

The Lived Experiences of Adolescent Secondary School Learners from Child-Headed Households: A Case Study of Cranborne Boys High School, Harare, Zimbabwe

By

¹*Pedzisai Goronga and* ²*Norah Moyo*

¹Educational Foundations Department, Faculty of Education, University of Zimbabwe

²Educational Foundations Department, Faculty of Education, University of Zimbabwe

Abstract

This study focused on adolescent secondary school learners living in child-headed households. It was carried out at Cranborne Boys High School in Harare, Zimbabwe. Qualitative research methodology was used in which a case study was adopted. Purposive sampling was done which resulted in eight adolescents from child-headed households participating after they agreed to take part. Semi-structured questionnaires, interviews and Focus Group Discussion were used as data collection instruments. The study found out that the participants faced a lot of challenges in their households. The challenges included inadequate basic needs like food, clothing and accommodation as well as having limited or no access to health facilities. They also do not attend school regularly and resorted to seeking part time employment for their daily survival. It was also revealed that the extended family no longer provides a reliable safety net for these adolescents. It is recommended that adolescents living in child-headed households be given psychosocial support both at school and in their communities. Professional counselling, exemptions from paying fees coupled with peer support programmes can improve their coping mechanisms. School teachers should be readily available to offer support to adolescent learners from child-headed households. Finally, a lot more needs to be researched on child-headed households as evidence suggests that they are on the increase.