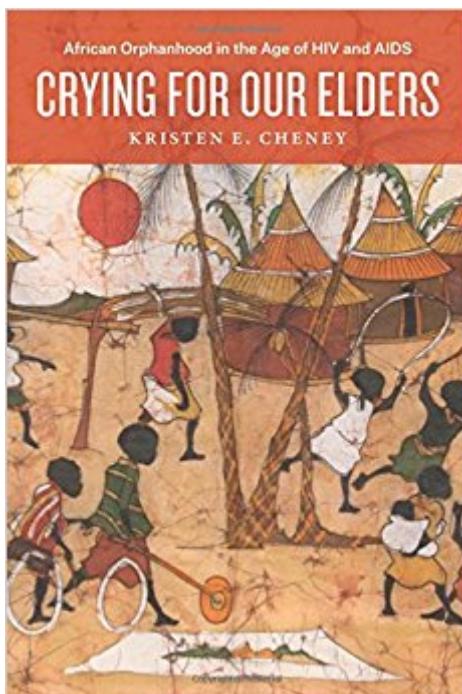


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Crying For Our Elders: African Orphanhood In The Age Of HIV And AIDS



Synopsis

The HIV/AIDS epidemic in Africa has defined the childhoods of an entire generation. Over the past twenty years, international NGOs and charities have devoted immense attention to the millions of African children orphaned by the disease. But in *Crying for Our Elders*, anthropologist Kristen E. Cheney argues that these humanitarian groups have misread the “orphan crisis.” She explains how the global humanitarian focus on orphanhood often elides the social and political circumstances that actually present the greatest adversity to vulnerable children—in effect deepening the crisis and thereby affecting children’s lives as irrevocably as HIV/AIDS itself. Through ethnographic fieldwork and collaborative research with children in Uganda, Cheney traces how the “best interest” principle that governs children’s rights can stigmatize orphans and leave children in the post-antiretroviral era even more vulnerable to exploitation. She details the dramatic effects this has on traditional family support and child protection and stresses child empowerment over pity. *Crying for Our Elders* advances current discussions on humanitarianism, children’s studies, orphanhood, and kinship. By exploring the unique experience of AIDS orphanhood through the eyes of children, caregivers, and policymakers, Cheney shows that despite the extreme challenges of growing up in the era of HIV/AIDS, the post-ARV generation still holds out hope for the future.

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Customer Reviews

“Everything you thought you knew about orphans is probably wrong.” Policy makers,

development workers, orphanage voluntourists, missionaries, prospective adoptive parents: ignore this book at your peril. (Alma Gottlieb, author of *A World of Babies: Imagined Childcare Guides for Eight Societies*) "Through her cautious, insightful, and moving ethnography based on fieldwork in Uganda, Cheney provides a deep understanding of the complex and unexpected forms of life that emerge around orphans. An important contribution to the growing field of critical children's studies, *Crying for our Elders* is also a remarkable expression of ethically engaged anthropology. (Didier Fassin, author of *When Bodies Remember: Experiences and Politics of AIDS in South Africa*) "Cheney provides an essential and refreshing narrative about the resilience of family in Uganda. With *Crying for Our Elders*, she makes a compelling addition to the literature on suffering, childhood, and the status of HIV/AIDS—and the intricate connections between them. (Karen Wells, author of *Childhood in a Global Perspective*)

Kristen Cheney is senior lecturer of children and youth studies at the International Institute of Social Studies, in the Netherlands. She is the author of *Pillars of the Nation: Child Citizens and Ugandan National Development*, also published by the University of Chicago Press.

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