

School stakeholders' perceptions on the mainstreaming of pregnant
learners in two East London secondary schools

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DECLARATION

I, **Ntombikayise Sylvia Mahlambeni**, fully declare that this thesis is my own work and that all sources that I have used or quoted have been acknowledged by means of complete references. I further declare that this dissertation has not been submitted at any institution for any purpose, academic or otherwise.

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N.S. MAHLAMBENI

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DATE

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my lovely niece,

Thenjiwe 'Nomkiki' Mahlambeni.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AIDS- Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

DoBE- Department of Basic Education

DoE- Department of Education

EMDC- Education Management Development Centre

EMIS- Education Management Information Systems

GEM- Girls' Education Movement

HIV - Human Immunodeficiency Virus

HSRC- Human Sciences Research Council

IRIN - Integrated Regional Information Network

L.O. - Life Orientation

NCS- National Curriculum Statement

NSE- Norms and Standards for Education

PMG- Parliamentary Monitoring Group

SASA- South African Schools Act

SGB- School Governing Board

SLES- Special Learner and Educator Support

STI- Sexually Transmitted Infection

USA- United States of America

WCED- Western Cape Education Department

ABSTRACT

Teenage pregnancy is one of the major factors leading to girls dropping out of school especially in developing countries such as South Africa. To address the problem, the South African government has put forward policies which allow for the continued enrolment of learners who could fall pregnant while at school. However, there is evidence that pregnant learners drop out of school even though these policies are in place. Hence this study investigated the perceptions of the school stakeholders on the mainstreaming of pregnant learners and one of the stakeholders is the pregnant learners themselves.

This study also aimed to investigate the way pregnant learners were perceived and treated in their schools and the views of the stakeholders on supporting the pregnant learners academically. It also aimed to explore leadership and management implications of the school stakeholders' perceptions.

This study revealed that some of the stakeholders were not aware of the existence of the policy that allows for the mainstreaming of pregnant learners in public schools. Those that indicated that they were aware of it reported to have a fuzzy idea of the policy. It seemed there was no shared understanding of the policy among the stakeholders; as a result the policy was not effectively implemented in the schools. This could also be the reason for the negative attitude shown by some of the school stakeholders to the policy. However, all stakeholders voiced out their opinions about this policy. With regards to the policy implementation they expressed fears that the educators may not be capacitated enough to deal with learner pregnancy and also that the pregnant learners may have a negative influence on other learners. Cultural beliefs and stereotypes seemed to play a role on how the stakeholders perceived the policy that legislated the mainstreaming of pregnant learners.