

***AIDS Orphans Rising: What You Should Know and What You Can Do To Help Them Succeed***

Sister Mary Elizabeth Lloyd  
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Reviewed by Kam Aures for RebeccasReads (2/08)

“AIDS Orphans Rising: What You Should Know and What You Can Do To Help Them Succeed” is a well-researched book examining what happens to the children who are left orphaned when their mothers and fathers die from HIV/AIDS. Sister Mary Elizabeth Lloyd presents the reader with some very grim statistics. Perhaps the most shocking is that “every 14 seconds a Child Headed Household is formed.” These children are left on their own with only each other as support because in a lot of cases their relatives will not take care of them or are financially unable to take care of them. According to the book “there are usually three to eight children per household.” These children do whatever they can to stay together, to get an education and to survive. The strength of the children in the stories presented in this book is incredible.

The sheer volume of orphans is staggering. “The data from UNICEF, UNAIDS and USAID indicates that in sub-Saharan Africa, 14 million children have been orphaned by AIDS – a number higher than the total number of boys and girls under 18-years-old in Canada, Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Ireland combined. That figure is expected to reach 18 million by 2010.” The book examines the dynamics of the Child Headed Household, where these children live, what they eat, how they survive and what is best for them. Most importantly though is the question of what we can do to help. At the end of every chapter Sister Mary Elizabeth presents us with a list of actions that we can take to help and support these children. She also presents us with a plethora of websites and other references that we can use to further explore the issue.

I never realized how large and widespread this issue was until reading Sister Mary Elizabeth’s book. She presents the information in such a way that you can’t ignore it. Not only is her book well-documented, but she also speaks from her personal experience as she has been assisting orphans and Child Headed Households for the past 12 years. Throughout the book are pictures of some of these children which help to make the issue even more real. “AIDS Orphans Rising” is an eye-opening book which truly inspires you to try to assist these children in their quest to stay together and to make it in this world. Just by purchasing the book you are not only educating yourself but you are also already helping because “100% of all profits from this book will go to help the Child Headed Households.”

