'INCLUDING THE EXCLUDED': TEACHING CHILDREN LEFT BEHIND BY EMIGRATING PARENTS IN HARARE, ZIMBABWE

by

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THESIS

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Dedication

To my late father Arthur Chikowo Nyatsanza - thank you for believing in my potential.
You will always be remembered;

My mother, Flora Maggie Matingo-Nyatsanza - without you I would not be who I am
today. I salute you for teaching us that hard work pays;

My father in-law Albert Mutizwa Tawodzera - you are our pillar and a mentor;

My husband Godfrey- my best friend and source of inspiration - for sure the sky should
always be the limit;

My children:
Alma-Nyasha-Vimbiso, Sean-Themba-Takudzwa and Gabriella-Ropafadzo-Thokozile;
May the Lord bless me with many more years to see you grow;

And to God the Almighty –*"Kurangarirwa nemi Mwari zvaringana."*

Declaration

I declare that **'INCLUDING THE EXCLUDED': TEACHING CHILDREN LEFT BEHIND BY EMIGRATING PARENTS IN HARARE, ZIMBABWE'** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references and that this work has not been submitted before for any other degree at any other institution.

Mazvita Cecilia Tawodzera   09-04-2019

Full names   **Signature**   **Date**

Acknowledgements

Abstract

The aim of this study was to assess the challenges confronting learners who remain in Zimbabwe when parents emigrate and to investigate whether and how teachers are equipped to deal with the specific needs of these learners as part of inclusive education. A phenomenological research approach was used to investigate this new phenomenon of left behind learners. The study was carried out at two high schools and two teacher training institutions in Harare, Zimbabwe. Primary data was collected through in-depth interviews with 12 learners and 6 lecturers. Two focus group discussions, each with 6 teachers were also conducted at the schools. Secondary data was collected from the analysis of relevant documents. Study results indicate that learners were left mainly in the custody of relatives, domestic workers or on their own. The challenges that the majority of the learners faced at home included abuse by guardians, the diversion of remittances to non-core expenditure, and inadequate support on educational, cultural and social issues. Most of the learners reported experiencing sadness, anger, despair, low self-esteem as well as feeling abandoned, neglected and rejected by their biological parents. The challenges at school included learners concentrating less in class, skipping classes and coming to school late. A few of the learners reported being on the verge of dropping out of school. The majority of interviewed teachers were unaware of the vulnerability of learners left behind by emigrating parents. Rather, some teachers viewed these learners as being economically advantaged, spoilt and delinquent and thus not requiring help. Most teachers reported being more competent in dealing with classical vulnerabilities: the physically and mentally challenged, orphaned and those affected by HIV and AIDS. Few teachers were therefore capable of meeting the needs of left- behind learners through inclusive education practices as the majority of them reported having no adequate knowledge and skills to handle this new vulnerability. This finding was confirmed by lecturers at teacher training institutions who reported that their curriculum had limited scope to teach inclusive education approaches to teacher trainees. Furthermore, there was no policy or framework to guide the implementation of inclusive education in schools. Thus, the little that teachers were equipped with was theoretical knowledge rather than practical skills necessary for inclusive education. Like teachers, most lecturers were generally not aware of the vulnerability of learners left behind by emigrating parents. The likelihood that lecturers could effectively capacitate teachers to handle inclusive education competently was therefore minimal. The study concludes that without a comprehensive inclusive education policy, inclusive education in the country will remain elusive. It is therefore recommended that an inclusive education policy be crafted and adopted and that the current teacher education curriculum be revamped to make the training of teachers more responsive to contemporary challenges such as those represented by learners left behind by emigrating parents.

Key words: Inclusive education, Left-behind learners, Schooling experiences, Teacher education, Vulnerability.

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Acronyms

AIDS   Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

HIV   Human Immunodeficiency Virus

IE   Inclusive Education

TOE   Theory of Education

G and C   Guidance and Counselling

TP   Teaching Practice

UNESCO   United Nations Education Scientific Cultural Organisation.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and motivation for the study

The post-2000 Zimbabwean migrations are undoubtedly Southern Africa's largest emigrations from a single country in the region's recent history (Crush & Tevera, 2010). This movement of Zimbabweans out of their country *enmasse* has been coined the 'Zimbabwean Exodus' (Crush & Tevera, 2010), comparing it to the biblical movement of the Israelites from Egypt. The migrations were triggered by a combination of an unstable political environment and an unprecedented economic decline in the country. A huge proportion of the Zimbabwean population is now resident outside the country, both in the region and internationally.

The establishment of the Zimbabwean population in the diaspora has not been without consequences back home. To begin with, the traditional family structure has been disrupted (Crush & Tevera, 2010). Most families in the country have been split, with family members scattered across different parts of the world (Fillipa, Cronje & Ferns, 2013). Emigrating parents are leaving their children behind in the custody of grandparents, non-relatives, domestic workers and even on their own, drastically altering the environment in which their children survive. This is because most parents are generally not certain of the nature of the education systems and living conditions in the host countries when they migrate (Fillipa, Cronje & Ferns, 2013). They would thus want to settle down first before bringing the children over. In reality however, most of these children never end up joining their parents. The majority are always 'waiting to migrate or waiting for papers' (Bakker, Elings-Pels & Reis, 2009; Rupande, 2014). In this situation, most learners are unable to concentrate fully on their schoolwork as they are always anticipating joining their parents (Bakker, Elings-Pels & Reis, 2009). The waiting period is usually long or indefinite thereby negatively affecting the performance of the concerned learners. Such learners generally do not perform well due to lack of school attendance, reduced concentration and lack of motivation to excel in a school environment that they consider temporary (Cronje & Fern, 2013). For some of these left-behind learners, it is not only their home environment that is affected, but their schooling environment as well since some guardians are inexperienced and

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therefore unable to support learners in the same way that biological parents would have (Zirima & Nyanga, 2010).

Studies have shown that the disruptive nature of parental emigrations has left most learners vulnerable, psychologically strained and lacking motivation (Lahaie, et al., 2009; Hu, 2011; Fillipa, 2011). The majority of the learners concentrate less in school and have little time for school work due to their assumption of adult roles like managing the household budget, heading families, taking care of siblings and even fending for the family (Fillipa, Cronje & Ferns, 2013, Rupande, 2014). While the education environment in the country is generally supportive of inclusive education (Zimbabwe, 1987),the policy environment is geared towards dealing with classical vulnerabilities of the disabled children, the girl child, orphans and children affected by HIV/AIDS (Samyang, 2013). Little, however, has been written on the left-behind learners as a vulnerable group deserving attention on educational inclusivity. Without adequate parental support and guidance, it is envisaged that teachers may salvage the situation, and act for and on behalf of the absentee parents in order to achieve inclusive education for all children.

But, do teachers recognize this vulnerability and are they adequately equipped to deal with the specific needs of these vulnerable left-behind learners? Anecdotal evidence in the country suggests that teachers may rather be seeing the left-behind learners as a privileged group with access to money and other material possessions. This perceived position of economic privilege tends to mask deep-seated challenges that these learners face. Thus, rather than helping to improve the conditions of left-behind learners, teachers may actually be worsening them, leaving the learners without the support necessary for an inclusive education. These learners may be facing exclusion from and within education which undermines opportunities to achieving their full potential with far reaching consequences for their future (UNESCO, 2014). For teachers that may be aware of the challenges faced by these learners, it is not known how the teachers are responding to the specific needs of this vulnerable group. It is also not known how teacher education in the country equips teachers to deal with these new challenges through inclusive educational practices.

Inclusive education is defined as 'a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education' (UNESCO, 2005a). It takes into account not only the diversity of learners, socio-economic backgrounds and linguistic variations (Zindi, 2014), but also other conditions that make it difficult for students to thrive. Such conditions include the vulnerability created by the emigration of parents. In the context of this study, the central issue is about the vulnerability of left-behind learners, the recognition of these learners as a vulnerable group, and the ability or otherwise of teachers to effectively deal with this new challenge. Such issues need to be thoroughly interrogated for inclusive education to be achieved in the country.

1.2. Statement of the problem

The deterioration of political and economic conditions in Zimbabwe has spurred large-scale emigration from the country. These emigrations have split families, with most parents living in the diaspora while their children are left in Zimbabwe on their own or in the care of the extended family or even non-relatives. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the majority of these children are psychologically stressed, lack parental care, guidance and motivation and concentrate less in school. Parental absence may thus be hampering their educational performance, development and success (Zirima & Nyanga, 2010). However, the exact nature of the challenges confronting these left-behind learners and their schooling experiences have not yet been sufficiently researched and articulated (Fillipa, Cronje & Ferns, 2013).

While the left-behind learners face daunting challenges in the absence of sufficient parental schooling support, it is envisaged that teachers may minimize damage to the learners through inclusive education (Lee, 2011). As UNESCO (2017) posits, inclusive education is about overcoming challenges that limit the presence, participation and achievement of all learners. While left-behind learners are enrolled in mainstream classes together with others and are therefore 'present' in the classroom, they have heightened vulnerabilities that require specific attention and more consideration, in the same way that explicit attention is paid to classical vulnerabilities: the disabled, orphans and the poor. Even though left-behind learners may not face exclusion 'from'

schools, they may in reality be excluded 'within' schools as their particular vulnerabilities are neither recognised nor dealt with. As Walton (2018:31) argues, the goal of inclusive education is to 'reduce exclusion from and within schools, and to secure participation and learning success for all.' It is about addressing and responding to the diverse needs of all learners, including the specific needs of left-behind learners.

Inclusive education involves 'a range of changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies, with a common vision which covers all children of the appropriate age range and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the regular system to educate all children' (UNESCO, 2005b:13). As such, inclusion goes beyond just including learners with different vulnerabilities in the same classroom. The broader and more contemporary notion of inclusive education encompasses taking into consideration not only disability, but also the cultural, social, economic and religious circumstances that may impinge on the ability of learners to participate fully and succeed in their education. Thus, the heightened vulnerabilities emanating from the emigration of parents: changed family circumstances, variable economic support as well as inadequate social and cultural support, unequivocally makes the issue of left-behind learners proper for inclusive education.

While teachers are expected to minimize damage to the learners through inclusive educational practices, there is no information available on whether these teachers are aware of this new vulnerability, which is different from classical vulnerabilities of the disabled, the orphaned and those affected by HIV and AIDS. Some researchers (e.g. Rupande, 2014) have suggested that the perceived economic privilege of some left-behind learners may actually be masking their vulnerability, making their susceptibility even less apparent. Even if teachers were to recognize this vulnerability, it is also not evident whether teacher education is preparing them sufficiently to deal with this new vulnerability and the various specific challenges that left-behind learners face, hence the need for this study.

1.3 Research aim and objectives of the study

The aim of the study was to assess the challenges confronting learners who remain in Zimbabwe when parents migrate and to investigate how teachers were equipped to deal with the specific needs of these learners as part of inclusive education.

The objectives of the study were to:

a) Investigate the views of learners who remain in Zimbabwe on their vulnerability and living with guardians.

b) Examine the educational challenges faced by learners left by emigrating parents in Zimbabwe.

c) Evaluate the teachers' perspectives on the challenges faced by learners who are left behind by emigrating parents in Zimbabwe.

d) Examine the challenges faced by teachers in interacting with left-behind learners and how they were dealing with these challenges as part of inclusive education.

e) Analyze how teacher education in Zimbabwe equipped teachers to deal with challenges faced by learners who remain in the country as part of inclusive education.

1.4 Study assumptions

The study was guided by the following assumptions:

a) Learners who remain in Zimbabwe after the emigration of parents were experiencing challenges resulting from living with guardians.

b) The schooling experiences of learners who remain in Zimbabwe were altered by the emigration of their parents.

c) Teachers in Zimbabwe had different perspectives on the vulnerability and challenges faced by left-behind learners.

d) Teachers in Zimbabwe faced challenges in dealing with and responding to the specific needs of learners who remain behind in the country when parents emigrate.

e) Teacher training in Zimbabwe did not adequately prepare teachers to teach left-behind children inclusively.

1.5 Research questions

In order to achieve the above aim and objectives, the study sought to answer the following research question:

What are the challenges confronting learners who remain in Zimbabwe when parents emigrate and how are teachers equipped to deal with the needs of these learners as part of inclusive education?

The sub-research questions were:
   a) What were the views of learners who remain in Zimbabwe on their vulnerability and on living with guardians?
   b) What educational challenges were faced by learners left by emigrating parents in Zimbabwe?
   c) What were the teachers' perspectives on the challenges faced by learners who are left behind by emigrating parents in Zimbabwe?
   d) What challenges were teachers facing in interacting with left-behind learners and how where they dealing with the challenges as part of inclusive education?
   e) How was teacher education in Zimbabwe equipping teachers to deal with challenges faced by learners who remain in the country as part of inclusive education?

1.6 Delimitation

Research for this study was carried out in Harare, the capital city of Zimbabwe at two high schools and at two secondary teacher training institutions, one in a low-income area and the other in a high-income area.

1.7 Definition of terms

This section presents definitions of terms used in the thesis. While the terms may have diverse meanings in different contexts, the purpose of this section is to operationalize the terms and make their meanings contextual to this study.

1.7.1 Vulnerable learners

These are learners whose survival, care, protection or development may be compromised due to a particular condition, situation or circumstance that prevents the fulfilment of their rights (Kumalo, 2013). All vulnerable learners have one common denominator: they have no reliable social safety networks on hand to depend upon in order to adequately manage the risks to which they are daily exposed (Kumalo, 2013). Left-behind learners are therefore part of this group of vulnerable learners and their vulnerability stems from the absence of their parents.

1.7.2 Left-behind learners

These are learners who have been left by emigrant parents in the country of origin and live without their biological parents (Elings-Pels & Reis, 2009; Lahaie, et al 2009). The vulnerability context of these learners is characterised by parental absence and all the attendant challenges such as lack of social, emotional and material support. This study focused only on left-behind learners who were in high school and were aged between 12 and 18 years.

1.7.3 Inclusive education

Farrell (2010:3) defines inclusion as "a process in which schools, communities, local authorities and government strive to reduce barriers to participation and learning for all citizens". Hall (2002:213) sees educational inclusion as "a principle that refers to the right of learners to feel welcome in a supportive educational context". It is "an on-going process aimed at offering quality education for all while respecting diversity and the different needs and abilities, characteristics and learning expectations of the students and communities, eliminating all forms of discrimination" (UNESCO, 2009:126). According to Bialobrzeska et al., (2012), some of the specific indicators for learner vulnerability include, among other things: learners experiencing emotional and phsychological problems, parental absence, lack of parental guidance and direction, lack of love and support, reduced school attendance and inability to manage schoolwork. Thus, while the classical concept of inclusive education focussed more on vulnerabilities resulting from disability, the broader and more contemporary notion of inclusive education encompasses not only disability, but also the cultural, social, economic and religious circumstances that may impinge on the ability of learners to participate fully and succeed in their education. Hence, this study views inclusive

education more broadly as a process by which all learners participate fully regardless of their differences and where different vulnerabilities are taken into consideration in order to increase access to and participation by learners in the general schooling system.

1.7.4 Teacher

The term refers to a person who is professionally and didactically trained and who is qualified in terms of his or her respective subjects, to carry out educative teaching (Duminy, Dreyer & Steyn, 1994). The teacher is a front-line troop of change and progress who provides instruction especially in a school (Beeby, 1986). In this study, in addition to the aforementioned characteristics, a teacher is a person who is formally appointed at a school to facilitate learning.

1.7.5 Teacher education

Teacher education consists of both pre-service and in-service training. Pre-service training equips teachers with regular education before they become qualified teachers and in-service training equips teachers that are already qualified and are in service. The term is sometimes used interchangeably with teacher training. However teacher education is far more than teacher training as it includes teaching pre-service teachers not only to teach within the four walls of the classroom, but how to base this teaching on sound theoretical knowledge. This study adopts the definition by (Kapinga, 2014) who defines teacher education as the policies and procedures designed to equip teachers (both prospective and in-service) with the knowledge, attitudes, behaviors and skills they require to perform their tasks effectively in the classroom, school and the wider community.

1.7.6 Inclusive teacher education and training

Inclusive teacher education and training relates to the training that equips teachers with the relevant and necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes for effective implementation and achievement of inclusive education and support. Teachers who undergo inclusive education training may function more effectively in inclusive environments (class, school and or community) than those that have not been exposed to inclusive education training.

1.7.7 Schooling experiences

Schooling experiences refer to the total sum of encounters by pupils as a result of formal schooling where teaching and learning takes place. These include academic achievement, enrolment, attendance, progression, dropout, pushouts and extra-curricular.

1.8   Research methodology

A methodology is "a process of following the steps, procedures and strategies for gathering and analysing the data in the research investigation" (Polit & Hungler, 1999:648).

1.8.1 Research approach

The study adopted a phenomenological approach as the issue of left-behind learners could best be captured in a qualitative way where knowledge, feelings, and even perceptions are expressed freely in a manner that avails more understanding. Phenomenology seeks "to understand an experience from the participant's point of view" (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001:157). It also allows the researcher to understand in detail the lived experiences of the participants, providing the opportunity for one aspect of a problem to be studied in some depth within a limited time frame (Creswell, 2003). The approach was thus suitable for understanding the challenges that left-behind learners were facing and the way in which the teachers were dealing with the challenges faced by this vulnerable group.

1.8.2 Sampling

Purposive sampling was used to 'select individuals who have experienced the phenomena being studied' (Creswell, 2007:61) Two high schools, one from a high income area and the other from a low income area, were selected into the sample to capture varying student experiences. Six learners with both parents who had emigrated were selected at each school into the sample. Furthermore, a group of six teachers was selected at each school for focus group discussion. At each teacher training institution, three lecturers were selected for in-depth interviews. Thus, in total, 12 learners, 12 teachers, and 6 lecturers took part in the study.

1.8.3   Data collection methods

'Doing phenomenology' means capturing 'rich descriptions of phenomena and their settings' (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998:68). Data for this study was collected through in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and the review of the teacher education curricula, handbooks, teaching programmes, past examination question papers and other necessary documents. Such triangulation was meant to increase the credibility and dependability of findings. In-depth interviews were used to collect data from learners.The interview schedule for the left-behind learners was translated into the local vernacular, *Shona*. In-depth interviews were also carried out with lecturers at the respective teacher education training institutions on how they are equipping pre-service teachers with knowledge, skills and capabilities to deal with educational inclusion. Focus group discussions were carried out with teachers at each of the two selected schools to get information on their' perceptions on the vulnerability of left-behind learners and how they were dealing with the specific needs and challenges of these learners as part of inclusive education. Curricula, handbooks and past examination question papers of the teacher training institutions were reviewed to understand what and how teachers were being equipped for inclusive education.

1.8.4   Data analysis

In a phenomenological approach, data analysis consists of a series of systematic procedures that identifies the essential features and relationships as well as transforming the data through interpretation (Groenwald, 2004). This study used the following procedures advocated for by Moustakas (1994):

1.8.4.1 Horizonalization

This involved going through data transcripts and highlighting 'significant statements' or quotes that provide an understanding of the experiences of learners who remain and on educational inclusivity.

1.8.4.2 Clusters of meaning

From the statements and quotes, the researcher developed clusters of meaning, bringing together ideas and experiences that are related and that serve to form themes

that are relevant to the challenges of learners who remain in the country and inclusive education.

1.8.4.3 Textural and structural descriptions

The researcher made use of the statements and themes to write individual descriptions on what participants experienced and how they experienced the phenomenon in terms of conditions, situations and contexts.

1.8.4.4 Essential structure

In this process, the researcher focused on the common experiences of participants and tried to make sense of the underlying meanings. Clusters of meaning or themes therefore emerged, thus furthering the researcher's understanding of the essential structure of both the home and school experiences of the left-behind learners and teaching these learners as part of inclusive education.

1.8.4.5 Reporting

This involved making detailed comments about the findings, arranging the findings according to themes and topics and then drawing out key issues to be discussed. The researcher also made interpretations and linkages relating to the findings. The implications of the findings were also drawn out and linkages were made with the wider literature.

1.8.4.6 Document analysis

The analysis of documentation in the study included a review of the teacher training institution curricula, lecture notes or handbooks and past examination question papers. This was done in order to understand what aspects of inclusive education were being taught and emphasized.

1.8.5 Trustworthiness of the research

Any good research not only tells a convincing story, but is also rigorous in nature so that its conclusions can be accepted more definitively. In striving for this acceptance, the researcher should show the audience the procedures used in ensuring that the methods are reliable and conclusions valid. This brings to the fore important tenets of

trustworthiness or criteria for evaluation of qualitative research which every researcher should be concerned about while designing a study and analysing results (Kitchin & Tate, 2000). In this study, the trustworthiness of the research was verified against Guba's (1981) model of trustworthiness which looks at, a) credibility, b) transferability, c) dependability, and d) confirmability of the information collected.

1.8.5.1 Credibility

Credibility is checking of the truth of the findings ensuring to what extend the collected data reflect reality. Lincoln & Guba (1995) argue that ensuring credibility is one of most important factors in establishing trustworthiness in qualitative research. To ensure this credibility, this research adopted well established methods of enquiry (phenomenology design) whose procedures are clearly laid out. Such methods have been used in other researches concerning learners and inclusive education and thus yielded credible information and results. The triangulation process that was adopted in this study to ensured that data was cross-verified. This is in line with Given (2008)'s view that triangulation helps the researcher to look at the data from different perspectives and view points to get a holistic picture of the environment. Thus, in this study, the key issues involving left-behind learners and inclusive education were understood from various sources that included left-behind learners themselves, teachers and lecturers, as well as review of relevant documents. To ensure that participants were honest, their anonymity was assured, and everyone was given an opportunity to withdraw from the study at any point, if one so wished. Data collected as well as the interpretations and conclusions reached were tested with stakeholders to increase credibility. As Streubert & Carpenter (1999) point out, credibility is demonstrated when participants recognise the reported research as their own experiences.

1.8.5.2 Transferability

Transferability "is concerned with the extent to which the findings of one study can be applied to other situations." (Merriam, 1998:39). It was enhanced in this study by the purposeful selection of participants from different teacher training institutions and schools in different settings to allow for a diversity of voices and richer data. The researcher ensured that the research was consistent in research methods and followed the research process correctly. This study provided, in detail, information about the Harare context to enable decisions about transferability to be made on the basis of

similarities in context. Transferability was also ensured through the process of member checks to enhance the possibility that the findings have the same meaning for left-behind learners, teachers and lecturers. However, as Erlandson (1993) notes, conventional generalizability is never possible as all observations are defined by the specific contexts in which they occur. While the findings of this study may not be easily transferable to different contexts, they are nevertheless relevant to places that are contextually the same as Harare.

1.8.5.3 Dependability

Dependability ensures consistency in the research regarding the degree to which the data represents the changing conditions of the studied phenomena. Lincoln & Guba (1985) argue that there are close ties between credibility and dependability, and that when you demonstrate credibility, you are, in a way, also demonstrating dependability. To ensure dependability the researcher made sure that if the research is repeated, in the same context, with the same methods and with the same subjects or participants, similar results will be obtained. The use of overlapping methods such as the focus group, individual interview and document analysis helped in addressing issues of dependability as well. The researcher also addressed issues of dependability by reporting in detail all the procedures followed in the research as well as the analysis of results so that a different researcher may follow the same protocol and come up with credible and dependable results.

1.8.5.4 Confirmability

Confirmability ensures that the findings of the research are not distorted by the biases, motivations, interests and perspectives of the researcher. As Miles & Huberman (2006) point out, a key criterion for confirmability is the extent to which the researcher admits his or her own predispositions, beliefs and assumptions. In terms of confirmability, this researcher has given a detailed methodological description, indicating what approaches have been favoured and why, justifying the steps taken in the research process as well as acknowledging any weaknesses. As Guba (1978), points out, issues of confirmability and dependability are addressed by leaving an extensive audit trail of the processes of data gathering, data analysis and data interpretation to enable the auditor to trace the course of the research step-by-step, determining if the conclusions, interpretations and recommendations can be traced in their sources and if they are supported by the inquiry.

1.8.6 Significance of the study

The study is important to understand the challenges and experiences of learners who remain in Zimbabwe when their parents emigrate. This is important for the attainment of inclusive education in the country, given that parental emigration still continues unabated and children of emigrant parents now form a significant proportion of the student body in the country. The study will benefit teachers in schools as the results will contribute towards a better understanding of the experiences and challenges of left-behind learners. In addition, lecturers in teacher training colleges may also use the findings to reflect and plan on how best to equip pre-service teachers to deal with the new vulnerability of left-behind learners.

1.8.7 Ethical considerations

"All research raises ethical issues." (Moriarty, 2011: 24). This is because research is a public trust that must be ethically conducted if the results are to be valuable. The primary responsibility for the conduct of ethical research lies with the researcher. In this study, ethical clearance was applied for at the University of Limpopo's Ethics Committee, TREC. When that permission was granted (Appendix H), permission was also sought from the Ministry of Higher & Tertiary Education (Appendix I), the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education in Zimbabwe and Harare Provincial Education Offices. In addition to seeking clearance to conduct research, other critical ethical issues dealt with in this research included: informed consent, discontinuance, confidentiality, anonymity and respect.

1.8.7.1 Informed consent

The primary need for informed consent is to ensure that all research involving human subjects allows for voluntary participation by subjects who understand what participation entails in a study entails (Creswell, 2007). All participants to this study were asked to participate in the research voluntarily. Consent for left-behind learners who took take part in the study was sought and gained from their guardians. All participants were given information on the aims and objectives of the study in order that participants grant their consent from an informed position. Explanations were made in the vernacular and participants were given an opportunity to seek clarity. As Radnor (2001) points out, ethical research needs honesty and openness so that the research is not questioned.

1.8.7.2 Discontinuance

When participants agree to partake in a research process, they do not do that for an unlimited time. Rather they agree to participate as long as they feel free and comfortable to continue participating (Mbengwa, 2010; Singer, 1986). In this research, participants were informed that they have rights to terminate their participation as and when they feel like doing so and that their withdrawal would not have any negative impact on them.

1.8.7.3 Confidentiality

Confidentiality is integral to the research process. It is important for researchers to ensure that no identifiable information about participants is presented and to protect the identity of research participants through various processes that anonymize them (Rose et al., 2006). In this research, the information guarded securely and was used only for academic purposes. Files for the research material collected in the field were securely stored, and were only accessed by the researcher and supervisor.

1.8.7.4 Anonymity

To provide participants with anonymity, the researcher made sure where possible, that no identifying markers are collected during the research process. Where it has been unavoidable to do so, identifying markers have been removed so that data cannot be directly linked to the participant who supplied the information.

1.8.7.5 Respect

It is important that "educational researchers respect the rights, privacy, dignity, and sensitivities of their research populations and also the integrity of the institutions within which the research occurs." (American Educational Research Association, 2002:3). In this study, care was done to preserve the integrity of the participants as well as the institutions within which these participants were located. Thus, all participants that took part in the study were treated equally, irrespective of their gender, race, ethnicity or any other parameters.

1.8.7.6 Emotional risk

The subject content of this study is an emotional one, especially to children left behind by emigrating parents. The interview process may have the potential to make students

re-live their experiences and raise anxiety. To prepare the students for the interviews the researcher enlisted the services of guidance and counselling teachers to prepare the students before the interviews and also to attend to any issues arising thereafter. The primary concern for this was the safety of the research participants.

1.9 Organization of the study

Chapter One provides the introduction, background and motivation of the study. The background deals with parental emigration and its impacts on left-behind learners as well as the key issues related to inclusive education in Zimbabwe. Further discussions centred on the problem statement, aim of the study, study assumptions, research questions, theoretical framework, research methodology ethical consideration and the significance of the study.

Chapter Two discusses the issue of vulnerability and provides a theoretical framework underlying the study based on Bourdieu's three forms of capital: economic, social and cultural capitals.

Chapter Three provides the review of related literature on impacts of parental emigration, conceptualization and historical development of inclusive education and inclusive education and teacher education both at an international, regional and local level looking at selected examples.

Chapter Four is the research methodology. This chapter details the research approach and discusses the sampling procedures, data collection and the data analysis methods employed in the study.

Chapter Five is the data analysis chapter. It is divided into three sections, each section concentrating on specific research questions. The first section answers the sub-questions on the views of left-behind learners in Zimbabwe on their vulnerability and living with guardians as well as the educational challenges they faced. The second section focuses on the teachers' perspectives on the challenges faced by learners left behind in Zimbabwe and the challenges that teachers faced in interacting with left-behind learners. The third section of this chapter focuses on how lecturers were

equipping student teachers to deal with the specific needs of left-behind learners as part of inclusive education in the country.

Chapter Six provides the study summary, a conclusion and makes recommendations based research findings.

1.10 Conclusion

This chapter focused on the introduction to the study by presenting the background, problem statement, aims, assumptions and research question, theoretical framework, definition of terms, research design and methodology, significance of the study, trustworthiness of the research, ethical considerations and programme of the study. The next chapter provides a theoretical framework underlying the study and reviews local and international perspectives on inclusive education, literature related to inclusive education and inclusive teacher education as well as the impact of parental emigration on left-behind learners.

CHAPTER TWO: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: USING BOURDIEU'S THEORY TO EXPLORE THE VULNERABILITY OF LEFT-BEHIND LEARNERS

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the theoretical framework of the study. It starts by discussing the issue of vulnerability as being socially constructed and therefore requiring society to help through its institutions in order to meet the needs of vulnerable learners. The vulnerability of left-behind learners is examined and a link is made on the role of inclusive education in meeting the needs of the learners affected by this new vulnerability. This explanation is made within the ambits of Bourdieu's forms of capital and also details how and why well equipped teachers are necessary to meet the needs of left-behind learners and to enhance positive schooling experiences.

2.2 Vulnerability and vulnerable learners

The concept of vulnerability generally refers to groups of children who are most likely to fall through the cracks of regular programs, and/or those children that experience negative outcomes such as the loss of their education. In most cases, there are barriers that stand in the way of the equal participation of these children in projects designed to benefit all children (UNICEF, 2004). The Kingdom of Swaziland (2010) defines a vulnerable child as "one with or without parents, who lack the basic needs for survival and is living in circumstances with high risk and whose prospects for health, growth and development are seriously impaired. Bialobrzeska et al., (2012:8) on the other hand defines a vulnerable learner as 'someone who has no access or has limited access to basic needs such as sufficient and nutritious food, shelter, adequate clothing, a safe home and community environment free from abuse and exploitation, family care and support, good health care, and the ability to take full advantage of available education opportunities.' All vulnerable children have one common denominator: they have no reliable social safety networks on hand to depend upon in order to adequately manage the risks to which they are daily exposed (Kumalo, 2013). Left-behind learners, who are the central concern of this thesis, are part of this group of vulnerable children. Their vulnerability stems not only from the absence of their parents, but also from all the attendant problems that arise thereafter. Bialobrzeska *et al.*, (2012) points out that some of the general indicators for child vulnerability include parental absence, the experience of emotional and psychological problems, lack of parental guidance and

direction, lack of love and support, reduced school attendance and inability to manage schoolwork, among others. These and other indicators are apparent in the lives of most left-behind learners who are left in households that are barely functional and therefore unable to provide meaningful support to the learners.

2.2.1 Vulnerability as a social construct

Vulnerability as a social construct can be viewed as susceptibility that is generated by the way that society is organized and relates, rather than one caused by a person's impairment or difference. Thus, systemic barriers, negative attitudes and purposeful or inadvertent exclusion by society may be the main factor increasing the vulnerability of individuals or a group of people. While physical, sensory, intellectual, or psychological variations may cause individual functional limitation or vulnerabilities, these do not have to lead to inability and negative experiences unless society fails to take account of and include such people regardless of their individual differences. The focus, then, is not on what is wrong and puts on what should be done to identify and remove the barriers or the reduce of their effects. In the ambits of inclusive education, this specifically looks at what can be done to remove barriers that restrict life choices for vulnerable learners. Since being vulnerable negatively affects individuals, there is a great deal that society can do to reduce or remove some of the barriers. The emphasis is on changes required in society, changes in attitudes and changes in the provision of support and information to vulnerable learners.

2.2.2 Linking vulnerability and inclusive education

The drive towards inclusive education has been gaining traction incrementally at the global level since the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948. Article 26 of the declaration indicates that everyone has a right to education (United Nations, 1948). Since that declaration, several conventions have been signed. These include the UNESCO Declaration Against Discrimination in Education (1960); the International Covenant on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965); the International Covenant on Economic and Social Rights (1966); Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979); the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006).

Underlying these conventions has been the need to ensure that children have equal access to education in ways that are inclusive and integrative. This means going beyond merely acknowledging the existence of these frameworks, but rather to seek to understand the nature of the different challenges confronting learners who are vulnerable to exclusion and marginalization as well as understanding how teachers deal with the specific needs of these learners through inclusive educational practices. It is a rights-based approach to education, one which appreciates the diversity of all learners and places particular emphasis on the needs of children that are vulnerable to exclusion and marginalization.

While left-behind learners are enrolled in mainstream classes, their vulnerability stems from the fact that they no longer have or enjoy the close support of biological parents in their schooling. Most of them may be on their own without adult supervision and support, while others may be in the custody of guardians that are either too young or too old to be of any significant help. In that regard, the left-behind learners become more vulnerable as they lack the necessary social support. Unless teachers come to the aid of these learners by providing the necessary specific support, these learners are at risk of exclusion as their specific needs are not met. Whereas teachers are likely to be aware of the specific needs of other vulnerable learners such as the disabled or the orphaned, the needs of the left-behind learners are not yet sufficiently understood and therefore warrant more interrogation, highlighting the heightened vulnerability facing this group of learners.

In the social sciences, it has often proven useful to distinguish three levels of conceptualization which generally explain differences in students' educational/ academic performance and schooling experiences for inclusive educational platforms. The macro level looks at the particular features of the national education system which creates educational differences (Heckmann, 2008). The meso level considers the single school as an organization and its environment and addresses the way an organization links the individual and society. The micro level concentrates on the individual and small group actors and their interrelations, their definitions of the situation, their needs, goals and resources. In this research, both the micro and macro levels of conceptualization are important. The micro level concentrates on how the individual left-behind learners are facing challenges with parental absence as they

interact with guardians and teachers in relation to their schooling experiences. The macro level of conceptualisation in this research looks at how the education system deals with issues of vulnerability, how the needs of particular groups of learners are being met, the systems put in place to improve the students' experiences, as well as the role of teachers in meeting the needs of these learners through inclusive education. As Nhemachena, Kusangaya & Gwitira (2012) argue, the process of inclusion focuses on the system in order to make it more welcoming to all learners especially those disadvantaged and vulnerable. It is thus through inclusive educational approaches that the vulnerability of left-behind learners may be dealt with and ameliorated.

2.2.3 Left-behind learners, vulnerability and inclusive education

The phenomenon of left-behind learners is a contemporary vulnerability whose link to inclusive education has not been sufficiently death with. There is thus a need to contextualise and appreciate the role that society and the education system is envisaged to play towards the creation of an environment that minimises the negative impacts emanating from parental emigration and at the same time improving the experiences of the left-behind learners as a vulnerable group. Inclusive education is built around the goals and ideologies of equality and social justice for all learners. At its core, inclusive education is about creating a school and classroom environment in which all students, regardless of their individual differences and challenges, participate fully in their education, development and success (Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, 2011).It implies the provision of quality education and a supportive school environment that allows all children to take full advantage of the teaching and learning opportunities to develop their potential. This equal access to education empowers vulnerable children to be independent and helpful members of an inclusive, barrier-free society.

The success of this process, however, is dependent on the capacity of teachers to use curricular differentiation and the ability to modify content, approaches, activities and assessments in order to respond more effectively to the diverse needs of learners. Modipane & Themane (2014), for example, have highlighted the benefits of using the teachers' social capital as a resource for curriculum development in the creation of child friendly school environments that are safe and supportive school of all learners. Available evidence suggests that inclusive educational approaches can improve the performance of all learners (UNESCO, 2008; Hooker, 2017; Westbrook & Croft, 2015;

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Zindi, 2014). This is because, rather than generalising teaching approaches to all students, increased attention is paid to individual challenges as well as to pedagogy and curriculum adaptations in order to benefit learners.

While most current inclusive educational practices are centred on dealing with classical vulnerabilities, especially those emanating from learner disability as well as the orphaned and those affected by HIV and AIDS, contemporary vulnerabilities such as those resulting from parental emigration are generally not factored in. This is because teacher education has also been slow to catch up with and adapt to present-day vulnerabilities. Consequently, teachers in schools have not been adequately sensitised and capacitated to deal with a broader range of vulnerabilities that include the left-behind learners. Contextualising inclusive education in the face of new vulnerabilities therefore implies a shift from seeing the left-behind learner as a problem, to viewing both society and parents as well as the teacher education system as being part of a broader system affecting the education of the learner. The heightened vulnerability of the left-behind learner that results from parental emigration may thus be effectively dealt with through inclusive educational approaches that firstly recognises the existence of the problem and secondly, equips teachers with adequate knowledge and skills to confront the challenges. Teacher education is therefore crucial in determining what happens in classrooms because when teachers have knowledge and are capacitated, their ability to cater to the different needs of learners is also enhanced. To understand fully the vulnerability of left-behind learners, and therefore comprehend the necessity of inclusive educational approaches to dealing with this vulnerability, a discussion on Bourdieu's forms of capital becomes important.

2.3 Bourdieu's forms of capital

This study uses Bourdieus' theory on the forms of capital to investigate the phenomena of left-behind learners in Harare, Zimbabwe. In his famous work, "*The Forms of Capital*", Bourdieu (1986) discusses the structure and the functioning of the social world as being underpinned by various forms of capital. These capitals, this study argues, are necessary if learners who remain in the home country after the emigration of parents are to experience an inclusive and well-rounded education. Bourdieu (1986) identified three forms of capitals, these being economic, social and cultural capitals, providing a multi-dimensional approach to conceptualizing the different resources that parents

possess and which they invest to promote children's educational success. For learners to do well, Bourdieu argues that these learners need to have access to the three capitals, without which they will struggle to fulfil their goals of learning in an environment constrained of necessary support. He further contends that "families possess different amounts and composition of capital and that each type of capital, invested in children, may yield a comparative advantage in the educational system" (Mollegard & Jaeger, 2015:13). For example parents may use their economic capital to pay tuition fees, their cultural capital to ensure that children have a comparative advantage in the educational system, and their social capital to get their child into a prestigious educational institution or track. All of these investments lead to a higher likelihood of educational success. The issue which is central to this study is whether the emigrant parents are fully providing these capitals for positive schooling experiences of their children. In the case of the left-behind learners, their schooling experiences may be moderated and negatively influenced because the necessary forms of capital are absent due to parental emigration. To this end, various studies (Bakker, Elings-Pels & Reis 2009; Hung, 2013; Rose, et.al., 2006) have indicated that while some left-behind learners may be economically advantaged because of remittances received from diaspora parents, not all diaspora parents remit adequately for their children back home. The perception that all left-behind learners are economically better is therefore not always valid. The greater majority of the left-behind learners therefore lack economic capital, cultural and social capitals that are a requisite for good educational experiences. Thus, Bourdieu (1986) and Coleman (1988) are of the view that, in addition to economic resources, parents should use other types of non-monetary resources to promote children's educational success.

2.3.1 Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital

Cultural capital encompasses the ideas and knowledge that people draw upon as they participate in social life (Bourdieu, 1986). It denotes the familiarity with dominant cultural codes and the ability to exploit this familiarity through knowledge and behaviours, institutionalised via educational credentials, or objectified via possession of cultural objects to one's own advantage (Heckmann, 2008; Mollegard & Jaeger, 2015). Cultural capital is mostly transmitted from the family, especially from parents to children through investment and socialization and it is acquired over time as it impresses itself upon one's habitus (character and way of thinking).Thus, in the

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presence of parents, children have access to abundant cultural capital. The absence of parents, on the other hand, is predicted to minimize cultural capital, potentially affecting the schooling experiences of left-behind learners. Among the sub-types of cultural capital that Bourdieu (1986) emphasized are incorporated cultural capital and embodied cultural capital.

Incorporated cultural capital is the sum of the quality of the learned skills, knowledge, values, preferences, and standards which have to be acquired and which are manifested in a certain habitus of the person. Embodied cultural capital consists of both the consciously acquired and the passively "inherited" properties of one's self, (Heckmann, 2008).In this case "inherited" does not imply any genetic process, but rather receipt of capital over time. The content and quality of cultural capital is heavily dependent on the cultural capital of the family in which the person grows up. Thus, the process of appropriating objectified cultural and the time necessary for it to take place mainly depends on the cultural capital embodied in the whole family. In the context of Zimbabwe, where many parents have emigrated, the absence of the parents is likely to reduce the transmission of cultural capital to the children. While left-behind children in the custody of the extended family may still have recourse to this capital, it is definitely not the same as what would occur in the presence of biological parents. For those left-behind learners living on their own, cultural capital is almost non-existent. This is because the transfer of cultural capital is complicated as it involves many forms of intentional and unintentional learning that happens in daily family interaction and creates learning potential that enables a person to acquire and incorporate the culture of his or her environment. The amount of incorporated cultural capital can thus be comparatively small or large, depending on the level of family interaction. It is therefore highly likely that the transfer of cultural capital to learners left behind in Zimbabwe is minimized to the detriment of the concerned learners.

Without adequate cultural capital, some of these learners have little stimuli to succeed. It is generally acknowledged that children living with families that have both higher levels of education and professional backgrounds are likely to do better academically as they are consistently encouraged by their parents to aim higher and achieve better results (Bourdieu, 1986). Furthermore, cultural capital affects educational attainment as students perform higher if they obtain more cultural capital especially from the

parent as a significant other (Bourdieu, 1986). Mollegard & Jaeger (2015:13) are of the view that cultural capital "contributes to educational success by equipping children with an understanding of the implicit 'rules of the game' in the educational system, an appreciation of higher education and the ability to present an impression of academic brilliance to teachers."

