

# **Enhancing social protection to alleviate HIV/AIDS induced child labour: *Experiences from Uganda*. Paper No. 11**

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## **Combating and preventing HIV/AIDS induced child labour in Sub-Saharan Africa: pilot actions in Uganda and Zambia**

The spread of HIV today constitutes the most serious health and social problem in Sub-Saharan Africa, as well as one of the leading causes of death. It is a phenomenon that has not only perpetuated the poverty cycle but also left a generation of children and young people highly exposed and vulnerable. When the family breadwinner falls ill or dies of an AIDS related illness, the equilibrium of the household is destroyed as household income and security are suddenly taken away. As the poverty level becomes more acute, health and nutrition deteriorate and children are forced to drop out of school early in order to care for family members or contribute financially to the household. This is an escalating reality for millions of children around the world, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, who become vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.

Given the previous research done in the ILO-IPEC HIV/AIDS and child labour studies and papers, and based on experiences in Uganda, this paper addresses the challenge of providing social protection to mitigate the phenomenon of HIV/AIDS induced child labour.

Three principal categories of agents are identified as the pillars of social protection delivery for HIV/AIDS induced child labour. These are: i) the informal sector (including individuals and self-help groups), ii) the private and NGO sector and iii) the public (government) provider, all of whom must collaborate to provide a holistic response. Indeed, an efficient social protection mechanism cuts across many government sectors and must be mainstreamed into education, health and legal policies, psychosocial support, child fostering and poverty alleviation initiatives.

This paper presents a strategy for integrating and mainstreaming social protection into action programmes supported by ILO-IPEC, as well as working with all major stakeholders to prevent HIV/AIDS induced child labour. The strategy incorporates all responsible social protection providers across all sectors and demands a central coordinating presence at central government level. There is a need to periodically update relevant information/data on social protection schemes and increase budget allocations to programmes. At the community, local, regional and national level, under the supervision of the coordinating authority, the sustainability of the social protection schemes is vital and this must be promoted through a dynamic network of support, capacity building and resource mobilisation.