

Re-entry of Teenage Mothers into Zimbabwe's Education System: Implications for Social Work and Policy

Wilberforce Kurevakwesu, Tinos T. Mabeza, Daniel Masungwa, Anesu A. Matanga, Ketty Chirangwanda, Anotida Mavuka and Noel G. Muridzo

Abstract

This article examines the institutional environment necessary for the re-entry of teenage mothers into Zimbabwe's education system. Zimbabwe's government recently adopted a re-entry policy, and despite its importance, the media is inundated with news of parental and or community resistance. Furthermore, it is clear that this is an area for social workers, but the roles that they can play have not been established. To address these issues, we conducted a qualitative study and interviewed 13 parents of re-entered girls, 8 social workers and 2 teachers from Bulawayo's Cowdray Park—to capture their views on measures that can be taken to create a conducive environment for re-entry. Through thematic analysis, we identified that there is a need to provide school fees, support in childcare, community sensitisation, teacher training and the recruitment of school social workers. We then recommended that for the creation of a conducive institutional environment for re-entry, social workers can provide support at different levels of intervention (individual, family, community and institutional). We also suggested that the government should consider the recruitment of school social workers and the expansion of available social protection programmes, among other recommendations.

Keywords: Education re-entry policy, institutional environment, social work, teenage mothers