Parental Guidance

Helping AIDS orphans head their households

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The U.N. estimates that AIDS may leave up to 18 million African children parentless by 2010-—and there aren't enough American celebrities to adopt them all. The nongovernmental organization (NGO) CARE Rwanda crafted the Nkundabana ("I love children") campaign to help Rwanda's orphans become self-sufficient heads of their own households through a community-based mentoring and education program—without displacing them to foreign lands. "It helps to give children a parental figure who they can go to for advice," says Madhu Deshmukh, director of the HIV/AIDS Unit of CARE USA, "and it helps to alleviate stigma and discrimination so children are more integrated within the community." CARE has recently reached more than 2,600 child-headed families and has attracted the attention of the Rwandan government in addition to NGOs in other parts of the world. Kids rule.

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