Consequently, an environment where learners grow up with their biological parents, and the socialization inherent thereof, is more likely to spur learners to want to succeed and mirror their parents' achievements than would children who grow up in different family contexts where the 'significant other' – the parent - is absent. Thus left-behind learners are more likely to lack parental encouragement and guidance, much to their detriment. While cultural capital is integral to the development and educational success of learners, other complimentary capitals are necessary. The next section discusses social capital and its relevance to the investigation of left-behind learners and inclusive education.

2.3.2 Bourdieu's concept of social capital

Social capital "is the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (Bourdieu, 1986:21). It refers to those resources and information that result from the network of relations that a person has with the other person on the basis of mutual recognition and respect (Heckmann, 2008).The idea of contributions by individuals within a social structure is central to the notion of social capital (Coleman, 1988). As Modipane & Themane (2014:2) point out "social capital does not simply refer to a single unit, but to a variety of entities which have common elements and facilitate certain actions collectively within that social structure." Such a form of social interaction thus enables citizens to address societal problems more meaningfully.

Bourdieu (1986) focuses on the advantages to possessors of social capital and the deliberate construction of sociability for the purpose of creating this resource. Social capital may promote educational success if parents possess social connections that facilitate access to, for example, prestigious educational institutions or educational tracks that require students to find apprenticeship positions (Mollegard & Jaeger,

2015).The amount and quality of social capital depends on the nature of economic, cultural and social capital that these related persons have and control. Due to emigration of parents, the social capital of left-behind learners may generally be limited in terms of the number of relations and the formal size of the network at their disposal. What relations they have access to consists mostly of relations within the extended family and peers who are typically considered to be secondary agents of socialization. Accordingly, such a network may be limited in its potential for educational support and only provides a far distant and weak relationship in terms of encouraging successful educational outcomes of children left in the home country by emigrating parents.

The importance that such a network puts on the significance of human capital might be low and may not be able to support the left-behind learners fully, especially in issues regarding supervision of homework and revision for tests as well as in other ways that are relevant for success in education. The lack of social capital or its limited nature emanating from parental emigration is envisaged to result in negative schooling experiences. Thus, the wealth of knowledge possessed by parents who are working abroad and are absent from their for long periods of time, is of little use to the learners back home. Although left-behind learners may have access to extended family and peers, these are considered secondary agents of socialization whose role in educational support is generally limited. The extended family or non-relatives in whose custody children are left may also not be that focused and enthusiastic in maintaining relations with educational institutions in the same way that biological parents would. Henceforth, the left-behind learners are most likely to be negatively affected in their schooling experiences. Using Bourdieu's theory of social capitals enabled an interrogation of how left-behind learners were being affected and the role that inclusive educational approaches could play in minimising damage and improving the learners' schooling experiences.

2.3.3 Bourdieu's concept of economic capital

Research done in other countries has posited that most children left by emigrant parents benefit economically from the emigration of their parents due to increased remittances from the diaspora (Bakker, Elings-Pels & Reis 2009; Hung, 2013). Positive educational outcomes are therefore envisaged for the left-behind learners. The majority of the findings are, however, contextual and therefore cannot be easily generalised. In the

case of Harare, in Zimbabwe, it was necessary for the study to investigate whether learners left behind by emigrating parents were benefiting from increased economic capital and how this was impacting on their schooling experiences.

Economic capital refers to monetary assets or resources such as wealth, property, and other material possessions (Møllegaard&. Jæger, 2015). It can can be converted into money and be institutionalised in the form of property rights (Bourdieu, 1986). The availability or unavailability of these family resources may affect children's educational experiences. Economic capital is important because it is intertwined with the other forms of capital as these other different types of capital can be derived from it. Socially, whether or not an individual is a member of a group generally depends on economic capital. This is because while there are goods and services which economic capital can give immediate access to, there are however other goods and services that can only be obtained by virtue of social relationships or social obligations (Mollegard & Jaeger, 2015). If cultural capital is to be effectively transmitted, for example, the transformation of economic capital into cultural capital presupposes an expenditure of time that is made possible by possession of economic capital (Bourdieu, 1986). Thus, if effective socialisation of children is to take place, the amount of usable time by family, especially parents determine how much cultural capital is transmitted to the children. Bourdiue therefore argues that when one possesses more economic capital, it is also likely that their children will obtain more cultural capital as well. Economic capital is therefore at the root of other capitals as well because it can be transferred into cultural and social capital.

The Zimbabwean crisis presented a context for interrogating the role of economic capital in the education of learners left behind by emigrating parents. The deteriorating political and economic conditions in the country since the year 2000 forced most parents to emigrate. It was generally expected that the emigrant parents would remit adequately to their children in the country, thereby strengthening their economic capital. This economic capital would be for different expenditures such as school fees, clothes, rentals, food and cash resources which are necessary for the upkeep of the learners. What was not apparent, however, was whether these parents were remitting sufficiently, and if so, the impact of such economic capital on the educational development, success and the overall schooling experiences of the learners back in Zimbabwe.

2.3.4 Forms of capital, left-behind learners and role of teachers

The foregoing sections have discussed the importance of the different forms of capital of educational development and success. It has been pointed out that the lack of economic, cultural and social capital may result in left-behind learners having little stimuli to succeed and thus lead to negative schooling experiences. In the absence of parents, it is the duty of the teachers to minimise damage through inclusive educational approaches. However, there was no information regarding whether the teachers were adequately trained and capacitated to meet the needs of the affected learners through curricular differentiation, content modification, and through activities and assessments that respond more effectively to the diverse and learning needs of the learners.

This study argues that teachers are critical to ameliorating the challenges facing left-behind learners as they are able to supply more of the necessary social and cultural capitals that are critical for inclusive education. Teachers, as transmitters of social and cultural capital, can act as agents of change in creating inclusive learning environments. This is only possible, however, when teachers are well capacitated and are able to reflect and evaluate as they interact with learners on a daily basis. Through an inclusive culture within the education settings, teachers can contribute to the eradication of discriminatory attitudes and behaviours, further strengthening social cohesion and peace (UNESCO, 2014).Empowered teachers can also dramatically improve how vulnerable learners experience education by creating child-friendly environments, increasing attention in classrooms practices with regard to pedagogy and curriculum adaptation and using their skills to accommodate learners with different needs (Modipane & Themane, 2014). This can, however, only be done when the specific needs of vulnerable learners are well researched and teachers are equipped to deal with the needs of these children as part of inclusive education.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the vulnerability of learners left behind by emigrating parents in Harare, Zimbabwe. It deliberated on how these learners are vulnerable and how this vulnerability likely leads to negative educational outcomes. The chapter also discussed Bourdieu's forms of capital and how these can be used as the theoretical lens through which the vulnerability of left-behind learners was studied. Emphasis was placed on

educational inclusion and the culpability of the broader environment in the negative experiences that vulnerable learners faced. The next chapter reviews literature related to the study, more specifically on the right to education, teacher education, and inclusive education practices.

CHAPTER THREE: TRENDS IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND TEACHER EDUCATION FOR INCLUSIVITY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a literature review which discusses, among other things education as a universal right, the impact of parental emigration on left-behind children, inclusive education, and inclusive teacher education and practices. The review is structured in such a way that trends for these various topics are reviewed from the global to the local level in order to make the comprehension of the issues better.

3.2 The right to education

Education is a universal right for children everywhere in the world. The educational rights of children are enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) (UNICEF, 2008). Besides this UN convention, a host of other global educational conferences (e.g. Salamanca, 1994; The 2000 World Education Forum Framework for Action, Dakar, the Millennium Development Goals, Geneva, 2008, the United Nations Conference of September 2015) have all made impassioned appeals on inclusive education for all children regardless of physical, economic, social, cultural, political and religious differences in learners. Such education is expected to be inclusive and accommodative of the individual needs of all children.

Globally, a number of countries have legislated for the right to education, including inclusive education. In Spain, for example, the General Regulation Law for the Education System of 1990 gave learners with special educational needs the right to receive an education that responds to their personal needs. In Namibia, the state also took a stance to provide equal educational opportunities and access to all learners through the integration of learners with special needs and those with disability (Zimba, Mowes & Naanda, 2007). However, the legislative framework for implementation in Namibia is still hazy and needs to be conceptualized and contextualized more for it to be effective and yield the desired benefits. In South Africa, educational inclusion is embodied in the country's White Paper 6 on education. The Department of Education uses this paper to try and address historical imbalances and inequalities in education

by acknowledging that learning disabilities arise from the environment rather than from the individual learner (South African Department of Education, 2001).

Zimbabwe, though a signatory to a number of international conventions on education for all, does not have a specific inclusive education policy (Mpofu, 2007; Chireshe, 2013). Inclusive education is generally managed, supported and promoted through a host of policies such as the Zimbabwe Disabled Person Act which advocates for non-discrimination of people with disability. The 1987 Education Act (revised in 1996) also makes provision for inclusive education through its "education for all" stance (Zimbabwe, Government of Zimbabwe, 1987). The Act places on every local authority the responsibility of providing education to all children. In addition, the 1999 report with its recommendations from the Nziramasanga Commission is also used to manage inclusive education in Zimbabwe. The Departments of Education and Higher Education thus uses these Acts (and related policies) to guide the training of teachers and prepare them for the implementation of inclusive educationin schools. It is however doubtful whether, in the absence of a clear and dedicated policy, inclusive education in the country can be implemented successfully.

Despite the embeddedness of education rights in acts, policies, conventions and national constitutions of many countries, serious violations of these rights occur world-wide and are often unrecognized or underreported (Bakker, Elings-Pels &Reis, 2009). While some violations may be blatantly intentional, other rights are violated in very subtle manners and in some cases with violations regarding children of migrating parents. It is generally the case world-wide that some migrating parents leave their children behind when they decide to move. This is particularly because most parents are uncertain about the conditions awaiting them in the diaspora. As such they do not want to expose their children to the unknown, preferring to leave them in their home countries, even if temporarily. Such left-behind learners risk losing the right to proper education as they are left in the care of people who are unlikely to fully support them in their quest for education. The lack of support is usually because guardians such as grandparents, relatives, maids, non-relatives usually have very little or no knowledge or experience on how to supervise and help these learners. In some cases, the guardians have no will or zeal to fulfil their expected roles.

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3.3 The conceptualization of inclusive education

The concept of inclusion, particularly that referring to the domain of education, is a fluid one. There is a growing realisation in the field that inclusion means different things in different contexts (Dyson, 2001; Florian, 1998; Forlin, 2004a; Green, 2001; Swart, et al., 2002; Mitchell, 2006; Swart & Pettipher, 2005). According to Dyson (1999:37) the multiple definitions of inclusion can be attributed to the "different discourses through which different theoretical notions of inclusion are constructed." Dyson further argues that the discourse of educational politics is concerned with the extent to which a particular school realizes and protects the rights of its students and monitors power distribution accordingly (Dyson, 1999). Such a discourse is concerned with the eradication of injustice in schools. From Dyson's explanation of political discourse, one can easily appreciate the proliferation of definitions of inclusivity that focus primarily on equity and social justice in education.

In the same vein, Engelbrecht and Green (2007) sees inclusive education as a proposed strategy for achieving a democratic and a just society. Swart & Pettipher (2001) regard inclusion as the development of an inclusive society where all members participate optimally and contribute in a democracy. This discourse of efficacy is therefore about the cost-effectiveness of educational services in order to achieve equity. In India, because of limited resources, special education is unaffordable and hence inclusion is the only option (Mani, 2001). Pragmatics discourse on the other hand, is more interested in the effectiveness of the school. In other words, it is concerned with what an inclusive school should look like in practice. Hence this provides an illustration of an approach whose focus is on the inclusive practices and cultures within a school community.

As the foregoing discussion clearly illustrates, the concept of inclusive education is not monolithic. This concept has different meaning in different contexts to different people. Inclusion itself is not a problem, but it is instead the consequence of the way an individual or group might apply meaning to the word (Hansen, 2012). As Slee (2001b) observes, it is the meaning produced by language which is inclusion's chief adversary. Inclusion is generally seen as "a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures, and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education. As such,

it involves a range of changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies, with a common vision which covers all children of the appropriate age range and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the regular system to educate all children" (UNESCO, 2005a:13). It is a process that involves the transformation of schools and other centres of learning so as to cater for all children regardless of gender, ethnicity, diseases, disability and learning difficulties, thus eliminating all forms of discrimination (UNESCO, 2008).

Inclusion involves a particular emphasis on the educational rights of those groups of learners who may be vulnerable, marginalised or at risk of exclusion or underachievement. Inclusive education is truly rights-based and requires all aspects of the education system to be reviewed and redesigned, thus removing the barriers for participation in learning for all learners is at the core of this concept. It can be understood as an on-going process in an ever-evolving education system, focusing on those currently excluded from accessing education, as well as those who are in school but not learning (UNESCO, 2008). Furthermore, inclusive education takes into account a greater diversity of learners those from different socio-economic backgrounds, those from different linguistic backgrounds, those who experience exclusionary pressure, and those who are socially disadvantaged and those suffering from diseases as well as those who are oppressed (Zindi, 2014).

The different ways in which inclusion is understood in education has often resulted in some authors describing inclusion in a way that contrasts it with special education. Lipsky & Gartner (1999) however, contend that inclusive education is not a special education reform, but heralds the convergence of the need to restructure the public education system to meet the needs of a changing society and the adaptation of the separate special education system, which has been shown to be unsuccessful for the greater number of students who are served by it. Barton (1999) argues that inclusive education is not integration. "It is not concerned with the assimilation or accommodation of discriminated groups or individuals within existing socio-economic conditions and relations, nor is it about making people as 'normal' as possible" (Barton, 1999:58). Ultimately therefore, inclusive education is about transformation of a society and its institutional arrangements such as education. As Ainscow (2005) points out, inclusive education is concerned with overcoming barriers to participation that may be

experienced by any pupil. Such a process depends on the continuous pedagogical organizational development within the mainstream education system. Florian (2005:31) cited in Winter & O'Raw (2010) provides a useful summary of a range of definitions of inclusive education and their various sources as shown in table below:

Table 1: Definitions of inclusive education

Definition	Source
Being with one another, how we deal with adversity, how we deal with differences	Forest &Pearpoint, 1992
A set of principles which ensures that the student with a disability is viewed as a valued and needed member of the school community in every respect	Uditsky, 1993
A move towards extending the scope of 'ordinary' schools so they can include a greater diversity of children	Clarke et al., 1995
Schools that deliver a curriculum to students through organisational arrangements that are different from those used in schools that exclude some students from their regular classrooms	Ballard, 1995
Schools that are diverse problem-solving organisations with a common mission that emphasises learning for all students	Rouse and Florina, 1996
Full membership of an age-appropriate class in your local school doing the same lessons as the other pupils and it mattering if you are not there, plus you have friends who spend time with you outside of school	Hall , 1996
The process by which a school attempts to respond to all pupils as individuals by reconsidering its curricula organisation and provision	Seba, 1996
Schools that are accepting of all children	Thomas, 1997

Source: Florian (2005:31)

Although there are variations in how people describe inclusive education, there are common elements that feature regularly in these different conceptualisations of inclusive education. These elements include a commitment to building a more just society, a commitment to building a more equitable education system and responsiveness of education systems towards diversity (Green, 2001; UNESCO, 2008). In addition, UNESCO (2005a) outlines four principles that are common to all definitions of inclusion. These principles include the fact that inclusion has to be seen as a never-ending search to find better ways of responding to diversity; that inclusion

has to be concerned with the identification and removal of barriers; that inclusion should be about presence, participation and achievement of all students, and lastly, that inclusion should involve a particular emphasis on those groups of learners who may be at risk of marginalisation, exclusion or underachievement.

Taking cognisance of the foregoing discussions, this study defines inclusive education more broadly as a process by which all learners participate fully regardless of their differences and where different vulnerabilities are taken into consideration in order to increase access to and participation by learners in the general schooling system. Such an understanding of inclusion bodes well with UNESCO (2008)'s pronunciation that views inclusive education as an on-going process aimed at offering quality education for all while respecting diversity and the different needs and abilities, characteristics and learning expectations of the students and communities, eliminating all forms of discrimination.

While there is a general recognition and understanding of the concept of inclusive education globally, attention has not been sufficiently paid to all the groups of children that are vulnerable. One such grouping that has been ignored (sometimes unintentionally so) is that of the learners left in the home country when parents emigrate. These learners have remained relatively invisible in the efforts to achieve inclusive education as some countries do not even acknowledge that their vulnerability actually exists. Without targeted measures to help them overcome the barriers and achieve inclusivity, the goals of Education For All will not be met. The following sections therefore focus on the historical background of inclusive education and its current international status, impacts of parental emigration on children left by emigrating parents and teacher education for inclusion of this vulnerable group.

3.4 The current international status of inclusive education with historical background

This section therefore reviews the current international status of inclusive education, focussing on its historical background and development.

3.4.1 Development of inclusive education

Inclusive education has evolved as a movement now with a contemporary and broader view, that seeks to challenge exclusionary policies and practices in order to promote presence, participation and achievement for all learners and that all learners matter and matter equally (UNESCO, 2008; UNESCO, 2017). It is part of a wider struggle against the violation of human rights and unfair discrimination that seeks to ensure that social justice in education prevails. Inclusion has its origin in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 (UNESCO, 2005a). According to the declaration:

> Everyone has the right to education…. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary Education shall be compulsory. Education shall be directed to the full development of human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace. (Article 26-Universal Declaration of Human Rights)

In addition to the declaration, educational inclusion has been advocated for and cited in a number of subsequent key UN Declarations and Conventions (UNESCO, 2005a). These include: the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which ensures the right of the child to education, with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity; the 1990 World Declaration on Education for All (Jomtien Declaration), which set the goal of Education for All; the 1993 UN Standard Rule on Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, which not only affirms the equal rights of all children, youth and adults with disabilities to education, but also advocates that such education should be provided in integrated school settings. Other important declarations on inclusive education are to be found in the 1994 Salamanca Statement and Framework of Action on Special Needs Education, which requires schools to accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions, the 2000 World Education Forum Framework for Action, Dakar, EFA and Millennium Development Goals, which stipulates that all children should have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education by 2015 and the 2001 EFA Flagship on the Right to Education for Persons with Disabilities. Even the 2015 sustainable development goals recognise the

importance of inclusive education as the fourth goal articulates the need to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education that promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

3.4.2 The UNESCO Salamanca statement and subsequent policies

The Salamanca Conference (UNESCO, 1994) held in the city of Salamanca, Spain was a watershed in the development of inclusive education throughout the world. At this conference, a declaration, which came to be known as the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) serves as a blueprint for defining inclusive education, proclaiming principles in respect of the education for all ideals enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN, 1948) and the United Nations Standard Rules on Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities of 1993. These principles emphasized that every child is unique in terms of characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs, and therefore with a fundamental right to education, must be given the opportunity and to achieve and maintain an acceptable level of learning. Thus, "educational systems should be designed, and educational programmes implemented to take into account the wide diversity of these characteristics and needs" (UNESCO, 1994:viii).

3.4.2.1 Education for all

The *Salamanca Statement* recognised the necessity and urgency of providing education for all children, within the regular education system; in a way proposing that even the needs of left-behind learners need to be catered for as part of inclusive education. According to Article 2 (UNESCO, 1999:5) "regular schools with an inclusive orientation provide for the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities and achieving education for all; moreover, they provide an effective education to the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system".

3.4.2.2 Call to governments

The *Salamanca Conference,* as an obligations of all governments in an attempt to further the purpose of inclusive education, hoped the governments to give the highest policy and budgetary priority to improve education services so that all children could

be included, regardless of differences or difficulties and "to adopt as a matter of law or policy the principle of inclusive education, enrolling all children in ordinary schools unless there were compelling reasons for doing otherwise" (UNESCO, 1994: IX). The mandate for governments was also to "develop demonstration projects and encourage exchanges with countries that have inclusive schools, ensure that organisations of disabled people, along with parents and community bodies, are involved in planning and decision-making and put greater effort into pre-school strategies as well as vocational aspects of inclusive education" (UNESCO, 1994: IX). In relation to this research, of paramount importance was the fact that governments were mandated to ensure that both initial and in-service teacher training addresses the provision of inclusive education (UNESCO, 1994). The emphasis was that educational planning by governments should concentrate on education for all persons, in all regions of a country and in all economic conditions, through both public and private schools (UNESCO, 1994). The absence of any concerted effort to cater for the needs of the children who remain when parents emigrate can therefore be seen as a violation and a disregard to the Salamanca call.

3.4.2.3 Inclusive schooling

The *Salamanca Statement* also called on the international community, particularly on UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP and the World Bank, to endorse the approach of inclusive schooling. The challenge was to ensure that education for all effectively meant what it said, particularly for those that are vulnerable and in need. Non-governmental organisations were requested to strengthen their collaboration with official national bodies and become more involved in all aspects of inclusive education. As the United Nations agency for education, UNESCO among other things was asked to enhance teacher education in this field by getting support from teacher unions and associations and stimulate the academic community to do more research into inclusive education and disseminate the findings and the reports. UNESCO was also asked to use its funds over the five-year period, 1996-2001, to create an expanded programme for inclusive schools and community support projects, thus enabling the launch of pilot projects (Article 4, UNESCO, 2009).

Chireshe (2013) argued that changes in curriculum, buildings, school organization, pedagogy, assessment, staffing, school ethos and extra-curricular activities are necessary to contribute to the success of inclusive schools. In addition, appropriate preparation of all educational personnel enhances the attainment of inclusive education. As pointed out in the Salamanca statement, pre-service training programmes is also critical in the attainment of inclusive education as it provides teachers with a positive orientation towards the diversity of students. This helps to develop an understanding of what can be achieved in schools with locally available support services. The knowledge and skills required include assessing special needs, adapting curriculum content, utilizing assistive technology, and individualizing teaching procedures to suit a larger range of abilities. In teacher-training practice schools, specific attention should thus be given to preparing all teachers to exercise their autonomy and apply their skills in adapting curricula and instruction to meet pupils needs (UNESCO, 1994). Hence, to be an inclusive school means accommodating the needs of all students and welcoming diversity as a way to enrich learning for everyone.

3.4.2.4 International conference on education and its report

Inclusive Education: the way of the future was the theme of the 48th session of the International Conference on Education (ICE) held in Geneva in November 2008. The conference gathered global stakeholders for a dialogue on inclusive education with respect to the policy, implementation and challenges in various contexts and all levels and forms of education. The key challenges identified were to build more inclusive, just and equitable societies by developing quality education systems that are more inclusive and responsive to the tremendous diversity of people's learning needs throughout life. The International Conference on Education (UNESCO, 2008) agreed amongst others that inclusive education must be based on the principle of education as a human right, implying that the sky should be the limit for all individuals with regards to their educational potentials and achievements.

Though inclusive education should in part be a quantifiable objective, it must be achieved through a transformative on-going process that changes the fundamental approach starting at the school, by embracing diversity as a positive stimulus that encourages learning (UNESCO, 2008). It was also agreed that if inclusive education

is to succeed, governments' commitment of resources must prioritise areas like provision of infrastructure, development and improvement of teacher competencies, training and working conditions and implementing of suitable pedagogies. Emphasis was for teacher education programmes to be organised along inclusive lines, with lecturers themselves having to understand inclusive practices, developing a great knowledge of mainstream education and in particular the sorts of practices that are appropriate in inclusive classes (UNESCO, 2008). In order to foster inclusion, all stakeholders, be they social actors, state, private sector or civil society should collaborate in both formal and informal education opportunities with the aim of embracing diversity.

3.4.2.5 The 2015 UN Sustainable Development Summit on education

The September 2015 UN summit was convened in New York at the 70th session of the UN general assembly for the historic adoption of new Sustainable Development goals (UNESCO, 2015). The gathering committed to providing inclusive and equitable quality education at all levels – early childhood, primary, secondary, tertiary, technical and vocational training regardless of sex, age, race, ethnicity. Persons with disabilities, migrants, indigenous peoples, children and youth were underlined as vulnerable and therefore deserving increased access to life-long learning opportunities which could help them acquire the knowledge and skills needed to exploit opportunities and to participate fully in society. In addition to the aforementioned commitment, the fourth sustainable development goal was crafted to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all (UNESCO, 2015). Thus, the event marked the inclusion of education as a transformative stand-alone goal in the new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Underlying this agenda was the agreement that by 2030, all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes. By 2030 emphasis was also put on eliminating gender disparities in education, ensuring equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations (UNESCO, 2015).

In addition, it was also agreed that all learners by 2030 should acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, for example through education

for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development. The building and upgrading of educational facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and the provision of safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all are also part of Agenda 2030 on sustainable development goals.

3.5   Impacts on children left behind by emigrating parents

International migration is a global phenomenon where people move for economic, political and social or many other reasons. Over the past fifteen years, Zimbabwe has become a major migrant sending country. The majority of its citizens have moved to regional countries such as South Africa, Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia and Swaziland as well as to international destinations like the United Kingdom, United States, New Zealand and Australia. Such movements have disrupted family units, splitting members between different countries and even continents. The movement of Zimbabweans out of their country *enmasse* has stimulated research on migration and its impacts. Some of the research has covered aspects related to the integration of migrant children in their new destinations and few have however concentrated on the schooling experiences of left-behind learners. This study aims to assess the challenges confronting left-behind learners, seeking to understand the nature of the challenges and comprehending how well equipped teachers are in dealing with these challenges as part of inclusive education. It is therefore prudent to review literature on the effects of parental emigration on these children at different geographic scales: globally, regionally and at the national scale.

3.5.1 Positive impacts of parental emigration

The migration of parents does not always have a negative impact on the children who remain in the home country when parents emigrate. As Beine, Donquire & Rapaport (2008) and Batista &Pedro (2007) argued, parental migration may result in extensive 'brain gain', this phenomena occurring when the very prospects of migration encourages those in the home country to obtain more educational skills in preparation for their own migration. This happens regardless of the fact that many of those

acquiring education may never ultimately migrate. The children of migrants may endeavour to do well in school in anticipation of their own migration to destinations where a good education is generally a requirement for a better life. Supporting this observation, Batista &Pedro (2007) found evidence that higher migration prospects at the individual level increased the probability of completing intermediate secondary school in Cape Verde. Thus the initial migration by parents may serve as stimuli for prospective migrants (i.e. children who remain when parents emigrate) to acquire more education. In addition, migration has also been postulated to be beneficial in cases where the migration of parents leads to increased educational expenditure for the children left-behind by emigrating parents as well as raising the probability of starting capital intensive enterprise (Yang, 2008; Bakker, Elings-Pels &Reis, 2009; Amuedo-Dorantes & Pozo, 2010). In a study done in Zimbabwe, Fillipa (2011) found out that "remittances from external earnings augment the family's spending power, resulting in increased educational outlays and a decreased need for child labour, as well as improved living conditions, thus benefiting the children left behind. As migrants increase their own levels of economic stability they may also increase their families' ability and aspire to invest more in certain aspects of their children's education. There are however instances where the departure of the parent translates into decreased income as that wage earner leaves, hence disrupting education through decreased household income (Rose, et.al., 2006; Zhao, 2017).

3.5.2 Negative impacts of parental emigration

Despite the positive picture that has been painted in the above section, it is agreed that there is generally a negative relationship between migration and education, specifically the education of children left-behind by migrating parents. Hung (2013), for example, found a negative relationship between parental migration and high school enrolment in rural China. In the same vein, a study in the Caribbean showed that left-behind learners constitute a vulnerable group in society regarding their educational pursuits (Bakker, Elings-Pels & Reis, 2009). The children left behind by migrant parents are often deprived of their fundamental right to grow up within a nurturing family environment. There is some evidence that the family environment created after the emigration of parents often offers insufficient protection and makes these children more susceptible to abuse and exploitation (Fillipa, Cronje & Ferns, 2013). Elder (2007)

as quoted by Fillipa (2011) stated that when parents leave their children behind, it increases these children's vulnerability.

In Zimbabwe, it has been shown that outmigration has resulted in family separation and a decline in traditional family support structures. As Cronje& Ferns (2013) observes, the destruction of the traditional structure of families, has left adolescence without mentor roles and support structures which are a requisite for a functional family unit. An absent parent generally causes emotional damage and migration may thus result in a child being unsupervised, unprotected and potentially poorly behaved (de la Gorza, 2010). As Spera (2005) and Mazzucato et al., (2014) argue, parental involvement and monitoring are robust predictors of children's academic achievement. In the absence of such monitoring from parents, it is predicted that children will perform poorly in school and will probably experience emotional and behavioural problems. Some children may live with grandparents who are unable to sufficiently guide them in terms of schooling. In rural Northern China, for example, most grandparents, in whose custody most children were left in, were unable to substitute the role of parents when it came to schooling, often leading to a decline in school enrolment as well as years of schooling for some of these children (Lee, 2011).

Academically, the increased responsibility that left-behind learners assume at home, and the lack of parental motivation and support may greatly impact on their educational functioning. Bakker, Elings-Pels &Reis (2009) concluded in their study that children who are left behind faced the risk of abuse and often suffer from psychological problems and decreased educational accomplishment due to the absence of their parents. Feelings of abandonment, anxiety, loneliness, sadness, despondence, despair, anger, lack of trust and low self-esteem also creates inability to concentrate at school and hence compromise academic achievement. That same study also showed that adolescence are sometimes forced to assume surrogate parental roles like taking care of siblings, managing large sums of money that their parents send and even fending for the family, which burden weighs heavily on them to the detriment of their physical and psychological well-being (Fillipa, Cronje & Ferns, 2013; Rupande, 2014). Research indicates that left-behind learners experience an important transition in their lives which impacts on their social and moral well-being as well as on their

academic achievement. Such transition includes children adopting parental roles for their siblings and being (Lahaie et al., 2009; Dreby, 2011).

Hanson & Woodruff (2003), studying in Mexico, found out that some left-behind learners are being engaged in decision making that is far above what their ages will be expected to understand. According to Rose, et.al., (2006) these children may in addition to adopting adult responsibilities experience segregation, prejudice and marginalisation in the absence of their parents. This assumption of adult roles makes it more difficult for some left-behind learners to achieve their educational goals, ultimately affecting their performance at school. Even in cases where parental migration is accompanied by increased remittance flows to the country of origin, the overall disruptive nature of the out migration is such that the supposed benefits are easily outweighed (de la Gorza, 2010; Hung, 2013).   A study carried out in Haiti observed that even if left-behind learners receive remittances from their parents, the overall disruptive effect of outmigration imposes an economic burden on the remaining household members that is more likely to reduce the likelihood of the children being schooled (Bakker, Elings-Pels & Reis, 2009; de la Gorza, 2010).

 In addition, some of the children are always 'waiting to migrate or waiting for papers', a situation which makes them less able to concentrate on their schoolwork as they anticipate to join their parents 'soon' (Bakker, Elings-Pels & Reis, 2009; Rupande, 2014). The waiting period can, however, be long or indefinite thereby negatively affecting the performance of the concerned learners. Such children generally do not perform well due to lack of attendance, reduced concentration and lack of motivation to excel in a school environment that they consider temporary. When such disruptions occur during a child's adolescence period (when the child encounters physical, emotional and social changes) the effects can be quite devastating (Cronje & Ferns, 2013).

In the absence of parental support, it is expected that teachers, who generally spend more time with the children at school, would step in to fulfil those roles by providing students with an inclusive education that takes cognizant of the disadvantaged position that these children are in. In the case of Zimbabwe, it is not certain whether teachers realize the magnitude of the problem posed by the children left behind by emigrating

parents. Even if they are aware, there is no evidence to indicate whether these teachers are sufficiently equipped with skills to deal with the situation in order to ensure that all learners achieve their potential to the fullest in an environment that embraces inclusivity.

3.6 Teacher education for inclusive education

Underlying the process of inclusion is the assumption that the general classroom teacher has certain knowledge and understanding about the needs of different learners, teaching techniques and curriculum strategies (European Agency for Development and Special Needs Education, 2010). Teachers play a pivotal role in relation to providing inclusive education to learners experiencing barriers to learning and development children left behind in the home country by emigrating parents included. Unlike in the yester years, teachers have unprecedented responsibility towards all learners, and these learners have diverse and unique needs thus within the contemporary inclusive classrooms, teachers face increased pressure as their roles diversify, compared to previous generations. These teachers need meaningful and effective training, development and support for them to acquire the knowledge and skills that would enable them to provide effective support to learners in an inclusive way.

Should teachers lack the necessary knowledge and skills, they will find it difficult to address the complex nature of learning barriers experienced. This would be the case with the Zimbabwean situation where vulnerable students exist in the form of the children who remain in the home country when parents emigrate. As noted by Savolainen (2009), teachers play an essential role in quality education emphasis being that the quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers. Bailleul et al., (2008) highlighted that the quality of the teacher contributes more to learner achievement than any other factor, including class size, class composition, or background. UNESCO (2014) argued that creating inclusive learning environments with particular attention to building the capacity of teachers is the most intervention strategy to promoting inclusive education. Strong teachers are a central component of aa quality education that allows all children to learn effectively and it is crucial that they are adequately trained in inclusive methodologies and equipped with the necessary

skills. Hence the success of Education for all (EFA), depends to a larger extend on the quality of teacher education (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (O.E.C.D, 1997). The need for 'high quality' teachers equipped to meet the needs of all learners becomes evident to provide not only equal opportunities for all, but also education for an inclusive society. Reynolds (2001) says that it is the knowledge, beliefs and values of the teacher that are brought to bear in creating an effective learning environment for pupils, making the teacher acritical influence in education for inclusion and the development of the inclusive school.

In effect the demands of inclusive education require individual countries and states to restructure and align teacher training, preparation and development programmes in order for pre-service teachers to acquire the relevant and necessary knowledge and skills that will enable them to effectively meet the needs of all learners within the education system, which includes vulnerable children left in the home country by emigrating parents (Van Laarhoven et al., 2007). Preparing teachers at the pre-service level to teach in inclusive settings is essential for teachers to acquire and develop appropriate attitudes, skills and competencies for effective implementation of inclusive education in inclusive, collaborative and diverse settings (Mbengwa, 2010). To further this argument, Kaplan & Lewis (2013:9) suggested that, "inclusive education needs to be recognized as an essential learning objective for all student teachers, regardless of which level they will teach at, which subject(s) they will teach, or where in the country they are likely to be deployed."

Pre-service teacher education curricula therefore need to be revised or developed so that all student teachers are aware of, and are supported towards inclusive education learning goals. Thus teacher training and education are important towards the success of inclusion programmes. Without a clear and consistently revised plan for teacher training regarding the educational needs of learners experiencing barriers, attempts to meet the educational needs of left-behind learners among other vulnerable children will not be met. The task of initial teacher education is therefore "to prepare people to enter a profession which accepts individual and collective responsibility for improving the learning and participation of all children" (Florian & Rouse, 2009: 596).

Cardona (2009) noted that concentration on initial teacher education would seem to provide the best means to create a new generation of teachers who will ensure the successful implementation of inclusive policies and practices. More specifically regarding teacher education, Ballard (2003:59) says that inclusive education is concerned with issues of social justice, which means that graduates entering the teaching profession should "understand how they might create classrooms and schools that address issues of respect, fairness and equity. As part of this endeavour, they will need to understand the historical, socio-cultural and ideological contexts that create discriminatory and oppressive practices in education." The isolation and rejection of disabled students and children left in the home country by emigrating parents is therefore one area of injustice in an arena where gender discrimination, poverty and racism are rife.

Despite the increased debates on improving teacher training, development and support for realising inclusive education there are still gaps that need to be filled to that effect. For instance, it has been argued that teacher education has not kept pace with the new demands and vulnerabilities; few teachers feel adequately prepared to effectively support learners of widely diverse abilities (Covell, 2001). Pearson & Chambers (2005:116) support this view by stating that "the current technicist, recipe-like approach to teacher training is viewed as ill-suited to training in relation to inclusion, since it does not recognise the complexities and uncertainties involved". Moreover, a research by Golder, Norwich & Bayliss (2005) showed that training institutions give teacher trainees information on inclusion but do not prepare them to address barriers to inclusive development when they get to the field. Thus, due to inadequate training, some learners remain unidentified and this leads to insufficient data on the type and categories of learning barriers (Mbengwa, 2006). Such lack of information hinders successful provision of inclusive education and type of services will not be known by bodies responsible for planning purposes. It is crucial therefore that teacher education fully prepare pre-service teachers on what lies ahead in the field, and to face the challenges of the present school climate as part of inclusive education.

3.6.1 Teachers' attitudes, beliefs and values on inclusion

Williams & Finnegan (2003:40) argue that "people's perceptions determine their actions". A person's perceptions and attitudes are often related directly to learning experiences provided by the environment and the generalised belief systems of the society (Swart et al., 2002). Thus perceptions have a direct influence on the way in which one responds to the world. Forlin & Chambers (2010:74) define an attitude as "a learned, evaluative response about *object* or an issue and ... a cumulative result of personal beliefs". It is those beliefs, adds Forlin (2010), which influence teacher attitudes to inclusive education that in turn, influence their intentions and behaviours. Attitudes are formed by experience as well as by implicit learning and may reflect an individual's personality, shape their behaviour and serve a certain purpose for those who hold them (Zimbardo & Lieppe, 1991). Johnson & Howell (2009) suggest that attitudes may be seen to have three related components: cognitive (i.e., the idea or assumptions upon which the attitude is based), affective (i.e., feelings about the issue), and behavioural (i.e., a predisposition toward an action that corresponds with the assumption or belief). This need for positive teacher attitudes and for teachers to create a 'sense of belonging' to support effective inclusive practice has been noted by Westbrook & Croft (2015). Hence teachers' attitudes and beliefs directly affect their behaviour with students and so have a great impact on student's schooling experiences.

Mbengwa (2010: 410) maintains that "if teachers hold a positive attitude towards inclusive education it may allow and encourage practices that will guarantee, to a large extent, successful inclusion of all learners and can influence learners to also have positive attitudes". As highlighted by Ainscow (2005), any teaching is likely to be ineffective where teachers subscribe to a belief system that regards some students as being 'in need of fixing' or worse, as 'deficient and therefore beyond fixing. Teacher education must therefore be concerned with the promotion of positive teacher attitudes as well as instructional competences. The curriculum followed in teacher education – especially during pre-service programmes – shapes teachers' attitudes, knowledge and competencies, and influences their subsequent work with their own students (Kaplan & Lewis, 2013). Lancaster & Bain (2007); Forlin et al., (2009); Sharma, Forlin & Loreman (2007), agree that in general, there is a positive change in attitudes after undertaking an inclusive / special education unit of study and this is the case across a

number of contexts and countries. Pearson (2009) and Kaplan & Lewis (2013) believe that teacher education is a context in which changes in attitudes, beliefs and values do occur and pre-service teachers are helped to reflect on and change attitudes where necessary, and then move on to building practical skills and confidence.

The complexity of inclusive education should be taken care of by the inclusion of work on attitudes and beliefs in teacher education rather than relying solely on a technicist, competency-oriented approach which is better suited to the transmission of bureaucratic and procedural knowledge (Pearson & Chamber, 2005).Thus if the negative attitudes of teachers are not addressed during initial teacher education, they may continue to hamper the progress of inclusive education efforts in schools (Forlin et al., 2009). If pre-service teachers, for example, are going to develop positive attitudes towards inclusive education, they need opportunities for direct interaction with vulnerable people like the disabled, instruction on policy and legislation relating to inclusive education, and opportunities to gain confidence in practical teaching situations with a diversity of students (Westbrook & Croft, 2015). Forlin& Chambers (2010) suggested continuous change of attitudes by teacher through phronesis involving context specific judgement in interpersonal circumstances and teachers seeing beyond social norms and social practices.

3.6.2 Inclusive education and teacher education in some selected countries

 Inclusive education and teacher training have received varying degrees of commitment in different countries. Singh, (2016) observes that the starting points for inclusive education and teacher education in different countries appear to be very different. Some countries (United Kingdom, Italy, New Zealand, Botswana, Namibia, Lesotho, Nigeria and South Africa) have displayed commitment embodied in policies and legislation to implement inclusive education (Swart, 2004), while in other countries such as Zimbabwe, though a signatory to a number of international conventions on education for all, there is no specific legislation or clear cut policy on inclusive education (Chireshe, 2013). However, teacher training seems to be one of the core strategies that would enable effective implementation of inclusive education. Westbrook & Croft (2015) argue that unless teachers are fully prepared, inclusive education will not be realised. The following sections review literature that gives a

picture of the current teacher education programmes for inclusive education in different countries.

3.6.2.1 Inclusive education and teacher education in Britain

United Kingdom (UK) has been engaged in inclusive teacher training for many years. Student teachers in the country qualify through three routes: a 3 or 4-year education degree, a 3-year degree followed by a one-year teacher qualification or training on the job in schools in collaboration with an institution of higher education or local education authority (Booth, Nes & Stromstad, 2003). An inclusion statement within the UK National Curriculum requires all teachers to plan their teaching with due regard to three principles: setting suitable learning challenges, responding to pupils diverse needs and overcoming potential barriers to teaching and learning (Ballard, 2003). However, the Warnock Report seem to have given UK the way forward towards the initial special or inclusive teacher training as it has long recommended that all courses of initial teacher training should contain an element of special educational needs. The Warnock Committee advised that those validating courses should ensure that special needs elements become a condition for approving the courses (Golder, Norwich & Bayliss, 2005). To further strengthen the Warnock Report's recommendation, a Teacher Training Agency (TTA) was established and tasked with the responsibility for all Initial Teacher Education (ITE) (Barton, 2003). The TTA drew standards for trainee teachers to meet in order to qualify as teachers, and these included standards specific to learners with exceptional needs; it was focussed on all learners, but are particularly relevant to learners experiencing barriers to learning and development (Golder, Norwich & Bayliss, 2005; Booth, Nes & Stromstad, 2003).

