

Dropouts in the primary schools, a cause for concern: A case of Shurugwi South Resettlements Primary Schools 2006 to 2013.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate factors contributing to student drop out rate in Shurugwi South Resettlements. The participants namely head teachers and teachers were purposely selected, in line with the qualitative research approach. Open ended questionnaires, face to face interview; focus groups and document analysis were used as sources of data collection instruments. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data. The case study also allows the researcher to explore a bounded system (a case) over time through detailed, in-depth at collection involving multiple sources of information interviews, observations, documents and reports (Cresswell,2007). Qualitative data analysis revealed that dropouts resulted from an array of challenges. These included early marriages for girl child, pregnancy, and lack of finance, poverty, traditional and religious beliefs. Some of the strategies proffered to reduce dropouts included working in coalitions, creating partnership, hosting community conversations and creating prevention plans, teacher-parent consultations, and guidance and counselling programmes. This study recommended that the government, community members and teachers work together and come up with a solution to reduce the impact of school dropouts.

Key words: dropouts, primary schools, strategies.

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Shurugwi South Resettlements are in the Midlands province of Zimbabwe. It is made up of five primary schools. Primary schools are battling with problems of poor attendance and performance by pupils (Nyika and Kurebwa 2014). This problem had since been bedevilling the nation even before Zimbabwe independence in 1980. This practice gives birth to truancy, absenteeism and drop out problems. The World Bank says, 15% of the children in the age ranking of 10 to 18 years after admitting and attending school in earlier period, dropped out before completing primary school in the academic session of 2001-2002. Dropping out of school has negative consequences at both individual and social level. "The students who withdraw from school prematurely end up not obtaining certificate of graduation, (Ajaja, 2012). In addition Azam (2007) says the major social