them into their homes because it will look like they’ve stolen a child.

Another man shares “An abandoned child is where the parents have died or where parents don’t have basic conditions at home so the child is neglected and becomes vulnerable.”

Another story related to this question are about a child who was not being parented at all and are left to roam, the father was a drunk and unavailable to talk to. The mother then discussed with the situation with the Chefe de Quartarão to ask permission to enroll the child in school and he granted permission. She finally bumped into the father told him about enrolling the child and he was touched and grateful for her efforts. After that when she reached out to the child to offer support by way of paying for books and supplies the child would say that the father is helping with these things and looking after the child now.

One woman told the story of her sister dying and leaving six children. The extended family stepped in and helped find the children room in their homes. Unfortunately they could not all remain together in one family.

The summary of this question is: There are countless cases where families are supporting neighbors’ children or children from their extended families. The desire to help keep families together and stop children becoming abandoned is very evident from this discussion.

The second question that evening was: “If a family could choose between sending a child to live at a Center or keeping the child in the family circles, what would people choose?”

One woman tells her story of taking her nephew when his circumstance had fallen apart. The pastor at her church suggested taking him to a local Center. She declined because she knew she could look after him because she had a job. (She was asked why she didn’t opt for the Center. Her response was that she wanted to keep the nephew within the family circle.)

The summary to this question is: The general consensus amongst the group is that care centers are a welcome way of helping children in Mozambique, because its better for them to be there than on the street. However it is clear that people desire that children are raised in family circles.

The third and final question for the group was: What are the reasons that some families are able to take extra children in to their home, and others not? Are people’s decisions based on whether they can afford to help?

An initial response was “Its not based on whether families can afford it. It’s based on whether the person has the heart and inner will to help a suffering child.”

Another respondent told of her personal situation with taking in her brother’s year old baby daughter after his wife died. She did not know the girl had significant health problems. Even though it was difficult financially because she had a teenage daughter too she did agree. She has raised her as her own for seven years now and she is like her own daughter to her. Her brother recently came to her and said he was going to take his daughter and give her to live with another family. She is heart broken and wonders if there is anything she can do legally.

Someone in the group encouraged her to pray for God’s help. Another man also said she should pray and let God help. Both respondents to her said she needs to let the brother do as he wills.

The summary for this question is: The consensus amongst the group is that a family’s ability to care for extra children is not purely down to whether they can afford it. Discussions up to now have centered on taking in children of extended family.

In regard to legal parental rights - The group are not clear on what the law says about protecting children and who can have the parental rights. Most think that no such laws exist to support those who take on the long-term care of a child who’s not their own. Can the focus group leader investigate the laws?

## Chapter 4

## Key Findings

The interviews were conducted throughout 2016 with administrators and staff from 8 orphan care centers in Mozambique. These centers are specifically Christian and it is central to their representation of organisational mission and purpose and the vocation of the individuals interviewed.

Herein is a summary of their thoughts shared in the interviews.

1) The number of years the individuals were involved in Orphan Care in Mozambique ranged from 3.5 - 23. The organisations have existed up to 23 years.

2) These organisations begin exit strategies for their youth from between 14 years old to 18 years old when the Mozambican govt requires youth to leave their care facilities.

3) Exit preparation process within these organisations can last 4 years. It is intermittent activity, but ongoing structured and intentional effort to prepare youth for their exit. Education is seen to be the most important factor - not just k-10/12, but vocational and technical and life skills are tops.

4) Activities are varied and sometimes tailored to the individual. The tailored option is done within the smaller scale care facilities where there is a more intimate acquaintance with the young person - their personality and preferences. It is easier to take the time to be involved.

The kind of activities varies depending on resources. Almost all seek to provide access to some sort of skills training as a way of preparing the young person for a job qualification. They do this on-site or at a training location. Training options could be: building trades, sewing, cooking, auto mechanics, computer programs, and more.

Additionally, most attempt some sort of community integration activity and life skills training. These two are part of the attempt to help a young person understand how to live life in the community. They are shown how to run their daily life for example, how to buy food and budget, clean your home, wash clothes, what money is and how to use it, and more. They are also introduced to their family again (if they have family or extended family), going for regular visits. Negotiations take place as to how the situation will work with the family, i.e finances, jobs, a room to be built, etc... This highlights the fact that not all orphans are devoid of family but may be orphaned due to abuse or economic conditions. When they are old enough to leave they may be capable of taking care of themselves in potentially abusive situations or be part of providing for the family if it was economic reason for them being at the care facility. Reintegration with a formerly abusive family situation usually requires some processing time with the young person to alert them to what they might encounter. Depending on how long they have been at their care facility they may have forgotten abuse and begun to create an idealised family of origin scenario.

While family reintegration is part of community integration it is not all of it. Young people need to know what it is like to live in the community at large. Living in a house without friends around, get up and go to school or a job. Some care providers attempt to help them get a feel for this by taking them out for a weekend where they will basically learn these types of activities. Mentioned earlier is learning how to shop. There is also use of public transportation - how long it takes to get from point A to point B utilising the options. One of the care facilities has a “grandma” on site who helps get them culturally and socially trained. Others utilise the “tias”, the daily educators and overseers, to help them learn some of the skills needed to live in community.