In its commitment to inclusive teacher training in the UK, the Department of Education and Skills set out the government's vision for the education of learners experiencing barriers to learning and development and highlighted the importance of all teachers possessing skills and confidence to support learners experiencing barriers to learning and development to realise their potential (Golder, Norwich & Bayliss, 2005). With regards to ITE, it was stipulated that the Department of Education and Skills together with TTA will collaborate to ensure that initial teacher training (ITT) provides a good foundation in core skills and knowledge of barriers to learning and development and

work with higher institutions to assess the scope for developing specialist qualifications (DfES in Golder, Norwich & Bayliss, 2005). ITT is required to equip teachers with knowledge, skills and competences to understand how the learning is affected by the physical, intellectual, emotional and social development of learners and to identify learners who have learning barriers including those who have specific learning difficulties, are very able, or do not have fluent English. ITT was also expected to: implement and keep records of IEPs for learners, know where to get help in order to give positive and targeted support and demonstrate that they are committed to ensuring that every pupil is given the opportunity to achieve their potential and meet the high expectations set for them.

However, there are still concerns with regard to ITT in the UK. It has been reported that "the training is not aligned to inclusive education in terms of quantity, quality and nature" (Pearson & Chambers, 2005:116). For this particular challenge, Ainscow, Farrell & Twaddle (2000) recommend that what is required is a process of social learning within given contexts during training. Other problems encountered in the preparation of teachers included: "lack of time, poor linkage between college or university teaching and school-based practice, permeation approaches to SEN issues that learners have failed to find helpful, option-based approaches to SEN issues that are not mandatory for all learners, or do not link well to subject teaching and the lack of practical advice (and sometimes none) on how to meet the needs of some learners, including those with behavioural difficulties" (Robertson, 1999:170). Booth, Nes & Stromstad (2003) advocated for the production of an 'Index for Inclusion of Teacher Education', which would recognise the importance of a human rights perspective to education and emphasising the political nature of education, would be advocating that inclusion is concerned with challenging and reducing inequalities and exclusionary values and practices and that it is very serious about enhancing the learning and participation of all students. Barton (2003) therefore argued that inclusivity in education should be concerned with the pursuit of equity, social justice and non-discrimination and thus the identification and removal of ignorance, fear, prejudice and all the associated assumptions.

3.6.2.2 Inclusive education and teacher education in Ireland

The Irish Education Act of 1998 established the right to an appropriate education for all. The aim of the Act was to promote equality of access to and participation in education so that all students would benefit from education (Travers, et al., 2010). The Act specifically speaks of the education of children with disabilities and other special educational needs and the education of children who experience educational disadvantage. Educational disadvantage is viewed as "the impediments to education arising from social or economic disadvantage which prevent students from deriving appropriate benefit from education in schools" (European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2009:3). In Ireland where teacher education is both at a diploma and degree levels, all primary and post-primary teachers are expected to be able to work in inclusive settings, teaching pupils with a range of diverse needs. Institutions which provide initial teacher education embed inclusive education practices throughout the teaching experience as well as providing a variety of optional and mandatory modules related to the education of pupils with diverse needs. However, teachers who wish to work specifically with children with special educational needs in special schools, in special classes in mainstream schools or in mainstream settings may enrol in post-graduate courses to complete certificates, diplomas or master's degrees in special education and these post-graduate courses are open to all qualified teachers.

According to European Agency for Development and Special Needs and Inclusive Education (2009), a number of institutions providing initial teacher education reported on a range of opportunities they have created to facilitate student collaboration, reflection and discussion in relation to teacher education for inclusion which they view as central to teacher education where appropriate attitudes, values and strategies are developed during these programmes where students are introduced to self-reflection, peer assessment and group work. In their teaching, students are challenged to develop their role in delivering an inclusive education through consultation and collaboration with parents and colleagues including learning support and resource teachers, special needs assistants and Home School Community Liaison Teachers as well as other professionals from outside the school. Generally, most institutions acknowledge the importance of the development of teachers' attitudes and values to support inclusive practice and have amended their teaching practice requirements to provide

opportunities for students to observe practising teachers working in inclusive classrooms as well as opportunities for students to plan and implement inclusive practices in their practice teaching.

However, a study of inclusion by the Standing Conference on Teacher Education, North and South[SCoTENS] (2010) reveals that school principals and teachers who have been in service for a number of years feel that initial teacher education insufficiently prepared them for the challenge of teaching a broad curriculum to increasingly diverse groups of students. The same study revealed that, while incorporating special educational needs in initial teacher education is extremely important, the bulk of the teaching profession who were already in post were ill-prepared for the challenges that these changes presented. From the above discussion, one can say that Ireland tends to be very pro-active in ensuring that teacher education courses are responsive to change as the gradual shift towards a more inclusive education system has been paralleled by changes in the content and methodologies of teacher education courses to also promote school-based inclusive practices.

3.6.2.3 Inclusive education and teacher education in Australia

The pre-service training of teachers in Australia varies considerably between states and territories. In order to ensure that general teachers are adequately trained to meet the needs of all learners in their classes there is a current move towards formalising teacher training. Several jurisdictions have already introduced the requirement to include specific units of study on learners with special needs in pre-service training courses (e.g. New South Wales). Other states are reviewing existing courses and preparing to formalise such structures. Monitoring of pre-service courses will be effected by teacher registration boards that will require minimum studies in learners with special needs for teachers to become registered.

Aniftos & McLuskie (2003) state that while teacher education programs engage participants in knowledge construction and for classroom teaching and learning, it is essential that teacher training institutions provide relevant opportunities for pre-service teachers to develop personal philosophies that promote classroom environments that are supportive of participation and achievement for all learners. In response to the

demands of inclusive education and teacher training as presented in the above statement, some institutions in Australia provide initial special or inclusive teacher training. In Queensland, for instance, Inclusive Education Statement of 2005 defines inclusive education as an approach that questions disadvantage and challenges injustice hence policies to guide teacher training and teacher practice have been formulated (Aniftos & McLuskie, 2003). Education Queensland (EQ) sets standards for teachers and graduates seeking to enter the teaching service and, specific attention is given to inclusive and participatory learning experiences to benefit the diverse range of learners in schooling (Aniftos & McLuskie, 2003).

In Western Australia (WA), it was also reported that a major review of educational services for students with disabilities in government schools has also led to the Department of Education and Training being more focused on the need to better prepare teachers for inclusion (D&T in Sharma, Forlin & Loreman, 2007). Initial special or inclusive training in Australia was said to be compulsory for all trainees and specialist teacher-training programmes in special education are also offered. For example, in Western Australia, a compulsory unit of work on educating learners experiencing barriers to learning and development is included in undergraduate teacher preparation courses (Sharma, Forlin &Loreman, 2007). However, Australia has not yet accomplished its mission in relation to special or inclusive teacher training. For example, Sharma, Forlin & Loreman (2007) reported that in Victoria, all teachers are required by law to be registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT). However, VIT does not require registered teachers to have completed a unit in the area of special education, and not many universities offer units in special education in undergraduate programs. It has only been in the last few years that some universities, such as Melbourne, have introduced a mandatory unit in special education, while others, for example Monash, offer the programme as an elective unit (Sharma, Forlin & Loreman , 2007). Thus, this insufficiency of training to prepare teachers to effectively include and support learners experiencing barriers to learning and development in ordinary schools has been repeatedly seen as a barrier to establishing more inclusive settings (Sharma, Forlin &Loreman, 2007).

3.6.2.4. Inclusive education and teacher training in Vietnam

In Vietnam advocating for inclusive education and teacher training was done mainly by Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Vietnam's Ministry of Education and Training, and other Vietnam partners and stakeholders' (Nguyet & Ha, 2010; Kaplan & Lewis, 2013). This was a move to develop a national curriculum so that all student teachers in universities and colleges would receive quality training that prepared them for teaching in inclusive settings. There are two options for teacher training, either at four-year universities or at three-year teacher training college. University teacher training programs tend to focus more on theories of education and prepare teachers for education management positions as well as classroom teaching while teacher training colleges focus more on the technical skills of teaching (Nguyet & Ha, 2010). Some universities and colleges have managed to include inclusive education as a required core course, while others simply offer the course as an optional elective. Though inclusive education is still not a compulsory component of initial teacher training for all colleges and universities in Vietnam, the number of institutions that do offer some type of inclusive education training have increased (Nguyet & Ha, 2010). However, a lack of suitably experienced lecturers held back progress in this initiative thus further work was therefore developed to improve the attitudes, knowledge and practical skills of lecturers, so that they could deliver the training curriculum, using appropriate pedagogy (Kaplan & Lewis, 2013). It is mainly through CRS' advocacy with program partners and education stakeholders that inclusive education is now included as a core course for all students majoring in pre-school education at three-year teacher training colleges in Vietnam. This ensures that future pre-school teachers will be well equipped with skills and strategies to be effective teachers for children with diverse needs. In Vietnam, CRS has helped modify the existing curriculum to include teacher training modules on early intervention, provide pre-school teachers with knowledge regarding how to screen and identify children with barriers to education.

3.6.2.5 Inclusive education and teacher education in Tanzania

Tanzania is a signatory of a number of international agreements such as Education for All {EFA} (UNESCO, 1990), Salamanca Framework of Action (UNESCO, 1994), Dakar Framework for Action (UNESCO, 2000) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN, 2008). The government is an exponent of EFA as seen by its

inclusion in its Education Act No. 25 (1978). The Education and Training Policy (1995) and the Primary Education Development Plan (PEDP) are also targeted at ensuring access and equity in the education arena (UNESCO, 2007; Kapinga, 2014).   In Tanzania, the inclusive education concept means to broaden educational opportunities for children with disabilities and marginalized groups so as to realize their full potential. Tanzania's teacher education is both college based and university based (Kapinga, 2014). The college-based regular teacher education programmes offer a two-year grade 'A' teacher education certificate and diploma in education. Teacher grade 'A' certificate is the initial course for primary school teachers and it is the minimum qualification for teaching at primary school level. A diploma in education is the initial qualification for teaching in secondary schools.

The University based regular teacher education programmes offer a three-year bachelor's degree, which qualifies graduates for teaching in secondary schools and teachers' colleges. However only two universities and one University College offer degree programmes in special education at a bachelor's level and the college based teacher education for special education is offered only at one college, at Patandi Teachers' College (Kapinga, 2014). The Ministry of Education and Vocational training through the special needs education unit prepared Inclusive Education Teacher's Guide and Teacher's Resource Pack adapted from UNESCO which were intended to draw a way towards effective school for all by enlightening teachers on how effective teaching can be made responsive to the needs of individual pupils (UNESCO, 2007; Westbrook & Croft, 2015). However, Lehtomaki et al., (2014) pointed out that teacher education was slow to respond to the policy of inclusion, the two-year residential teacher training programme had no mandatory module on inclusion although such modules are offered as professional development for serving teachers. Moreover, teacher education curriculum was mostly theoretical with little practical participation in inclusive settings, even though one of the goals of inclusive teacher education in Tanzania was to make sure professionals are imparted with enough relevant knowledge and skills on special education needs.

A study by Kapinga (2014), on teacher trainees' knowledge and preparedness for inclusive education found out that most pre-service teachers investigated had knowledge of inclusive education but were not prepared to teach under inclusive

settings. They indicated that the basic training which teachers get through initial teacher education programmes does not provide them with adequate theoretical and practical experiences related to inclusive education. The unpreparedness to teach inclusive classes were also ascribed to inadequate content in the course offerings especially the course on special education. The findings of the study suggest that a huge effort will have to be made by policy makers to effect the paradigm shift towards inclusive education. The average teacher is apparently neither prepared nor ready to teach learners of inclusive classrooms effectively. However, it is commendable that the overwhelming majority of trainee teachers are open and willing to learn more about inclusive education.

On a positive note, Westbrook & Croft (2015), in a study done in six African countries (Tanzania, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Senegal and Uganda) to gauge the implementation of inclusive educational pedagogies for children with disabilities, found that implementation was very successful in Tanzania. This was primarily because Tanzanian colleges taught inclusive pedagogies that included topics on effective interaction with students and the use of appropriate learning aids. An inclusive teachers' guide and teacher resource   book pack was also adapted from UNESCO and prepared by Tanzanian Ministry of Education and vocational training to equip teachers with information on inclusive education was also very useful. Moreover, the government has continuously been revising its curriculum, content, methodologies and resource availability to cater for inclusive education. In countries like Kenya, the policy on inclusive education was not very clear, hence little success in the implementation.

3.6.2.6 Inclusive education and teacher education in South Africa

The South African approach to inclusion is supported in government papers and documents like Education White paper 6, Norms and Standards for Teacher training, the Quality Education for All report by the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training and (NCSNET) and the National Committee on Education Support Services (NCESS), as well as the Consultative Paper 1 on Special Education: building an inclusive education and training system. Contemporary teacher education in South Africa trains teachers how to accommodate diverse learners in a single classroom in line with the social model of disability that views disability centrally as a

social construct created by an ability-oriented environment. This includes all learners irrespective of race, class, gender, disability, religion, culture or sexual preference (NCSNET & NCESS, 1997). The report promotes inclusive education for all learners and advocates the development of effective programmes to equip teachers and support providers with the necessary skills and knowledge to enable them to respond to learners' needs. Even in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Framework (CAPS) it states that, "inclusivity should become a central part of the organisation, planning and teaching at each school and this can only happen if all teachers have a sound understanding of how to recognise and address barriers of learning and how to plan for diversity……" (South Africa, Department of Basic Education, 2001:5-6).

Inclusive education in South Africa is expected to redress the disadvantages and past inequalities that existed in the dual regular and special education systems which operated during the apartheid era. In order to do this effectively teachers will not only need to be committed to change but must also be fully trained in appropriate methods to facilitate this change (Engelbrecht & Green, 2007). This is deemed so because prior to White Paper 6, regular class teachers frequently voiced concerns regarding their perceived inability to teach learners with special needs saying that they have been inadequately trained and lacked the necessary knowledge, skills, and confidence to implement effective inclusive practices (Engelbrecht & Green, 2007; Westwood, 2013). Furthering this point, the National Education Policy Investigation (1993) reported that teacher education in South Africa has been characterised previously by fragmentation and deep disparities in its duration and quality with the result that the majority of South African teachers are disadvantaged by the poor quality of their training when it comes to inclusive practices (Green, 2001). In addition, Bothma, Garett & Swart (2000) point out that the challenge facing many South African teachers is that they have not been trained to cope with the diversity of learners now entering schools as currently there are few teachers who have undergone formal training in inclusive education.

South Africa as a signatory to the Salamanca Convention on the stance of education for all in its Education White Paper 6 states that the Ministry of Education will, "through the district support teams, provide access for teachers to appropriate pre-service and in-service education and training and professional support services" (South Africa, Department of Basic Education ,2001:29), ensuring that the norms and standards for

the education and training of teachers, trainers and other development practitioners include competencies in addressing barriers to learning and provide for the development of specialised competencies such as life skills, counselling and learning support. The White Paper made it clear that teachers cannot be expected to function effectively if they are not empowered to do so (Mdikana, Ntashangase & Mayekiso, 2007). On this note, the paper recommended that tertiary institutions should develop programmes for diversity learning and should start introducing programmes in inclusive education. The recommendation seemed to have been successful because Oswald (2007:152) reported that "many of South Africa's higher education institutions have already made the necessary changes and incorporated the theory and practice of inclusion into the curriculum for pre-service training programmes for teachers."

As recommended by Nel (2007:3) with initial teacher training, "teachers need to have knowledge and skills on various forms of extrinsic as well as intrinsic barriers, identifying and assessing a learner who experiences barriers to learning, compiling an assessment profile of a learner experiencing barriers to learning, collaborating with relevant role players, interviewing parents, implementing the intervention strategies, keeping record of progress, reflection skills, mobilisation and utilisation of resources available at school and preventing and addressing barriers to learning arising from a variety of aspects." There are still existing gaps to be addressed in this area. Van Laarhoven et al., (2007), for instance, caution that due to a number of factors such as cost, disincentives to extend duration and requirements of programmes, and both human and institutional resistance to sudden changes in the structure of education institutions and teacher preparation, programmes may never achieve large-scale adoption and adequately train pre-service teachers on inclusion.

In line with the above Chimhenga (2014), proposed that lack of clear and precise knowledge and understanding of inclusive education at the initial stage of teacher training will create problems for the implementation of inclusive education in schools. In support of this view, a qualitative study by Hay, Smit & Paulsen (2001) revealed that some teachers in South Africa have a definite lack of knowledge about issues relating to inclusive education. Furthermore, the teachers felt unprepared and ill-equipped to teach in inclusive classrooms as a result of their lack of training, lack of time, large classes and lack of teacher experience. For some teachers, the fear of not being able

to manage diversity resulted in feelings of hopelessness and in learners being referred for assessments by specialists and placements in special programmes (Swart et al., 2002). The findings above are supported by the findings by Mukhopadhyay, Nenty & Abosi (2012) who noted that, in Botswana teachers found it difficult to teach learners with learning disabilities due to a lack of training and that adequate training in inclusive education was a critical prerequisite for teachers to function effectively in order to implement inclusive education successfully.

Research done by Fakudze (2012) has revealed that the majority of interviewed teachers in South Africa had not been trained in inclusive education whilst undergoing their initial teacher training. This explained their lack of clear and precise knowledge and understanding of inclusive education environment. In the research Fakudze (2012) further argues that teachers are not fully supported through the provision of resources during their training. Teachers in South Africa feel that the government has to train them for inclusive education and provide them with the necessary resources for the smooth running of inclusive education (Fakudze, 2012). "The South African Government should ensure that teachers are given the skills to teach efficiently and implement inclusive education" (Fakudze, 2012:75). As it is, in South Africa and Botswana, most teachers upgrade themselves at their own expense on a part-time basis (Fakudze, 2012).

Research by Tshifura (2012) revealed that teachers were not adequately trained to implement inclusive education. While the teachers were well qualified, they did not have the expertise to deal with diversity in their classrooms. Other studies show that in South Africa, teachers who have not undertaken training regarding the inclusion may exhibit negative attitudes toward such inclusion (Landsberg, Krüger & Nel, 2005). Furthermore, these teachers may not be associated with more positive attitudes towards learners with barriers to learning (Briggs et al., 2002). In the United Kingdom, training in inclusive education appears to enhance understanding and improve attitudes regarding the inclusion of all learners (Golder, Norwich & Bayliss, 2005). Inadequate training relating to the implementation of inclusive education for learners with barriers to learning may result in lowered teacher confidence as they plan for inclusive education (Chimhenga, 2014). In support of this view, Dagnew (2013) maintains that teachers must be both competent and confident in their teaching ability

in inclusive settings. Does the scenario obtaining in South Africa also apply to Zimbabwe? Does initial teacher education in Zimbabwe effectively equip teachers to deal with the needs of all learners specifically left-behind learners? The next sub-section which looks at inclusive education and teacher training in Zimbabwe attempts to shed more light on this topic.

3.7 Inclusive education and teacher education in Zimbabwe

Access to education is a basic human right which must be accorded to every child. At independence in 1980 Zimbabwe declared education as a basic human right and worked hard to ensure that all people in the country had access to it. Special attention was paid to traditionally disadvantaged groups such as women, rural communities and the disabled (www.ibe.unesco.org, 2008).To underline the importance that Zimbabwe puts on education, the country has, over the years, become a signatory to several international charters and conventions on education, including the Salamanca statement and framework for action on education that seeks to find ways of increasing access to education by all (Mpofu et al., 2007; Musengi, Mudyahoto & Chireshe 2010; Chireshe, 2011).

While Zimbabwe has a strong education system, the country, however, has no specific policy that explicitly deals with inclusive education (UNESCO, 2008; Chireshe, 2013). UNESCO (2008) argues that such specific policies are desirable to protect the education rights of children who live in difficult circumstances that often require specific legislation for resolution. Chikwature, Oyedele & Ntini (2016:16) also allude to the absence of specific policies for inclusive education in Zimbabwe, observing that "there were no policies in place to guide the implementation of inclusive education in teacher education, and government has not yet drafted any policies while colleges themselves had no local policies." In the midst of this policy vacuum, the case of left-behind learners in the country adds another dimension to the inclusive education debate which has to be interrogated.

Currently, inclusive education, including the training of teachers, in the country is managed through multiple policies such as the Zimbabwe Disabled Person Act, the 1987 Education Act (revised in 1996) and the 1999 Nziramasanga Commission report

on education. In addition, Zimbabwe's Constitution, adopted in 2013 now upholds the educational rights of all people including those vulnerable and disabled (Jenjekwa, Rutoro & Runyowa, 2013). However, no attempts have been made yet to entrench those rights by crafting a specific policy on inclusive education. This study contends that the absence of such a policy is a major drawback on government's efforts to ensure inclusive education for all, including left-behind learners. A study such as this one, which looks at the specific experiences of the left-behind learners, the ability of the teachers to deal with the needs of these children, and the ways in which teacher education prepares them for the task, is desirable if all-encompassing inclusive education is to be achieved. The findings of the study may be relevant in highlighting the key policy issues that have to be considered for inclusive education to succeed. In the absence of specific policies, institutions generally do not feel obliged to equip teachers with knowledge and skills that are relevant for the implementation of inclusive education.

3.7.1 The Pre independence education in Zimbabwe

Pre-Independence education in Zimbabwe was divided on racial and ethnic grounds. It was characterised by policies which were discriminatory and marginalised all other racial groups except whites who had guaranteed access to quality education (National Action Plan of Zimbabwe, 2005). White children went to superior government-provided schools, Asian and mixed race children were lumped together in second tier school, while black Africans attended inferior schools (Women of Zimbabwe Arise, 2010). It was only in the 1950's that government began to build schools for Africans and encouraged missions to develop teacher-training colleges. Government emphasis remained on primary schooling, with only a few missions permitted to develop secondary schools. Up to Independence in 1980, there were only a few secondary schools for Africans. Though the number of blacks proceeding to secondary schools increased with the construction of more schools, the progression rate was low.

On the other hand, schooling for white children was compulsory and free. Several boarding schools dotted around the country catered for children growing up on farms and mines. Secondary schools were also streamed by ability into academic and commercial and special technical schools were established for those technically

inclined. As government schools were racially integrated by legislation in 1978, "community schools" were allowed to establish fee levels. Unfortunately, the fees that these schools prescribed were too high and marginalised blacks could not afford such fees.

3.7.2 The Post-independence educational transformation and inclusive education in Zimbabwe

One of the major promises made by freedom fighters during the liberation war was that free primary education and affordable secondary education would be availed to Zimbabweans once the country was independent. Thus, the immediate goal of the new government at Independence was to open up educational opportunities for all races in order to redress the qualitative and quantitative imbalances and inequalities which had existed during the colonial era.

3.7.2.1 The 1987 Education Act

The 1987 Zimbabwe Education Act revised in 1996 and 2006 declared education as a basic human right in Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe thus adopted a rights based approach to education, encouraging all children and adults to acquire an education that would make them contribute meaningfully to society and to the development of the country. The Act introduced free and compulsory education for all students regardless of any demographic differences. According to the Act "…no children shall be refused admission to any school on the ground of race, tribe, colour, religion, creed, place of origin or the social status of his all her parents" (Zimbabwe, Government of Zimbabwe, 1987:12). It supports inclusive education as it gives a framework that supports gender sensitive education, integration of pupils with disabilities in regular schools and classrooms as well as supporting the teaching of education, awareness and life skills. The Act also supports the teaching of minority or local languages like Kalanga, Sotho, Xhosa and Tsonga as well as adopting a policy of partnership with parents, communities and other partners.

The declaration of the education for all policy by government thus expanded the education sector to make it inclusive among other things by expanding access and provision of education at all levels, by coming up with a broad and more comprehensive

curriculum which would capture interest of all learners and by financing inclusive education (UNESCO, 2009).The government emphasised that inclusive education strategies can only work if they are handled by teachers who understand the concept of inclusiveness, thus giving proper orientation to pre-service and practising teachers is important for inclusive education. Transformation was meant to enable the education systems and methodologies to meet the learning needs of all learners in a way acknowledging, respecting and accommodating differences. However, in as much as Government's focus on inclusive education was commendable, it was, and still remains oriented towards inclusivity of students with classical vulnerabilities such as the disabled, the girl child and the orphaned. Children that are left behind by migrating parents rarely, if ever, feature in the inclusivity debate. In the same vein, teacher training is also still geared towards understanding and taking care of the needs of other forms of exclusions without necessarily acknowledging new forms of vulnerabilities such as that of left-behind learners. These children are therefore not catered for, both in practical and in policy terms.

3.7.2.2 The Nziramasanga Commission

The Zimbabwe Report on the Presidential Commission of Inquiry into Education and Training (Nziramasanga, 1999) has elements of inclusive education. However, it put more emphasis on the disabled, the girl child and children in difficult circumstances like orphans and those affected by HIV and AIDS. The Commission refers to these children as vulnerable groups and further recommends that an inclusive system of education can benefit them. Some of these groups referred to by Nziramasanga (1999) as vulnerable are however left out in teacher training programmes because of their life circumstances (Chikwature, Oyedele & Ntini, 2016).

Another key recommendation of the commission was "the provision of education and training at all levels including the disadvantaged, the marginalised and those in remote rural areas considering the critical concerns of access, relevance and quality" (Nziramasanga, 1999:15). Such policies of the new government were aimed at decolonising the old education system, abolishing restrictive racial educational structures and improving access. The report also makes reference to universal education and recommends a revamped teacher education system to produce multi

skilled teachers who would be able to cater for the needs of both the currently included and excluded (National Action Plan of Zimbabwe, 2005). While Zimbabwe's education system, though affected by decades of economic decline in the country, is still one of the best on the continent, more still needs to be done to align policies and practices to capture new vulnerabilities and protect the rights of all children, including left-behind learners.

3.7.2.3 Inclusive education and teacher education in Zimbabwe

In order to understand the role that teacher education plays in helping teachers respond to the needs of vulnerable children, left-behind learners included, there is need to give a brief description of where and how inclusive education fits in the teacher education curriculum in Zimbabwe. Pre-service teacher training in Zimbabwe is the responsibility of teacher-training colleges and the universities. Secondary school teacher training colleges fall into two categories: academic and technical. Academic colleges require a student to major in up to two main subjects. Technical colleges require a student to take one technical and one academic subject. All students are also required to take the subject Theory of Education (TOE) (Jenjekwa, Rutoro & Runyowa, 2013). In TOE: sociology of education, psychology of education and in philosophy of education that's where inclusive education is taught or is supposed to be taught. Secondary school teacher training colleges require each student to study the subjects of the student's choice offered in the secondary school curriculum, including TOE and one of the main compulsory subjects.

Training programmes at the university level normally consists of a three-year degree course followed by a one-year post graduate certificate or post graduate diploma in education programme. Universities also offer Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) and Masters of Education (M.Ed.) programmes. The pre–service teachers are supposed to be equipped on inclusive education in educational foundations where educational sociology, educational psychology and educational philosophy are done.

Since signing the 1994 Salamanca statement and framework for action on special needs education, strides have been made on the implementation of inclusive education and teacher education in Zimbabwe. Though Zimbabwe has no single specific

inclusive education policy (Chireshe, 2013; Mpofu, 2000), some related policies present ensure the inclusion of previously marginalised pupils in schools. However, a major challenge remains in that the policies have not been translated into tangible transformational approaches in the secondary school teacher education curriculum (Mafa & Makuba, 2013). In secondary schools, where most learners are experiencing physical, emotional and social changes as part of adolescence, it is critical for teachers to show commitment to inclusion in explicit and ostensible ways rather than through mere spoken or written pronouncements. Teacher education institutions in Zimbabwe should therefore be torch-bearers in the discourse and practice of inclusion. The nature and quality of education of all learners, which includes left-behind learners, is dependent on the quality of teachers. Such teachers should be products of a "carefully planned policy on teacher education" (Zvobgo, 1986:82). There is need therefore to assess challenges confronting left-behind learners and to investigate how teachers, through teacher education, are equipped to deal with the specific needs of these learners as part of inclusive education.

Previous studies in Zimbabwe have revealed that most teachers lack training in inclusive education even though teacher training seems to be one of the core strategies that would enable effective acquisition and implementation of inclusive education (Jenjekwa, Rutoro & Runyowa, 2013; Mafa & Makuba, 2013). Yet, ensuring that newly qualified teachers have an understanding of inclusive teaching is the best investment that can be made. Chireshe (2013) found that even though more universities and teachers' colleges in Zimbabwe are training teachers in special needs education and inclusive education, many teachers remain unqualified in the area. The absence of a vibrant inclusive education policy and practice in teacher education is a major gap which might lead to a challenge in cascading inclusive education in Zimbabwean schools (Jenjekwa, Rutoro & Runyowa, 2013). In line with the above, Mavundukure & Nyamande (2012) maintain that most teachers in Zimbabwe have no specific training to teach learners with disabilities and other special educational needs and vulnerabilities.

In a survey done by Musengi, Mudyahoto & Chireshe (2010) in Zimbabwe, teachers admitted that they did not have the skills to practice individualistic instruction in class and lacked appropriate training in inclusive education which would assist them in

helping children with learning disabilities. The lack of appropriate knowledge and skills for inclusive education was also noted in a study in Botswana by Mbengwa (2010). This study revealed that teachers lacked knowledge and skills in material production, guidance and counselling, communication, life skills, inclusion of learners with diverse needs in inclusive classrooms, working with parents, establishment of support programmes, and programmes for supporting the gifted and talented learners (Mbengwa, 2010). Thus, Nel (2007) argues that unless teachers are fully prepared through training, inclusive education will not be realised. In order for teacher preparation to be effective in capacitating the teachers, such training has to be contextualised so that the relevant problems that need to be tackled are identified. The problem of left-behind learners is one such issue that needs to be interrogated so that the training given to teachers is appropriate and helps them to effectively deal with the problems of these vulnerable learners.

Besides the studies mentioned above, other studies carried out in Zimbabwe have revealed that the implementation of inclusive education in the country is affected by lack of resources (Ngwarai & Ngara, 2013). Findings from studies in Namibia also attest to the fact that lack of resources greatly compromises the effective implementation of inclusive education (Zimba, Mowes & Naanda, 2007). In Zimbabwe, where a high teacher-pupil ratio (1 to 40) is in many of the country's public schools is also worsening the ability of schools to offer durable approaches to inclusive education. Because of this high teacher-pupil ratio, teachers are left with no room to cater for diverse children especially children with disabilities (Mpofu 2000; Peresuh 2000; Mpofu et al., 2007; Chireshe 2013). Given that the classic forms of vulnerabilities are not even well tackled in the country; it is doubtful whether the current approaches to inclusive education in the country are able to deal with the new vulnerability of learners left behind by emigrating parents.

In Zimbabwe, even if inclusive education should be practiced by all lecturers at teacher training colleges it is generally taught and dealt with in the Theory of Education section (Jenjekwa, Rutoro & Runyowa, 2013). However, it is doubtful whether student teachers are adequately equipped to deal with even mild cases of disability (Jenjekwa, Rutoro & Runyowa, 2013). The same situation prevails in Botswana. As Mukhapadhayay (2013:77) asserts, "teacher training institutions for primary school teachers in

Botswana do not provide effective training for inclusive education in their initial professional training." Another study in Zimbabwe by Mandina (2012) noted that college level training in the country was not sufficient to equip teachers to teach in an inclusive setting, especially where there are children with severe disabilities, emotional and behavioural problems. Mandina (2012) further noted that interviewed teachers agreed that college level courses did not prepare them sufficiently to teach in an inclusive environment. The obligations of inclusive education, will, as argued by Jenjekwa, Rutoro & Runyowa (2013), only be met when all schools have teachers with adequate training in special needs education. Those needs will also have to include the specific needs of left-behind learners, as such needs are currently unmet in the context of the country's mass exodus of parents.

Several studies have been carried out in Zimbabwe on the need for inclusive education in general. One such study pointed out that there was a need to make inclusive education compulsory at teacher education colleges as well as at universities training teachers (Jenjekwa, Rutoro & Runyowa, 2013). While at some of the colleges, inclusive education was included on mission statements, it was noted that it was not taken seriously and it was also not clear how this inclusive education would find its way into the curriculum. In addition, there seemed to be no zeal and conviction to implement it (Jenjekwa, Rutoro & Runyowa, 2013). Moreover, within some teaching diploma and degree programmes, the time allocated for the residential phase of theoretical grounding was very limited, with little time allocated for the Theory of Education module in general and inclusive education specifically. The rest of the time was allocated to teaching practice and revision for final examinations. Thus there is little time to theoretically ground student teachers on the needs, demands and skills necessary to deal with vulnerabilities such as those presented by learners who have been left by emigrating parents.

Most lecturers interviewed indicated that there was little time for Theory of Education where inclusive education is supposed to be taught and time available for specialist training of pre-service teachers is limited. During this limited time there is a focus of theory without practice. Thus this was a pointer to the almost silent treatment given to inclusive education. This is supported by a study done in Botswana where pre-service teachers are only exposed to limited practice during the teaching practice exercise

hence the teacher education programme is heavily theoretical (Mbengwa, 2010). The results of the study indicate that teacher trainers find it challenging to positively influence trainees' attitudes towards inclusive education and support, associating their difficulty to the programme structure which currently does not or minimally exposes trainees to practical experiences within and outside the training institutions. This implies that trainees are likely to graduate without the right attitude towards provision of support within inclusive setting (Mbengwa, 2010). The study concludes that on leaving college as qualified practitioners, most pre-service teachers are ill equipped to effectively assist those with special needs and the vulnerable to the extent that the purported inclusive classroom will be a de facto exclusion zone where the child with special needs is clearly left alone and ignored while others learn (Musengi, Mudyahoto & Chireshe, 2010; Jenjekwa, Rutoro & Runyowa, 2013).

The problems of inadequate preparation of teachers for inclusive education are not limited to the developing world alone, but to the developed world as well. In Scotland for example, Peebles & Mendaglio, (2014) noted that there was very little time in teacher education programmes to cover issues of inclusion in the country. The authors go on to argue that the focus of the teacher training programmes was weighted heavily on theory with the practice being allocated very little time. Similar findings were obtained in qualitative study conducted by Fayez, Dababneh & Jumiaan (2011) which reported that pre-service teachers held strong and positive attitudes about the philosophy of inclusion as an entitlement of children with special needs. However, when asked about their preparedness to implement inclusion, the participants felt their mandatory inclusion course, while adding to their knowledge base, only provided a very narrow understanding of practical skills. Hodkinson's (2006) study found similar findings and concluded that first year teachers felt their pre-service training provided them with a good understanding of the theory of inclusive education, however their understanding of the practical delivery was limited thus some pre-service teachers cited the need for more preparation and experience in order to feel prepared for working with vulnerable learners and those with exceptional needs.

As Golder, Norwich & Bayliss (2005:94) claim, "institutions send a dual message which familiarised students with words about inclusion, but without preparing them to tackle barriers to inclusive development" when they start working in schools. The concept of

inclusive education therefore often only fully makes sense when seen 'in action', giving student teachers an opportunity to experience inclusive education, or practise learner-centred, inclusive and active approaches to teaching and learning, before they embark on teaching a diverse group of learners. In the case of Zimbabwe's new vulnerabilities of left-behind learners, embedding inclusive education within the current educational system would mean capacitating student teachers with in-depth knowledge on how these learners are vulnerable and what approaches need to be adopted to reduce these vulnerabilities.

Besides being ill-prepared for inclusive education, there are a number of other factors that impede on the teachers' ability to deliver education in an inclusive way. In a study done by Mafa & Makuba (2013), it was revealed that lesson preparation, planning, and a host of other tasks expected of teachers placed a heavy demand on them to the point where a focus on inclusivity is no longer a priority area. These problems encountered by teachers when handling inclusive classes bring to the fore the appropriateness of the teacher's training programmes that teacher trainees are exposed to during pre-service teacher training (Mafa, 2003). If these findings by Mafa (2003) are anything to go by, it would appear that teachers' training colleges in Zimbabwe have not yet responded accordingly to the pedagogic and didactic challenges being heralded into schools by the inclusion revolution. Thus inclusion topics in most teacher training syllabi in the country are only meant to sensitize teacher trainees on inclusion and not necessarily to produce teaching graduates who can teach inclusive classes effectively and competently (Mafa, 2003). These challenges, and others, could however be solved through changes in the teaching training curriculum (Mafa & Makuba, 2013). Such changes would ensure that all learners' diverse needs are catered for, including the needs of children left in the home country by emigrant parents.

Research has also shown that issues of the girl child, the disabled and those children affected by HIV and AIDS are now familiar to most Zimbabweans, and have, by and large, been included in the curricula and training of most Zimbabwean teachers. However, the challenges of left-behind learners are a recent phenomenon and as such, its seriousness and the nature of the challenges that it raises regarding inclusive education is not well understood. It may be that teachers being churned out of the Zimbabwean colleges and universities are ill-equipped to handle the challenges. Thus,

as Mafa & Makuba (2013) observe, most teachers in the country seem to aim their inclusive education practices at the classical vulnerable learners (disabled, girl child and those affected by HIV and AIDS) to the exclusion of other forms of vulnerability. The left-behind learners form part of this excluded group, whose needs and vulnerabilities must be brought to the fore.

3.8 Existing gaps

From the literature review, it is evident that the need for inclusivity in education, has, to a large extent been identified as a key aspect in the development of an education system that truly caters for the needs of vulnerable students. In many countries, aspects of inclusive education are being included in initial teacher education programmes. However, there is still a lot to be done in order to align the training to meet the needs of all learners. Most teachers in many countries are still unable to support learners even after being equipped with knowledge on inclusive education during their initial training. Most countries seem not to have a strong, clear and focused stand with regard to inclusive teacher education and training. In some institutions, inclusive education modules are offered on an elective basis while in others the modules are compulsory. In many cases, teachers at teacher training institutions are not compelled to have an element of inclusive education before qualifying as teachers. This leads to inequalities in teacher skills and competencies. Such teachers are therefore unlikely to be able to effectively handle the needs of vulnerable learners.

For Zimbabwe specifically, literature reviewed above has shown that there are several policies that guide inclusive education. A major weakness, however, is that these policies are generally geared towards addressing the needs of the disabled students, the vulnerable girl child as well as children that are affected by HIV/AIDS. Little is mentioned regarding left-behind learners as part of the group of children that are vulnerable and therefore deserving attention in order to achieve inclusivity. Inclusive education in the teacher education curriculum in the country is anchored on 'children with special needs' or 'children with developmental retardation', thus perpetuating a narrow disability or special needs interpretation of inclusive education within the teacher education curricula.

In line with the above, Westwood (2013) sees the notion of inclusivity as the education of the disabled as a narrow view of inclusive education. In Zimbabwe's case, the question of whether teachers have knowledge about the vulnerability of left-behind learners is fundamental. This is because, without proper knowledge, teachers may not deal with challenges that they are not aware of. As Fakudze (2012) point out, the diversity of learners and their challenges demand that teachers be knowledgeable about the task they face. Inclusive education can thus not be achieved if teachers have little knowledge about the challenges they face. Even though some teachers may learn on the job, a basic knowledge of what these teachers expect to face in the field will prepare them better for the actual challenges in the field.

In the context of Zimbabwe, where awareness of the vulnerability of left-behind learners by teachers seems to be minimal, it can be argued that an injustice is being visited upon these children regarding inclusive education. However, blame should not be apportioned to teachers only, but rather to teacher training as such training is supposed to equip the teachers to deal with such vulnerabilities. Should teacher education be silent on these issues, teachers will be ill-equipped and thus will not be able to handle challenges such as those of these children who remain in the home country when parents emigrate. This is because teacher training and education should equip teachers to inclusive education challenges, teaching methods and curricula as well as prepare them for environments where they will be expected to operate in ways that meet the needs of all learners by taking into consideration their individual circumstances.

Simply put, teacher training institutions are expected to lead the way, making inclusion "embedded deeply in the very foundation of the school, in its missions, its belief system, and its daily activities, rather than an appendage that is added to a conventional school" (Lipsky & Gartner, 1997:390). These institutions should lead in marrying theory and practice to ensure that the pre-service teachers fully appreciate inclusive teaching strategies for implementation in schools. From the foregoing literature review, it can be argued that there are obvious gaps in teacher preparation programs. Lecturers should view these gaps as a major roadblock to advancing the actualization of inclusion at the very basic level: the general education classroom. To ensure a better match between teacher education and the realities of inclusive

classrooms, changes to the current approaches are necessary and critical. Admittedly, it is difficult at this point to conclude whether teacher education in Zimbabwe equips teachers with the requisite knowledge and skills to deal with left-behind learners. Against this background, this research assessed the challenges confronting learners who remain in Zimbabwe when parents migrate and investigated how teachers were equipped to deal with the specific needs of these children as part of inclusive education.

3.9 Conclusion

This chapter reviewed literature on inclusive education, specifically looking at the effects of parental emigration on children who remain in the home country. It also located the study within the broader discourse of inclusive education. The chapter also reviewed several global declarations related to making education more inclusive and discussed the key principles in the declarations. It has been shown that teacher education in the country may not be geared for new vulnerabilities, especially those of left-behind learners which is a recent phenomenon that is not yet been adequately understood. The next chapter discusses the methodology used in this study.

CHAPTER FOUR: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH TO RESEARCHING LEFT-BEHIND LEARNERS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodological approaches adopted in this study. Polit & Hungler (1999:648) define methodology as "the process of following steps, procedures and strategies for gathering and analysing the data in a research investigation." This methodology chapter therefore discusses the research approach, data collection methods, sampling approaches and data analysis procedures.

4.2 Research approach

A research approach involves "establishing and planning ways in which the research will be conducted, so that sound conclusions in relation to the research question as well as the problem statement are reached" (Mbengwa, 2010:144). The approach further specifies who or what is involved, where and when (Mokoena, 2013). A phenomenological research approach was adopted in this study because the issue of left-behind learners and inclusive education is relative new and therefore not sufficiently explored. Phenomenology focusses on people as creators of their own reality and tries to see reality from the eyes of those who are living it (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). As Given (2008) points out, constructed realities exist in the minds of the individuals and cannot be broken into parts, but must be examined as a whole where the investigation has to be carried under natural conditions. Thus, the approach explains human perceptions in a bid "to illuminate the specific and to identify phenomena through how they are perceived by the actors in a situation" (Lester, 1999:1).

