



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA  
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
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# *Teachers living with AIDS:*

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**Underplaying the role of emotions in the implementation of  
HIV/AIDS policy in Zimbabwean primary schools**

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partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
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## Abstract

This study explores how HIV-positive teachers within a specific social context understand, interpret and act on HIV and Life Skills policy. My aim was to illuminate the experiences of teachers living with AIDS and how their experiences affect the ways in which they understand and act on government policy. As a constructivist, I worked on the premise that people's experiences can best be understood by interacting with them and listening to them. I chose a narrative research design because it allowed me to explore and understand the perceptions and complexity of my research partners' experiences, and to faithfully present and represent the stories told by teachers living with AIDS. I used the data collected from the teachers' stories to write narratives that gave a first person account of the experiences of each teacher. To express my own voice in the text I created a column on the side of each page where I recorded my own experience of the process of the inquiry. I used inductive analysis in order to make sense of the field data. Rather than beginning with a theory, inductive analysis allowed me to expose the dominant and significant themes in the raw data without imposing preconceptions on the data. Three distinct themes emerged from the analysis, and formed my conceptualisation of the experiences of teachers living with AIDS: a) conflict between teacher as role model and ideal citizen, and teacher as an HIV-positive person; b) HIV illness and its impact on the body of the teacher; c) teachers as emotional actors. The main findings from the study suggest that in a context with AIDS there are limits to what education policy can achieve if it remains out of touch with a real world in which school is attended by children and teachers whose bodies are either infected or affected by the HIV virus. This is substantiated by the fact that while the HIV/AIDS policy is about bodies and about emotions, it is blind to the bodies and the emotions of those implementing it. I contend that it is this oversight that creates the wide gap between policy intentions and outcomes. Secondly the study highlights the uniqueness of HIV/AIDS education policy and its implementation which, unlike other education policies, powerfully brings to the fore the emotions of the implementers. I conclude the study by suggesting that the policy-making process be reconstructed to inscribe the real bodies and real emotions of the teachers into the policy, to shift from a



purely prevention mode to one that looks at the whole prevention-to-care continuum and acknowledges that a significant majority of school pupils and teachers are infected and affected.

**Key words:** teachers living with AIDS; HIV policy; policy images; teacher emotions; teacher identities; narrative inquiry; teacher as role model; HIV illness; teacher absenteeism; stigma



## Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the University of Pretoria. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other university.

*P. U. Madzima*

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Patricia Machawira

3<sup>rd</sup> day of February 2009



*This thesis is dedicated to*

*my husband Simukayi*

for the constant love, support and encouragement, and for believing in me at times  
when I didn't believe in myself,

and

*my children Chido , Masimba and Tayana*

for constantly reminding to take a break and enjoy the beautiful things in life.

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## List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

AECT	Association of Education Communications and Technology
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ART	Anti-retroviral therapy
ARV	Anti-retroviral [medication]
DART	Development of Antiretroviral Therapy for Africa [drug trial programme]
HEAT	HIV/AIDS in Education Assessment Team [Government of Zimbabwe]
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
PSMAS	Public Service Medical Aid Society
PTUZ	Progressive Teachers' Union of Zimbabwe
STD	Sexually transmitted disease
STI	Sexually transmitted infection
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UZ	University of Zimbabwe
WHO	World Health Organisation
ZIMTA	Zimbabwe Teachers Association