



PHOTO: CARITAS SOUTH AFRICA

Selinah: Strengthening support for families

Imagine a world without parents. Only children and grandparents. It's a very real world for many children in South Africa. Many parents have died from an illness called AIDS.

When people become sick with AIDS they find it hard to produce food and earn money, so poverty has increased. Children have to do the jobs that parents once did. This can mean that children miss out on going to school.

Three children whose lives have been changed by AIDS are Petunia, 16, Rose, 14 and Thabang, 12. Their parents have died because their bodies became too weak to fight off infections. This is what happens when you have AIDS. However, they have a special person to care for them – their grandmother, Selinah.

Caritas Australia is working with their partner in South Africa, Siyabhabha Trust, to provide care and support to families affected by HIV and AIDS. The community decided that they needed to give more help to families affected by HIV/AIDS so that children can continue to go to school. (MDG 2: Primary Education for All).

Because it is especially important for people living with HIV and AIDS to eat nutritious food, Caritas South Africa is working with the community to provide training in organic farming. This means families can grow their own fruit and vegetables. Also, because mums and dads, aunts and uncles, brothers and sisters are getting sick and dying, Caritas has made sure there is someone there for people to talk to when they are sad or lonely. Safe drinking water is also a priority. Members of the community are also learning how to apply for government support.

The children's grandmother, Selinah, meets with members of her community in a room that has been built where grandparents share stories and concerns about raising grandchildren. They learn to sew, knit and to help with homework. Selinah sews and sells her goods to earn money for the children's school uniforms.

Two of Selinah's grandchildren now attend school and participate in activities after school, at weekends and in the holidays.

"This project has brought life to my house," says Selinah.

Fair Play means that all children have the chance to go to school. *Fair Play* means that communities affected by HIV and AIDS are supported.

When you donate to Project Compassion you are supporting *Fair Play Today*.



SOSE/HSIE / RE

1. a) How are the jobs divided up in your home? List the jobs your parents/guardians do.
 - b) Which of those jobs could you do?
 - c) Which jobs would be too difficult? Why?
 - d) What other jobs/chores do you do at home?
 - e) The theme for Project Compassion this year is *Fair Play Today*. Are the jobs at home divided fairly? (Hint: Consider age and gender). How could you apply *Fair Play Today* at home?
2. a) Can you remember the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)? (They are included in the Lifestyle Awareness Calendar). Name them. Which of the goals are identified in this story?
 - b) List two examples of how through Project Compassion you are assisting families like Selinah's to experience *Fair Play Today*.
 - c) How can you be involved in *Fair Play Today* in the classroom and on the playground?

Dear God, every child has the right to be loved and cared for. Thank you for those who care for me. We pray that communities who face the challenges of HIV and AIDS daily will continue to work together to make sure all people, especially the children, are loved and cared for. Amen.