Phenomenology is qualitative in nature. Through this approach, a researcher collects and interprets data and reports the research findings in a detailed descriptive manner (Given, 2008). This approach was used in order to deploy a wide range of interconnected methods, to get a better fix on the matter at hand (DeWaal, 2004). Moreover, the issue of left-behind learners involved feelings, attitudes, intentions and perceptions, which cannot be reduced to numbers and is thus best captured in a qualitative way which explains why things are the way they are. Through this qualitative approach, the study assessed the challenges confronting learners who remain in

Zimbabwe when parents migrate and investigated how teachers were equipped to deal with the specific needs of these learners as part of inclusive education. To understand fully the lived experiences of left-behind learners, the researcher suspended own meanings, interpretations, and beliefs so that these would not bias the study results, in a process which Moustakas (1994) calls bracketing. While the approach generated enormous, detailed and informative data on left-behind learners and the capacity of teachers to handle the challenges faced by these vulnerable learners, it should be noted that the study results are not necessarily representative of all the left-behind learners in Harare, nor are they reflective of the conditions experienced by learners that only have one parent working abroad.

4.3 Data collection

Data collection is the process of gathering and measuring information on variables of interest, in an established systematic fashion that enables one to answer stated research questions, and evaluate outcomes (https://ori.hhs.gov). It refers to the gathering of information that is helpful in clarifying the problem being researched. Generally, qualitative researchers study participants' perspectives with interactive strategies mainly to provide illumination and understanding of complex psychosocial issues and answering humanistic questions (Marshal, 1996). This requires close involvement between the researcher and the participants who affect one another through mutual interaction. Information for this study was collected through different, but complimentary ways in order to get true picture of the matter being researched. Such triangulation, through the use of multiple data collection methods, increased the credibility of findings.

4.3.1 Pilot study

Cassim (2015) argues that piloting is done to enhance the credibility and dependability of findings as research tools or procedures are tested and the feedback received is used to optimise tools or procedures. A pilot study was done to test and assess the appropriateness of data collection instruments in order to help detect errors and possible ambiguities (see Appendix A-C for pilot survey tools). The pilot study also provided an estimate of the duration of an interview as well as revealing how participants would understand the questions asked. Two left-behind learners, one teacher and a lecturer

took part in the pilot study. The feedback from the pilot survey was used to refine the interview schedule, splitting some questions which were overloaded, removing double barrelled questions and rephrasing ambiguous questions to increase clarity. The pilot study enhanced suitability and clarity on interview questions and their appropriateness to collect the required information from participants.

4.3.2 In-depth interviews

Cohen & Manion (1986) describe an interview as a two-person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining relevant information, and focused on the content specified by the research objectives. Moustakas (1994:114) asserts that the "phenomenological interview involves an informal, interactive process and utilises open-ended comments and question." This study thus made use of semi-structured interviews (Appendix D) to get information from left-behind learners. The interview schedules were developed based on the literature review, assumptions, research objectives and research questions. These semi-structured interviews allowed flexibility during the interview process, enabling further probing where necessary. The interview schedule for the left-behind learners (Appendix E) was translated into *Shona,* the local vernacular. In-depth interviews were also conducted with lecturers (Appendix F) at teacher training institutions. Information gathered related to the curriculum on inclusive education and on how lecturers were equipping student teachers to meet the challenges of inclusive education in the field. During an interviews, the researcher was able to observe the behaviour of the participants, and used visual signs such as nods and smiles to motivate participants to provide complete and more in-depth answers.

4.3.3 Focus group discussions

A focus group is an informal discussion among a group of selected individuals about a particular topic (Wilkinson, 2004). As Kitzinger (1995) explains, the idea behind the focus group method is that group processes can help people to explore and clarify their views in ways that would be less easily accessible in a one to one interview. Phenomenology places importance on use of qualitative approaches such as focus group discussions. In this study, focus group discussions were carried out with teachers at the two selected schools (Appendix G). The focus was on the teachers' perceptions

on the vulnerability of left-behind learners and on how sufficiently equipped the teachers were to address the specific needs of vulnerable learners towards fulfilling the goals of inclusive education. For all focus group discussions, the researcher was the core moderator who guided and directed discussions on relevant topics. An assistant sat in on the discussions to take notes which were discussed with the researcher immediately after the interview. As Robson (2002) suggests, such interaction between the investigator and the assistant enables key issues to be clarified while the issues are still fresh in the minds of both. Discussions were recorded using a digital recorder, allowing more accuracy in the data collected. Perakyla (1995) notes that working with tapes, recorders and transcripts eliminates many of the problems researchers have with the unspecified accuracy of field notes and with the limited public access to them. All participants were asked for permission to record the interviews. Recorded interviews were transferred to a computer where they were digitally locked for safekeeping. In order to ensure confirmability and dependability, the researcher maintained an audit trail of the data collected and took field notes to aid in the interpretation of the data gathered.

4.3.4 Document analysis

A document is a text based file with materials that are important in describing both the historical and current situation about the research in question. Documentary analysis is thus an analysis of written materials that contains information about the topic under investigation (Strydom & Delport, 2005). The researcher accessed information on the curriculum on inclusive education in teacher training institutions, hand books on the course where inclusive education was included, examination questions and any other information relevant to the study. The documents provided information and a framework in which to understand what was theoretically planned to equip pre-service teachers on inclusive education and shedding light on how teachers were equipped to deal with the vulnerability of left-behind learners. The document analysis provided information that could have been difficult to gain through interviews. This aided to the dimension of authenticity to the research process (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2004) as well as validation by accessing information from different sources. As Patton (1990: 244) points out "multiple sources of information are sought and used because no single source of information can be trusted to provide a comprehensive perspective." This cross-checking technique thus has the potential to highlight areas of inconsistency and possible bias in study participants' responses and thereby improve the credibility and

dependability of the overall research (Cassim, 2015). This process of triangulation thus increased the possibility of understanding the phenomenon of left-behind learners better.

4.4 Sampling

Sampling is "a process of selecting subjects or participants to take part in a research investigation on the ground that they provide information considered relevant to the research problem." (Oppong, 2013:203). In qualitative research, individuals are selected to participate based on their first-hand experience of a phenomenon of interest (Streubert & Carpenter 1999). Mokoena (2013) describes sampling in qualitative research as being relatively limited, based on saturation (and not representativeness) and the size not statistically determined. This sampling procedure depends on the "availability and willingness of people to participate and on the fact that cases that are truly similar to the population are selected" (Mbengwa, 2010:150).Thus, in the phenomenological approach used in this study, participants were deliberately or purposefully chosen on the basis of their being able to provide information regarding left-behind learners' experiences, the challenges they faced, teachers interaction with left-behind learners as well as how teacher education was equipping teachers to meet the specific needs of vulnerable learners as part of inclusive education.

4.4.1 Selecting high schools

Two high schools were purposively selected for inclusion into the sample: High School 1 located in a low income residential area and High School 2 in a high income residential area. The rationale for selecting schools from different income areas was to enable the study to capture varying experiences as these schools had different levels of resource endowment and facilities. In addition, the operational challenges and opportunities were also envisaged to be different as well. The concentration of the study on high schools only was based on the fact that most of the learners that are left by emigrating parents are generally in high school. The learners are also at a teenage age where they are generally experiencing physical and emotional changes that are likely to compound the challenges being experienced at school (Fillipa, Cronje & Ferns, 2013). Thus, focusing on high school learners was predicted to yield more information on the educational challenges faced by left-behind learners in the country.

4.4.2 Selecting learners for the study

The target population constituted, at both schools, of all learners from Form 1-6 with both parents who had emigrated to the diaspora. There were 36 learners at School 1 and 49 learners at School 2 who had both parents in the diaspora. Out of these, six learners at each school, one from each class (Form 1 – Form 6) were randomly chosen by means of random numbers from stratified class lists of the target population. This was done in order to reduce any bias that may have resulted from pre-selecting the learners on the basis of some criteria already in operation or the judgement of the teachers at the school. Eight of the twelve leaners that were interviewed were girls while four were boys. The dominance of girls in the sample is explained by the fact that there were more girls in the target population than boys.

Additionally, some of the boys were also less open to participating and therefore opted out of the study before the selection was done. The ages of the learners ranged from 12 years for those in Form One to 18 years for those in Form 6. Three of the learners were living in child-headed households, two were living in the custody of non-relatives (domestic workers), while seven of the learners were in the custody of relatives: aunts, uncles, and grandparents. Two of the learners had parents that had divorced before going to the diaspora, while another two had parents that divorced after moving to the diaspora. Among the sample, three of the learners had parents that had never came back to the country to visit since their movement to the diaspora, while for the other nine learners, the parents periodically visited at least once every two years. Only three of the learners had parents that were remitting regularly and sufficiently, while for seven of the learners the remitting was low and less frequent. The parents for the remaining two learners were not remitting at all. The learners were interviewed on their experiences of living with guardians, challenges at home and at school. While the help of guidance and counselling teachers was sought, it was limited only to identifying learners with both parents in the diaspora. No breach of confidentiality was committed in this case since the teachers were already aware of the details regarding who the left-behind learners were.

4.4.3 Selecting teachers

The population for teachers was constituted by all teachers at the selected high schools. These teachers were listed and stratified according to the level at which they were teaching (Form 1-6). Where a teacher was teaching across different levels, he/she was listed only at the level with the highest teaching load as this signified more interaction with learners at that level. Only one teacher was randomly selected at each level for inclusion into the sample, bring the total participants at each school to six and the total sample to twelve teachers. Teachers were selected for interview on the premise that they were the ones interacting with left-behind learners and were also dealing with the implementation of inclusive education. As Zindi (2014) posits, the successful implementation of educational programmes mostly hinges on teachers who are responsible for helping learners meet there needs within the ambits of inclusive education.

4.4.4 Selecting teacher training institutions

While there are many teacher training institutions in Harare, purposive sampling was regarded as the best way to select only institutions that trained secondary school teachers for inclusion into the study. Two institutions, Institution A and Institution B were therefore selected. From Institution A, the Department of Teacher Development was chosen while at Institution B, the Department of Theory of Education was chosen to participate in the study. These were the departments that were responsible for training teachers at the respective institutions and were therefore envisaged to have relevant knowledge and information on the training of teachers for inclusive education. The institutions also offered teacher training at different levels, one at a diploma level and the other at a degree level, hence providing a wide spectrum of information and a basis for comparisons.

4.4.5 Selecting lecturers at teacher training institutions

The target population for lecturers consisted of all lecturers in departments that were responsible for teaching inclusive education approaches. Thus, at each teacher training institution, three lecturers were purposively selected into the sample, one each from the subject area of sociology, philosophy and psychology of education. The choice of lecturers from these subject areas was motivated by the fact that this is where issues of inclusive education were dealt with. These lecturers were thus more likely to provide

information on the content of the subjects as well as the skills that they imparted on student teachers. In addition, the lecturers also provided information on their understanding of vulnerability, the vulnerability of left-behind learners and the importance they attached to inclusive teaching methods for preservice teachers.

4.5 Data analysis

Data analysis is a mechanism for reducing and organising data to produce findings that require interpretation by the researcher (Burns & Grove, 2005). In the phenomenological approach used in this study, data analysis consisted of a series of systematic procedures that identified the essential features transformed data through interpretation (Groenwald, 2004). This study followed the phenomenological analytical procedures advocated for by Moustakas (1994). These procedures consisted of activities namely: a) Horizonalization; b) Clusters of meaning; c) Individual textural description; d) Individual structural description; e) Essential structure and; f) Reporting. Although the processes are presented here in a linear fashion to make it more understandable, data collection and analysis took place concurrently in a practice known as the constant comparative method of analysis.

4.5.1 Transcribing, translating and horizonalization

Transcribing is the procedure for producing a written version of an interview (Hancock, Windrigde & Ockleford, 2007). In this study interviews were transcribed verbatim and notes from observations were added. The interviews with left-behind learners were simultaneously transcribed and translated as these had were conducted in *Shona*, the local vernacular. Long statements were compressed into brief and more concise expressions and meaning units were determined. The process of transcribing all interviews familiarised the researcher with the data collected. After transcription, horizonalization then followed. This entailed going through data transcripts several times, and highlighting significant statements, sentences or quotes that provide an understanding of the experiences of these left-behind learners. Besides intimately knowing the data through reading transcriptions, the researcher also listened to audio recordings of the interviews. The aim was to become more fully aware of the 'lifeworld' of the participants so as to enter their 'frame of reference as suggested by Rogers (1951) cited by Burnard (1991). In addition, horizonalization also involved taking notes of both the content of the interviews as well as the researcher's impressions on

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participants in terms of their speech especially on how the participants spoke and the implications of their speaking on the truthfulness or otherwise of their answers.

4.5.2 Clusters of units of meaning

Clusters are typically formed by grouping units of meaning or themes together as the researcher identifies significant topics (Creswell, 1998; Moustakas, 1994). Statements were clustered into themes or meaning units, removing overlapping and repetitive statements. Under these broad categories (themes), sub-categories were formulated. The arrangement of the sub-categories used a 'selective coding' approach in which the categories were linked to the core categories. Coding at each stage was terminated when theoretical saturation was achieved and no further new information was gained. While this process of identifying key themes and forming categories in this study was interpretive in nature, it also included the perspectives and voices of the people who were interviewed.

4.5.3 Individual textural description

From the transcriptions and field notes, statements and themes were used to write individual textural descriptions on the varying experiences of different learners who remain in the home country when parents emigrate. In addition, the experiences of teachers were captured regarding meeting the needs of all learners, in particular, learners left by emigrant parents. Verbatim examples were included. This was done for each participant using the relevant, valid invariant constituents and themes.

4.5.4 Individual structural descriptions

Individual structural descriptions of the experiences of each participant were prepared on the basis of their individual textural descriptions and imaginative narrative as well as how they experienced the phenomenon in terms of the conditions, situations or contexts. Structural descriptions generally "involve seeking all possible meaning, seeking divergent perspectives and varying the frames of reference." (Creswell, 2007:235).

4.5.5. Essential structure, invariant structure or essence

In this process, focus was on the common experience of participants and making sense of the underlying meanings, at the same time considering individual variations. As put

forward by Groenewald (2004:21), "unique or minority voices are important counterpoints to bring out regarding the phenomena researched." Clusters of meanings therefore emerged, thus furthering the researcher's understanding of the essential structure of both the home and school experiences of left-behind learners and how teachers were dealing with the needs of these learners through inclusive education.

4.5.6. Reporting

This involved putting together the material into a meaningful format, making detailed comments about the findings, arranging the findings according to themes and topics and then drawing out key issues to be discussed. The aim was to communicate distinct critical elements of the phenomenon of left-behind learners. Interpretations and linkages related to the findings were made and the implications of the findings were drawn out as linkages were made with the wider literature. Thus, in addition to the review of literature prior to fieldwork to familiarize with key research issues, more literature was consulted during and after the survey as well as in the writing stage of the thesis.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter detailed and justified the methodological approach used to assess the challenges confronting learners who remain in Zimbabwe when parents migrate and to investigate how teachers were equipped to deal with the specific needs of these children as part of inclusive education. The phenomenological approach used in the study involved the use of semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis. Collected data was analysed following the analytical procedures advocated for by Moustakas (1994). The findings revealed by this methodology are presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE: LEARNER VULNERABILITY AND EXPERIENCES, TEACHER CAPACITATION AND TRAINING FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter provided a detailed methodology of the study. This chapter presents and discusses the findings of the study. It is divided into three sections with each section addressing different particular objectives. The first section answers the first two sub-research questions on the views of left-behind learners regarding guardianship, their vulnerability, experiences and educational challenges. The second section focuses on teachers and addresses the next two sub-research questions on teachers' views on the vulnerability of left-behind learners, the challenges the learners face, the teachers interaction with learners and the challenges that these teachers face in implementing inclusive education. The third, and last section presents results on lecturers' conceptualization of vulnerability and inclusive education and how the lecturers were capacitating teachers to deal with the specific needs of left-behind learners.

5.2 Guardianship, left-behind learners' experiences and challenges

This is the first of three data analysis sections which are presented in order to fulfil the study aim, which is to assess the challenges confronting learners who remain in Zimbabwe when parents migrate and to investigate whether teachers were equipped to deal with the specific needs of these learners as part of inclusive education. This section deals with the first two research questions: a) What were the views of learners who remain in Zimbabwe on their vulnerability and on living with guardians? and; b) What educational challenges were faced by learners left by emigrating parents in Zimbabwe? This section emphasizes the views of left-behind learners in understanding their challenges and experiences. As Loxton (2004) argues, the voices of children are frequently ignored in studies that concern them, often being relegated to a silent minority being spoken for by others. This study thus elevates the voices of these children by using direct quotes that capture and embody their experiences in ways that broadens the understanding of their vulnerability and challenges.

5.2.1 Guardianship

The history of international migration in the developing world in general indicates that families, at the first instance, rarely migrate as a unit (Halpern-Manners, 2011). Rather, one member of the family, who is usually the head, moves first and settles at the destination before calling upon the other family members to follow. When all spouses migrate, whether at the same time or one following the other, a decision has to be made regarding guardianship. Most parents rarely consult their children, but try to make the best choices about who, in their absence, would provide the best attention and care required by their children (Zhao, 2017; Owusu, 2011; Silver, 2006). In the Zimbabwean case, study results showed that the options ranged from children being left on their own, in the care of relatives or under the guardianship of non-relatives. The starting point for understanding left-behind learners' experiences is therefore to explore the issue of guardianship. Interviewed learners described how they were left, who they were left with and their living conditions in the absence of parents. It is important to note, at this point, that the different types of guardianships revealed in the study generally tended to influence the left-behind learners' experiences, and challenges.

5.2.1.1 Relatives as guardians

In the various cultures of the people of sub-Saharan Africa, it is a common practice to periodically send children to the extended family for temporal care and fostering (Owusu, 2011). In Zimbabwe, parents sometimes send their children to live with relatives in the rural areas until the challenges that necessitate such arrangements are dealt with (Potts, 2010). Even within urban and rural areas, the practice is also common due to the country's predominantly patriarchal structure which places much emphasis on the extended family and spreads the responsibility of raising children amongst a host of family members. The current trend, where parents migrate to international destinations and leave their children for much longer periods, is however, recent. This study found that many of the children were left in the care of relatives when their parents emigrated. Some of the relatives that were shouldering the responsibility of looking after the left-behind learners included uncles and aunts. A learner at School 2 had this to say:

> *"I stay with my uncle who is my father's older brother."*
>
> (Learner 3: School 2, Harare, 19thSeptember 2017)

While some of the parents migrated together, it was discovered that others divorced while overseas, further complicating the dynamics of guardianship. Other parents

divorced while in the country and then emigrated separately, leaving children in the care of grandparents. In Zimbabwe, grandparents are generally considered to be better carers because of their closer relations to the left-behind learners' parents. An interviewed learner had this to say:

> "Ever since the divorce and the departure of my parents separately to South Africa to work, I have been staying with my grandparents, my father's parents since I was 5 years old."
> (Learner 2: School 2, Harare, 19thSeptember 2017)

> "I stay with my aunt, who is my mother's sister. My father is in Britain and my mother is working in South Africa."
> (Learner 1: School 1, Harare, 13thSeptember 2017)

It is apparent from the above responses that most parents were comfortable entrusting their children to the custody of close relations: aunts, uncles and grandparents, bringing to the fore the importance of the extended family in the upbringing of children in Zimbabwe. As Ansell & Van Blerk (2004) argue, extended family relationships that are imbedded in most African people's culture make it easier for left-behind learners to be absorbed into the extended family when parents migrate. In some cases, some of the guardians were accepted with relative ease by left-behind learners who viewed them in the same light as their biological parents:

> "My uncle really takes good care of us. I do not call him uncle. I call him Daddy. That is why when we started this conversation I told you that I am staying with my daddy."
> (Learner 3: School 2, 19thSeptember 2017)

In the African context in general and the Zimbabwean environment in particular, a child does not belong to the parents alone. Rather, the child is seen as a responsibility for many, hence the common saying that 'it takes the whole village to raise a child.' According to Silver (2006), that general understanding, that a child is the responsibility of many, engenders joint responsibility for the care and upbringing of children to the extended family. Entrusting custodianship of the left-behind learners to relatives is thus a common phenomenon in the country. While the majority of the left-behind learners in the custody of relatives in Zimbabwe were born in that country, it should be noted that a few learners were born in the diaspora and then returned to the custody of relatives in Zimbabwe. One left-behind learners had this to say:

> *"I was born in South Africa in 2002 when my mother was working there since a long time ago. I started schooling in South Africa, but after Grade One I came back to Zimbabwe to stay with my maternal grandparents."*
> (Learner 2:School 1, 13th September 2017)

One of the reasons why some diaspora parents return their children home is their belief that the education in Zimbabwe is better than in the countries where they may have emigrated to. In addition, some parents feel that their children should grow up in an environment which inculcates Zimbabwean cultural values to their children. A significant majority of the parents prefer their children to join them later, especially during their tertiary education stage, when their value system has been solidified already. This was aptly captured by two left-behind learners who said:

> *"I was born out of Zimbabwe, but I was brought back here because my mother believes that the education system here is better especially before I go for tertiary education."*
> (Learner 3: School 2, 19th September 2017)

> *"My parents did not take me with them. They left me with my grandparents as they believe that there is high quality of education in Zimbabwe. They also want me to mature first before tertiary education as I learn some of the things the Zimbabwean way."*
> (Learner 2: School 1, 13th September 2017)

The question that remains unanswered is whether the ideals that emigrant parents seek for their children are achieved in their absence and whether guardians responsible for the education and socialisation of the left-behind learner's substitute credibly. While most emigrant parents aim to eventually send for their children after settling down well in the foreign country, this does not always materialise as parents may not find good paying jobs to enable them to adequately look after their children. In some cases, the parents even go through periods of unemployment. One left-behind learners explained this quite vividly:

> *"People back home think that someone is working and earning much in the diaspora, yet the money is not enough. My mother once invited me to Cape Town during the August 2015 school holidays. I came back and I am continuing to stay here with my aunts. I saw for myself how she is struggling to make ends meet in Cape Town."*
> (Learner 5: School 1, 13thSeptember 2017)

In this case, it is the left-behind learner who, after seeing the dire conditions under which the mother was living in the diaspora, opted to continue living with relatives in Zimbabwe. The upbringing of such a learner thus lay with relatives. In the majority of cases in the

study, the challenges that learners faced depended on the ability of guardians to care for, nature and protect the learner.

5.2.1.2 Non- relatives as guardians

While the majority of emigrating parents may generally favour relatives as guardians, there are situations that force parents to entrust children to non-relatives. This is particularly true where close relatives have also migrated or where relations with remaining relatives are not cordial. It may also be that the closest relatives may live in areas where there are no good schools. Thus, some parents have no alternative, but to entrust their children to non-relatives, be they friends or maids. This was revealed in the study where left-behind learners were left in the custody of a housemaid:

> *"Our parents migrated long back. I am staying with my younger brother and a housemaid."*
>
> (Learner 3: School 2, 19th September 2017)

> *"We were left with a maid. We have been staying with the current maid since 2015. Before that, we had other maids who would leave and others would come to take care of me and my young brother."*
>
> (Learner 4: School 1, 13th September 2017)

The above two participants were boys who were staying with maids. From the discussions held with the boys, the maids were doing everything for the learners who were not partaking in any household chores. While this may have seemed to be an advantage, the reality is that these boys were disadvantaged as they were not being taught essential chores crucial for later stages of life.

The issue of entrusting the care and upbringing of children to non-relatives such as maids is a recent phenomenon in the Zimbabwean environment. In addition to it being a result of parents lacking options for guardianship, it was also a status symbol, where the ability to employ a maid denoted wealth and class. In addition, the declining socio-economic situation in Zimbabwe, and the attendant rise in the number of unemployment people, was providing an oversupply of labour in the country. Hence, some maids were educated and even trained professionals who were unable to find work in their specific fields of expertise. An increasing number of emigrant parents were also finding it better to employ maids rather than entrust their children to relatives, which, in the long term may sour relations. Dealing with maids meant that they could 'hire and fire' at will without

worrying about future relations in the wider extended family set-up. Later sections of this thesis will interrogate whether employing maids present any real advantages in relation to the upbringing, socialization and overall development of the left-behind learners.

5.2.1.3 Children left on their own by emigrant parents

Child-headed households are not a new phenomenon in Zimbabwe. Foster et al., (1997) reported an increase in child-headed households in the country in the early 1990s due to the impact of HIV and AIDS which orphaned may children. The increase in AIDS deaths also occurred when the country was in an economic crisis resulting from the economic structural adjustment programme (ESAP). This meant that fewer households were in a position to take in additional members (i.e. orphans). Hence, most orphans were left to fend for themselves, with the elder children assuming parental roles. Three of the learners in interviewed in this study were living on their own, the younger children being cared for by the elder, but under-age siblings, creating child-headed households. One left-behind learner observed:

> *"We are staying on our own as children: myself, my sister and my brother."*
> (Learner 5: School 1, 13thSeptember 2017)

Some of the left-behind learners also expressed concern about other left-behind learners who were staying on their own. The major concern was on these learners face dangers such as drug abuse, prostitution and other dangers in the absence of parental protection. The severity of such vulnerability was expressed by one learner who said:

> *"It is a very dangerous situation having children living on their own. I am better off because I am living with my grandparents. Children living on their own have too much freedom and can do anything they can think of, especially some things which are not good for them, including abusing alcohol, or organising a lot of parties where bad behaviour is exhibited. Such parties, even nude parties, have flooded Harare."*
> (Learner 6: School 1, 13thSeptember 2017)

While it is understandable that some parents may have no extended family willing to take care of their children or cannot afford to pay a maid look after their children, children living on their own face numerous challenges and dangers that impact negatively on the living conditions as well as on their schooling. The following sections examine some of these challenges and consequences.

5.2.2 Challenges and experiences at home and at school

This section deals with the experiences as well as challenges that left-behind learners were encountering both at home and at school. While parental migration is generally undertaken with the intention of improving the lives and welfare of children that are left in the country of origin, UNICEF (2010) posits that such migration may actually serve as a catalyst for various challenges and risks that will eventually confront the left-behind learners. These risks and challenges may be present both at home and at school. Although the risks and challenges at home intersect with those at school and vice-versa, they are presented here separately and sequentially to make them more understandable.

5.2.2.1 Challenges and experiences at home

The challenges at home ranged from the lack of supervision and support, lack of socio-psychological support and the assumption of parental duties, among other challenges.

5.2.2.1.1 Misuse of remittances

To gain a good understanding of the effect of parental migration, left-behind learners were asked to give a brief background of the circumstances leading to their remaining in the country and the living conditions prior to and after parental emigration. All 12 left-behind learners interviewed highlighted the difficult socio-economic conditions in Zimbabwe that pushed their parents to emigrate. This is in line with Zhao's (2017:16) who asserts that "household migration is typically considered a livelihood strategy that is taken up due to economic deficiencies of the family." Parents thus move to improve the circumstances and wellbeing for the whole family, particularly children (Kufakurinane, Pasura & McGregor, 2014; Rapaport & Docquire, 2006). This understanding was pointed out by a number of participants:

> *"My parents left for the UK in 2008 when the political and economic situation here in Zimbabwe was at its worst. They went to look for work."*
> (Learner 3: School 2, 19thSeptember 2017)

> *"My father and mother are in Britain working since I was I0 years old. Now I am fourteen."*
> (Learner 5: School 2, 19thSeptember 2017)

The key driver to most of the parental emigrations was thus a search for better socio-economic opportunities. As Guo (2012) points out, the majority of these migrations are envisaged to have positive results in that remittances will be sent from abroad to finance household, educational and medical expenses back home. The study revealed that most parents from the high-income residential area had migrated to Europe, while the majority of parents from the low-income residential area had moved regionally. Only one left-behind learners in the low-income area had a parent who had emigrated to Britain. This difference was attributed to the high cost of visa and air-fares to Europe that could only be afforded by those from the high income areas. The differences in migration destination may also account for differences in the challenges that left-behind learners in the different income areas faced. What happens when parents remit back to Zimbabwe? The majority of the left-behind learners indicated that guardians were responsible for making decisions on the use of such remittances:

> *"Money for groceries is sent to my two aunts who are responsible for buying groceries for us."*
>
> (Learner 5: School 1, 13th September 2017)

> *"They send money yes, but the money is sent to my aunt. She is the one I am staying with. My parents do not send money to me even though I have an ID to open a bank account. So my aunt receives the money and pays school fees and buys groceries. Sometimes she gives me money for my personal needs."*
>
> (Learner 5: School 2, 19thSeptember 2017)

While Owusu (2011) asserts that remittances are important for local livelihoods as they have an ability to lift households out of poverty, this study sought to find out how left-behind learners were benefitting from remittances and how transparent guardians were regarding financial matters. The majority of the learners indicated that the handling of remittances was rarely transparent and that they experienced food shortages even when their parents were remitting. Others complained that school fees and stationery were not paid for timely despite remittances being received before schools open. Some left-behind learners argued that guardians were prioritizing remittances for their biological children:

> *"My mother sends money to my aunt who then pays school fees. But things are not well because there are always school fees arrears, yet the money is being sent. It seems they are misusing the money".*
>
> (Learner 6: School 2, 19th September 2017)

> *"My grandfather receives the money sent by my parents. However, he usually pays only half and uses the rest."*
>
> (Learner 2: School 1 13th September 2017)

This is similar to the observations by Rupande (2014) that some guardians converted remittances to personal use at expense of the left-behind learners' welfare. It is also prudent to note, at this point, that the misuse of remittances by guardians was prevalent among the guardians of learners at School 1 in the low-income residential area than those at School 2. It may also be that guardians of left-behind learners at School 2 were well-off economically and thus were not inclined to misuse remittances. This was explained by a left-behind learner whose parents was in Britain:

> *"My uncle goes to work and has a very good job. He sometimes goes out of the country on business and he really takes good care of us."*
>
> (Learner 3: School 2, 19[th]September 2017)

For the left-behind learners in School 1, the situation was different and chances of remittances being misused were high. This was because most guardians there were generally poor, sometimes using some of the remittances to cover own costs before the needs of left-behind learners:

> *"My father is in Britain working and my mother is in South Africa… they send money to my aunt ….. But there is always shortage of food in the house."*
>
> (Learner 1: School 1, 13[th]September 2017)

From the above discussion, one can conclude that the economic background of the guardian was playing a huge role in determining the way in which remittances were managed with the well-off guardians using remittances as expected. The misuse of remittances among poor guardians was high.

5.2.2.1.2 Irregular remittances

Another challenge facing the left-behind learners was that of parents remitting irregularly. Owusu (2011) points out that some migrant parents may face challenges in raising the requisite finance required by their dependents back home due to unemployment or high costs of living in the diaspora. Some emigrant parents may be living in abject poverty to the extent of not being able to remit. Under such

circumstances, the left-behind learners face a lot of risks such as malnutrition. Others may end up engaging in anti-social behaviour – drugs and prostitution – as a reaction to tough economic conditions at home. In this survey, the majority of the left-behind learners were not receiving consistent support from their emigrant parents were those whose parents were divorced. While some of the parents had divorced while still in the country, others had also divorced in the diaspora. In some circumstances, parents had remarried. Two left-behind learners affected by this said:

> *"The first year my mother went to South Africa was in 2011 after divorcing my father. At first she was working and sending money. This all stopped when she found a boyfriend who stopped her from working. Nothing is coming from her now. I am suffering. Actually, my school fees is paid for by a non-governmental organisation, MAVAMBO."*
>
> (Learner 6: School 1, 13th September 2017)

> *"My father does not send me any school fees. He does not do anything. My aunt pays my school fees with her own money. My mother just sends some money to help here and there."*
>
> (Learner 2: School 2, 19th September 2017)

The above quotes show unequivocally that some parents in the diaspora were not economically stable and thus were not remitting consistently nor sufficiently. It was revealed in the study that some left-behind learners had even dropped out of school due to lack of money. One left-behind learner indicated that her 14-year-old brother was at home as there was no money for fees for both of them. Another learner indicated that she knew left-behind learners that were not going to school because they had no money for school fees:

> *"I know of siblings who dropped out of school in Grade 7 because their diaspora-based parents were not sending money for their school fees. The guardians have no money school for school fees either and so some of these learners are now involved in illegal activities."*
>
> (Learner 2: School 1, 14th September 2017)

Cases of parents not remitting have disastrous effect on the left-behind learners. This is because poor guardians were generally unable to help in meeting various educational costs. A lecturer at Institution A even commented that:

> *"It is a sad situation; we are seeing some of the learners loitering in the streets without going to school yet the parents are in the diaspora in search of money."*
>
> (Lecturer: Institution A, 17th September 2017)

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This scenario of children of emigrant parents dropping out of school is in contrast with the observations of Alcaraz, Chiqular & Salced, (2012) that remittances from migrant parents increase educational opportunities for the left-behind learners by increasing the household budget and enabling households to invest in the educational development of children. It is therefore a concern when children drop out of school and parental emigration does not improve the resources of the family back home. In the Harare case, the economic capital that parental emigration was supposed to generate was not present, hence the education of left-behind learners was being sacrificed.

5.2.2.1.3 Substituting money for love

There is evidence that some migrant parents tend to sacrifice critical values such as love on their children and substitute it with money because of their long periods of absence (Cronje, 2011). A number of studies have identified the benefits of remittances on left-behind children (e.g. Adams & Page, 2005; Antman, 2011; James., Jenks, & Prout., 1998; Lu, 2014). Fillipa (2011) posits that money may sometimes act as a strong social presence of migrant parents as left-behind learners accept it as a currency of love. There is, however, concern that some parents may be overcompensating and commoditizing love, much to the detriment of their children.

This study identified love and money as two intertwined themes emerging from left-behind learners' narratives about their lives after parental emigration. Most of the left-behind learners indicated that money and material things cannot effectively substitute for physical and emotional presence or compensate for the suffering caused by separation from their parents:

> "*Despite an improvement in my material condition, the freedom and the maid doing almost everything for me, I miss my mother so much.*"
> (Learner 4: School 1, 13th September 2017).

> "*Some people might not understand it, but it is a difficult situation. I miss my father. Parents should always be there for their children.*"
> (Learner 2: School 2, 19th September 2017)

These quotes illustrate the depth of emotions shown by the left-behind learners regarding their longing for parental love. As Fillipa (2011) observes in her study on adolescence, their words may appear cold or detached, but portray a higher degree of vulnerability and loneliness. Longing, loneliness and sadness were among the most

frequently mentioned and observed emotional states among left-behind learners in this study. The majority of the interviewed girls, especially those in Form One and Form Two expressed their emotions more easily, perhaps indicating that younger learners in lower forms were more affected by their parents' absence than those at higher levels. Of the four male learners interviewed, one was very emotional and indicated that living with grandparents was stressful as he was expected to do all household chores:

"It is very stressful. I am responsible for every household task that you can think of."
(Learner 4: School 2: 19thSeptember 2017)

While left-behind learners that were staying with maids were happy that the maids did not control remittances, they also indicated that they missed their parents nevertheless. In general, though, most boys did not openly express their feelings and seemed to be bottling up their emotions, presumably because of the stereotypical belief in the country that boys have to be strong and not explicitly show emotion. One of the male left-behind learners interviewed in the study illustrated this point by saying:

"It is tough when your parents leave, but as a big brother I need to be strong for the sake of my little sister."
(Learner 4: School 2, 19thSeptember 2017).

Thus, even though boys were not openly displaying emotions, they were nevertheless as vulnerable as the female left-behind learners. All these learners were finding it tough to live without their parents. The money that their parents were sending, though necessary, could not substitutes for love. As the study results show, the departure of parents from Harare was undoubtedly impacting negatively on the well-being of the learners.

5.2.2.1.4 Lack of psycho-social support

The family environment created after the emigration of parents often offers insufficient protection and makes children more susceptible to a lot of dangers (Fillipa, Cronje & Ferns, 2013). For example, Cortes's (2008) in Ecuador, reports that children left with grandparents generally suffer from a lack of psycho-social support. The findings of this research are similar. Left-behind learners interviewed in this study articulated the lack

of psycho-social support in their lives in three contexts: Firstly, the learners felt that it was emotionally depressing when their achievements were not physically witnessed by their parents:

> *"At my age, parents should be there for us to see us grow and monitor our milestones."*
>> (Learner 5: School 1, 14th September 2017)

> *"I wish my father was communicating and coming back home to see how much I have grown."*
>> (Learner 5: School 2, 19th September 2017)

Secondly, left-behind learners found the absence of trusted confidants stressful, despite the presence of friends and relatives. When asked to whom they confide in during challenging times, left-behind learners had this to say:

> "*I just keep things to myself until I can talk to my mother. When I have problems some people ask me what the problem is because I will be too quite. My mother is the only who understands me. I just live with the people I live with because I do not have a choice. I do not confide in them.*"
>> (Learner 2: School 2, 19th September 2017)

> "*There are times I miss talking face to face with my mother and sharing some problems and life experiences. No one can really replace motherly love.*"
>> (Learner 3: School 1, 14th September 2017)

The foregoing quotes explicitly demonstrate the fact that most left-behind learners generally did not confide in their guardians. In the absence of their parents, the majority chose not to confide in anyone at all. Guo (2012) notes that although guardians can substitute for biological parents in some occasions, the help they offer is generally not adequate. The absence of biological parents may thus be a threat to the socio-cultural development of left-behind learners as they risk failing to progress to social adulthood (Kufakurinane, Pasura & McGregor, 2014). While in the Zimbabwean cultural context aunts and uncles play an important role in socialising children during puberty (Kambarami, 2006), results of this survey demonstrate that most left-behind learners had reservations in confiding critical issues to the extended family. This aligns with the assertion by Cronje & Fern's (2013) that the traditional structure of families in Zimbabwe is weakening and leaving adolescence without dependable mentors that are critical to the socialization process. In the absence of the parents, the left-behind learners were

vulnerable and exposed, without close confidants to guide and counsel them. As one learner puts it:

> *"There are things I cannot talk about with anyone. I need to confide these things to my father or mother for these are my immediate family."*
> (Learner 2: School 1, 13th September, 2017)

Thirdly, the majority of the left-behind learners interviewed reported missing role-models in their lives as their parents were away. Ansell &Young (2003), suggest that children have different levels of acceptance regarding the migration of their parents. Younger children, for example, may view migration as a form of neglect (Smeekens, Stroebe & Abakouminkm, 2012) and are likely to feel emotional detachment problems - feelings of abandonment, sadness, despondence, despair, anger, lack of trust and low self-esteem (Bakker, Elings-Pels & Reis, 2008). This creates what Pissin (2013) calls 'children at and as risks', children who generally face a permanent struggle against feelings of insecurity and neglect and tend to become emotionally unstable. Seven of the twelve left-behind learners interviewed in this study indicated that had hopes of joining their parents and felt neglected and rejected because those hopes were not fulfilled. This was summarised by some participants who said:

> *"My parents really abandoned me. All those promises they made about me joining them are no more. They don't worry about my well-being. They are only concerned with my siblings whom they are staying with, but as for me, it's my grandparents' duty that I even have food on the table."*
> (Learner 4: School 2, 19th September 2017)

> *"Sometimes I wonder what my mother thinks of when she has neglected me and my siblings. My brother is not even going to school."*
> (Learner 6: School 1, 13th September 2017)

While the left-behind learners may feel neglected or abandoned, it is prudent to remember that some of these parents were not intentionally leaving their children, but were unable to care for them in the diaspora. This, however, does not excuse parents that were simply being negligent. When parents cannot afford to support their children back home, this results in left-behind learners being shifted from one surrogate family to the other. Bakker, Elings-Pels & Reis (2009) found that child-shifting was common among left-behind learners in the Caribbean and that it generally resulted in psycho-social problems among the left-behind learners. Evidence from this study indicated that child-shifting was also prevalent in Harare:

"This year I am not living with my grandparents. I am staying with another aunt, who is my father sister, younger than the one who pays my school fees. That one is more aggressive than the older one whom I was staying with in the first year that my parents emigrated."

(Learner 2: School 2, 19thSeptember 2017)

"During the holidays I stay with my aunt. My father divorced my mother and is not contributing anything. However, he is always scolding me and coming to put his rules saying that I don't listen to him. How does he know I am like that when he doesn't want to be part of my life?"

(Learner 6: School 1, 14thSeptember 2017)

The instability that results from the continuous shifting of left-behind learners between different homes can be unsettling and disorganizing to the left-behind learners who end up being depressed. This finding is not peculiar to Zimbabwe alone. Researchers in Trinidad and Tobago found that at least a third of the left-behind learners exhibited serious levels of depression which was affecting schooling. Such children were more than twice as likely as other children to have emotional problems even though their economic status was improved (Bakker, Elings-Pels & Reis, 2009). Female participants in the study faced additional challenges, especially regarding their physical development such as menstruation and did not have anyone to help:

"Nowadays, we usually help each other as girls. Usually here at school we just sit and start talking and discussing various issues and that's how we learn. When I started menstruating, I was at boarding school and I just learnt from others."

(Learner 3: School 2, 19thSeptember 2017)

"I really miss my mother. There are issues I wish my mother was around to listen to, especially when other children talk about their mothers and what they are doing with them."

(Learner 6: School 1, 13thSeptember 2017)

That most left-behind learners were missing their parents is not in question as the preceding discussion has shown. In the absence of parents and close confidants, however, the social media has taken an important role in the socialization process. Learners are able to use electronic gadgets like phones to research on the internet. The reliability of the information they access, however, cannot be guaranteed. Most teachers interviewed in this study felt that unsupervised surfing on the internet was exposing most learners to social ills like pornography, drug abuse and prostitution. In cases were the

left-behind learners were living with maids or on their own, the dangers were even more as there was virtually no control as to what is accessed.

