

Schooling despite all odds

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PROPOSITIONS ACCOMPANYING THE THESIS

“Schooling Despite All Odds: Evidence from Lesotho on female child carers who stayed in school”

by Brenda Yamba

1. The responsibilities of the child carers looking after younger children go beyond household chores and providing intimate care to also include assuming parenting roles outside the home. (Chapter 4)
2. The challenges of parenting and providing intimate care to their family members highlight the internal conflict that child carers experience when having to deal with the expectation of playing the adult role while still recognizing that they were children. This role of parenting younger family members brings about anxiety among the child carers who normally would not have the parenting skills to manage younger family members, especially teenagers. (Chapter 4)
3. Although child carers devise coping strategies to ensure that they are able to attend school, the pressure of caring weighs heavily on their minds even while at school. (Chapter 4)
4. The findings established that having a vision for a better life in the future was a key factor that motivated female child carers to continue attending school. Participants perceived a relationship between attending school and achieving their future goals as they considered school attendance as the first step on the pathway to a brighter future. Having a vision for the future also required that the children had the social competence to see themselves beyond their current situation and plan for the future. (Chapter 5)
5. The desire to provide quality care in the future is a key factor that motivates child carers to continue attending school. Success in school is a precursor to leading a good life and ultimately having the ability to provide better quality care. (Chapter 5).
6. Personal initiatives by school personnel and students, flexibility with school policies, and implementation of structured school programs were said to have contributed to making the schools conducive for female child carers to strive to stay in school despite their challenges. (Chapter 6)
7. The research highlighted the facilitative role that schools played in fostering linkages with service providers to support child carers’ schooling and home needs. The benefit of receiving external support through the school may have been a motivating factor for female child carers to stay engaged with the school. (Chapter 6)

8. Although most school programs were implemented to reach all students, these were considered to have had unintended positive outcomes for at-risk female child carers. (Chapter 6)
9. The school was seen to play a role of parental and family substitute, an attribute that the female child carers would have desired as a temporary reprieve from their primary caregiver role. Being in such a space could have been a motivating factor for the child carers to continue attending school. (Chapter 6)
10. The study demonstrated how family members cooperated by pooling resources to take care of the school needs of the child carers. Grandparents' old-age pension funds were used to cover school fees and other needs, demonstrating a symbiotic relationship between the elderly care recipient and the child carer. (Chapter 7)
11. From the child carers' perspective, neighbors seemed to play a major role in supporting their school attendance and were regarded the substitute family or parents. Neighbors were said to be the first point of contact for child carers when they felt unsafe or needed food, financial, material, and caregiving support. (Chapter 7)
12. "I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear."
Nelson Mandela