

**REDEFINING THE ROLE OF EDUCATORS IN MANAGING THE NEEDS OF
ORPHANED LEARNERS**

by

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DECLARATION

I, Teresa Auma Ogina (student number 98048075), declare that this thesis (Redefining the role of educators in managing the needs of the orphaned learners) has not been submitted by me before at any other university. It is my original work and I have acknowledged all the sources consulted and quoted in the bibliography.

TERESA A. OGINA.

AUGUST 2007

DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to my mother, Veronica Wanjeri Ogolla. Although she never received formal education, she was determined that her daughters go to school, and encouraged us to achieve the highest possible level of education. I also dedicate this work to all the educators working in schools with orphaned learners under challenging and unique conditions. May your commitment continue to inspire other well-wishers. To orphaned learners, may your experiences be a source of motivation to achieve your goals in life.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the way in which educators identified and managed the needs of the orphaned learners they encountered in their situation as educators in a school setting. The sample in the study consisted of a total of 12-orphaned learners and 8 educators from one primary and one secondary school in the rural part of Mpumalanga Province in South Africa. Data on how orphaned learners viewed their situation were collected using draw-and-write strategy and observation followed by in-depth interviews and follow-up interview questions. The aim of interviewing the orphans themselves was to explore their own views of the realities of their lived experiences of orphanhood and their expectations of the world around them. Data on how educators identified and responded to the needs of the orphaned learners were collected using in-depth interviews and follow up interview questions.

The experiences of the orphaned learners interviewed indicate a need for social and emotional support besides the obvious material need. Two distinct identities (among the educators themselves) emerged from the interviews with these educators:

- There were educators who responded positively by providing support to the orphaned learners.
- And there were educators who responded by referring the orphaned learners to *the educators who help orphaned learners*.

The findings of the study revealed that internal motivational factors had a strong influence on the choices these educators made in responding to the needs of the orphans; and lack of knowledge and skills in identifying and responding to the orphans' emotional needs could have a negative impact on educator response. The findings also showed that the level of interaction and involvement in a relationship with the orphans determined the way the educators identified and responded to these orphans' needs. The study suggest the need for training educators to be in a position to provide care and build relationships, as a means of helping fulfill the social and emotional needs of these learners.

KEY WORDS:

orphaned learners

needs

pastoral care

educators' role

relationships

grieving process

empathy

role of parents

responsibility

behaviour

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ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
FHI	Family Health International
<i>HIV</i>	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
SCOPE/OVC	Strengthening the Community Partnership for the Empowerment of Orphans and Vulnerable Children
RNCS	Revised National Curriculum Statement
SASA	South African Schools Act
UNAIDS	United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNICEF	The United Nations Children's Fund
USAIDS	US Agency for International Development