5.2.2.1.5 Role change and role addition

The review of literature in Chapter Three pointed out how left-behind learners are expected to carry out household duties previously carried out by parents (Fillipa, Cronje & Ferns, 2013; Rupande, 2014; Baker, Elings-Pels & Reis, 2009). Many of the left-behind learners interviewed in this study, especially girls living with guardians and in child headed families, pointed out that they had taken on additional roles and responsibilities like sweeping, fetching water, ironing, washing dishes, cooking and many other activities:

> "When I wake up in the morning my duty is to sweep the house before I bath for school. After school, I run errands for some people in the house. I do everything I am asked to do by anyone in the house."
>
> (Learner 1 School 1, 14th September 2017)

In a similar case, a 14-year-old girl, the youngest in the household, indicated that they were staying on their own as their guardian, an aunt, had left them and was now renting a place with her husband. This was despite the fact that the children were left in her custody:

> "I am the youngest and in Form One. My cousin-sister is in Form Four and she rarely spends the day at home. She just wakes up and cooks only for herself. When I come back in the afternoon, my cousin sister expects me to do all the household chores. My duties are to clean, cook, fetch water from the borehole a distance from home, wash the dishes, do laundry and iron for everyone."
>
> (Learner 3: School 1, 13th September 2017)

Some interviewed learners indicated being forced to shoulder responsibilities that were inappropriate for their age. Some girls, for example, were becoming substitute mothers for younger siblings, taking on household chores such as cooking and cleaning. Boys, on the other hand, were assuming headship of the household and providing guidance and support for younger members as well as taking on repairs and maintenance tasks. A male left-behind learner interviewed captured this situation by saying:

> *"I live with my aunt. I do everything at home, from cleaning, cooking, fetching water and repair work. My aunt doesn't help at all."*
> (Learner 4: School 2, 19th September2017)

These role changes and additions were stressful, but left-behind learners were obligated to take on the roles as guardians would not help them as parents would. Some of the left-behind learners emphasized that they had no choice but to do as expected:

> *"Though I miss my mother, I am okay. I can manage because there is nothing else I can do. I can't change the situation."*
> (Learner 5: School 1, 14thSeptember 2017)

Left-behind learners thus had no choice but to integrate into the general family life of their guardians, regardless of what their views were. By partaking in the duties, chores and other activities, they aimed to be recognized and accepted as part of the families. Those left-behind learners that were living on their own or with maids were also assuming adult roles. Hanson & Woodruff (2003) studying in Mexico, found out that some left-behind learners engage in decision making that is far above the comprehension of their ages (e.g. budgeting). The stress and challenges that come with assuming such responsibilities was captured by one learner who described her situation as follows:

> *"To make decisions as a child is a challenge. There are some things which are needed in the home and we may not have adequate money. It is hard to prioritize because all things will be important, but there will be no extra money."*
> (Learner 5: School 1, 13thSeptember 2017)

While it is a challenge for left-behind learners to live on their own, the findings of this study indicate that more parents preferred to leave learners on their to avoid sending more money when learners reside with guardians. However, teachers interviewed in this study pointed out that sending money directly to left-behind learners created problems as the learners misused and abused the money.

5.2.2.1.6 Acrimonious relationship with guardians

The majority of the learners interviewed for this study, particularly girls, reported that they had difficult relationships with guardians. The conflict seemed to stem from the huge generation gap between the guardians and the left-behind learners. As one left-behind learner said:

"Guardians should be supportive and not expect us to always dance to their tune. Sometimes guardians ill-treat you because your parents are not sending enough money. They forget that I will be innocent and just a victim of circumstances. Some guardians are not approachable when you have challenges."

(Learner 6: School 1, 13th September 2017)

"Because my parents are not around I don't have a voice in the home and people I live with don't want to listen to my concerns as a human being. I am ill- treated as compared to my aunt's child."

(Learner 2: School 2, 19th September 2017)

Misunderstandings between guardians and left-behind learners may also arise when learners feel that guardians restrict them from communicating with parents at will. Some of the left-behind learners in the study reported that their rights were being violated in the name of being taken care of. Some left-behind learners indicated that they reported abuse to parents, but were urged to keep quite in order to avoid creating acrimonious relationships with guardians. This is what some of them had to say:

".......my mother's sister can counsel you, but she does it in a rough manner. If it was my mother it was going to be different. When my mother counsels me, she does it in a good way and out of love."

(Learner 6: School 2, 19thSeptember 2017)

"Since she is not my mother she has her own expectations which are different from my mother's. Sometimes there are differences in the way she treats me as compared to how she treats her own children."

(Learner 1: School 1, 13thSeptember 2017)

From the above views it is possible to deduce that some guardians were imposing codes of conduct and rules without due consideration to the feelings, needs and aspirations of left-behind learners. Fillipa (2011) argues that left-behind learners under the care of guardians may become marginalised and not given agency and hence become powerless. This sense of powerlessness may eventually lead to deviant or anti-social behaviour. Some of the codes of conduct disliked by interviewed learners involved being restricted from speaking to parents when they wanted to. Most had no personal cell phones and were only communicating when the guardians wanted them to, and in most cases without privacy:

"When my mother phones and its only my aunt around she ask me to go and talk to her in private but if my aunt's husband is there he commands me to put the phone on speaker so that they can also hear the conversation."

"My mother once bought me a phone but my aunt took it away saying that I am too young to have a phone. However, I believe the real issue is that she thinks I will tell my mother how they are ill-treating me and giving first preference to their child, yet my parents are sending them money."

This lack of privacy and sometimes overly regulated access to communication meant that left-behind learners had no room to express their true feelings to their parents. It may be that some guardians feared giving left-behind learners' freedom to communicate so that they would not report the misuse of remittances or ill-treatment. Some learners reported that they were not given enough basics, especially food, and so guardians did not want this reported. As one learner said:

"My aunt makes sure she packs her son's lunchbox to school with good food. I am expected to carry just dry bread to school for the whole day. When I come in the afternoon there will be no food for me and I will have to wait for supper. She believes that the dry bread I take to school is enough for the whole day."

From the foregoing discussion, it is clear that some guardians were mistreating left-behind learners left in their custody. Maslow's hierarchy of needs makes it clear that physiological needs have to be satisfied first before any other needs are met (Kaur, 2013). Hungry learners can therefore not be expected to perform well in school. Learners lacking basic needs are susceptible to sexual abuse and molestation when they seek money or food while at school. While this study did not confirm the existence of such abuse, the fact that some left-behind learners expressed being deprived of adequate food and educational material may be fertile ground for abuse and such issues should be further researched.

5.2.2.1.7 Increased delinquency and behavioural changes

There is no documented evidence on behavioural problems of left-behind learners. However, Kufakurinane, Pasura & McGregor (2014) suggests that some of the learners, particularly those without adequate guidance, may be vulnerable to negative characteristics like delinquency, recklessness, snobbishness and profligacy and disrespectful as well as lacking in good manners. Bakker, Eling-Pels& Reis (2009)

contends that there may be increased delinquency and behavioural change by left-behind learners due to their attachment to material resources, misuse of money and in some cases, too much freedom and independence. When parents remit huge amounts of money to compensate for their absence, they damage their children who may abuse the money. Some teachers interviewed in this study pointed out that some left-behind learners with access to excess resources tend not to obey authority:

> "*Some of these children don't listen or obey their guardians. The guardians sometimes comply with the demands and expectations of the children for fear that emigrant parents may stop or reduce remittances.*"
>
> (Teacher 6: School 1, 13th September 2017)

Sometimes, left-behind learners with excess money may feel superior to guardians and may not be controlled or reprimanded. This often leads to crime and violence, particularly when guardians give up and no longer reprimand them. Lack of parental authority increases delinquency as well as behavioural and developmental anomalies which may affect schooling experiences. Ukwatta (2010), in his study on children left behind by parents in West Africa noted that two thirds of the interviewed families attributed changes in the behaviour of the children to parental migration. The negative changes included moodiness, bad behaviour at school, joining gangs and use of alcohol and drugs. De Hass (20I0) however cautions against making blanket assertions based on just a few isolated studies, but rather calls for more systematic empirical enquiries.

5.2.2.1.8 Communication between parents and left-behind learners

Communication is a necessary tool to bridge the gap between the left-behind learners and the migrant parents. When communication is compromised, hindered or disrupted, it may result in emotional disengagement: stress, anxiety, frustrations and feelings of rejection (Zhao, 2017). In this study, seven of the twelve left-behind learners reported experiencing breaks in communication with their parents. Some of the learners indicated that their parents were experiencing financial problems. Nevertheless, some left-behind learners exhibited high levels of anxiety when they were unable to keep connected to their parents, especially as they did not have phones:

> "*There is no money to buy a phone to communicate with my mother. My mother also doesn't have a phone as the boyfriend she is staying with took the phone away from her. It has been long since I communicated with my mother, but it hurts me.*"
>
> (Learner 6: School 1, 13th September 2017)

"Since 2010 I have never talked to my father. Some people might not understand it, but it's a difficult situation. Parents should always be there for their children."

(Learner 2: School 2, 19th September 2017)

One of the left-behind learners who was in Form Six indicated that she was expected to have a laptop for research since computers at the school were accessible only during part of the day and could not be used at night when she had time to work on most of her assignments. Her parents had, however, indicated that they had no money to buy one for her. She thus felt abandoned and of being rejected.

For those parents that were communicating, it on through cell phones and tablets via applications such as WhatsApp, e-mail, Skype, and Facebook. Parreñas (2001) refers to this reliance on different modes of communication to bridge the gap with children as 'mobile phone parenting'. A learner who was happy with the improved technology had this to say:

"Yes, I communicate on social media platforms like what's app, Facebook, Instagram and on Skype"

(Learner 3: School 2, 19th September 2017)

However other learners indicated that they still needed the physical presence of parents in a lot of matters. While the telephone contact was vital, it was not an entirely satisfactory substitute for the learners to keep in touch with their diaspora parents.

5.2.2.2 Educational challenges and interaction with teachers

Education is one of the most important indicators of children's well-being. It is also a foundation of human capital which influences future occupations and quality of life (Guo, 2012). In as much as emigration of parents is believed to improve educational experiences through increased remittances, several studies have shown that children who remain in the home country constitute a vulnerable group in society regarding their educational pursuits (Bakker, Elings-Pels & Reis, 2009; Feng-hu, 2013). Their educational experiences may thus be negatively affected. This section deals with the educational challenges that were confronting left-behind learners regarding school chores, homework, school meetings, anxiety, and communication with teachers.

5.2.2.2.1 Household chores affecting school work

An extensive review of literature in Chapter Three has shown that the emigration of parents bequeaths an emotional burden to left-behind learners which may disrupt households and negatively affect school attendance and normal family life (Fillipa, 2011; Acosta 2006; Hanson & Woodruff 2003). The reduction in adult role models within the household may also increase the child-rearing responsibilities of remaining household members, placing greater demands on older children to assist in running and supporting the household (Acosta, 2006). These additional roles make it more difficult for left-behind learners to remain in school (Hanson & Woodruff, 2003). Learners interviewed in this study indicated that they were sometimes over-burdened by the additional household chores and did not find enough time for schoolwork. Some of the learners were resorting to lying to guardians to create time for their schoolwork:

> *"When I have homework and I get home I just lie to my cousin sister that I am required by a particular teacher to go back to school in the afternoon so that I can go back and do my homework- lying in this case helps me because if I don't do that my schoolwork will suffer."*
> (Learner 3: School 1, 13th September 2017)

> *"I always get to school late. Sometimes I get to school already tired because I do household chores first before going to school."*
> (Learner 6: School 2, 19thSeptember 2017)

The absence of parents was thus creating negative psychological effects on left-behind learners resulting in the loss of concentration at school. It should be pointed out that the mere fact that children were doing work at home did not necessarily affect their schoolwork. It is, however, the additional work that was negatively affect left-behind learners by reducing time for schoolwork.

5.2.2.2.2 Homework

It has generally been argued that children from migrant households are at more at risk of leaving school as they lack motivation, guidance and because of declining performance (UNICEF, 2004). The lack of parental supervision and monitoring is often the cause of declining school performance among children of emigrant parents as caregivers or guardians cannot be relied upon to successfully supervise the homework of left-behind learners and monitor their performance. This was revealed by learners who said:

> *"My aunt never assists me. The husband is an apostle, thus most of the times she is away to other countries for church business. She is rarely*

home. When it comes to my homework, I do it alone or come to school early so that my classmates can assist me."

<div align="right">(Learner 1 School 1, 13th September 2017)</div>

"My grandparents are old, my grandfather is 78 years and my grandmother is 68so most of the times I get assistance in our neighbourhood as there are a lot of educated people. I sometimes go to ask for homework assistance to some of these people."

<div align="right">(Learner 2: School 1, 13th September 2017)</div>

It was quite apparent from these descriptions by learners that some guardians were not assisting them with homework. Rather some learners were getting assistance from neighbours, friends or through self-help on the internet. The challenge however was that some of these children were exposed to dangers such as possible sexual abuse from those that were helping them. In rare cases, some left-behind learners were being assisted by the maids. This was not unusual as the dire economic conditions in the country forced people with higher levels of education to work as maids. As one 13-year-old learner put it:

"Our maid passed her advanced level examination and she helps us with homework ever since I was in Grade Six. Even the other previous maids used to help me with my homework."

<div align="right">(Learner 4: School 1, 13thSeptember 2017)</div>

Other learners were resorting to extra-lessons:

"We go for extra lessons in the afternoon, so this extra teacher is the one who helps us with our homework."

<div align="right">(Learner 3: School 2, 19th September 2017)</div>

However, not all parents though were affording the extra tuition required. While most of the left-behind learners from the high-income areas indicated that they could afford this extra tuition, those from the low-income residential area pointed out that their parents could not afford extra lessons. These left-behind learners were therefore faced with challenges that were negatively affecting their schooling.

5.2.2.2.3 School meetings and consultations

Meetings and consultations are important for teachers and parents to engage in a one-on-one discussion. These meetings are important for the welfare of the learners. However, study results indicated that some of the people who were attending the

meeting were either too young or too old to help the learner with the feedback. One of the children living in a child headed family said:

> *"My cousin sister, who is one year older than me comes for consultation. It is difficult for me to really benefit from the consultation because of the age difference. Some issues need teacher consultation with the real parent or a mature adult, for example a teacher can effectively convince a parent about what needs to be done. In my case I asked my mother for a laptop and she said I am troublesome and I must learn to live according to my means. If she was at the consultation, she would have understood the importance."*
>
> <div align="right">(Learner 5: School 1, 13thSeptember 2017)</div>

This complaint was also raised by teachers who felt that some of the people who were coming for consultation were not serious. The teachers alleged that some of the guardians were just coming for consultation to fulfil an obligation, but did not follow up on the feedback given to assist the learner. Age difference also counted as learners tend to listen more to adult advice than to advice from their age mates. Some left-behind learners had no-one to represent them at consultations:

> *"When I have issues to be discussed at school no one of the people I am living with or my aunts is prepared to stand in for my mother."*
>
> <div align="right">(Learner 5: School 1, 13th September 2017)</div>

> *"My grandparents are too old and say they can't stand in for my uncle when he is away on business. These are the times I wish my parents were around."*
>
> <div align="right">(Learner 6: School 2, 18th September 2017)</div>

This is a cause for concern given the importance of parents or guardians fully playing a role in the educational welfare of learners. Mazzucato et al., (2014) posit that parental involvement and monitoring are robust predictors of children's academic achievement. However, in the absence of such monitoring, it is predicted that children will perform poorly in school. Inclusive education is therefore not only about teachers, but also about parents and guardians playing their role in all the schooling spheres.

5.2.2.2.4 Left-behind learners waiting to emigrate

In general, most learners are initially left behind in the country with guardians as a temporary measure as parents want to settle first before asking their children to follow. However, challenges of legalising migration, stringent entry policies and limited access

to public goods in the destination country can be a challenge (Kufakurinane, Pasura & McGregor, 2014). In South Africa, for example, the government tightened immigration laws regarding residency of families due to the scale of movement from Zimbabwe. Hence most of the children who were left with the hope of following have been stuck in the country years later. In addition, some parents undocumented, making it difficult for their children to follow. In such situations, where the left-behind learners are always 'waiting to migrate', hopelessness results and school performance is affected:

> *"I applied for visa before and was denied and I was stressed. Fortunately for me my parents come every Christmas so they is no point of me to continue weeping."*
>
> (Learner 4: School 2; 18th September 2017)

According to study results, a number of left-behind learners were 'waiting to migrate' while others had lost hope of ever joining their parents in the diaspora. There was concern that these learners were not perform well due to lack of attendance, reduced concentration and lack of motivation to excel in a school environment that they consider temporary.

5.2.2.2.5 Non-communication of parents with teachers

Good communication bridges the gap between people, benefits the learners and breeds success (Aronson, 1995; Berger, 1991). When parents and teachers communicate, they are able to trace the academic journey of a learner and both parties can intervene and assist where necessary. However, results from this study show that there was generally little communication between teachers and the diaspora parents. Some teachers emphasized the importance of communication by saying:

> *"Diaspora parents should make sure they also track the developments of their children through communicating with teachers and guardians so that together with the guardians they can bring up a good child who is well behaved."*
>
> (Teacher 5: School 2, 19th September 2017)

While the limited communication of diaspora parents with teachers may be because they trust guardians to act for them, most learners listen better to their biological parents. Teachers indicated that it was necessary for parents to show learners that they were

concerned beyond just providing monetary resources. In as much as guardians substitute for parents, biological parents must bridge the gap and always be updated directly by teachers on the performance of their children.

5.2.2.2.6 School needs not paid for in time or neglected

It is the role of guardians to make sure that the needs of the left-behind learners are met as they are the ones on the ground. Study results, however, showed that some left-behind learners were facing challenges regarding the provision of educational needs: school fees, books and stationery as well as food for school. One participant had this to say on challenges related to food:

> "*If I ask for extra food for lunch from my mother, she thinks I am being extravagant. But I am an advanced level student and spend the whole day at school. I just accept the situation and life goes on."*
>
> (Learner 5: School 1, 13th September 2017)

When parents are away they might not understand situations on the ground in relation to the real needs of their children. Some may even want to cut on what they believe to be unnecessary expenditure given their limited resources. However necessary payments need to be done on time. Asked whether their school fees and educational needs were being paid for in time, the responses from learners were varied:

> *"Sometimes my aunt doesn't pay all the school fees at once, yet my parents will have sent the money. She pays half the fees and uses the rest for other things. We are beginning a new term now but there is a $36 balance from last term's fees that has not been paid."*
>
> (Learner 3: School 1, 13th September 2017)

> *"I have problems with getting exercise books. If I ask my aunt for books she takes her time. It seems as if she concentrates more on her child than on me. She does things first for her child and this affects my school work."*
>
> (Learner 2: School 2, 18th September 2017)

The study results reveal that some guardians were abusing remittances and this was affecting the schooling of the left-behind learners when their school needs were delayed or not being met at all. The most affected left-behind learners were those at School 1 the low-income residential area where the majority of guardians were generally poor. In contrast, most left-behind learners at School 2 in the high-income area reported experiences fewer problems regarding the abuse of remittances and the late payment

of fees. Some learners also pointed out that some emigrant parents were not remitting regularly:

> "*I know of learners that are dropping from school in Grade 7 because the parents are not sending money. The guardians also do not afford to pay school fees for these children's secondary education. Some of these children are now being involved in illegal activities.*"
>
> (Learner 2: School 1, 13th September 2017)

Thus, the problem that the left-behind learners were facing regarding late or non-payment of school expenses was due to a combination of negligent parents that were not remitting regularly and guardians that were diverting remittances to own use. All this negatively affected left-behind learners at school through absenteeism, and lack of concentration while worrying about unpaid school expenses.

5.2.2.2.7 Too much money affecting the education of left-behind learners

The review of literature in Chapter Three discussed the issue of parents sending too much money and goods to their children. It was shown several of the reviewed studies that this was negatively affecting education of left-behind learners (Chikwature, Oyedele & Ntini, 2016; Kufakurinane, Pasura & McGregor, 2014). Results from this study concurred with those findings as excessive remittance were negatively affecting the schooling of left-behind learners:

> "*Some learners tend to concentrate more on their money and goods at the expense of schoolwork. The learners are always thinking of their money and not listening to what the teachers will be saying.*"
>
> (Learner 3: School 1, 13th September 2017)

This description was common among many learners and served to indicate the fact that in as much as remittances are necessary, some left-behind learners who had access to significant remittances were ignoring their school work and focussing on the money. The good intentions by parents to ease the lives of their children was thus spoiling some of the learners and effectively destroying their educational careers. As one learner pointed out:

> "*At every school there is a "Flambo"…. everywhere there is someone who always wants to show off. Some learners are even using their school fees or grocery money to buy expensive clothes, gadgets or food at school or showing off the gadgets their parents bought them.*"
>
> (Learner 5: School 1, 13th September 2017)

In this context *'flambo'* refers to a learner who wants attention and is always showing off. The *flambo's* educational experiences is thus likely to be negative as concentration is on showing off and not on school work. Some learners also felt that bragging and showing off at school was affecting teachers who were not remunerated adequately. but were teaching some learners with excessive cash:

> *"Some teachers think the bragging learners want to get more attention than teachers and the teachers sometimes develop negative attitude towards the learners."*
>
> (Learner 4: School 2, 18th September 2017)

The negative attitude by some teachers was ultimately defeating the whole concept of inclusivity as all learners need assistance equally to achieve their educational goals. Negative attitudes were rather reducing the chances of the learners to be assisted. Parents must therefore follow up on how the money they remit is used.

5.2.2.2.8 Lack of effective interaction with teachers

Interaction between teachers and learners is an important part of inclusive education. All learners should be treated the same and their needs met regardless of any differences. While some needs, such as physical disability, are transparent and can therefore be easily seen, the psycho-social challenges experienced by left-behind learners may be hidden until teachers identify them. For that to happens, however, learners need to open up so that they can be helped. In this study, it was discovered that some left-behind learners were experiencing challenges, but were not open about their challenges. Teachers were thus struggling to identify them. Left-behind learners that were reserved were the most disadvantaged as they rarely opened up when they had problems:

> *"Some learners don't want to share their personal information with teachers as they won't be sure how confidential the information will be kept. They think that they may confide in someone and then the information is exposed the learner will experience more problems."*
>
> (Learner 5: School 2, 18th September 2017)

> *"I do not share my problems with strangers, even my teachers or friends. I would rather wait to get airtime and talk to my mother."*
>
> (Learner 6: Mount Pleasant, 18th September 2017)

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This description was common among interviewed learners and shows that some of them were not discussing their problems. Rather they were bottling them up, which was damaging them emotionally and negatively affecting their schooling. Only a few learners indicated being able to share their challenges with teachers. Even then, these learners were very selective as to who to confide in:

> "I sometimes approach my teachers when I have challenges. Personally, I have some individual teachers that I approach. I don't trust every teacher at the school."
>
> (Learner 3; School 2, 18 September 2017)

While some left-behind learners may be reserved, it was revealed that some teachers were not approachable. Thus, in as much as some left-behind learners were reserved, teachers should also have been proactively open to encourage the learners to approach them for help when necessary. Only a few left-behind learners reported that they were helped by guidance and counselling teachers when in need. Having heard the voices of children on their experiences and challenges both at home and at school, the next section looks at how teachers were interacting with learners and helping them meet their needs as part of inclusive education.

5.3 Teachers' interaction with left-behind learners

This section concentrates on the perspectives of teachers in order to answer two questions: a) What were the teachers' perspectives on the challenges faced by learners who are left behind by emigrating parents in Zimbabwe? and; b) What challenges were teachers facing in interacting with left-behind learners and how where they dealing with the challenges as part of inclusive education?

5.3.1 Teachers' perspectives on vulnerability and inclusion

It would be remiss to examine how teachers were dealing with challenges facing left-behind learners without a brief discussion on the teachers' understanding of vulnerability and inclusion. This is because, over and above the direction given by the curricula and other guidelines, the ways in which teachers deal with challenges is influenced by their understanding and knowledge of the concepts.

5.3.1.1 Defining vulnerability in relation to learners

All participants to the focus group discussions defined vulnerability as relating to learners' exposure to danger due to circumstances and being disadvantaged and susceptible to harm:

> "*When learners are exposed to danger because of certain situations such as taking care of an HIV positive parent or the girl child being vulnerable because of being a weaker sex.*"
>
> (Teacher 3: School 1, 12th September 2017)

> "*Vulnerability is when children are susceptible to any kind of harm which can be physical, emotional and or sexual because of lack of protection. These children no longer have protection and are therefore susceptible to people or situations which may destroy them. These disadvantages can impact on them even later in life as adults.*"
>
> (Teacher 1: School 2, 19th September 2017)

From the above responses, one can surmise that being vulnerable is life threatening and has consequences on many aspects of the individual, both in the short and the longer term. While results of physical vulnerability may be seen in the short term, it may be years before emotional damage manifests. As Kumalo (2013) notes, most vulnerable learners have no reliable social safety networks to depend upon. For left-behind learners, the problem is compounded by parents being thousands of kilometres away in the diaspora from where they cannot be relied to give immediate support.

5.3.1.2 Educational inclusion

Generally, most teachers had rich explanations on the meaning of inclusive education. This may have been due to their being exposed to the new high school curriculum resulting from the recommendations of the 1999 Nziramasanga Commission on Education. This curriculum listed inclusion as one of the pillars of education. Various teachers interviewed in this study thus defined educational inclusion as:

> "*…teachers treating all learners as the same no matter their differences and integrating all learners regardless of differences in physical ability or inability.*"
>
> (Teacher 2: School 1, 12th September 2017)

> "*It means the education system should accept all learners from different backgrounds and with different capabilities and abilities.*"

The above quotes show that the teachers' understanding of educational inclusion was in line with that of UNESCO (2008) which underscores the involvement and accommodation of every learner, particularly respecting the educational rights of vulnerable and marginalised groups that are at risk of exclusion or underachievement. It is however important to note that the majority of teachers emphasized inclusivity that revolves around physical disability or differences. Westwood (2013) asserts that such a notion of inclusivity is narrow and leaves out other affected learners, such as those left behind by emigrating parents. As one teacher pointed out:

> *"All groups of vulnerable learners should be catered for. This includes even 'the exceptionally gifted' learners who are usually ignored."*
> (Teacher 1: School 2, 19thSeptember 2017)

Inclusive education in Zimbabwe is more focussed on classical vulnerabilities, to the exclusion of other vulnerabilities. As the above teacher points out, even exceptionally gifted students also deserve attention. The fact that they are academically brilliant does not mean that they are not vulnerable. It simply means that they may require a different kind of individual assistance to achieve their educational goals. This is the same with left-behind learners. Some of them may not have physical disabilities or suffer financially, but may still be vulnerable in other ways so as to require individual attention. Unless such contemporary forms of vulnerability are recognised, the notion of a truly inclusive education will remain elusive. As Ainscow (2005) points out, inclusive education should overcome any barriers to participation that may be experienced by learners. For left-behind learners, these barriers include, but are not limited to inadequate time to focus on schoolwork, lack of help to do homework, negative attitudes from teachers that see the them as privileged, as well as little support to deal with emotional and psychological pressures. It is necessary therefore to have continuous pedagogical reorganization within the education system in order to generate inclusive settings where not only physical, but social, cultural, economic and individual diversity is taken into consideration.

5.3.2 Training

Having discussed the teachers' knowledge and understanding of the concepts of vulnerability and inclusion, this sub-section now focuses on the training that teachers received, both at teacher training colleges and in the field, to enable them to deal with the vulnerability of left-behind learners. The starting point for this discussion is therefore on the policies that guide inclusive education and how such policies influence the training of teachers.

5.3.2.1 Guiding Policies on inclusive education

All teachers that were interviewed were not aware of any policies guiding inclusive education in the country. This validates the observation made by Chireshe (2013) that Zimbabwe has no single policy explicitly dealing with inclusive education. Most of the knowledge that teachers had was acquired from their 'Theory of Education' modules, which however, were not specifically dealing with inclusive education, but only had a small component in the curriculum. Jenjekwa, Rutoro & Runyowa (2013) argue that this absence of a vibrant inclusive education policy in teacher education in Zimbabwe is a major drawback in mainstreaming inclusive education in the country's schools and tertiary institutions. An inclusive education policy in the country would cascade to teacher education institutions such that pre-service teacher training would be able to focus more explicitly on teaching for inclusive education. A number of participants indicated that the government is awakening to the need to approach inclusive education holistically. This was reflected in the new Zimbabwe Education Curriculum Framework (Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, 2017) which sets out the common aims and objectives of the education system in the country. Amongst the principles underpinning this new curriculum are issues of inclusivity, diversity and respect (*Ubuntu/unhu*). It is hoped that these principles may lead to a more dedicated focus on inclusive education than is the case currently. Regarding the new curriculum and inclusive education, participants had this to say:

> "*The new curriculum which was crafted in 2015 is advocating for 'Ubuntu' so that we have a whole person, there is more emphasis being put on inclusive education so that all learners no matter their differences have equal opportunities".*

(Teacher 5: School 1, 13th September 2017)

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> *"If we look at the new curriculum which runs from 2015 to 2022, the syllabuses have been formulated to cater for different learners, so one of the major thrust of this new curriculum is a focus on inclusion."*
> (Teacher 4: School 2, 19th September 2017)

There were however uncertainties about the exact nature of the changes that the curriculum would bring and how it would be implemented. This was primarily because very little documentation existed to operationalize the curriculum beyond the framework document, which in itself was a summary of the need for a new curriculum, aims, principles, pillars and the exit outcomes envisaged to result (Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, 2017). The envisaged changes were not well articulated and teachers were generally uncertain as to what had to happen, how and when. Thus one teacher had this to say:

> *"Some of the changes brought by the new curriculum are bringing confusion, and we might fail to fully help these vulnerable learners if we do not understand what we have to do."*
> (Teacher 5: School 1, 12th September 2017)

Beyond the problems that were likely to be experienced due to inadequate information on the new curriculum, some teachers argued that the amount of work that one was expected to perform in terms of the curriculum content requirements was enormous, to the point of disabling teachers from giving specific attention to individual learners. Individual social record books, which are central to documenting individual learners' social history, challenges and needs, were relegated to the periphery as teachers scrambled to cope with the enormous workloads which they considered core to their teaching duties. Without adequate attention being paid to individual learners, inclusive education is therefore unlikely to be achieved soon. Some teachers had this to say:

> *"The amount of work that one needs to cover is enormous and the tasks for the learners are numerous. One then wonders how the learners will finish the syllabus and be examined and pass."*
> (Teacher 6: School 1, 13th September 2017)

What also seemed to be cause anxiety among teachers regarding the new curriculum was the lack of consistent messaging from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education regarding the new curriculum. Communication regarding subjects such as G and C, for example, have been conflicting and marred by policy U-turns. Such subjects have thus far been central to tackling individual student needs. Within the first year of

introducing the new curriculum, the Ministry has vacillated between making the subject examinable and non-examinable. This uncertainty was compounded by the government's unclear stance on the curriculum. Whereas the new curriculum was introduced under the former Minister of Education Dr. Lazarus Dokora (The Standard, 26 February 2017), there were reports that the successor Minister, Prof. Paul Mavhima was either dumping (The Zimbabwean, 13 December 2017), reviewing (TechZim, 9 January 2018) or maintaining the new curriculum (Newsday, 28 December 2017). Without clear guidelines and communication from the parent Ministry, teachers were unsure of the correct position of the Ministry and tended to concentrate on what they thought was required in order to meet their obligations. This, at times meant that few teachers were focussing on practising inclusive education and moulding learners beyond just academic achievement. The holistic approach, as envisaged in inclusive education ideals, was therefore generally missing.

5.3.2.2 Training for educational inclusion and aspect regarded as important

Most knowledge comes from training. With respect to teachers, their main source of knowledge during training is the teacher training college. All participants indicated that they had been sensitized on inclusive education during their teacher training years. As Van Laarhoven et al. (2007) point out pre-service teacher training generally enables teachers to acquire relevant knowledge, appropriate attitudes and competencies empowers them to meet the needs of all learners within the education system. Inadequate training may lower the confidence of teachers to implement inclusive education (Chimhenga, 2014). In this study all participants acknowledged having acquired some inclusive education skills at college. However, that empowerment was largely geared to addressing the needs of orphans, disabled and slow learners only. As one teacher puts it:

> *"The concentration was mainly on orphans, those children infected and affected by HIV and AIDS and the disabled children. It was mainly theory without the practical part."*
>
> (Teacher 3: School 2, 19th September 2017)

Most interviewed teachers felt that while they were competent in dealing with traditional vulnerabilities, pre-service teacher training only provided them with a very narrow understanding of the range of vulnerabilities that they may be encountered in the field.

This validates Hodkinson's (2006) observation that most pre-service training does not provide teachers with practical skills and preparation to deal with vulnerable students. This may be a result of the fact that most of the modules were theoretical, with little practical components. Brownell et al. (2005) thus suggest that pre-service teacher training should be weighted sufficiently to allow teachers to connect what they learn in class with classroom practice. In this study, teachers indicated that their years at teacher training colleges did not focus on inclusive educational practices or methodologies and therefore was not much help when it came to the reality of the workplace. Only three of the twelve teachers who had gone on to acquire post-graduate teaching qualifications reported having acquired some skills relevant to inclusive methodologies in that second training. Thus, some recommended post-graduate training to adequately equip teachers:

> *"I wasn't equipped much from my teacher education training, but I did post-graduate in counselling and that's where I got most of the skills that I am using now to deal with vulnerable learners."*
> (Teacher 6: School 1, 13th September 2017)

Other teachers felt that they had benefitted more from in-service training regarding how to deal with vulnerable learners than they had done during their initial training:

> "*My initial training did not equip me. Ii is the in-service training through workshops and conferences which has equipped me a lot. I also did counselling as a post graduate course.*"
> (Teacher 4: School 2, 19th September 2017)

Whereas teachers were quite knowledgeable about classical vulnerabilities, they did not say much on new vulnerabilities such as those represented by left-behind learners. Teachers who had been in the service for longer periods reported mostly using their experience to deal with new vulnerabilities, adapting to changing scenarios and challenges. As one teacher said:

> "*Teachers' colleges did not equip us much. We are not sure how they are doing it now, but most of the situations we are experiencing them in the field and with our experience we try to find ways of tackling the problems.*"
> (Teacher 2: School 1, 12th September 2017)

But, was this experience adequate for the teachers to meet the needs of learners faced with new vulnerabilities and provide an inclusive education? Some of the teachers interviewed felt that they were inadequately prepared to effectively support learners of

diverse abilities and backgrounds. It may, thus, be that teacher education has not kept pace with the new demands and vulnerabilities (Covell, 2001). One pre-service teacher noted:

"I am on teaching practice and in our curriculum we are being sensitized on inclusive education. However, I am encountering some of the vulnerabilities now in the field. The issue of left behind children is new to me. I am actually realising their vulnerability now as we are discussing."
(Teacher 6: School 2, 19thSeptember 2017)

It is clear therefore from the evidence produced so far that most teachers lacked effective training on inclusive education and on vulnerabilities that go beyond the classical ones. The majority of the teachers were therefore struggling to meet the needs of vulnerable learners. The curriculum was also silent on new vulnerabilities and individual teachers had to identify these new vulnerabilities on their own.

5.3.2.3 Inclusive practices, strategies and techniques

While most teachers indicated that they were trying to use inclusive education methodologies, they also reported that it was a daunting task. All interviewed teachers indicated having employed different teaching methods to accommodate all learners, especially those with different learning abilities. This resonates with the theory of multiple intelligences, which encourages teachers to use variety of ways to meet the needs of different learners and improve positive outcomes for all learners (Gardner, 1983). However, the teachers pointed out that the school curricula was examination-oriented such that there was insufficient time to engage individual learners with specific needs. Though the new curriculum aims to address such weaknesses by introducing continuous assessments rather than once off examination assessments as has been the practice, teachers still felt that there were no clear guidelines to make inclusive education feasible. Some teachers for Guidance and Counselling argued that there was little time to concentrate on individual learners. They suggested creating enough time for teachers to concentrate on specific content through group teaching which may enable the teachers to know learners closely and thus improve inclusive education.

Other teachers suggested forming social support groups at each school, under the G and C Department, to enable learners to interact, mix and share experiences. The teachers argued that the implementation of inclusive education is not the preserve of

teachers alone, but rather should be expanded to encompass learners interacting and helping each other. It was however not clear how successful this suggestion would be, given that vulnerable learners may not be empowered enough to advise on other children's challenges when they themselves were struggling with their own problems. Ironically, some teachers were pushing for the greater load of inclusive education to be handled by the Guidance and Counselling teachers, seemingly being unaware that inclusive education is not about content only, but rather ways and methodologies to be practised by every teacher in every subject at every school. It also important to note that some teachers thought of vulnerable learners as being in need of 'fixing' and therefore requiring specialist attention from G and C teachers only. Such a view contrasts the notion that inclusivity should be practised by all teachers for the benefit of all learners. It is doubtful that teachers with such views would be able to help vulnerable learners effectively. Ainscow (2005) points out that not much effective learning is likely to occur when teachers regard some students as being 'in need of fixing'. The mind-set of some teachers may thus become barriers to inclusive learning.

5.3.3 Teachers meeting the needs of left behind learners

This section now concentrates on teachers' views on the vulnerability of left-behind learners and the challenges these learners faced. The study sought to examine teachers' views on left-behind learners as a vulnerable group. The majority of teachers agreed that left-behind learners were vulnerable and thus deserving attention. The following quotes express the teachers' views on this subject:

> *"Children left by migrating parents are very vulnerable. For instance, there are children in child headed households where there is no adult control. The children do whatever they want. Some of the things they do expose them to a lot danger."*
> (Teacher 4: School 2, 19th September 2017)

> *"Some of the children are vulnerable because some of the migrant parents are irresponsible. Some of the parents can live children on their own (child headed families) or with guardians, but not sending back remittance."*
> (Teacher 1: School 1, 13th September 2017)

While most teachers saw left-behind learners as being vulnerable, they also pointed out that the vulnerability of these learners was almost invisible to a point where some teachers saw these learners as being rather advantaged. As one teacher pointed out:

> *"We are now thinking about these children as we discuss with you here. In as much as we know these children have problems, we don't really take it very seriously because of the economic advantage they have over other children, their guardians and even over us teachers."*
>
> (Teacher 2: School 2, 19thSeptember 2017)

The notion that left-behind learners are economically advantaged masks whatever vulnerabilities these learners may have. Until the perception that financially stability removes vulnerability is challenged, addressing the needs of these learners will remain difficult as teachers will not give any meaningful help to these learners. Only teachers that are able to see beyond the financial stability of some of the left-behind learners will be able to grasp the full extent of the challenges faced by the learners. The havoc created by parental emigration is such that left-behind learners have become 'orphans', - victims of Zimbabwe's social and economic crisis that has given rise to long-distance parenting and its attendant problems. A teacher made this point more explicit by saying:

> *"Some of these children are living pathetic lives. They are just like 'orphans', the only difference is that their parents are alive."*
>
> (Teacher 6: School 2, 18thSeptember 2017)

Another teacher opined:

> *"At times these children misbehave, but some teachers do not have time to find the root cause of these behaviours because their parents are in the diaspora. It may be that the child is missing something at home with parents being away."*
>
> (Teacher 6: School 1, 13thSeptember 2017)

Thus, even if the parents are not dead, the fact that their children live in poverty and without proper care means that these children are essentially orphans in all but name. This contrasts the widely held view that children with parents in the diaspora are all well of. The reality is that some of these children were facing challenges due to parental absence.

5.3.4 Teachers' perspectives on challenges faced by left-behind learners

Section 5.2.3 has dealt extensively with the left-behind learners' perspectives on the challenges that they face in the absence of their parents, both at home and at school. This section does not seek to replicate that discussion, but aims to provide an understanding of the challenges these learners face from the perspective of teachers. It

is important to understand teachers' perceptions as these shape their interaction with the learners.

5.3.4.1 Abuse by guardians

The major point raised by teachers was that left-behind learners were vulnerable to physical, emotional or even sexual abuse by guardians. The physical abuse generally stems from the fact that some children are overburdened with household chores that were negatively affecting their schooling experiences as they came to school tired. A teacher explained by saying:

> *"One of our leaners, a boy, comes to school already tired. He lives with his aunt and is the one who does all the house hold chores. He is not allowed to study at school in the afternoon. He is expected to go home early and help with household chores. He sometimes sleeps in class due to tiredness."*
>
> (Teacher 4: School 1, 12[th]September 2017)

Although some of the learners do not report the abuse at school, some teachers indicated that they were nevertheless able to infer on the causes of the left-behind learners tiredness and lack of concentration.

5.3.4.2 Misuse of remittances by guardians

Most emigrant parents make efforts to send money and goods to their children back home. However, teachers reported that some of these learners were living in abject poverty as remittances sent by diaspora parents were sometimes misused. According to one teacher:

> *"Some of these children are living in extreme poverty yet the parents are sending money. Sometimes care givers solve their monetary problems using these remittances. The needs of the* left-behind learners *are relegated down the list of overall household needs. There are even cases where other household members may eat food excluding the* left-behind learners*, yet the parents are working hard in the diaspora to feed their children."*
>
> (Teacher 1: School 1; 12[th]September 2017)

The abuse of remittances by guardians was said to be widespread, especially in the low-income areas where some learners with diaspora parents were reported to engage in drugs and prostitution for survival. Kufakurinani, Pasura & McGregor (2014) have

argued that a lack of financial resources by left-behind learners disempowers them to the point of hopelessness which may drive them into various forms of deviant or anti-social behaviour. One teacher had this to say:

> *"The situation is terrible. In some homes, the children left by migrant parents are suffering. Some of these children engage in transactional sex for as little as US$0,50."*
>
> (Teacher 6: School 1; 13th September 2017)

However, some teachers argued that some parents were irresponsible and were not remitting regularly to enable their children to survive well back home. One teacher provided a case that he was aware of:

> *"We have a form three learner who stays with her little brother on their own. That child has problems. She is the one fending for the two of them, making sure the basics are there in the home, yet the parents are in the diaspora. I once called the mother and she said there is nothing she can do because things are not going on well in South Africa where she is staying."*
>
> (Teacher 6: School 1; 13thSeptember 2017)

With such challenges of looking after the family, the left-behind learners are bound to be affected negatively at school as they cannot always concentrate. The chances of a child engaging in deviant behaviour are also increased when the learner is overwhelmed by adopting parental responsibilities.

