

SUPPORT SYSTEMS FOR GRANDPARENTS CARING FOR CHILDREN OF PRISONERS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

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ABSTRACT

While previous research has looked at grandparent caregivers in developing countries, interest in children of prisoners (CoP) is recent and there is a paucity of data on grandparent families with CoP. Furthermore, previous research has focused largely on the double vulnerability of both carers and children. Cognizant of the challenges faced by these households, this study also presents data on their support systems. The overall study objective was to deepen understanding on the experiences and support systems of grandparent-headed households with CoP. This is a phenomenological case study from Uganda whose data collection method was mainly in-depth interviews with grandparents, their incarcerated children on death row, the children of these prisoners and key informants. The main support system was the grandparents and children themselves. Their relationship is unique in a sense that it is reciprocal in nature and does not usually follow the linear, predictable pattern of relationships between majority of other children and their carers. Other support systems include community, faith, civil society organisations and the imprisoned parents of the children. The support provided by each of these varies in nature, function and frequency. Understanding these would be illuminative to interventions seeking to improve outcomes for grandparents caring for CoP. This paper proposes an adaptation of the Haddon Matrix as a framework for analysis and intervention.

Keywords: Children of prisoners, parental incarceration, grandparent carers, kinship care, vulnerable children.