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## No. 169, 2003

**Zimmer, Zachary** and Julia Dayton. "The living arrangements of older adults in sub-Saharan Africa in a time of HIV/AIDS," *Policy Research Division Working Paper* no. 169. New York: Population Council. ([PDF](#))

### Abstract

The detrimental consequences of the AIDS epidemic for older adults in sub-Saharan Africa suggest the need to investigate their characteristics, living situations, and well-being. In this study, we examine the living arrangements of persons aged 60 and older in 16 countries. Data come from the household roster component of recent Demographic and Health Surveys. The focus is on the tendency of the elderly to live with children and grandchildren, and we examine distributions and determinants. Results show that older adults in sub-Saharan Africa live in a variety of household arrangements. Men are more likely to be living in a nuclear household, while women are more likely to be living in extended families. Regressions show that determinants of living with children and grandchildren differ by sex. Taking advantage of survey items on the survival and whereabouts of parents of children, we also examine whether older adults living with grandchildren are involved in fostering or orphaning situations. Those living in countries characterized by high levels of AIDS-related mortality are more likely to be living with grandchildren, with grandchildren but no children in the household, and with orphaned grandchildren. The percent living with one or more double-orphaned grandchildren is strongly associated with AIDS-related mortality, suggesting that the epidemic may be having adverse influences on the living situations of older adults. Knowing about the types of households in which older people live is a first step to understanding their needs in a part of the world with limited resources.

  
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