5.3.4.3 Misuse of remittances by the left-behind learners

Teachers reported that some left-behind learners were misusing remittances, diverting money to purposes never intended by their parents. This was made possible by the fact that some left-behind learners were staying alone and had no-one to superintend over their resource use. The majority of the left-behind learners were generally not mature enough to make decisions in the same way their parents would do. This was indicated by a teacher who said:

> *"The parents in the diaspora try to compensate for their absence by giving some learners a lot of money. This however jeopardises their learning as some misuse this money, buying things that are not necessary, expensive electronic gadgets, flashy clothes, and even drugs and alcohol."*
>
> (Teacher 4: School 2, 19thSeptember 2017)

This finding resonates with the supposition made by Fillipa, Cronje, & Ferns (2013) that children who are left on their own may be forced to take inappropriate age responsibilities that they are incapable to execute properly and therefore end up harming themselves. It should be noted that not all left-behind learners in the study had access to huge sums of money. Some parents in the diaspora were not earning enough to remit o their children as observed by one teacher:

> *"Not all leaners whose parents are in the diaspora are troublesome or are getting a lot of cash. Some parents in the diaspora are struggling to make ends meet and hardly send money. As teachers we have to know the backgrounds of these children so that we can assist."*
>
> (Teacher 6: School 1, 12th September 2017)

The majority of learners in the study were thus suffering from lack of, rather than excessive remittances. Hence, care should be taken to understand the different backgrounds and conditions of different learners so that they can be given assistance that is appropriate to their needs.

5.3.4.4. Excessive freedom

Freedom is not absolute, but has boundaries that are defined by responsibilities. In households where parents are present, children are given freedom gradually as they grow so that they have time to absorb its ramifications and exercise it cautiously. In the current context, where children are suddenly left on their own or with irresponsible guardians, the sudden access to freedom may be detrimental if not exercised cautiously. Some teachers pointed out that learners with both access to cash and excessive freedom were tempted to engage in immoral behaviour. A teacher had this to say:

> *"In most cases children staying on their own are vulnerable. In child-headed households, children can abuse resource to their disadvantage and to the disadvantage of other learners. No-one is there to control and guide them. Some guardians are too soft for fear of losing benefits that come from looking after these children."*
>
> (Teacher 6: School 2, 19th September 2017)

Some learners staying with guardians may also be vulnerable as guardians may not stop such behaviour to avoid antagonising the learners and loose remittances from diaspora parents.

5.3.4.5. Lack of psycho-social support

Parental absence is generally detrimental to the well-being of left-behind learners because there is little or no supervision, guidance, or no help in tasks such as school homework. Without close support from guardians, some learners end up relying on social media where they become susceptible to accessing inadequate, wrong or destructive information. A teacher related a story of a girl who committed suicide when she could not find adequate support after being jilted by her lover and was not comfortable to confide in her guardian. Thus left-behind learners sometimes navigate difficult life situations without adequate social support, sometimes being easily manipulated and lured into dangerous and inappropriate activities. It is therefore important for diaspora parents to appoint guardians that are responsible and caring to reduce the vulnerability of learners. As one teacher pointed out:

> *"The vulnerability of the learner depends on the guardian. Some children may be well taken care of depending on how the guardian is looking after the child, whether the guardian is not showing favouritism between his or her own kids and the one left by migrant parents."*
>
> (Teacher 2: School 1, 12ᵗʰSeptember 2017)

While some guardians are responsible, there is no denying the fact that other guardians are irresponsible and behave in ways that negatively impact on left-behind learners at school. A number of teachers pointed out that left-behind learners who are not well groomed at home were problematic at school as they showed signs of being rebellious and rude.

Other teachers reported that left-behind learners lacked support in aspects such as homework because there was no-one at home to help them. This finding was similar to that of Guo (2012) in China who found that there was less social and cultural capital from parents and that the left-behind learners faced numerous challenges as it is difficult for parents to socialise their children by remote control from the diaspora. According to one teacher:

> *"Some of the* left-behind learners *have a great challenge. No-one reminds them to study or restricts them from watching certain types of movies or not to wear certain types of clothes. Parents are valuing money and material things at the expense of their children's lives and education."*
>
> (Teacher 5: School 2, 19ᵗʰ September 2017)

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Despite the challenges that the left-behind learners were facing, some teachers continued to see them as problems in society rather than viewing them as being vulnerable. The fact that some of the left-behind learners had access to cash seemed to divert any sympathy from teachers who saw them as trying to show-off. Even those teachers that recognised the challenges seemed to regard such vulnerability as minor and therefore made little effort to lessen this vulnerability.

5.3.4.6 Left-behind learners perceived as being advantaged

A thread running through this thesis is that left-behind learners are a vulnerable group which faces a number of challenges that are not generally recognised or dealt with. The invisibility of this vulnerability is partly due to the perception that these learners are actually an advantaged group, by virtue of having parents in the diaspora that give them money and other material goods. According to one teacher:

> *"You can find that a learner is bringing US$50 to buy at the school tuck shop. These parents will be giving their children unnecessary money."*
> (Teacher 1: School 1, 12th September 2017)

In such a context, it was difficult for teachers to believe that such learners were actually vulnerable. While some of the left-behind learners had economic capital, they continued to suffer due to lack of social and cultural capital. This was disrupting the general development of the left-behind learners as well as their education. As one teacher argued:

> *"Because the child will have money, the teachers may just think that the child is not suffering. The child may even be abused by the guardians at home and teachers will not pick this up because they do not believe the child is vulnerable."*
> (Teacher 6: School 1, 13th September 2017)

Sometimes guardians lose control and authority over left-behind learners, especially when parents send money directly to their children, circumventing guardians who then cannot exercise oversight on spending. Some guardians were thus leaving left-behind learners to do as they pleased, exposing them to danger and increased vulnerability. There were also contexts where guardians were depending on the remittances of the left-behind learners to survive. This study found that in such scenarios, the guardians were unable to guide the left-behind learners accordingly for fear of antagonising the

learners and losing money. The guardians thus left the left-behind learners to behave as they wished as long as the remittances kept coming. In the end, some of the left-behind learners were not being socialised in the same manner that biological parents would have done.

5.3.5 Implementation of curriculum to embrace left-behind learners

The above section dwelt on the perceptions of teachers on the challenges that left-behind learners were facing and how the challenges impacted on the schooling of the learners. This section now focuses on the interaction of teachers with left-behind learners as part of inclusive education as well as the challenges that teachers faced in meeting the needs of the learners.

5.3.5.1 Vulnerabilities of left-behind learners as part of inclusive education

Teachers were asked whether the vulnerabilities of the left-behind learners were recognised enough to be included as an important part of inclusive education in schools. Most teachers reported that challenges of left-behind learners were a new phenomenon not yet realised by many people, including policy makers. It was therefore premature to expect the issue to be addressed in the curriculum. During enrolment teachers were not even asking questions that are relevant to discovering learners with vulnerabilities. According to one teacher:

> *"The issue of children left by parents going to the diaspora is not yet important in our curriculum. During enrolment we do not take enough information to know which child has problems. Some of the information we only discover after the child exhibits deviant behaviour and we start asking more background questions."*
>
> (Teacher 4: School 1, 12th September 2017)

As the above quote illustrates, recognition of the vulnerability of left-behind learners was still low. The curriculum was also silent on this important phenomenon which is now affecting a large section of the Zimbabwean community. Teacher education in the country has thus not kept pace with new demands and vulnerabilities. Some teachers reported that there was no concerted effort to highlight the problem because it was not well understood:

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"This is a new problem which the teacher as an individual is dealing with as it comes. It is not yet part of the formal curriculum. We tend to focus more on the disabled, orphans and those affected by HIV and AIDS."
(Teacher 3: School 1, 12[th]September 2017)

In the face of this new phenomenon, what then needs to be done? Teachers argued that teacher training has to be contextualised so that the relevant problems are identified and tackled. In order for proper and relevant contextualisation to be done, the problem of left-behind learners needs to be interrogated and understood so that training given to teachers is appropriate. Only then can teachers be expected to effectively deal with the challenges faced by vulnerable learners and provide a wholly inclusive education.

5.3.5.2 Challenges in meeting the needs of left-behind learners

This section discusses the challenges that teachers were facing in meeting the needs of the left-behind learners as part of inclusive education. The challenges ranged from the absenteeism of the learners, lack of support by guardians, non-involvement of parents in the education of their children as well as the high teacher-pupil ratio that impedes them from concentrating on individual learners.

5.3.5.2.1 Left-behind learners as a new phenomenon

There was very little knowledge that interviewed teachers possessed on how the challenge of left-behind learners manifests and how to deal with it as part of inclusive education. One teacher pointed this out by saying:

"I trained a long time ago when there was little migration to the diaspora. Children were therefore always with their parents. It is unlike now when they live without their parents for long periods. This diaspora thing is new and we are learning how to tackle it. Our response does not come from out training."
(Teacher 3: School 1; 12[th]September 2017)

Teachers further pointed out that there was little help within the school system on how to deal with left-behind learners because the school authorities were also learning this new phenomenon. The question of knowledge and skill is important as it talks to the level at which teachers may be able to assist learners. As Fakudze (2012) point out, the diversity of learners and their challenges demand that teachers be knowledgeable about the task they face. The fact that left-behind learners were seen as advantaged also

meant that there was no urgency by the school authorities to capacitate the system to tackle the challenges related to these learners. Even in cases where diaspora parents were failing to pay fees for their children, government and NGO support was rarely extended to them, on the erroneous view that their parents were well-off. This was pointed out by one educator who said:

> "*We have some* left-behind learners *who are failing to pay fees. But, the moment NGOs hear that the parents are in the diaspora they don't assist them. We already have a case of a child with the mother who is late and the father who is in the diaspora. All of a sudden the father has decided that he no longer wants to pay school fees for his child. As brilliant as she is, she couldn't get assistance from NGO's."*
> (Teacher 6: School 1 13th September 2017)

The problem was also compounded by the fact that some guardians were not open about the problems facing the left-behind learners and this made it difficult to relate the child's problems to parental absence when the school was not aware that the parents were in the diaspora.

5.3.5.2.2 Lack of help to learners from guardians

Most teachers pointed out that their major challenge in dealing with left-behind learners concerned the non-cooperation of guardians in school activities. While homework is known to increases learners' immediate achievement by increasing the time spent on academic tasks and improving study habits (self-direction, self-discipline, time organization and problem-solving) (Guo, 2012) teachers pointed out that some guardians were not concerned about helping and monitoring such tasks. While teachers try to communicate with guardians regarding non-performance of left-behind learners at school, there was usually no feedback or cooperation. One teacher said:

> *"Some of these children are left with grandparents who are unable to assist these children. My mother in-law, for example, is 70 years old and was left with children in Grade 0 and Grade. How can she help these grandchildren at that age especially with schoolwork?"*
> (Teacher 4: School 2, 19th September 2017)

The above scenario illustrates how critical the situation regarding left-behind learners was as some guardians were unable to cater for the well-being of the left-behind learners in the same way that biological parents would have done. Evidence presented so far in

this thesis indicates that the family system was fragmented and was generally unable to step in when parents migrated. Even some of the guardians were unwilling to help teachers deal with sensitive subjects regarding the left-behind learners.

5.3.5.2.3 Absenteeism and late coming

Another major challenge that teachers pointed out was that some of the left-behind learners were always late or absent from school. This was generally affecting their school performance. This finding was similar to that made by Giannelli & Mangiavacchi (2010) that migration was having negative effects on school attendance for left-behind learners in Albania. As previously highlighted, some of the left-behind learners were sometimes given numerous chores that would make them tired and therefore late for school. Teachers reported that besides left-behind learners being overloaded with chores, some of the learners were affected by the 'waiting to migrate' syndrome and therefore not concentrating much on school. A teacher pointed this out by saying:

> *"You can tell a learner to prepare for an exam and he tells you he has no time as he is busy with issues concerning visa application."*
>
> (Teacher 3: School 2, 19thSeptember 2017)

Being late or absent can cause the child to lag behind and may negatively affect schooling performance. Some guardians were also not monitoring the learners to ensure that they were attending school regularly. Learners in child-headed families were worse off as they had no adult to monitor them:

> "*Some of these children, especially those who live alone, continuously absent themselves from school because they is no one who monitors and asks them."*
>
> (Teacher 6: School 2, 19thSeptember 2017)

The absenteeism was said to be particularly high during the first and last weeks of a new term as left-behind learners visited their parents early or came back late:

> *"Even those who visit their parents during holidays, usually the last week of term when we are supposed to revise and round off the term, some of them will have gone already."*
>
> (Teacher 5: School 2; 10 September 2017)

The first and last week of the term are generally important as this is when crucial information and inductions are given to the learners. The last week of the term is usually a revision week and so some left-behind learners were missing out on important information in their schooling.

5.3.5.2.4. Non-involvement of parents in school meetings and consultations

Parents are a central resource to the education system (NCSNET/NCESS, 1997:18). When parents and guardians efficiently communicate with teachers, learners' weaknesses, challenges and behaviours are easily identified and interventions made to improve the learners' schooling experiences. Study results indicate that there was generally a disconnection between teachers and guardians of left-behind learners. Teachers reported that only a few guardians were communicating with the school or attending consultation meetings:

> *"School meetings and consultations are important. But some guardians do not care as long as they are getting remittances. The majority do not even attend consultation meetings with the teachers or buy books for the learners that are left in their care."*
>
> (Teacher 2: School 1, 12thSeptember 2017)

In child-headed households, the situation was said to be even worse because of the absence of older household members to engage with teachers. According to Mbengwa, (2010) the existence of a strong relationship between teachers and learners has important benefits for learners as parents gain access to relevant information regarding the development of their children at school and teachers gain an insight into the behaviour and other information regarding the learners' background which may affect school performance. Teachers also revealed that diaspora parents rarely communicate with them, even when they are directly made aware of the challenges regarding left-behind learners:

> *"The greatest challenge we have is that there is no communication between us and the parents in the diaspora. Some of the guardians are not supportive especially if the real parents of the child are not supporting the guardians in the upbringing of the child. We had one guardian who was called to the school when a* left-behind learner *was expelled. The guardian indicated that she was tired of being called to school, yet the parents in the diaspora were not supporting her for the well-being of their child. The parents on the other hand do not communicate with us. It is as if they are not there."*
>
> (Teacher 6: School 1, 13thSeptember 2017)

Teachers offered several explanations as to why the biological parents may be silent. First, they suggested that parents trust that the guardians and teachers can do a perfect job as they act in *loco-parentis.* Second, some parents may not be doing well in the diaspora and therefore had no resources to communicate with the school. Third, some diaspora parents may actually not have been aware that their children had schooling challenges. Regardless of the reasons behind the non-communication, the role of biological parents in the upbringing of their children remains vital and should therefore not be taken for granted. It is derelict of parents to abdicate their responsibilities and expect guardians to take up all parental duties. Some teachers indicated that some parents in the diaspora were not much concerned about the life of the left-behind learners:

> "*The attitude of some of the parents is shocking. They do not care about the welfare of their children. Some are not responsible or supportive to the guardians that are living with their children. It is as if they are dumping their children on the guardians and on us teachers.*"
>
> (Teacher 4: School 2, 13[th]September 2017)

In an ideal situation, one would expect the diaspora parents to keep an open line with both the guardians and the teachers so that any problems that may be faced by the left-behind learners are easily and timeously communicated to them. Teachers can also use the same communication channels to update them on the performance of their children directly without having to rely on the guardian who may not understand some of the issues. Such communication would enhance the overall schooling experiences of the left behind children.

5.3.5.2.5 Intransigent and moneyed left-behind learners

One of the major challenges that teacher indicated facing was that of stubborn learners who are generally out of control. This intransigence behaviour was usually from learners that had excessive cash and wanted to be treated as special learners, often showing off and becoming unruly. One teacher had this to say:

> "*Some of the* left-behind learners *have a lot of money when they come to school as well as expensive electronic gadgets like cell phones, laptops, and tablets. They look down upon teachers saying that the teachers are*

poor. They can change cell phones now and again. To make matters worse, some of the teachers rent accommodation at these learners' homes. So, some of them do not respect the teachers whom they regard as poor. Some of the children are difficult to teach."

(Teacher 5: School 1, 12th September 2017)

While learners in general may be expected to exhibit some minor deviant behaviour at school, the teachers interviewed in this study argued that the unruly behaviour of some of the left-behind learners was excessive. Some teachers felt demeaned when their financial position was looked down upon by the left-behind learners and resorted to ignoring the challenges that these learners faced, thus negatively impacting on their educational well-being. Without anyone to reprimand them, some of the learners become even more vulnerable to failure. Thus one teacher said:

"Some of the children can adopt bad attitudes and not listen to guardians. They even look down upon teachers because their financial status elevates them. This would not happen if their parents were around. Some of them even resist counselling. You can take the horse to the river but you can't force it to drink water"

(Teacher 1: School 2, 19th September 2017)

The proverb used by the teacher in the above quote illustrates how some teachers seemed to have given up on the left-behind learners. Rather than seeking ways to assist the learners, some teachers were conflicted and were easily irritated by the behaviour of the left-behind learners and therefore opted to let them fail or become wayward. However, for inclusive education to be achieved, teachers need to help vulnerable students meet their needs, regardless of their own personal feelings regarding the vulnerable learners.

5.3.5.2.6 Teacher shortages and high teacher-pupil ratio

Inclusive education in general requires that teachers have time to be focussed on both the group and individual needs of learners. This is generally possible when the teacher-pupil ratio is low to enable teachers enough time to understand the complex needs that may arise from a diverse group of learners. In Southern Africa, teacher-pupil ratios are high: in Botswana the ratio can be as high as 1:40; South Africa 1:50, while in Lesotho the ratio can be as high as 1:80 (Mbengwa, 2010). In Zimbabwe, the teacher -pupil ratio in public schools is 1:45 (Mafa and Makuba, 2013). The huge classes reduce the ability of schools to practice inclusive education as was indicted by interviewed teachers:

"Sometimes you may know the learner's problem, but may not have enough time to help the learner because our classes are too large."
(Teacher 6: School 1, 12th September 2017)

"We have too many learners in one class so it's difficult to have information for each and every child. It is generally very difficult and tiresome. How can you teach a class of 45 students? These big classes call for a dedicated teacher and sometimes even the dedicated ones fail to manage."
(Teacher 4: School 2, 19th September 2017)

While some teachers may have had the will to help vulnerable learners, they were overwhelmed by huge workloads and ended up ignoring the challenges that vulnerable learners were facing. Teachers even failed to find time to record individual learner information that was necessary for identifying vulnerable learners and helping them as part of inclusive education. It was thus usually left to class teacher rather than subject teachers to record relevant information. Problems may thus only be identified later when a learner misbehaves or becomes unruly. One teacher said:

"Some of us only get to know that a learner has problems after there has been unruly behaviour. It is only then that we start asking who the child is, the guardianship, where and how the learner is getting money, and what exactly the learner is involved in. It is only at that late stage that we may find that the parents are in the diaspora and the learner is living on their own or with guardians that are unable to control them. Sometimes this information comes when it is too late and the damage has already been done."
(Teacher 3: School 1, 12th September 2017)

Besides the fact that teachers were not collecting relevant information about the learners, the other challenge was that teachers were rated according to final examination marks obtained by learners. Most teachers thus directed their effort towards achieving higher examination pass rates, concentrating more on learners that could help them achieve those passes. Left-behind learners were not even featuring in the larger scheme of things, hence they remained vulnerable. As Mafa & Makuba (2013) points out, Zimbabwe's curriculum is generally content-laden and examination-oriented and leaves less time to concentrate on the challenges faced by vulnerable learners. This was confirmed by a teacher who said:

"We have a lot of work to do and we do not have enough time for some of these issues. We would rather concentrate on the final academic results."
(Teacher 6: School 1, 12th September 2017)

The concentration on examination results is not a Zimbabwean problem only. Mukhopadhyay, Nenty & Abusi (2012) noted that this problem was also experienced in countries such as Namibia and Botswana, where educational policies were somehow underpinned by a market place philosophy of education where teachers concentrated on a narrow curriculum and a small group of academically able pupils. This however runs counter to the implementation of inclusive education and discourages teaching practises that allow for student diversity in an inclusive setup (Chimhenga, 2014). In the current set-up, some vulnerable learners with various challenges were at risk of being ignored and were therefore negatively affected in their overall schooling experiences.

The combination of a high teacher-pupil ratio as and the concentration on examinations means that the role of intervening in the challenges faced by vulnerable learners was often given to teachers within the Guidance and Counselling departments at schools. These teachers were also overloaded and ended up doing little to help vulnerable learners. Thus one teacher pointed out:

> *"Most of the issue to do with vulnerable learners are handled by the guidance and counselling department. However, because of teacher shortages, the department is also not fully staffed and we have to ask other teachers that are not fully equipped in the area to help."*
>
> (Teacher: School 1; 13 September 2017)

The problems of inadequate staff meant that concentration on vulnerable learners was limited. In the Zimbabwean context, where traditional vulnerabilities take the centre stage, vulnerabilities relating to left-behind learners was unlikely to be attended to. Without that support, some of the left-behind learners were becoming reserved and felt isolated and therefore suffered in their overall schooling experiences. What then needs to happen to improve the schooling experiences of learners who are vulnerable such as the left-behind learners? Some interviewed teachers argued that government needed to invest in in-service training so that teachers could be sensitised as well as equipped to identify and deal with new vulnerabilities. One teacher pointed this out by saying:

> *"We still need proper in-service training in the form of workshops especially on how to identify and handle particular issues. If a learner comes to you as a teacher and confides in you about his or her HIV status, how can you handle such an issue? How can you as a teacher identify deeper problems affecting learners? We need workshops for such things."*
>
> (Teacher 5: School 2, 19[th]September 2017)

Thus, in as much as teachers were trained and equipped while they were in training, there was still need for continuous learning through periodic seminars and workshops. This would make it easier to identify new vulnerabilities such as those presented by left-behind learners and to devise ways of intervening to minimise damage to concerned learners. Only then can inclusive education be said to be holistic and all-inclusive.

5.3.6 Document analysis

In addition to interviews and focus group discussions carried out in this study, a number of documents relating to inclusive education were also collected. These documents are thus, briefly analysed in this section in order to understand what was being done, the challenges related to inclusive education and what can be done to improve the implementation thereof. The documents include the Zimbabwe Education Act of 1987 (as amended), the social record and the Zimbabwe Education Curriculum Framework that is being introduced by the government.

5.3.6.1 Zimbabwe Education Act of 1987 (as amended in 2006)

In Zimbabwe the education sector is governed by the Zimbabwe Education Act of 1987 as amended in 1996 and 2006. Section 4.1 of the Act states that "every child in Zimbabwe shall have the right to school education" (Zimbabwe, Government of Zimbabwe, 2006:619). The Act guarantees the right of every child in the country to an education. While the Act does not explicitly refer to inclusive education, Section 4.2 further states that "No child shall be refused admission to any school on the grounds of race, tribe, colour, religion, creed, place of origin, political opinion or social status of his parents (Zimbabwe, Government of Zimbabwe, 2006:619). It can thus be argued that this clause Act covers and sets out the parameters for inclusive education.

What can be critiqued, however, is the lack of specificity regarding what exactly is to be focussed on. While the original Act is over 30 years old, the amendments made just over a decade ago would have been expected to address some of the weaknesses of the original Act regarding inclusivity and vulnerability. The right to education, as currently enunciated in the Act, is general and is about the rights of every child to education without acknowledging the fact that different children are exposed to and suffer from different vulnerabilities that ought to be flagged if inclusive education is to become a

reality. Such specificity is required in order to guide the promulgation of policies that will encompass protection of vulnerable learners, left-behind learners included.

While the Zimbabwe Education Act conforms to the country's constitution adopted in 2013 by upholding the educational rights of all people including those vulnerable and disabled (Jenjekwa, Rutoro & Runyowa, 2013), legislators had not gone the extra mile to entrench those rights by crafting a specific policy on inclusive education. There was little in the Act that guided teachers regarding contemporary vulnerabilities likely to be face in the field. Interviewed teachers indicated that they were concentrating on classical vulnerabilities: orphans, the girl child and the disabled. They argued that even Ministry of Education circulars to schools only concentrated on classical vulnerabilities. The left-behind learners therefore did not feature anywhere as being vulnerable learners. Under such conditions, the needs of the left-behind learners were unlikely to be addressed.

While a few of the interviewed teachers pointed out that left-behind learners may be covered under the provisions of the Education Act which forbids discrimination on the grounds of social status of parents, that provision was too broad and too vague to give any meaningful direction for inclusive education that also encompasses the left-behind learners. In any case, social status is easily interpreted to refer to the position that results from the economic well-being of the parents rather than anything remotely linked to parents having migrated to other countries. Given the earlier discussion in Section 5.3.5.2.5 where left-behind learners were seen as being moneyed and intransigent, this group of learners was unlikely to be regarded as being vulnerable by teachers. Hence, while the left-behind learners were not discriminated against at enrolment, the fact that their needs were not flagged and that teachers were relatively not aware of their vulnerability means that their schooling experiences would be negatively affected. The Education Act therefore needs to be explicit so as to give guidance to the promulgation of policies that direct the adoption and implementation of inclusive education that encompasses all vulnerable learners, the left-behind learners included.

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5.3.6.2 The Zimbabwe Education Curriculum Framework and the Zimbabwe Education Sector Strategic Plan: 2016-2020

Realising that the Zimbabwean education curriculum was getting out-dated in light of changes in the global economy and developments in ICTs, a Presidential Commission, the Nziramasanga Commission was set up in 1999 to inquire into the state of education in the country and to recommend necessary changes. The result was the crafting of a new curriculum to replace the old one. It is therefore necessary to review the documentation relating to this new curriculum in order to understand whether issues of inclusivity and vulnerability are covered. The major document relating to the new curriculum is the Zimbabwe Education Curriculum Framework. The analysis of this document is necessary because it is the "the main reference document informing the development of syllabuses, revision of syllabuses, development and use of learning resources and the creation of guidelines for in-service teacher training and support" (Government of Zimbabwe, 2015:1).

The competency-based new curriculum was rolled out in 2017 at four different levels: ECD A, Grade 1, Form 1 and Form 5 (Nhaka Foundation, 2017). The aim of the curriculum is to promote and cherish the Zimbabwean identity and values, prepare learners for life and work as they acquire practical competencies, literacy, and numeracy skills as well as foster life-long learning in line with the opportunities and challenges of the knowledge society (Government of Zimbabwe, 2015). The curriculum is also expected to promote inclusivity, lifelong learning, equity and fairness, and gender sensitivity (Government of Zimbabwe, 2015). While government insisted that the curriculum was smoothly being rolled out, it was widely reported in the Zimbabwean media that there were false starts in implementation owing to teacher shortages.

But, how relevant was the new curriculum to inclusive education? The framework document stated that all "schools are encouraged to actively engage, as learning organisations, in providing diversified opportunities for all learners to develop the knowledge, key skills and attitudes defined in this framework" (Government of Zimbabwe, 2015:2). One can thus argue that the provision of diversified opportunities for all learners was in itself an attempt to afford all learners a platform where they express themselves and their needs are given due recognition, hence achieving inclusive education. In addition, the government pledged to provide improved access

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and quality education to every learner regardless of social, economic or physical differences so that the rights of every child to an education, as envisaged in the Zimbabwe Education Act and the country's constitution, are granted. One of the key principles underpinning the new curriculum was that of 'inclusivity' and 'diversity' (Government of Zimbabwe, 2015:2). On the surface therefore, the new curriculum seemed to be supportive of inclusive education.

One however needs to move beyond the superficial level of analysis and look at the Education Framework in-depth to see if inclusive education is operationalized. For all its good intention, the framework document was silent on how inclusivity and diversity will be dealt with, thus leaving much of the implementation to the discretion of teachers. In a context where most of the teachers were ambivalent about the new curriculum, and where the demands of the new curriculum were viewed as burdensome, it is doubtful that teachers could find ways of accommodating learners with different needs so as to achieve inclusive education. Much of the support that vulnerable learners require was left to teachers responsible for the Life Skills Orientation subject. Such teachers, at the risk of being overwhelmed by much excessive workloads, may thus resort to dealing with the traditional vulnerabilities that they are confident to handle, to the exclusion of contemporary vulnerabilities that require learning and understanding first. The left-behind learners are thus excluded from those learners that are perceived to be vulnerable and truly inclusive education remains unattainable.

To complement the new curriculum, the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education drafted an Education Sector Strategic Plan: 2016-2020. This plan seeks to introduce wide ranging reforms in the education sector to support the new curriculum by providing teachers with new knowledge and skills, availing new learning materials, creating the right learning environment and providing good coordination as well as phasing of all the inputs needed to provide a first class learning experience for all children. (Government of Zimbabwe, 2015: iv). The Education Sector Strategic Plan has for pillars: access (infrastructure, fees, and non-formal education), quality (competency-based curriculum), learner-focussed (skilling teachers) and leadership (management & monitoring) (Government of Zimbabwe, 2015: vii).

Given the aim and pillars of the plan, how relevant is the plan to inclusive education? The Education Sector Strategic Plan acknowledges the lack of an inclusive education policy in the country and aims to establish a working group that will craft such a policy (Government of Zimbabwe, 2015: 39). While the timeline for the implementation of the policy was given as 2018, to date, no such policy has been availed. But, what would the policy, when availed contain? A perusal of the relevant section in the Education Sector Strategic Plan shows a clear bias towards children with disabilities and the preoccupation with the provision of infrastructure for their needs (Government of Zimbabwe, 2015: 39). It argued in that section that at least 10% of the learners in schools have disabilities and therefore deserve attention. No other vulnerable groups were mentioned. It is thus yet to be seen if the envisaged inclusive policy will result in a broader understanding of vulnerability than is currently the case. Without a nuanced understanding of vulnerability, the needs of the left-behind learners will remain unattended to and such learners will continue to experience negative schooling experiences in an environment that claims to be inclusive.

5.3.6.3 Life skills syllabus booklet for the new curriculum

While the Zimbabwe Education Act provides the framework for the educational vision of the country, the Act has to be operationalized by policies, which will then feed into the crafting of the relevant subjects and content. Because there is no single cogent policy on inclusive education in the country, there are a number of areas where inclusive education seems to be pushed from. One of these areas is the teaching of the life skills subject in the schools. This section thus reviews the life skills orientation syllabus for high school education in the country. This is because most of the identification of learner vulnerability and challenges in the schools are assigned to teachers of this subject. The life skills subject was formerly called Guidance and Counselling, but was renamed in the new Zimbabwe Education Curriculum Framework.

The new curriculum has been touted to be a radical deviation from the past curriculum and is projected to give impetus to inclusive education. However, a look at the life skills curriculum shows that there is no specificity on contemporary vulnerabilities such as that faced by the left-behind learners. The first aim listed in the syllabus is "to guide learners to achieve their full physical, intellectual, personal, emotional and social abilities"

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(Ministry of Primary and Secondary education,2015:2). This aim directly supports the pursuit of inclusive education. When learners are assisted in all areas of development, it means that a holistic approach to education is being heralded. The third aim is to "to promote development anchored on *Unhu/Ubuntu/ Vumunhu* in all facets of life (Ministry of Primary and Secondary education, 2015:2). The issue of development in all facets of life is being re-emphasized here and may be linked to inclusive education. Teachers, acting in *loco-parentis* are encouraged to interact and socialise learners so that they acquire the social and cultural capital necessary for a complete human being, promoting identity, norms and values. During the in–depth interviews one teacher said of the new curriculum:

> "*The new curriculum is advocating for "Ubuntu" so that we have a whole person, more emphasis being put on inclusive education so that all learners no matter their differences have equal opportunities.*"
> (Teacher 6: School 1, 13 September 2017)

While the aims of the syllabus are good and can be used to achieve inclusive education, the major challenge comes to the implementation part. Teachers argued that the challenges to implementing inclusive education were numerous: the syllabus is big on ideals, but concentrates too much on content, and says very little about the methodologies that are to be used in achieving the set goals. In the same environment mentioned before (high teacher-pupil ratios and concentration on examination based performance), and without adequate resources, inclusive education is likely to die a natural death and left-behind learners are likely to be the first victims as they are rarely recognised. While the scheme of assessment emphasizes that "the syllabus scheme of assessment is grounded on the principle of inclusivity" (201Ministry of Primary and Secondary education, 2015:24), there is very little information on how this should be achieved besides the declaration that "arrangements, accommodations and modifications must be visible in continuous assessment bearing in mind candidates with special needs (Ministry of Primary and Secondary education, 2015:2). There is no mention of what these special needs are or how teachers should deal with these special needs. It is highly likely therefore that the teachers will revert to the traditional vulnerabilities that they are familiar with and try to deal with these in order to achieve inclusive education. Left-behind learners are thus unlikely to be seen as vulnerable and may remain unattended to and experience negative schooling experiences.

5.3.6.4 The school social record

The social record is a document that is crucial for the attainment of inclusive education. This is because of the information that it contains that may enable a teacher to identify the needs of the vulnerable learner and then be able to come up with interventions. Every teacher is expected to record important social history of the learner: name of child, residential address, guardianship, guardian's occupation, number of siblings and any relevant information. The social record, if maintained correctly and consistently is able to help a teacher to identify vulnerable learners early. This was supported by a teacher who said:

> *"The social record is a mandatory document which every teacher should have in order to be able to help learners. As an educator one has to have this information at hand to assist learners inclusively. In the Guidance and Counselling department, you are expected to record that information."*
> (Teacher 4, School 2, 19th September 2017)

Despite the fact that the social record is an important document that all teachers should have, the study found that less than a quarter of the teachers were maintaining such a record. Some of the teachers pointed out that they did not have time to record such information as their concentration was on preparing students for examinations while paying little attention to the social aspects of the learner that may result in negatively schooling experiences. One teacher had this to say:

> *"No one asks for the social record although it is a useful document to help learners. It's up to an individual to have it or not. To us as teachers the class register is for attendance and contact details, but does not include the social information of a learner. We overlook this social information which can help deal with the challenges facing some of our learners.*
> (Teacher 3: School 2, 19thSeptember 2017)

The underlying purpose of education, which is to create an all-round and well-groomed learner, was thus being defeated. The above quote indicates, without doubt, that teachers were not taking the social record seriously. For most of them, it was just a document that they needed to show to officials and not to help them in identifying vulnerabilities. Even pre-service teachers did not take the document seriously either, rather maintaining the social record to get marks during training. This was indicated by one pre-service teacher who said:

> *"The social record is a requirement for us as pre-service teachers. Each record has its own marks. If you don't have it, you don't get marks. You are given marks according to the documents you are required to have and*

you produce. However, practically most teachers don't really utilise it in the field for the benefit of the learners."

<div align="right">(Teacher 6: School 2; 19 September 2017)</div>

The underutilisation of the social record was primarily due to the high teacher-pupil ratio which was disabling teachers from having enough time to concentrate on the individual needs of the learners. The other problem was that of shortage of resources. The economic challenges in Zimbabwe have also permeated the schooling system and teachers were finding it difficult to help the learners even when they could identify the problems. Interviewed teachers argued that they were unable to meet the needs of learners in the known vulnerability categories that it was generally inconceivable that they could try to understood other vulnerabilities that they had no resources to deal with. Some teachers reported even using their own money to help vulnerable learners who came to school hungry. Thus one teacher said:

"I am always having food available to give learners. I buyfrom my pocket. I love and have the passion for children. Like that mentally challenged learner whom I was told by other teachers to sort my problem, I gave her my bread and she was very happy and she calmed down."

<div align="right">(Teacher 4: School 2; 19thSeptember 2017)</div>

In an environment where resources are scarce and policies are either absent or ambiguous, teachers found it difficult to implement inclusive education. The needs of vulnerable learners, left-behind learners included, were thus not being met.

5.4 Equipping teachers for inclusivity: lecturers' perspectives

The focus of the previous section was to examine teachers' perspectives on the challenges faced by left-behind learners, the challenges teachers faced in interacting with left-behind learners and how they were dealing with the challenges as part of inclusive education. The key findings presented so far show that the majority of teachers were more versed with classical forms of vulnerability than with the contemporary vulnerabilities of left-behind learners. Most lacked the practical experience necessary to tackle this new phenomenon. This section thus starts on the premise that teacher education in Zimbabwe does not adequately prepare student teachers to teach left-behind children inclusively. It tries to answer the following sub-research question: How was teacher education in Zimbabwe equipping teachers to deal with challenges faced

by learners who remain in the country as part of inclusive education? The section begins by presenting results of the lecturers' conceptualization of vulnerability and inclusive education as a basis for a broader discussion on the capacitation of the teachers during the teacher training period.

5.4.1 Lecturers' understanding of vulnerability

The discussion regarding teachers' understanding of vulnerability indicated that different people understand vulnerability differently, and that subsequent attitudes and actions towards vulnerable learners largely depend on these perceptions. It was therefore necessary in this study to probe the lecturers' understanding of vulnerability as these guided what they passed on to pre-service teachers. The majority of interviewed lecturers clearly articulated vulnerability as encompassing the notion of being disadvantaged or being prone to danger and exclusion due to different life circumstances:

> *"Vulnerability is a situation whereby a person is not meeting expected standards because of some disadvantages the person has, for example if a learner doesn't have enough money for his or her upkeep while others have which can affect schooling experiences.*
>
> (Lecturer 2: Institution B; 14thSeptember 2017)

> *"Vulnerability refers to being exposed to certain circumstances or situations that compromise one's performance in class or school activities."*
>
> (Lecturer 3: Institution A; 17thSeptember 2017)

The lecturers' understanding of vulnerability concurred with that of teachers who defined vulnerability as being largely about disadvantages that lead to exclusion and marginalisation. The disadvantages may in different facets of a person's life. Hence, some lecturers went on to say:

> *"Those learners who are disadvantaged in one way or the other in comparison with the others, be it mentally, emotionally, socially, culturally or physically are vulnerable."*
>
> (Lecturer 2: Institution B, 14thSeptember 2017)

> *"When a child does not have adequate protection economically, socially, emotionally and morally, this can expose this child to so many negative forces that they become susceptible to abuse. Without protection, they become vulnerable."*
>
> (Lecturer 3: Institution B; 20thSeptember 2017)

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The cultural and social vulnerability voiced in the above quotes is similar to Bourdieu's (1986) shortage of cultural and social capital which, when limited or absent can negatively affect learners' experiences. Thus, in addition to classical vulnerability which seemed to preoccupy teachers, lecturers generally added social and cultural vulnerability, which is usually ignored, but can affect certain learners to the point of marginalization. But, which groups of learners did the lecturers regard as vulnerable and therefore deserving of their attention equipping pre-service teachers on inclusive education? One lecturer shed light on the focus by saying:

> "*We generally tell the pre-service teachers to include everyone especially the physically challenged. But if you look at the curriculum that we use, the inclusion that is emphasized is mainly for people with disabilities."*
> (Lecturer3: Institution A, 17thSeptember 2017)

Thus, while lecturers were generally of the view that learners can be vulnerable in different ways and therefore deserving attention for inclusive education to be achieved, they also pointed out that in reality, emphasis is mainly on the disabled learners. Hence, the needs of other learners are unlikely to be met. In such a context, the vulnerability of left-behind learners is unlikely to be given attention.

5.4.2 Lecturers' views on the vulnerability of left-behind learners

Lecturers' responses to the vulnerability of left-behind learners were varied. While some viewed left-behind learners as vulnerable learners, others were ambivalent, indicating that while these learners may have problems, they also had many advantages that learners without diaspora parents did not have. The following sections briefly discuss these views.

5.4.2.1 Abuse of remittances

Lecturers suggested that the vulnerability of left-behind learners emerges from the fact that some of the children receive a lot of money from their parents and sometimes abuse it. With too much freedom and financial resources, some left-behind learners may also ignore their school work resulting in them failing or dropping out of school. On the other hand, those left-behind learners whose parents were send little money or none at all were vulnerable because of their poverty:

> "*Vulnerable children are susceptible to becoming victims, especially in a weak economy like ours. When their parents do not send them money and*

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goods, they are exposed to all sorts of dangers as they try to look after themselves."

<div align="right">(Lecturer 3: Institution B, 20thSeptember 2017)</div>

"Some of the parents may not send the remittances consistently. When the parents spend time without sending money, then the children suffer and are exposed to suffering and exploitation."

<div align="right">(Lecturer 3: Institution A, 17thSeptember 2017)</div>

One lecturer likened the lives of some of the left-behind learners to that of Christmas which comes once a year. When the parents send money, these learners enjoy and live lavishly. However, when the money comes inconsistently, the children suffer. It is therefore an oversimplification to regard all left-behind learners as being financially privileged and therefore not suffering.