Even with all of this, several interviewees mentioned that these young persons are still seen as outsiders and “different” once they start entering the larger community. They can be taken advantage of fairly easily. This can create problems and loneliness for some of the young people as they seek to integrate. And as that escalates it can lead to experimenting with risky behaviours, i.e. drugs, alcohol, sex.

A factor that has an impact on success is one of entitlement, or “receiving” attitude. Due to the circumstances of living in a place where everything is provided - food, water, clothes, etc… The young people often don’t understand, through life experience, what it’s like to be hungry when you go to sleep, or they have forgotten. They need to get rid of the entitlement idea.

Another interesting education activity, utilised by one care facility, for empowering the youth to take an active role is the use of “dream” seminar. A trained facilitator takes the young person through a process of identifying their dreams and then helping them learn how to plan to see it happen. It is not a one-off activity, a facilitator comes back and the process continues over a period of time. It was mentioned as very transformative and empowering.

5) What minimum skills does an orphan youth need in order to successfully transition from your care facility?

One care provider said that “wanting” to leave is a very important skill. Another said that while they might show excitement on their exterior, inside they are often terrified. But some kind of job and money skill rates very high among all the care providers. Sexual morality is also seen as important to a successful transition because having babies early in life with a person you don’t love and want to marry creates big problems for a stable and successful family future. It can lead to a cycle of continued failures. Girls tend to stay more connected to the care facility and so they need to have sound training in female type jobs that give them good option for income so they don’t rely on men only to provide.

Ability to resist peer pressure. Money planning - which often doesn’t work culturally. (they like to do with it as they please when they please. Plans are not conducive to this carefree attitude and it’s seen as a more Western idea.)

6) The ideal future story centered primarily on either more skills training and having good job, or on good relationships - choose a good spouse, connected to whatever family of origin relationships are available to them, and to have their own home.

9) The strengths that most perceived they have passed on have to do with spirituality knowledge and experience. They hope that endures with them as they go out into the world. Also, they tend to think they have provided good life skills and education.

10) The challenges that these care providers believe their young adults face, compared to the intact family kids, when they leave are quite varied. Challenges with 1) relationships - especially that many go out without family supporting them, and even if they do have family that they will be taken advantage of, 2) employment issues - lack of jobs, inability to work 8 hour days, lack of job skills, low personal initiative, inability to see opportunity for what it is, 3) lack of financial literacy, 4) they don’t have strong life skills.

13) Successful transitions usually involved good academic achievement, obtaining employment or finding a good spouse. Unsuccessful transitions is pretty much the opposite, unwanted pregnancy, drug & alcohol abuse, poverty, inability to keep jobs, throw away opportunities.

14) If resources were not a limitation most concluded that education and additional kinds of skills training would be top priority. Additionally some way to get them connected to good jobs and help them do well in them.

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## Appendices

## Appendix 1: IRB Approval Letter

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| apuLogo | **Azusa Pacific University**  ***Institutional Review Board***  *Office of Research and Grants*  **Exempt Status** |  |

**DATE: June 21, 2016**

**TO: Melinda Nelson**

**FROM: Joanie Stude, Coordinator, Institutional Review Board**

**IRB ID NUMBER: #69-16**

**PROJECT TITLE: Exit Strategies for Aging Out Orphans in Mozambique**

**Based on the information you have submitted, the project referenced above has been reviewed and declared Exempt from the requirements of the human subject protection regulations as described in 45 CFR 46.101(b).**

**The determination of Exempt status means that:**

* **Further review in the form of filing an annual Renewal form or a Closure report form is not necessary.**
* **Research must be carried out exactly as describe in the application. Additional review is required for *any* modifications to the research procedures.**
* **All protocol deviations, unanticipated or serious adverse events must be reported to the IRB within one week. See the IRB handbook for instructions.**

For assistance please contact the Institutional Review Board Coordinator at [jstude@apu.edu](mailto:jstude@apu.edu) or 626.815.2036.

## Appendix 2: Interview Guide

* How long have you and your organization been involved in orphan care?

At what age do you begin to implement measures to prepare the youth for when they will exit? How long does that process last?

What are the components of the exit plan you implement for your youth?

Are there any steps you take to empower youth to take an active role in their own exit plans?

* What minimum skills does an orphan youth need in order to successfully transition from your care facility?

If you could write the ideal storyline for a youth aging out of your organization, what would it be?

Are those who age-out from your facility allowed to come back to visit?

If so, are there any procedures they must follow in order to visit?

If they wanted to come back and stay for a short while, what is the maximum amount of time they would they be allowed to stay?

If a youth who leaves your facility ends up homeless, what measures are available to help them?

What is your perception of the value of government or international regulations you are aware of that determine the timing and specific actions you implement with aging-out orphans?

What are the strengths you feel your youth possibly acquire at your facility and take with them when they leave?

What are unique challenges aging-out orphans face compared to youth of similar age nationally or internationally in making the transition from leaving their family homes to independent living?

What are unique challenges aging-out orphans in Mozambique face compared to orphans aging-out of care facilities outside of Africa?

What is the theological basis for your organization’s work and how does it influence your exit strategies?

Without revealing names, can you share the story of a few of your orphans who transitioned successfully and unsuccessfully to life outside your care facility?

If financial and personnel limitations were not a factor, what additional measures would you implement to prepare your youth for exiting your facility?