5.4.2.2 Vulnerability due to lack of psycho-social support

Lecturers pointed out that left-behind learners may be vulnerable because of lack of psycho-social support. This is because some of the guardians may not perform their expected role of socialising the children. Hence some of the children may end up lacking cultural and moral direction:

> *"Most of the* left-behind learners *are a mess. Some of them are no longer in school, but money is coming. Fees may be paid, but the children just do as they wish, absent themselves and may even end up being de-registered. The parents are not there to support their children. Diaspora parents should know that guardians cannot replace real parents. If possible parents should take their children with them.*"

<div align="right">(Lecturer 2: Institution A; 16thSeptember 2017)</div>

> *"Normally these children are lacking parental guidance and counselling, love, affection, attention, direction, monitoring and someone who disciplines them and they lack Ubuntu which should be wholly instilled by the parents themselves, who are however absent."*

<div align="right">(Lecturer 3: Institution A, 17thSeptember 2017)</div>

Some of the lecturers thus indeed acknowledged the vulnerability of left-behind learners and the dangers that these learners were facing on their own without adequate grooming. Furthermore, lecturers did not put emphasis on the economic advantage of left-behind learners, but rather stressed the lack of socio-cultural capital due to parental absence. The general view was that some parents had forgotten their cultural and social roles as parents. This was captured by a lecturer who said:

"Some parents in the diaspora think sending money is the only thing their children need. There is no proper socialization taking place. Money without proper socialisation is nothing. Even with their material wealth, the children are missing parental guidance, which is necessary for proper growth and development."

(Lecturer 1: Institution B, 14thSeptember 2017)

Socialisation is an on-going process. In the absence of parents, most children have no-one to share important information with, or to ask for important advice. Some of the guardians are poor substitutes and so children get lost, lacking the values of *Ubuntu* that parents are expected to instil. The surrogate parents are generally poor substitutes. The physical presence of parents is thus important in the development or growth of children. Bandura's (1977) social learning theory asserts that parents are supposed to be role models who provide social learning to their children, passing on the cultural and social traits, beliefs, values, morals and attitudes that are important for the sustenance of society. Without the physical presence of the parents, the children are bound to suffer. The problems faced by left-behind learners, however, still remain relatively invisible. There is little acknowledgment within the Zimbabwean society itself, let alone in inclusive education, that this vulnerability actually exists.

5.4.2.3 Perceived economic advantage forestalling help

Although the majority of lecturers acknowledged the vulnerability of left-behind learners, they indicated that society in general viewed them as being economically advantaged. Because of this, the left-behind learners rarely get help or get treated the same way as other disadvantaged learners. A lecturer explained this vividly by saying:

"*In most of our communities, people do not regard* left-behind learners *as being vulnerable. You hear people saying these children are spoilt and naughty because of the money that they get from their diaspora-based parents. In schools, teachers complain that they cannot control learners with access to a lot of money. Sometimes these learners receive money that is four times a teacher's monthly salary. How can they discipline such a child?"*

(Lecturer 1: Institution B, 14thSeptember 2017)

The lecturers further pointed out that teachers who earn little money in the country's economically depressed environment were likely to have negative attitude towards seemingly privileged left-behind learners. Yet there are learners who require social, emotional and cultural support. For the left-behind learners without adequate monetary

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support, the problems were enormous. This was because they continued to be viewed as being advantaged even when they were struggling. Even the BEAM programme, which is a government grant meant to assist learners who are in need of economic help, rarely assisted left-behind learners due to the perception that they were all economically advantaged due to having diaspora-based parents. Thus the possibility of these learners getting adequate attention through inclusive education was minimal.

5.4.3 Lecturers' perspectives on educational inclusion

Inclusive education strategies can only succeed if they are implemented by teachers who fully understand the concept of inclusiveness. It is therefore incumbent upon lecturers to give proper orientation to pre-service and practising teachers if inclusive education is to succeed. Hence, Bustos, et al (2012) argues that teacher education should be at the "centre" of inclusive education reform. Pre-service teacher training is thus the beginning of the long journey towards inclusive education. Some of the views of lecturers regarding inclusive education were as follows:

> *"Inclusive education is about incorporating, accommodating or including everyone in the education system and the curriculum catering for the physically challenged learners. In this country, emphasis on inclusive education is on disabled learners who should not be restricted to special schools, but must be included in the mainstream education system."*
>
> (Lecturer3: Institution A, 17[th]September 2017)

> *"This is an education system that looks at all children as the same without discriminating them because of physical inability or social and economic deprivation. The government thrust from independence adopted the education for all policy whose main aim was to increase and facilitate education access by all."*
>
> (Lecturer 3: Institution B, 20[th]September 2017)

Lecturers from both teacher-training institutions were aware that inclusive education entailed accommodating every learner regardless of differences or circumstances. However, their emphasis was on ensuring that their institutions enrol physically challenged learners and that they refurbish their infrastructure so that it becomes accessible to physically challenged learners. Even with such understanding, one of the institutions was failing to enrol the visually impaired and those with hard of hearing due to unavailability of resources to cater for them, hence defeating the whole concept of inclusion. A deeper analysis of the above quotes reveals that most of the lecturers were

also more focussed on classical vulnerability: the disabled, orphans and the economically disadvantaged. One of the institutions had even enrolled disabled students, and saw that as a major step towards inclusive education. Yet inclusive education is only not about the disabled and orphans, nor is it just about enrolment. It is about the inclusion of all learners regardless of their differences, whether physical, social, economic, emotional or religious, and the provision of skills and infrastructure to meet the needs of all the disadvantaged. Thus, some of the lecturers were found wanting in their understanding of the notion of inclusive education.

While lecturers are the ones saddled with the responsibility of equipping the pre-service teachers with knowledge and skills, the fact that some of them were not clear about what inclusive learning really entails raises questions regarding how much they can or are able to impart on the pre-service teachers. The questions arise out of the understanding that a teacher's ability to implement inclusive education effectively emanates from the quality of trainers and the consequent training one receives. Thus, a lecturer with limited skills and knowledge may not be able to impart the same in order to produce a product with a well-rounded understanding and skills for inclusive education.

5.4.3.1 Policies on inclusive education

A policy is a system of principles or a piece of legislation that is meant to guide decisions and achieve rational outcomes. In the education sector specifically, policies are meant to guide teachers towards pre-defined educational outcomes. For inclusive education to be achieved there is need for policies that are geared towards achieving education for all learners, regardless of their differences. When and where a programme is policy driven, there are high chances that human, material and financial resources may be committed towards the proper implementation of the programme (Mafa & Makuba, 2013). UNESCO (2008) argues that such specific policies are desirable in the education sector to protect the educational rights of children in difficult circumstances that require specific legislation for resolution. Where the policies are in place, one would expect that those charged with the responsibility of implementing them would be able to pronounce what they are and what they are meant to achieve. Results of this study however, show that most of the lecturers were not familiar with the specific policies guiding them in

inclusive education. Some of the participants had this to say regarding policies for inclusion:

> *"There are policies which are there. Like right now, every school being constructed is being designed to accommodate the physically challenged."*
> (Lecturer 1: Institution A, 16th September 2017)

> *"There are number of policies which have been put in place by the ministry to guide the teachers in as far as inclusive education is concerned. I might not pronounce them off hand by they are a number of them."*
> (Lecturer 2: Institution A, 16thSeptember 2017)

> *"To be honest I am not even aware whether the policies are there, but of late there has been emphasis on inclusive education."*
> (Lecturer 3: Institution B,20th September 2017)

Most lecturers could not identify any specific policy guiding them on inclusive education. The problem, as has been discussed in earlier chapters, is that there was no single comprehensive policy regarding inclusive education in Zimbabwe (Chireshe, 2013). In the absence of a national policy, actors were finding it difficult to craft guidelines towards inclusive education. Thus, there were generally *ad hoc* approaches to the implementation of inclusive education, loosely guided though by a litany of related legislation such as the Disabled Persons' Act. It was therefore not surprising that many lecturers could not identify policies that were central to inclusive education. Without a clear policy on inclusive education in general, it is difficult to see how a more focussed approach to teacher education could be achieved and talk of mainstreaming inclusion in teacher development becomes mere rhetoric. Some lecturers were of the view that the absence of a dedicated policy was not much of a hindrance to implementation of inclusive education as opined by one who said:

> *"The general policy guiding educational inclusion is the Education Act itself supported by the country's constitution. Like now there is the new curriculum that was introduced in 2O15. It is the umbrella policy that is guiding teachers' training institutions and universities, and it is now a mandate to focus on inclusive education."*
> (Lecturer 3: Institution A; 17thSeptember 2017)

However, the fact that most lecturers and teachers were unable to pinpoint relevant sections or guiding principles is testament that even the new curriculum still fell short of embracing inclusive education in totality. A dedicated inclusive education policy, rather than a general education policy is requisite for inclusive education to succeed. This is

despite the fact that government already treats education as a human right. Circulars from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary education to schools regarding inclusive education were missing other vulnerabilities like the left-behind learners. Even for the new curriculum to succeed in terms of inclusive education, a formal, comprehensive and dedicated policy should be put in place. Simply embedding pieces of references to inclusive education in the curriculum without the necessary guiding principle and framework will not yield tangible results. The current situation, where a dedicated policy does not exist, is problematic. This is because most lecturers do not seem to understand the parameters and extent of what they are expected to do. The absence of the policy also means that there is no framework to guide implementation. In such an environment, where the implementation of inclusive education in general is challenging, and where resources are few, the needs of left-behind learners also fall into obscurity. The need for a dedicated inclusive education policy in the country is therefore self-evident. Such a policy will guide and direct implementation, and thus deliver to the nation an equitable and just education system where the needs of all the vulnerable learners that include the left-behind learners are met.

5.4.3.2 Inclusivity in teacher education curriculum

Working on a programme to enhance the preparatory programs for special and general teacher candidates at the University of Illinois in the USA, Van Laarhoven et al., (2007), argued that the demands of inclusive education require the restructuring and alignment of teacher training to enable pre-service teachers to acquire necessary knowledge and skills. Only then can teachers be able to meet the numerous and sometimes different needs of learners. Bustos et al. (2012) further states that training institutions may only remain relevant if the teachers they produce are competent and skilled enough to adapt to the ever increasing and changing needs of a diverse range of learners. As has been shown in the review of literature in Chapter Three, a number of countries in the world have had to review their teacher education curriculum in order to respond to emerging challenges so that learners are taught inclusively. In some of the countries, the government had to make inclusive practices compulsory in order for results to be speedily achieved. This study found it necessary to review the implementation of inclusive education at the two institutions responsible for teacher education to see if and whether inclusive education was being taken seriously. It was revealed that the burden

of teaching for inclusive education lay primarily in the departments responsible for the Theory of Education (TOE) or teacher development modules, specifically in psychology and sociology of education. One lecturer had this to say:

> *"It is in Psychology of Education that we have a topic on inclusive education. When we teach them in the sociology of education module, we also tell the pre-service teachers that when they go to the field, they will meet different learners and that they don't have to discriminate, but rather accommodate every child. But it's only a topic that we do in less than 2 weeks"*
>
> (Lecturer 1: Institution B, 14th September 2017)

> *"We have a section that deals with special needs. Some of our students go to schools where there is inclusive education like at St Georges School in Bulawayo (a school for the physically challenged). So we equip them here in our lectures."*
>
> (Lecturer 2: Institution A, 16th September 2017)

As the above quotes clearly show, the emphasis on inclusive education is mostly about special needs education which concentrates on the physically and mentally challenged learners. Where the teaching may go beyond this narrow understanding of vulnerable learners, it is only to include topics on general guidance and counselling as well as on HIV and AIDS. However, most teachers felt that they were ill-equipped to deal comprehensively with vulnerable learners, especially the new vulnerabilities. Only those teachers that enrolled for a post-teacher education programme in guidance and counselling felt a measure of confidence that they could deal with challenges facing vulnerable learners. Thus one can argue that the pre-service teacher emerging from the teacher institutions is generally ill-equipped to implement inclusive education and dealing with traditional vulnerabilities. The ill-preparedness is worse off regarding how to deal with left-behind learners as the curriculum is silent on such vulnerabilities. One lecturer noted:

> *"The current teacher education really falls short in equipping teachers with the skills and knowledge required to handle vulnerable children in a way that is inclusive. What we are doing is just scratching the surface. This is mainly because we have limited time and a lot of things have to be covered in that short period of time."*
>
> (Lecturer 3: Institution B,20th September 2017)

At both institutions that were surveyed, it was clear that topics on inclusive education were inadequately covered, with just an average of a week being assigned to the topic. This concurs with Jenjekwa, Rutoro & Runyowa's (2013) assertion that the time allocated for the residential phase of theoretical grounding in teacher education is very

limited, resulting in inadequate theoretically grounding of pre-service teachers on dealing with vulnerabilities such as those related to the left-behind learners. In addition, much of the teaching in terms of inclusive education was mostly theoretical. Kapinga (2014), in Tanzania, makes similar assertions, arguing that basic training in the country provides inadequate content and little practical experiences to enable the pre-service teachers to engage with the reality in the field. In Zimbabwe, the minimal time allocated to teaching practice means that teacher education in general ends up being primarily theoretical (Mbengwa, 2010). There was even very little emphasis on inclusive education, with regards to time and resources allocated towards mainstreaming it into the curriculum. One lecturer emphasised this point by saying:

> *"It is only recently that some emphasis was given to inclusive education. I think this idea of inclusivity was recently taken up by the Department of Teacher Education (DTE) as they had some representatives who attended a workshop on inclusivity. So when we were reviewing our syllabus, they started complaining that we were not taking inclusivity seriously. So, in 2015 we ended up including inclusivity as an addendum in the question paper."*
>
> (Lecturer1: Institution B, 14thSeptember 2017)

The above quote illustrates that though inclusive education was pronounced by the 1987 Education Act and is upheld in the constitution, it has not been taken seriously over the past three decades. It is treated as an afterthought, an appendage to the education policies that gets little recognition or funding. Even the lecturers that were supposed to equip the pre-service teacher were not adequately capacitated to provide the requisite skills:

> *"The majority of lecturers here are not really adequately capacitated to teach the concept of inclusive education in its broad sense, because it is also new to some of them. In our situation, we do not even have a lecturer in special education."*
>
> (Lecturer 2: Institution B, 14thSeptember 2017)

That some of the lecturers felt inadequately capacitated to impart knowledge on inclusive education to the pre-service teacher was a huge indictment to teacher training education in Zimbabwe. The implementation of successful inclusive education in the country thus requires the capacitation of the teacher training lecturers first before these can be expected to equip pre-service teachers. Such training needs to broaden the conceptualization of inclusive education to include both traditional and new vulnerabilities so that vulnerable learners like the left-behind learners are not left out.

5.4.3.3 Skills on educational inclusion imparted to the pre-service teachers

When asked whether they equip the pre-service teachers with skills to enable them to deal with challenges related to vulnerable learners in the field, most lecturers indicated that they were stronger in imparting theoretical rather than practical skills. One lecturer said:

> *"We just equip them with theoretical knowledge such as on classroom management, how to give extension work, and how to handle slow learners and on remediation. The problem though may be in the application since we just give them the theory."*
>
> (Lecturer 2: Institution B, 14ᵗʰSeptember 2017)

The largely theoretical approach to inclusive education is problematic in that pre-service teachers are expected to practice inclusivity for the first time in the field. Most teachers then find the situation overwhelming. Hence Mafa & Makuba (2013) argue that there should be connections between carefully planned coursework and fieldwork, equipping teachers with both theory and practice so that pre-service teachers learn to connect what they learn in the lecturer room with the reality in the classroom. During teaching practice, lecturers are supposed to observe whether the pre-service teachers translate the theory into practice. However, as one lecturer indicated, this was not always the case:

> *"We just assume that the pre-service teachers will practice what we teach them. The workloads that we have during teaching practice makes it impossible to really get into details and nitty gritties of the actual practice. However, I agree that there should be a follow up of the applicability of the whole theories through monitoring of inclusion."*
>
> (Lecturer 3: Institution A, 17ᵗʰSeptember 2017)

Thus, while follow ups on implementation of theory learnt in the lecture room is a necessity for effective capacitation of the pre-service teacher, the huge numbers of student teachers that needed to be observed made it difficult to do so. Rather than observing pre-service teachers effectively practicing inclusive teaching, lecturers were generally just looking at the pre-service teachers' documents. The problem with this approach, however, was that some of the documents may not have been genuine, with pre-service teachers generating them to get them good marks, without the actual practice having been done. Some of the student teachers even reported throwing away these documents as soon as they graduated, making the whole process devoid of any real value as far as the implementation of inclusive education is concerned.

5.4.3.3.1 Varying teaching methods

But, what is it that the institutions concentrate on regarding inclusive education? Most of the lecturers indicated that the main concern is generally on encouraging pre-service teachers to vary teaching methods so that different learners may benefit. According to one lecturer:

> *"The skills that we teach them are many. We however concentrate mainly on the teaching methods they need to use in the classroom - especially the teaching methods which are capable of incorporating everyone. We urge them not to only concentrate on the lecture method, but to also use group work, debates and role play to cater for every learner's area of intelligence."*
>
> (Lecturer 3: Institution B, 20thSeptember 2017)

The varying of teaching methods is done to accommodate learners with their different learning intelligences. As UNESCO (2005a:5) points out, "inclusive education should encompass a range of modifications not only in content, but also in approaches, structures and strategies." The lecturers indicated that they also sometimes vary approaches in their teaching so that the pre-service teachers actually see how it is done and experience the benefits, all in the hope that they will do the same when they graduate and are deployed in the field. However, the varying of approaches was not always practical at the teacher institutions because of the large classes that the lecturers were teaching. Most lecturers ended up concentrating on the lecture method only, hence their students did not get to experience in practice what they were expected to do in the field. In the midst of these challenges, there are however lecturers who try to improvise. One lecturer indicated that sometimes they used the de-rolling method, explaining thus:

> *"We sometime de-role our students. We can, for instance, ask them to take the role of learners and ask them to say some of the things they expect to be helped with as vulnerable learners. Sometimes we also make them to assume the role of parents where we can ask them to discuss how they can take care of their disabled children. We can practically move around with our students while in their roles of parents to check the suitability of classrooms and toilets on disabled learners."*
>
> (Lecturer 2: Institution A, 14thSeptember 2017)

While the method is good and effective in equipping pre-service teachers with skills, the pre-occupation of inclusive education is still largely on traditional vulnerabilities,

especially on the physically handicapped. It is no wonder that most of the pre-service teachers graduated with an understanding of inclusive education that was heavily tilted to classical vulnerabilities.

5.4.3.3.2 Instilling positive attitude towards vulnerable learners

Besides the knowledge and skills that lecturers impart on the pre-service teachers, what else is important for the success of inclusive education? Bustos et al. (2012) argue that for inclusive education to succeed, implementers must have a positive attitude – one where they view the vulnerable learners as deserving of a chance to learn rather than looking down upon them. The lecturers at teacher training institutions must therefore serve as role models of inclusive practices in order to teach teachers with conviction. As Chireshe (2013) points out, the lecturers should lead by example in order to create a positive tone in inclusive practices. Only then can pre-service teachers be equipped to feel armoured with inclusive values and humanness that they can use to create a classroom atmosphere full of respect, fairness, and equity – a pre-requisite for successful inclusive learning. Asked whether the teacher institutions create such an environment for their trainees, a lecturer said:

> *"In sociology and psychology of education we try to create a conducive learning environment. We hope that our pre-service teachers will do the same when they go out to teach. We also try to use terms that do not label, terms like physically challenged (instead of disabled), slow learners (in place of dull). This is to avoid labelling and stereotyping which can negatively affect learners."*
>
> (Lecturer 2: Institution B, 14th September 2017)

Labelling and stereotyping are detrimental to achieving inclusive education. This is because such terminology can lead to the discrimination and neglect of the concerned learners (Mbengwa, 2010). As the labelling theory points out, a label can stick to individuals such that they live according to the label in what is referred to as a self-fulfilling prophecy. Hence, in trying to be more inclusive, some lecturers indicated that they encourage the use of terms that have a positive meaning: "physically challenged", "less gifted", and "intellectually challenged". The lecturers further argued that this choice of words helps to improve attitudes towards learners. Thus, when lecturers use these terms while teaching pre-service teachers, their hope is for the pre-service teachers to

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internalise the terms and consequently be able mirror the inclusive practices of their trainers in the field.

The lecturers' expectation was that the pre-service teachers would also be able to empathise with learners and thus help them better. To further equip pre-service teachers with skills requisite for inclusive education, some lecturers reported that they were now discouraging *streaming* of learners. Streaming, in general, is a system in which learners are grouped into different classes according to their academic capabilities. This leads to teachers labelling learners as either good or bad, intelligent or not, or some other classification that results in the teachers adopting different attitudes towards different learners. What the lecturers rather encouraged was mainstreaming, where learners with different challenges are not put in 'special classes', but rather remain in regular classes where their individual challenges are dealt with. To help the pre-service teachers adapt to the realities of the workplace, some lecturers indicated that they try to ground their students in theories that they envisage would help the pre-service teachers to tackle the real problems at work. Thus one lecturer said:

> *"Theory of education and professional studies, are what makes the teacher a 'real teacher'. This is where teachers are taught how to deal with diversity in the classroom. If, for example, a teacher enters a classroom of 45 with different learners ranging from the physically and mentally challenged as well as orphans, a teacher with theory of education knowledge should be able to help the different learners and embrace all of them, and hence implement inclusive education."*

(Lecturer 1: Institution B, 14th September 2017)

While the quote above illustrates the strategy that lecturers at teacher training institutions were using to equip pre-service teachers for inclusive education, one cannot fail to notice that the diversity of the challenges alluded to by the interviewee did not extend to, or embrace left-behind learners and their challenges. It is therefore doubtful that even the theories that were imparted to the trainee teachers and the examples used would be inclusive enough to encompass contemporary vulnerabilities such as those related to children left behind by emigrating parents. The focus remains, rather, on classical vulnerabilities.

5.4.3.3.3 Sensitizing pre-service teachers on rights

Children's rights are central to inclusive education. Interviewed lecturers concurred that the issue of rights was central to inclusive education and that pre-service teachers should be sensitive to children's rights in order for inclusive education to succeed. One lecturer had this to say:

> "*What we are saying is that every person has the right to learn at the nearest school and we should remove institutional, attitudinal and even environmental barriers. This will help children to have equal access to education.*"
>
> (Lecturer 3: Institution A; 17thSeptember 2017)

During the theory of education lectures, pre-service teachers are taught that all learners have rights and that vulnerable learners also have the same rights as everyone. This understanding is in line with the Zimbabwean Education Act which asserts that every child has a right to an education. Teachers are therefore legally mandated to treat learners equally. But, to what extent were lecturers inculcating the issue of rights into the pre-service teachers and how equipped were these teachers to deal with the challenges faced by vulnerable learners? Most of the lecturers indicated that they teach pre-service teachers about children's rights, hoping that this will keep the teachers aware of their responsibilities while they are working with the learners in schools. However, some lecturers felt that the exam-oriented nature of the education system in primary and secondary education curriculum, as well as the high teacher pupil ratio militates against the implementation of inclusive education. In addition, most of the teachers were said to lack motivation due to low remuneration. As a lecturer pointed out:

> "*Generally, pre-service teachers try to implement inclusive education during their teaching practice period so that they pass the course. However, after they finish the course, they just ignore some of the things they learnt such as individualised teaching or offering psycho-social support. This is because they face various challenges in the field such as extremely large classes.*"
>
> (Lecturer 1: Institution A, 17th September 2017)

As the above discussion clearly shows, there was awareness among lecturers of children's rights and of the need to protect those rights. The lecturers were trying to impart to the pre-service teachers knowledge and the skills to implement these rights in the classroom. They argued, however, that the challenges faced by the teachers in the field were enormous: high teacher-pupil ratio and high teaching loads. These challenges

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made it difficult for the teachers to give individualised attention to learners. Hence, vulnerable learners may not be given the attention they deserve. The left-behind learners especially may not even be attended to, given that their challenges are largely unrecognised.

5.4.4 Teacher education curriculum and left-behind learners

The central argument in this thesis is that the left-behind learners are invisible as vulnerable learners, and that in those rare instances when there is discussion about them, the general tendency has been to group them and collectively view them as being advantaged, rather than vulnerable. While it is true that some interviewed left-behind learners were economically advantaged, the same cannot be said for the majority of these learners, whose parents were in fact struggling to survive in the diaspora. More so, despite any economic advantage that may have existed, the study findings have shown that most left-behind learners were socially and culturally disadvantaged due to parental absence. They were thus vulnerable in a number of spheres, including in their education. The education curriculum responsible for shaping and equipping pre-service teachers should thus be cognisant of this vulnerability if inclusive education is to be achieved. This study thus assessed teacher education curricula at the selected teacher training institutions. As Cardona (2009) argues, pre-service teacher education is a vital cog in the education wheel as it provides the best platform to develop a new breed of teachers with the requisite skills and attitudes to implement inclusive policies successfully.

Interviewed lecturers indicated that although some of them were aware of the vulnerability of the left-behind learners, the teacher education curriculum had a narrow view of inclusion and vulnerability where the left-behind learners do not feature at all. This is what some of the lecturers said:

> "The issue of the left-behind learners *is not yet part of the curricula because it is a recent issue. It seems society at large, lecturers included, does not really see the issue as a major problem. In as much as we teach about broken homes in contemporary social problems, we do not always refer to this new group – the 'diaspora orphans'. It is not a topical issue. Right now we generalise and concentrate more on the physically challenged, orphans and those affected by HIV and AIDS."*

> (Lecturer 2: Institution B, 14thSeptember 2017)

"It is not part of the curriculum. As we speak, I am realizing that it is another form of vulnerability which should be given attention. We are yet to really emphasize that these children need help as they are very vulnerable. Even if we see that they need help sometimes we overlook their vulnerability as society because we see them as better than those children without parents that are abroad. But if you look at the social, emotional and cultural parts these children really need help."

(Lecturer 3: Institution B, 20thSeptember 2017)

Thus, the problem of left-behind learners is not yet a priority in inclusive education. While teacher training institutions strive to give pre-service teachers information on inclusion, the scope seems very limited primarily because the lecturers, who are charged with delivering the skills and knowledge, have also not caught up to the fact that the phenomenon of left-behind learners is a crisis that requires urgent attention. The institutions are not adequately preparing pre-service teachers to be able to deal with the numerous barriers to inclusive education in the field. Effective capacitating of pre-service teachers requires that the curriculum be dynamic and the training be contextualised so that the emerging problems and vulnerabilities, such as that of left-behind learners, may be identified and tackled successfully. Lipsky & Gartner (1999) argue that what is required is not a special education reform, but an emergence of a transformative education system whose institutional orientation is to continuously reflect on its vision and goals, to see if it is meeting the changing needs of the learners in a changing society.

The Zimbabwean society has, in the past decade or so, experienced fundamental changes that have been disruptive to the family unit. The vulnerability of these children cannot continuously be ignored. Rather, the education curriculum should continuously be revisited and restructured to deal with these new vulnerabilities. As Florian (2005) posits, a commitment to inclusive education means that institutions can only respond to the needs of all learners, both collectively and individually, by keeping the curriculum dynamic and open to new possibilities. The interviews with lecturers in the two institutions surveyed reveal, without doubt, that the current curriculum is ill-equipped to deal with contemporary challenges. While the government has committed to implementing the recommendations of the Nziramasanga (1999), it was not clear, at the time of the research, whether the changes would be comprehensive or piece-meal. Without a comprehensive inclusive education policy and an accompanying

implementation framework as well as dedicated funding, inclusive education in the country will remain a challenge. In as much as individual lecturers may understand the need for broadening the scope of inclusive education, without the backing of a dedicated policy and relevant funding for inclusive education, they are bound to fail. The policy, framework and funding are needed to institutionalise the necessary changes and fight against the perceptions that society at large currently holds regarding the vulnerability of left-behind learners. The perceived economic advantage of some of the left-behind learners must not be used as an excuse to neglect the greater majority of learners, who, due to the absence of their parents, experience increased social, emotional and educational vulnerability.

5.4.4.1 The social record and related documents

To implement inclusive education effectively, teachers are expected to keep a social record containing a learner's historical background, social information and any relevant anecdotal data. Such information could also include issues to do with deviant behaviour and any challenges related to the learner. Such information is valuable because it gives the teacher a total view of the learner and may use that information to help the learner holistically. With proper social records being kept, learners experiencing problems attributed to their being left behind by emigrating parents may actually be picked up. As one lecturer pointed out:

> *"Although our curriculum does not exactly include issues of* left-behind learners*, pre-service teachers on teaching practice are expected to keep a social record. This record can help them identify* left-behind learners*, and the challenges associated with the absence of parents. The pre-service teacher can also see from high absenteeism rates and indiscipline that the learner may be living without parents."*
>
> (Lecturer 2: Institution A, 16th September 2017)

The majority of participants indicated that the social record was integral to effective teaching and that it was mandatory for teachers to keep it. They pointed out that they, during the training of teachers, emphasized the importance of keeping this record:

> *"It is a must for our students to keep a social record book where they record for each learner, information such as number in a family, parents' occupations and school level for other siblings. They have to know the social background for each learner in class through that book, such that even when assessors come and assess pre-service teacher's documents they can see*

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that such a particular learner is vulnerable or not from the recorded information.."

(Lecturer 1: Institution B, 14thSeptember 2017)

The importance of the social record in effective teaching and practice of inclusive education is not in question. However, the above quotes raise questions on the adherence of teachers to the requirement. Regardless of how much emphasis the lecturers place on the importance of the social record, it is perhaps only pre-service-teachers that religiously kept the social record in order to get academic marks during their training. In neglecting to keep social records, the teachers however lost information that could help them to meet the needs of learners and thus advance inclusive learning. That information is crucial to identify and assessing learners who experiences barriers to learning and implement intervention strategies (Nel, 2007:3). Lecturers also found it difficult to assess whether pre-service teachers know how to use the social record. This was because the lecturers were also overwhelmed by their workloads and ended up assessing the physical presence of the social record and not necessarily the implementation of practices emerging from the information it contained. As one lecturer said:

> *"In as much as we want to check both the theory and practical aspects of the documents, sometimes it is difficult to do because of the many assessments that one has to do in one visit."*

(Lecturer 2: Institution B, 14thSeptember 2017)

Even though the social record is a mandatory document, the preceding discussion clearly shows that its utility was in question. Teachers rarely kept the record and those that were supposed to supervise them were also overwhelmed and so the social record ended up losing relevance. In an earlier discussion of the social record, teachers indicated that they were overwhelmed by work and that the low remuneration that they were getting did not motivate them to compile a social record which is demanding in terms of time.

5.4.4.2 Inclusive teacher education curriculum and related topics

The absence of a dedicated and comprehensive inclusive policy hinders the training of teachers that are capable of handling inclusive education demands. However, some interviewed lecturers felt that there were topics that were taught in the Theory of Education modules (e.g. Contemporary Social Problems) that could sensitise pre-

service teachers on the challenges that they may encounter in the field and how to tackle them. The problems faced by left-behind learners should be one of those challenges. The lecturers' argument was that pre-service teachers should be innovative enough to manage any new challenges they encounter in the field:

> *"When pre-service teachers begin their course, they usually have a general understanding of inclusive education. Our job is to make them understand better as we sensitise them on various issues. When they experience the real issues in the field, they need to apply what they would have learnt in different areas during their academic stay here to help vulnerable learners."*
> (Lecturer 2: Institution A, 16th September 2017)

However, in as much as the pre-service teachers were expected to be innovative in the field, the fact that the teacher-training curriculum was silent on the vulnerabilities of left-behind learners meant that there was no institutional support for those teachers that may be innovative enough to grasp the issues and decide to act. With the perception of left-behind learners as being advantaged or even spoilt still dominating, teachers are unlikely to 'waste' their time dealing with the challenges of these learners that no-one at the school will recognise and reward them for their efforts. Should teacher education embrace and recognise these new vulnerabilities, a critical mass of teachers that are sensitive to contemporary challenges in inclusive education will be created. Together, this critical mass of teachers will be able to transform educational practices and broaden the scope of inclusive education beyond traditional vulnerabilities, and hence include the needs of children left behind by emigrating parents.

5.4.4.3 Improvements in teacher education curriculum for left-behind learners

Since teacher education institutions are key to inclusive education, lecturers were asked whether there were any recent improvements to teacher training in their departments in relation to capacitating teachers to respond to the needs of vulnerable learners in the recent past and most lecturers indicated that no such changes had been made. The general view was that while there was talk of improving the approach to inclusive education, not much was being done on the ground. For any changes related to left-behind learners specifically, the dominant view was that this was a new issue not known or recognised by many, including at the teacher training institutions themselves. However, given the dynamism of education in general, some argued that the issue of

the vulnerability of left-behind learners could gradually be visited and the curriculum expanded to become more embracing. Thus said some lecturers:

"There is nothing tangible yet on improving teacher training to specifically accommodate new vulnerabilities. It's on an individual basis where we are becoming aware and conscious of different pupils' needs and treating each child as an individual and meet each child at his or her point of need and then be able to cascade the information and skills to our pre-service teachers."
(Lecturer 3: Institution B, 20[th]September 2017)

"We should now adjust what we have in our models to accommodate this new vulnerability. We need to sensitise our students, and make them are aware that in as much as we talk about orphans, the physically challenged and the girl child, this is another group of vulnerable learners that is upcoming up."
(Lecturer 3: Institution A, 17[th]September 2017)

Thus, clearly, not much focus has been given on the vulnerability of left-behind learners or sensitizing pre-service teachers. This means that there was no support system for learners which such vulnerabilities. The sensitizing of pre-service teachers is the first step to acknowledging the problems of the left-behind learners, what is really needed is equipping the pre-service teachers with the relevant skills to tackle the challenges and thereby help the affected learners. As Mafa & Makuba (2013) notes, sensitization of teachers in any topic does not necessarily produce teaching graduates who can teach inclusive classes effectively and competently. Equipping the teachers thus entails the transfer of soft skills necessary to meet the needs of vulnerable learners within the ambits of inclusive education. Some lecturers also argued that once sensitised, pre-service teachers should be able to go out into the communities of their schools and research on the problems affecting their learners and in the process would come across the problems of left-behind learners:

"It is part of the our curriculum policy that when pre-service and graduate teachers go out on teaching practice and full employment respectively, they should do community or outreach programmes, going out into communities to identify learners who may not be in school and understanding the problems. They will then know how best child can join others in school and help them. It is especially a requirement for our students on teaching practice."
(Lecturer 2: Institution B, 14[th]September 2017)

However, like the social record discussed earlier, this approach is problematic because most student teachers only do this during teaching practice and not when they are deployed to work after graduation. Perhaps a more rigorous approach would be to imbed this requirement throughout the training period and not just as a small component when teachers go for teaching practice. Integrated with adequate theory, the approach would equip the pre-service teachers with life-long skills to be able to tackle any challenges that may arise while they are in the field.

5.4.5 Document analysis

This document analysis entailed identifying relevant documents, extracting relevant data and making analysis of the extracted data to find out more on how teacher education in Zimbabwe is equipping pre-service teachers to teach inclusively and deal with challenges such as those being experienced by left-behind learners. In this study, the researcher identified modules or handbooks related to inclusive education, module outlines, teaching programmes and past examination papers for analysis. In relation to the aims, research questions and literature review the researcher searched for relevant data that would facilitate the proper interpretation of the whole research process. The challenge encountered, however, was that most lecturers were reluctant to avail such documentation.

5.4.5.1 Syllabus

For effective teaching and learning, every module should have documents that communicate course information and defines expectations and responsibilities. In Zimbabwe, the curriculum for teacher education is generated at college level (Jenjekwa, Rutoro & Runyowa, 2013). The curriculum, however, has to be endorsed by the University of Zimbabwe for standardization. The source of the various documents analysed hereafter was therefore the two institutions involved in the study. At one of the teacher training institutions, the researcher analysed the Theory of Education syllabus for a three year programme in Psychology and Sociology of Education. The module on Philosophy of Education was not reviewed as it had no content relating to inclusive education.

The fourth objective of the module stated that pre-service teachers should, at the end of the module, be able to '*project a holistic view of the developing child at various stages of development with particular emphasis on adolescence.'* It could be argued that this objective indirectly implies that pre-service teachers should be able to understand the tenets of inclusive education and therefore be able to holistically cater for the needs of all learners regardless of any differences. The fifth objective also envisages the training of teachers that are able to '*guide and counsel pupils in response to their personal needs',* hence creating a teacher capable of identifying learners' individual needs and guiding and counselling them accordingly. However, without the serious integration of the social record into the process, the teacher that is produced is not adequately equipped to teach inclusively.

A further analysis of the module outline revealed that there were no specific topics on inclusive education. As argued before, it is left to the individual lecturers to infuse issues relevant to inclusive education when dealing with topics on contemporary social problems. Even where the outline indicated a topic dealing with learners with differences, the examples used were those of children with special needs like the auditory, visual, physical and slow learners. Nowhere was there mention of contemporary vulnerabilities such as those experienced by left-behind learners. It is clear therefore that challenges such as those of left-behind learners were not yet being considered in the inclusive education debate.

The module on the Sociology of Education listed a topic on 'Contemporary Social Problems'. In this topic, issues listed included deviance, child's rights and abuse, poverty, AIDS and education as well as domestic violence. It may be that well-informed and innovative lecturers may be able to add vulnerable learners such as the left-behind learners in the discussion and hence alert teachers to such vulnerabilities. At the school level, a teacher may also be able to identify left-behind learners and include them among the vulnerable learners. However, without any direct reference to left-behind learners in all the sub- topics in the teacher-training modules, the possibility that these learners may completely remain invisible and therefore unacknowledged, is very real. Thus one lecturer said:

"The issue of left-behind learners *is not yet part of our concern even in the module for Contemporary Social Problems. Maybe it can be mentioned in passing in the topic for 'Globalisation' but again, I am not sure."*

(Lecturer 2: Institution B; 14th September 2017)

Overall, therefore, the teacher education curriculum that was analysed was silent on the issue of left-behind learners. In a context where the government is struggling to concretize issues related to inclusive education in general, the issue of left-behind learners in particular, is not even featuring. Equipping pre-service teachers to recognise such vulnerabilities is therefore a starting point towards a truly inclusive approach to education in the country. An analysis of the "Theory of Education' module shows that pre-service teachers are encouraged to use various methods of teaching, including the lecture method, group work, practical work, and role-play. While lecturers could do well by practising inclusive methods, the majority of the lecturers indicated that they end up using the lecture method owing to huge workloads, lack of resources and high student-lecturer ratios. Thus pre-service teachers may not be capacitated adequately. When such teachers eventually graduate and are deployed to teach in schools, they are likely to use the lecture method as well and not opt for variable methodologies that embrace all vulnerable learners. With such approaches, while students with classical vulnerabilities (e.g. the disabled) may be identified, those with the new vulnerabilities such as the left-behind learners will get lost in the multitudes of learners and their needs may not be identified or dealt with.

5.4.5.2 Handbook on inclusive education

Handbooks that are used by lecturers at the two surveyed institutions are essentially summaries of a certain areas of study in a course. In this study, the researcher reviewed a teacher's hand book: *Breaking Down Barriers to Inclusive Education in Zimbabwe* which is used by both institutions to equip pre-service teachers on inclusive education. The foreword of the handbook by the then permanent secretary, Dr Mahere, quotes the Education Act, emphasizing that "…every child in Zimbabwe shall have the right to school education" and that "all learners have access to education regardless of their individual characteristics or difficulties since there can be no better investment than the education of all children without any form of discrimination" (Chimonyo et.al., 2011: vii). While the book indicated that the curriculum ought to ensure that learning is more appropriate to

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the various development levels, abilities and capacities of learners, it also stuck to the familiar narrow definition of vulnerability where the physically challenged took centre stage, with the concentration on those children with speech and language disorders, health related disorders, the mentally challenged and the gifted and talented disabled learners. Hence inclusion in the book is defined as "education of learners with disability in the schools where their siblings go to." (Chimonyo, et al, 2011: viii). Nowhere in the book were emerging vulnerabilities, such as those relating to the left-behind learners mentioned. But, as results of this study show, the needs of some left-behind learners are real and challenging. The needs of these particular learners are not being met. There is therefore need for a curriculum review that encompasses contemporary issues in education, especially those relating to inclusive education. Without periodic reviews, a curriculum, may fail to create child friendly schools and unable to meet the needs of a changing society (Modipane & Themane, 2014). While the needs of the physically disabled as well as the orphaned are critical and deserve attention, the findings of this study make it clear that the left-behind learners are equally vulnerable and therefore need to be included in any planning for inclusive education.

5.4.5.3 Teaching programme

Teaching programmes are important documents made in preparation for implementation of the curricula for different courses. These documents show the particular course to be taught, the topics to be covered for a particular course, the length of time a certain topic is going to be taught and the responsible lecturer for that topic. For this research teaching documents from one of the two institutions in the survey were analysed. The analysed programme was a teaching programme for Theory of Education. The programme ran almost three months and incorporated topics on Intelligence, Special Needs and Inclusive Education. The inclusive education topic was allocated just one week, where each day consisted of just 2 hours of teaching. Essentially therefore, the topic was just being taught in 10 hours of the three-year course. With such little time allocated to inclusive education, not much is expected to be covered. Rather lecturers ended up rushing to cover the content without particularly allowing the student teachers to absorb, assimilate and even debate the key issues. The time allocated for such an important area is therefore limited and inadequate to theoretically ground pre-service teachers on the various debates on the topic and to

impart skills that are essential for dealing with vulnerabilities such as those presented left-behind learners. Thus one lecturer commented:

> *"With the little time allocated per topic, a small dose of inclusive education is given to the teachers during training."*
>
> (Lecturer 3: Institution A, 17th September 2017)

The result of this insufficient time allocation was that pre-service teachers were generally graduating with little knowledge on inclusive education and therefore were ill equipped in terms of inclusive education in general. It is therefore too much to expect that they would be able to handle inclusive education issues related to left-behind learners. As put forward by some teachers, they may end up concentrating on vulnerabilities they are used to, the traditional ones like the disabled and not giving much attention to new phenomenon like the left-behind learners.

5.4.5.4 Past exam question papers

When teaching has taken place, it is mandatory in Zimbabwean schools and tertiary institutions that learners are examined in order to test whether learners have understood the information they had been learning. The examinations can be theory, oral, practical or a combination of these. The researcher thus reviewed Theory of Education examination papers from one of the two institutions in the study. It proved impossible to access question papers from the other institution and none were available on their website as well. The analysis of the accessed papers was basically concentrated on whether there were questions relating to inclusive education and what the key issues being examined were. Question papers from 2013 to 2016 were analysed. Overall, there were few questions on inclusive education on the examination papers. One lecturer explained:

> *"It is only recently that more emphasis was given to inclusive education. I think this idea of inclusivity was recently captured by the Department of Teacher education (DTE) as they started complaining about exclusion of inclusivity as a concept in our syllabus in 2012. By 2013 we had to include questions on inclusive education as an addendum in the question paper."*
>
> (Lecturer 3: Institution B, 20th September 2017)

The first examination to include questions on inclusive education was in 2013. The 2013 question in the Theory of Education October examination paper, which dealt with inclusive education, was repeated verbatim in the 2014 final examination in a different

module, Psychology of Education. Repeating the same exact question in two consecutive years may be indicative of the importance that the lecturers were now putting on inclusive education. On the other hand, it may, however, reflect that the lecturers were not yet competent enough to broaden the scope of their teaching and hence felt comfortable on familiar issues that had been examined the previous year. In addition, the question, which asked students to debate whether inclusive education was exclusive education, seemed to focus on the fact that teaching disabled and visually impaired students together with the generality of the learners may actually be excluding these learners experiencing traditional vulnerabilities. Issues related to new vulnerabilities such as those experienced by the left-behind learners were thus not being recognised.

The 2015 Psychology of Education examination included a question on inclusive education which asked students to discuss whether inclusive education was a myth. Such a question brings to the fore the fact that inclusive education has not yet been fully embraced, despite moves towards its adoption and implementation. When the researcher asked one lecturer the rationale behind this question, the lecturer explained:

> *"The idea of inclusion is now among us, inclusive education itself is still a dream yet to come true. As it is, we are still struggling to equip our pre-service teachers on the traditional vulnerabilities afflicting learners and we are yet to succeed. Now the issue of inclusion of left-behind learners in the curriculum will also follow suit, but it will, also for some time, feel like a myth."*
> (Lecturer 3: Institution B, 20th September 2017)

The idea that issues related to the left-behind learners and inclusion are still new resonated with most of the lecturers interviewed. While they are still grappling with traditional vulnerabilities and inclusive education, the issue of left-behind learners takes a back stage. Without a dedicated and comprehensive policy on inclusive education, the tackling of even the classical vulnerabilities will remain a challenge. To successfully tackle all vulnerabilities, including those affecting the left-behind learners, policies need to be adopted and the curriculum for teacher education needs to be revamped to accommodate new challenges afflicting the left-behind learners.

All hope is not lost however. The 2016 end of year paper asked students to examine the view that child-headed families were a reflection of the disintegration of the extended

families. This question may have arisen out of the observation that there are children staying alone and that the extended family is no longer strong, willing or capable enough to compensate for absent parents, regardless of whether the parents died or migrated. In a way, this question brings to the fore the issue of child-headed households and the effect on schooling. The schooling challenges may thus be addressed through inclusive education. However, the understanding of inclusive education in general is still elementary. Much is therefore needed to review the curriculum so that pre-service teachers are equipped with skills and knowledge relevant to practising inclusive education. Only then can the teachers be expected to comprehensively conceptualise inclusive education in its broader sense which includes recognising the needs of left-behind learners and being able to deal with their needs in an environment of inclusive education.

5.5 Conclusion

The chapter presented and discussed the findings of the study in order to fulfil the study aim of assessing the challenges confronting learners who remain in Zimbabwe when parents migrate and investigating how teachers were equipped to deal with the specific needs of these learners as part of inclusive education. The learners that were left in Zimbabwe by emigrating parents where left in the custody of relatives or non-relatives or on their own. The absence of parents was generally impacting negatively on left-behind learners, scaring them emotionally. The majority of these learners lacked psycho-social support, had acrimonious relationships with guardians, lacked provisions due to the misuse of remittances by guardians, were overburdened due to role addition, and had no role models and confidants to unload emotionally stressing challenges to. Regarding educational experiences, most left-behind learners faced challenges related to too much work that was affecting their schooling performance, and lacked support for schoolwork at home. In addition, the learners were poorly representation at school meetings, their school expenses were either not paid or paid late. While left-behind learners from both low and high income residential areas were experiencing challenges, the challenges faced by learners in the high-income areas were being ameliorated by the presence of guardians that were economically well off, better educated and therefore better capacitated to provide help. Overall, though, there was enough evidence from this study that reduced, economic, social and cultural

capital from emigrating parents was negatively affecting the schooling of left-behind learners.

Results from focus group discussions with teachers at the two high schools revealed that the majority of teachers were more versed with classical forms of vulnerability: the orphans, disabled and the girl child. The idea that left-behind learners were a vulnerable group was therefore not entrenched. Rather some teachers perceived the left-behind learners to be advantaged primarily because some of the learners had access to adequate financial support from diaspora-based parents to support flashy life styles. It seemed, in this instance, that perceptions rather than reality mattered as the majority of the interviewed left-behind learners were not financially stable. The majority of the teachers took the few left-behind learners who had access to excessive money to be representative of left-behind learners. Evidence from interviews with left-behind learners, however, showed that the majority of parents in the diaspora were not remitting adequately.

The majority of teachers indicated that they were equipped with some knowledge on inclusive education while they were still in teacher training. Most of this knowledge, however, was theoretical making it difficult for them to engage in inclusive practices in the classroom. The only exceptions were teachers that had undergone further post-teacher education courses (e.g. counseling and guidance) who seemed more conversant with inclusive education. However, their understanding of inclusive education was generally centered around classical vulnerabilities and they did not seem capacitated enough to identify and del with new vulnerabilities such as those represented by left-behind learners.

Regarding challenges to implementing inclusive education approaches, teachers indicated that they were also ill-equipped to deal with classical vulnerabilities, let alone contemporary ones. They further pointed out that the issue of left-behind learners was a new phenomenon that they understood little about and thus did not feel adequately equipped to tackle the challenges related to it. The challenges related to helping left-behind learners centered on the non-cooperation of guardians and parents which made the teachers job difficult. They further pointed out that most left-behind learners were generally late or absent from school, did not do their homework well, had their schooling

expenses in arrears and some were sometimes intransigent, all of which affected their educational development. All these challenges were compounded by the shortages of resources to implement inclusive education as well as the high teacher-pupil ratio which made it almost impossible for teachers to devote time for individual attention that is necessary for the successful implementation of inclusive education.

While inclusive education is an ideal that the Zimbabwean government is working towards achieving, the study noted that there was very little documentation on the policies guiding the approach. Without proper policies and guiding principles in place, it would be difficult to see the effective implementation of inclusive education in the country's schools. On teacher training, the study findings indicate that lecturers were generally aware of inclusive education and the skills that needed to be taught to pre-service teachers to prepare them for inclusive teaching. However, some of the lecturers had the misconception that inclusive education was primarily about disabled learners and those being affected by other traditional challenges such as HIV and AIDS. Only a few lectures were aware of contemporary vulnerabilities such as those of left-behind learners. These vulnerabilities that these learners faced rarely, if ever, featured in their debates on inclusive education. Thus, in imparting skills for inclusive education, the lecturers did not consider left-behind learners as being part of the learners that were vulnerable. Thus the theory and practice of inclusive education at the training institutions was also silent on this most vulnerable group of learners.

One can argue that teacher training at the two institutions studied in Harare did not adequately equip pre-service teachers to tackle inclusive education in general and the vulnerability of left-behind learners in particular. The absence of a comprehensive policy on inclusive education and an accompanying framework for implementation as well as the lack of funding means that a truly inclusive educational environment is still to be achieved.

CHAPTER SIX: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1   Introduction

The aim of the study was to assess the challenges confronting learners who remain in Zimbabwe when parents migrate and to investigate how teachers were equipped to deal with the specific needs of these learners as part of inclusive education. Chapter Five presented a detailed discussion of the study findings in order to fulfil this aim. This chapter presents a summary of the major findings and discusses the substantive contributions that the study makes to the field of inclusive education, particularly on the nascent literature on contemporary vulnerabilities such as those of the left-behind learners and the role of inclusive education towards the understanding and amelioration these challenges. A conclusion is given and key recommendations are made for programming purposes.

6.2   Summary of findings

This section summarises the substantive findings of the study. The findings are presented in the order in which the study objectives were given in order to enable clear linkages to be made between study aim and the findings that emerged from the research.

6.2.1 Left-behind learners views on living with guardians and on vulnerability

The economic and political crisis that has existed in Zimbabwe in the past two decades triggered large-scale emigration from the country, including the migration of parents to the diaspora. The majority of these parents migrated alone and left their school-going children in Zimbabwe. Study findings revealed that these left-behind learners were left either on their own, or in the care of relatives and/or non-relatives. The majority of the interviewed left-behind learners were left in the care of relatives as most parents believed that relatives were better guardians and would therefore effectively substitute for their absence and raise the children on their behalf. There were, however, other left-behind learners that were entrusted to non-relatives. The circumstances that forced parents to entrust learners to the custody of non-relatives included the lack of trust between parents and relatives, the absence of any close relations still remaining in the country, or the unavailability of good schools in the areas that remaining relatives were

living. However, there were other parents who entrusted their children to the custody of maids because doing so has become a new status symbol in the country - a sign of being wealthy.

Evidence presented in the study indicated that the living conditions, challenges and experiences of the left-behind learners generally depended on the type of guardianship. While some relatives where doing a good job of looking after the left-behind learners, there were also instances where left-behind learners were suffering under the guardianship of these relatives. This was because some of these guardians were diverting remittances for personal use and even prioritising the welfare of their biological children at the expense of left-behind learners. This was particularly prominent among learners in the low-income areas than for those in the high income areas where guardians generally had their own financial resources and therefore not prone to misuse remittances. Some of the left-behind learners even indicated experiencing food shortages. Teachers confirmed that some of the left-behind learners were coming to school hungry and that this was negatively affecting the schooling of these learners.

The negative consequences that left-behind learners living with non-relatives were facing related to the lack of proper supervision as some of the guardians (e.g. maids) had little power to superintend over the learners. The lack of control generally emanated from the fact that the left-behind learners acted as representatives of the employer (i.e. parents) and therefore tended to exercise a degree of independence that was however detrimental to their overall well-being. In circumstances where learners were left on their own, the older ones generally bore the responsibility of looking after their younger siblings. Without supervision, and sometimes with access to money, some of the left-behind learners in child-headed households were vulnerable to abusing drugs and alcohol, much to their detriment. Some of the left-behind learners living on their own, but receiving limited resources from their parents in the diaspora were also vulnerable due to lack of resources. This further exposed them to extreme dangers that their parents would have shielded them from, were they present.

In as much as there were complaints of abuse of remittances by guardians, there was also a number of left-behind learners who indicated that their parents were remitting very little or were not remitting at all. This group of left-behind learners was the most

vulnerable. In cases where such left-behind learners would have been left in the custody of a domestic worker, the domestic workers eventually deserted the children and moved on to look for employment elsewhere. Where the learners where left in the custody of relatives, some of the relatives found it difficult to continue sustaining them, hence some were subjected to both physical and psychological abuse as guardians vented their anger for being burdened with the upkeep of the learners. Thus some left-behind learners ended up being continuously shifted between relatives.

Regardless of whom the guardians were, a common issue that emerged from the study was that most of the left-behind learners were generally stressed, felt rejected and abandoned, suffered from anxiety and emotional disengagement, were frustrated and missing parental love. While some of the left-behind learners had access to money and material things, this was a poor substitute for the physical and emotional presence that the learners yearned for. Girls, much more than boys displayed a high degree of longing, loneliness and sadness, while there was little display from the boys who may have been bottling up their feelings, acceding to societal expectations that stereotypically believe that boys should not cry or show emotions. The study findings thus confirm the argument by Fillipa, Cronje & Ferns (2013) that the family environment created after the emigration of parents often offers insufficient warmth and protection to children who would have been left by emigrating parents. Even when the left-behind learners performed exceptionally well in school, most pointed out that the lack of parental psychosocial support was emotionally destructive as they needed their parents to physically witness their achievements.

Another key finding related to the issue of role models. Most of the left-behind learners indicated that they needed their parents to be present in their lives as role-models to guide them into adulthood and to socialise them. While the left-behind learners appreciated the sacrifice that parents were making to provide them with resources, most argued that the parents needed to take an active role in the socialization process. Some learners felt that they could not confide in their guardians and thus ended up spending time consulting social networks and the internet in general on a number of issues that challenged them. Some ended up being exposed to social ills like pornography, drug abuse, prostitution and nude parties which were rife in Harare. The attachment to gadgets such as smartphones and overreliance on the internet, combined with access

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to cash resources, had a drawback in that some the left-behind learners became delinquent and exhibited negative behaviour: recklessness, being snobbish and profligate, disrespectful as well as generally lacking good manners. This confirms the assertion by UNICEF (2010) that when children are not consistently supervised by parents, they end up adopting undesirable behaviours that include the use of vulgar language, smoking and alcohol and drug consumption.

The adoption of parental roles by left-behind learners was another critical finding of the study. A number of the interviewed learners were filling in for, and carrying out duties which would ordinarily have been taken up by their parents. Hence, some of these left-behind learners were shouldering responsibilities that were inappropriate for their age. The case for some of those left-behind learners living with guardians was also similar as they were expected to adopt roles and responsibilities that were sometimes way above their age. These role changes, responsibilities and additions were stressful by to the learners who, however, had no choice but to do as expected and instructed by guardians.

Acrimonious relationship with guardians was another major challenge for left-behind learners. Most of the learners indicated that they generally had difficult, stressful and sometimes sour relationships with guardians. The conflict seemed to stem from various issues: ill-treatment by guardians, unnecessarily restrictive environments imposed by the guardians, constant monitoring by guardians when communicating with parents, and the misuse of remittances. Some left-behind learners reported that their rights were being violated in the name of being taken care of and that such violations would not occur were they living with their parents. Most left-behind learners did not report the ill-treatment to their parents for fear of creating acrimonious relationships between parents and guardians. While living under such circumstances, most left-behind learners felt powerless and abandoned and without a voice.

6.2.2   Educational challenges faced by left-behind learners

This section summarises the educational challenges that were faced by left-behind learners in Harare. These challenges were intertwined with the challenges that were being experienced at home. One of the key motivations for parental emigration is

generally to improve the livelihoods and educational conditions of left-behind learners through increased remittances. Study findings however, show that left-behind learners were experiencing many educational challenges because of the migration of their parents. This is because remittances from migrant parents towards the educational needs of the left-behind learners were either insufficient, came late or did not come at all. Some guardians were also misusing or diverting the remittances, often prioritising their own needs above the educational needs of left-behind learners. The result was that some of the learners were attending school while stressed, were absenting themselves from school more frequently, while some were failing and discontinuing their studies. The following paragraphs deals with the issues in detail.

When parents remit to their children in Zimbabwe, they may do so in a manner that negatively affects their children, especially when they remit too much money that ends up spoiling the learners and taking away their concentration from school. It was revealed in this study that left-behind learners who had access to high remittances were too proud, flashy and were concentrating on bragging at the expense of their schooling. This ultimately led to their failure to achieve their educational goals. A contributing making migrant parents spoil left-behind learners was to compensate for their inability to send for the learners to join them in the diaspora. These learners spent years 'waiting to migrate' and not focussing on education. Some of the learners were thus said to absent themselves from school for no apparent reason. Other left-behind learners were also missing valuable learning time when they visited their parents in the diaspora before schools closed for holidays and came back after the start of the term.

Another draw-back for the left-behind learners in the study was linked to household chores. Most left-behind learners reported taking on onerous household chores, unregulated additional roles and responsibilities which overburdened them. While this was true for left-behind learners that were staying with relatives, it was worse for learners in child-headed households because they had no choice but to assume the roles regardless of how arduous the roles were. Much time was thus spent on these tasks and responsibilities, negatively affecting the schooling of left-behind learners due to reduced concentration, fatigue, reduced time for study or homework, high absenteeism and arriving late for school. Some older left-behind learners were even facing with the possibility of dropping out of school in order to fend for siblings. All these

challenges contributed to the left-behind learners experiencing negative schooling experiences.

Most teachers that were interviewed in the study indicated that one of the major challenges facing left-behind learners was the lack of interaction between these learners and teachers. This was because some learners were not open enough to talk to their teachers about their needs and challenges. This ended up affecting them emotionally, hence negatively affecting their schooling experiences. Some left-behind learners indicated that some teachers were not approachable and could not therefore assist them to surmount their challenges. In some cases, teachers were labelling left-behind learners as deserving too much attention without really getting to know the challenges that they faced. Faced with the possibility of being misunderstood and labelled, most left-behind learners became withdrawn and were not assisted. This defeated the purpose of inclusive education where all learners must be assisted regardless of their differences.

The study also established that negative schooling experiences were a result of lack of parental supervision and monitoring as caregivers or guardians could not be relied upon to successfully supervise the homework of left-behind learners and monitor performance. Some learners indicated that they were not being assisted by guardians to do their school work. It was even more challenging in child-headed households where there were no adults to assist. Some left-behind learners indicated that they ended up asking assistance from neighbours, which act exposed them to possible abuse.

One of the key responsibilities of a parent is to monitor the progress of the learner and to communicate with teachers on any challenges that may be experienced. In the absence of parents, guardians are expected to step in. Findings from this study indicate that most guardians inadequately took on this role as most were not attending school meetings. As Spera (2005) emphasizes, parental involvement and monitoring are robust predictors of children's academic achievement. In the absence of such monitoring, children are likely to perform poorly in school and it will take time before parents realise it. The non-attendance of school meetings by guardians was therefore a disservice to the learners who still needed to be monitored and guided. The study also revealed that some guardians who attended school meetings were either too old or too young to

understand the significance of the consultations or partake in them. Thus, important feedback relevant to the welfare and educational experiences of learners was not being utilised.

While some guardians were derelict in their duties regarding communication with teachers, the study also revealed that biological parents in the diaspora rarely communicated with the teachers. Instead, they seemed to have abdicated their responsibilities and expected guardians to be responsible for everything. In a technological age where communication has been made easier through telephones, email and WhatsApp, the non-committal nature of parents to their responsibilities was baffling and inexcusable. Communication is needed in order to constantly monitor a learner's progress and the ideals of inclusive education will not be met if parents do not become an integral part of the process of educating their children.

6.2.3 Teachers' perspectives on inclusive education, vulnerability and challenges faced by left-behind learners

Teachers' views on inclusive education and vulnerability are important if inclusive education is to be achieved. This is because views and conceptualizations guide actions. Teachers cannot implement inclusive education if they do not understand it. In the same vein, teachers struggle to help students if they do not understand who is vulnerable and who is not. Study results indicate that most teachers generally understood the concept of vulnerability. The majority reported that this understanding was a result of them being sensitized of the issues during their training. On inclusive education, the majority of the teachers had a basic understanding of what inclusive education entailed. What information the teachers had was acquired during their teacher training years. The following paragraphs will summarize the issues more substantively.

Although most teachers had knowledge of the concept of vulnerability, the majority argued that their knowledge was generally superficial as they had only been taught the basics. They further argued that the greater part of the training was at a theoretical level with very little practical experiences to help them understand deeper what this vulnerability entailed. As a consequence, the majority of teachers found it difficult at work to identify some of the more subtle forms of vulnerability and how to handle them.

In essence, pre-service teacher training only provided a narrow understanding of the range of vulnerabilities that teachers encounter in the field. The general examples of vulnerability that lecturers were only those of the physically and mentally challenged as well as orphaned children. Hence, after training the majority of the teachers were able to identify such vulnerabilities with ease and concentrate on them, to the exclusion of other vulnerabilities.

Beyond the identification of vulnerabilities, teachers also indicated that their training did not necessarily equip them with enough skills to deal with vulnerable learners. They asserted that their training was theoretically oriented. Where learners' vulnerabilities were identified, the challenge that remained was on how to deal with the vulnerabilities, given the limited training discussed above. Those teachers that indicated that they were better equipped to deal with the vulnerabilities were generally ones that had embarked on post-teacher training professional development programmes. Such programmes included dedicated courses on guidance and counseling. The majority of the teachers were thus ill-equipped to detect and to deal with vulnerabilities other than the classical ones. Vulnerable learners such as left-behind learnerswere thus generally out of the scope and monitoring of the everyday teaching practices in schools.

Inclusivity is generally a difficult concept to define. It requires a deeper conceptualization in order for teachers to understand it fully so that they are able to implement it. The majority of teachers had a general idea of inclusive education. Like vulnerability, however, a greater proportion of the teachers pointed out that their understanding was largely about addressing the needs of the physically and mentally challenged learners as well as those orphaned by diseases such as HIV and AIDS. Rarely, they asserted, were they conscientised on the needs of those affected by new vulnerabilities such as the left-behind learners. Without being aware of such vulnerabilities, it follows that the inculcation of necessary skills was also absent.

When teachers are trained, they are introduced to numerous methods of teaching. This is because different learners may require to be taught differently, given the different nature of their challenges and capabilities. Interviewed teachers indicated that they were exposed, during their training, to different teaching methods which helps them to accommodate all learners. These methods were in line with the theory of multiple

intelligences, which encourages teachers to use variety of ways to meet the needs of different learners. However, even when armed with these methods, a number of teachers indicated that these methods did not necessarily prepare them to handle non-traditional vulnerabilities such as those represented by left-behind learners. They further argued that what is needed is to understand the nature of the vulnerabilities first before they could even begin to talk about how to address them. Hence, the majority of the affected learners may continue to suffer unnoticed because their vulnerabilities are generally not well understood.

On the vulnerability of the left-behind learners in particular there were mixed views from teachers. While most of the teachers agreed that left-behind learners were vulnerable and deserving attention, there were others with contrasting ideas. Those viewing left-behind learners as being vulnerable generally agreed that parental absence was exposing these children to a lot of dangers like physical, emotional or sexual abuse by guardians as well as lack of psycho-social support. The left-behind learners thus generally lacked economic, social and cultural capitals which are important for their development and positive schooling experiences. Teachers that did not see left-behind learners as vulnerable pointed to the perceived economic advantages of the left-behind learners. This group of teachers also referred to left-behind learners as being spoilt. The perceived economic advantage of some of the few left-behind learners was rather blinkering teachers from seeing the vulnerability of these learners. That a portion of teachers would fail to recognise the vulnerability of their learners is worrying, because of the possibility that such teachers would not even try improve their approaches towards helping these learners, hence disrupting the delivery of inclusive education to all learners.

While the goal of inclusive education is to provide education for all learners regardless of differences, this study established that most teachers regard vulnerability and inclusive education as being mostly targeted towards traditional vulnerabilities (e.g. disabled and the girl child, those affected by HIV and AIDS and the orphans). Such a notion of vulnerability and inclusive education leaves out other vulnerable learners whose educational needs remain unmet, especially the left-behind learners.

6.2.4 Challenges faced by teachers in dealing with challenges confronting left-behind learners as part of inclusive education

While the mass emigration of Zimbabweans to foreign lands is topical and well-studied, the problem of left-behind learners still remains unresearched and therefore largely unknown. It is therefore also difficult to deal with the resulting problems in order to deliver inclusive education. The first challenge that teachers faced was the lack of guidance. This was attributed to the lack of an integrated national policy on inclusive education which meant that teachers did not know exactly what needed to be done and how. All they relied on were periodic circulars that were generally vague and even contradictory. Even the new Education Curriculum Framework and the Zimbabwe Education Sector Strategic Plan (2016-2020) gave very little guidance on inclusion education approaches. In such a context issues relating to left-behind learners did not even feature and therefore remained invisible. Without proper policies and guiding principles in place, it would be difficult to see how inclusive education can be effectively implemented.

Regarding left-behind learners specifically, the majority of teachers pointed out that they did not fully understand the complex manifestations of this vulnerability. Consequently, they were not equipped to deal with the challenge. They further argued that even the Ministry of Primary and Secondary had not yet grasped the full nature and strength of the problem. Under such circumstances, it was therefore perhaps premature to expect the teachers to know how to deal with the issues when the curriculum was silent about the phenomenon. Some of the teachers even indicated that they were not even equipped to deal with the traditional vulnerabilities, let alone new or emerging ones.

The second challenge the teachers faced was the lack of guardian's cooperation at school activities and meetings. This meant that teachers had no-one to liaise with regarding the problems affecting the learner. Most teachers argued that the success of a learner is dependent upon the cooperation between the school and the home. If the home is generally unconcerned or unresponsive, then teachers find it difficult to help the learner. It was revealed in the study that absenteeism and coming to school late were common problems among left-behind learners. Without proper communication with the guardians, the learner could not be helped as some would just lie about their

whereabouts or why they absent themselves from school. It was further revealed that some guardians were not even open to tell the teachers that they were not the real parents. Rather some teachers only discovered this when the learners were in deeper problems. Other guardians were either too old or too young to handle the parental demands and therefore generally employed a hands-off approach towards the schooling of children left in their care, much to the detriment of the educational experiences of the left-behind learners.

The third challenges, related to the above, concerned non-communication from biological parents. When guardians do not execute the roles they are assigned, then the biological parents are expected to step in, regardless of the physical distance between them. The parents can use communication media such as the telephone, emails or WhatsApp to communicate with teachers. The non-involvement of parents made it difficult for teachers to identify these vulnerable learners and work hand in hand with the parents for the positive educational outcomes of the child. For effective and success of inclusive education all stakeholders, parents included should play their part.

The fourth challenge concerned the financial and material resources that a few left-behind learners had access to. Teachers argued that it was difficult to help left-behind learners that had access to too much money and material goods. In an economic environment where teachers were underpaid, some of the left-behind learners regarded themselves as being better economically than their teachers and therefore did not listen to advice or rebuke. Thus some of them were said to be ill-disciplined, playful, stubborn, and unruly. Some teachers ended up ignoring the learners who suffered considerably in their academic work, hence undermining inclusive education.

The fifth challenge that teachers faced in implementing inclusive education involved huge workloads and higher teacher-pupil rations. Since inclusive education generally requires that teachers have time to be focussed on all as well as the individual needs of learners, higher workloads and teacher-pupil ratios detract from that goal. This study found that teachers were failing to effectively meet the needs of left-behind learners because they were expected to teach classes with huge numbers of learners. In addition, the teachers had to teach many classes, making it almost impossible for them to invest time in identifying the challenges of individual learners. These huge workloads

and high number of classes also affected the keeping of social records as teachers had no time to compile these. Without social records, the success of inclusive education because daunting. Only pre-service teachers therefore made efforts to keep the social records owing to the fact that they were assessed for their academic progress and awarded marks. Moreover, the examination-oriented nature of the curriculum meant that teachers focussed on finishing the syllabus and grilling talented students to achieve better grades, upon which the performance of the teacher would be judged. Learners with challenges such as left-behind learners thus suffer as their needs are not met.

6.2.5 How teacher education is equipping teachers to deal with challenges faced by left-behind learners

Teacher education is the cornerstone of any education system. As Chikwature, Oyedele & Ntini (2016) argue, this is the level at which new changes can be introduced effectively before they cascade down to the schools. For inclusive education to succeed, teacher training institutions should be capacitated to deliver quality teachers that then implement the process in schools for the benefit of all learners. Thus this study also investigated how teacher education was equipping pre-service teachers to deal with inclusive education in general, but the left-behind learners specifically. The study established that lecturers, just like teachers, had knowledge of what inclusive education entailed, often repeating the well-held view that inclusive education relates to education that caters for all learners without discriminating on the basis of differences.

Regarding vulnerability, all interviewed lecturers, in various ways, viewed vulnerability as a situation whereby an individual is disadvantaged or prone to danger, exclusion or marginalisation because of certain life circumstances. However most of the lecturers also put emphasis on the disabled, orphaned and those learners affected by HIV and AIDS as being the only vulnerable learners. Westwood (2013) argues that such a narrow notion of vulnerability does not give equal treatment to all learners as only the traditional vulnerabilities are focussed on. The fact that most of the lecturers did not mention left-behind learners as being vulnerable explains the narrow definition of vulnerability that was also being offered by teachers who were trained at these training institutions. It is therefore safe to conclude that the teachers' views on vulnerability and inclusive education mirrored those of their trainers. Extending the same logic, it also means that

the teachers' ability or inability to implement inclusive practices effectively emanates from the quality of trainers and the training they were exposed to. Narrow definitions of inclusive education and vulnerable learners therefore cascade from teacher training institutions to the teacher in the classroom, limiting the scope of inclusive education and shutting off the left-behind learners from much-needed help.

On inclusive education policies, the study established that most lecturers were not aware which specific policies guided the implementation of inclusive education in the country. What the majority could however, indicate was that inclusive education derives from the constitution which affords the right to education for all. Without knowledge of policies guiding inclusive education, it was difficult to see how lecturers could successfully spearhead the implementation of inclusive education in the country. At the teacher institution level, it was found that there were also no specific policies in teacher education that could guide lecturers on inclusive education. This may be because institutions generally do not feel obliged to have policies of their own in the absence of a guiding national policy.

How then where teacher education institutions equipping pre-service teachers in the absence of a policy to guide them? Study results indicate that inclusive education was included in the Theory of Education modules or in the Department of Teacher Development curriculum, especially in psychology and/or sociology of education. In these modules, the matters related to inclusive education were included in topics that dealt with individual needs, counselling and guidance as well as contemporary social problems. The challenge, however, is that the time allocated for these topics was inadequate and so inclusive education was barely taught in detail. Rather it was given a cursory look, hoping that pre-service teachers would then improve their knowledge on their own. This rarely happens as the pre-service teachers concentrate mainly on issues relevant to the examination and not to generally broaden their scope. Additionally, in the Zimbabwean environment where classes were huge and resources inadequate, lecturers had no time to focus on the subject matter of inclusive education or inclusive education practices. Without adequate time, lecturers concentrated on the theoretical aspects of the curriculum rather than on practical sessions that deepen understanding as well as develop the soft skills required for the implementation of inclusive education. The lecturers even failed to make effective follow-ups on teachers that were on teaching

practice where the actual practical training was supposed to take place. It is no wonder therefore that pre-service teachers graduated without adequate knowledge on inclusive education or the skills to implement it.

While lecturers are expected to teach by demonstration so that pre-service teachers see for themselves how certain things are done, the study revealed that this was not always the case. Some of the lecturers indicated that, in a perfect environment, they are expected to teach using different methods of delivery such that their students can also learn and imitate them. This involves the use of the lecture method, group work, role-play, and many other such methods that make teaching effective and increase inclusivity. The majority of the lectures however reported that they were generally sticking to the lecture method, given the time and resource limitations. Their students therefore had little chance to learn from observation and were unlikely to do so themselves in the classroom.

Overall, the curriculum for teacher training was silent on left-behind learners. Where vulnerability was discussed, it was only in relation to the traditional vulnerabilities mentioned before. This was not difficult to understand, given the silence regarding left-behind learners amongst other stakeholders such as government ministries that are responsible for crafting policy. The fact that Zimbabwe has a large numbers of diaspora-based parents is not lost to the Zimbabwean society. What is not yet acknowledged is the fact that the learners they leave behind face numerous challenges related to their education. The perception that emigrant parents were perceived to be better off than parents remaining in Zimbabwe means that their children were also viewed as being better off economically. This view also existed among some lecturers who regarded left-behind learners as privileged. Such perceived privileges therefore masked the vulnerability of left-behind learners, yet not all of them were economically privileged as revealed by the study findings. The left-behind learners remain vulnerable as the greater proportion of lecturers who are supposed to sensitise pre-service teachers on the vulnerability of these learners gloss over the matter. Yet these children remain economically, socially, emotionally and culturally vulnerable.

A few lecturers, however, recognised the vulnerability of the left-behind learners and therefore stressed the need to re-visit the curriculum periodically so as to include

emerging issues in the training of teachers. Even if the curriculum was not fundamentally revamped, these lecturers argued that module outlines could be tweaked so that the topic becomes broad and covers all relevant matter including the issue of left-behind learners. The lecturers further argued that social records should be emphasized so that teachers do not utilise them only during training, but also in the classroom after graduation. This would help to understand the various different circumstances affecting learners including those left behind by migrating parents. However, in order for this to succeed, government needs to attend to challenges such as high teacher-pupil ratio, the examination oriented nature of the curriculum as well as poor remunerations which deter teachers from fully utilising records and implementing inclusive education. In addition, interviewed lecturers indicated that there was a need to effectively monitor the practical use of social records both during teaching practice and in everyday teaching in the classroom.

Lastly, documents analysed in the study, which included modules or handbooks related to inclusive education, course outlines and past examination question papers show that the concept of inclusive education is generating a lot of interest and has even been included in examinations for teacher education in the past three years. However, much still needs to be done as sometimes the questions on inclusive education were included as addendums – almost as an afterthought. Lecturers also indicated that the greater proportion of the emphasis in inclusive education was only on infrastructure development to accommodate disabled learners. This shows that the conceptualization of inclusive education still needs to be broadened to take into consideration current realities such as that of the left-behind learners. Without such reconceptualization, inclusive education is unlikely to be successful in the country.

6.3 Major contributions of the study

The starting point of this thesis was that the vulnerability of left-behind learners was not recognized sufficiently in the country resulting in little attention being given to the learners as part of meeting their needs within the ambits of inclusive education. While studies have been done on large-scale emigrations from Zimbabwe, not much has been written on the effects of parental migration on left-behind learners, the vulnerability of these learners and how teachers were capacitated to meet the needs of these learners

as part of inclusive education. The thesis attempts to contribute substantially to the generation of knowledge on this emerging field of the vulnerability of left-behind learners and inclusive education. The exploration of this vulnerability, the challenges that left-behind learners were facing, their interaction with teachers and the capacitation of teachers for the provision of inclusive education that encompasses contemporary vulnerabilities was done through Bourdieu's (1986) forms of capital (economic, social and cultural). This contribution is discussed in the following sections.

Firstly, the thesis interrogated in detail the vulnerability of left-behind learners in order to show how and why this group of learners deserves attention within the realm of inclusive education. The education system in Zimbabwe is generally geared towards addressing the needs of disabled learners and those affected by HIV and AIDS. For the disabled learners, their vulnerability stem from the fact that they may be excluded from mainstream education because the infrastructure and methodologies used for delivering content may be unsuitable and inappropriate for their needs. For the orphaned and those affected by HIV and AIDS, their vulnerability emanates from their challenge to enroll in school because they lack the resources to do so. Even when they are enrolled in mainstream education, the resource constraints and conditions at home are such that they are unable to participate fully in their own education.

While left-behind learners have not yet been sufficiently recognized as vulnerable learners deserving attention through inclusive education, the findings of this study indisputably show that this group of learners was equally vulnerable. Their vulnerability stemmed from the absence of their parents and all the attendant problems that thereafter arose: disrupted living conditions; lack of parental love, support and adequate guidance; reduced support on schoolwork; reduced stimuli to succeed; absence of role models; variable economic support; as well as the deep emotional and psychological problems that were compounding these problems. Without adequate social and cultural support, the left-behind learners therefore become more vulnerable and are unable to manage risks that they daily exposed to. Left-behind learners are thus a vulnerable group that deserve serious and considerable attention.

Secondly, the thesis has demonstrated the need for the vulnerability of left-behind learners to be dealt with in the ambits of inclusive education. It has shown that although

left-behind learners are enrolled in mainstream classes together with others and are therefore 'present' in the classroom, they have heightened vulnerabilities that require specific attention and more consideration, in the same way that explicit attention is paid to classical vulnerabilities. Thus, while left-behind learners may typically not face exclusion 'from' schools, they may in reality be excluded 'within' schools as their particular vulnerabilities are neither recognized nor dealt with. The goal of inclusive education is to minimize exclusion both from and within schools, making sure that all learners participate fully regardless of any specific challenges that they may face. It is about addressing and responding to the diverse needs of all learners, including the specific needs of left-behind learners.

When left-behind learners face challenges at home due to their changed family circumstances, their ability to participate fully in education is curtailed in many ways. Hunger, for example, disables them from concentrating fully during instruction while increased social and psychological challenges heightens vulnerability because learners cannot concentrate fully. Delayed or non-payment of school expenses may actually 'exclude' left-behind learners from mainstream education, temporarily or even permanently through prolonged absenteeism or dropouts. The vulnerability of left-behind learners thus deserve to be tackled through the implementation of inclusive education practices that recognize the challenges that these learners face. The current scenario, where the vulnerability of left-behind learners is inadequately recognized is in itself a barrier to the attainment of education by all learners. Inclusive education should improve the educational development and success of all learners regardless of any social, physical, emotional, cultural economic or even religious difference. While the narrow definition of inclusive education concentrates on classical vulnerabilities, the changing circumstances, such as the continued emigration of parents and the creation of left-behind learners require broader conceptualizations that embrace contemporary vulnerabilities such as those of left-behind learners in order to promotes access, equality and social justice in the education of all learners.

Thirdly, the thesis has dealt extensively with the perceived economic advantages enjoyed by left-behind learners and the impact that this has on the education of the learners. Bourdieu (1986) argues that when one possesses more economic capital, it is also likely that their children will be advantaged as they will be able to obtain other

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capitals as well, especially cultural capital. In the case of emigrant parents, it is therefore envisaged that their migration will yield adequate economic capital that will in turn spur their children to success by increasing monetary resources allocated to education. While there is much literature that deals with parental emigration in other continents and suggests that the emigration of parent as is beneficial to left-behind learners, evidence from this study contests this assertion. This is because the majority of the learners studied were not benefiting much from the migration of their parents, most of whom were remitting irregularly or not at all. In fact, the majority of left-behind learners were experiencing financial problems and were not paying their school expenses on time or in full. The result was that these learners were not accessing education consistently, hence negatively affecting their schooling experiences. For the few left-behind learners that had access to adequate monetary resources, this economic capital did not necessarily improve the educational outcomes for the concerned learners nor did it result in positive educational experiences. Some of the left-behind learners receiving adequate remittances had no complementary adequate social and cultural capital which resulted in them misusing their economic resources, much to their detriment. Thus, as the results from Harare showed, the existence of economic capital only, without the other necessary supporting capitals does not benefit the left-behind learners at all, but rather increases the vulnerability of the concerned learners.

Fourthly, the thesis has demonstrated the importance of grounding programmes in policies if such programmes are to be successful. Without clear policies programmes are implemented haphazardly without adequate conceptualizations and focus. The study findings indicate that the failure of the education system in Zimbabwe to deal with contemporary vulnerabilities such as those of the left-behind children in the country stem from the absence of a dedicated policy for inclusive education. While the country has numerous policies that directs attention to the disabled learners, the orphans and those affected by HIV and AIDS, these policies are too fragmented to achieve a truly inclusive education system in the country. The absence of a specific inclusive education policy impacted negatively on the ability of teachers to address the needs of all students since these teachers were inadequately capacitated. Teacher training was no better either, as lecturers also indicated that they were handicapped in training teachers adequately because of the absence of a policy to indicate what has to be done and how regarding inclusive education in the country. The crafting of a dedicated inclusive education policy

will go a long way in guiding and directing the implementation of inclusive education in the country.

Lastly, the study used innovative methodologies to assess the challenges confronting learners who remain in Zimbabwe when parents migrate and to investigate how teachers were equipped to deal with the specific needs of these learners as part of inclusive education. While most studies on children are conducted by soliciting the views of other concerning the challenges that confront the children, this study found it necessary to approach the subject by allowing the voices of the learners to be heard, rather than to be spoken for by others. While other voices, those of teachers were also instrumental in articulating the challenges that the learners were facing, these voices were supplementary to those of the learners, thus lending credence to the results as the experiences of learners were captured from their lived realities.

6.4 Recommendations and policy implications

There is no doubt that left-behind learners are missing economic, social and cultural capital due to the absence of their parents in the country. As a result, their schooling experiences are negatively affected. A number of measures need to be put in place so that inclusive education in Zimbabwe becomes truly inclusive and that learners such as the left-behind learners are not left out. Based on the key findings in this study, the following recommendations are made:

a) **Migrating with children** - The main problems that left-behind learners were facing in the country, both at home and at school, were a result of the emigration of their parents. While it is understandable that it may not be easy for parents to migrate with their children at the same time, owing to their need to establish first in a foreign country, this study recommends that the best way of dealing with the problem is for parents to live with their school-going children in the diaspora. One of the motivations often cited by emigrating parents is that they need to improve the lives of their children. The study results, however, show that left-behind learners were suffering in the country, something which defeats the basic reasons why the parents moved in the first place. Thus, where parents migrate first, they should send for their children in the shortest possible time so that the

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children are not exposed to conditions that would damage them physically, psychologically, socially and emotionally for the rest of their lives.

b) **Guardianship** – The choice of a guardian is crucial for the left-behind learners to have stable lives. The study has shown that the majority of left-behind learners were left in the hands of guardians that were not sufficiently equipped to look after them. It is not enough for parents to leave their children to someone on the basis of relations or friendships only. Rather one has to understand the character of the guardian and how far the person would be willing to look after the left-behind learners. Where it proves impossible or takes a longer time for left-behind learners to follow their parents early, there is need for the parents to continuously monitor the guardian through multiple sources to make sure that the children are not abused or neglected. Relying on the left-behind learners to update parents on their living conditions is not reliable given some of the left-behind learners are generally afraid to report abuse for fear of reprisals or messing up relations between parents and the guardians.

c) **Ring-fencing** – While guardians may do a good job of looking after the left-behind learners, there is need to include other support systems and networks for the children to fall back on. This includes involving the extended family to monitor and also help when the guardian feels burdened. There should however, be clearly understood procedures of how this is done so that there is no unnecessary interference resulting from jealousy or personal misunderstandings between the guardian and members of the extended family. Where parents are members of religious groupings, it may also be strategic to arrange for periodic visits to monitor the left-behind learners. This arises out of the fact that some of the left-behind learners indicated that they sometimes have no-one to confide in, especially if they are not seeing eye to eye with the guardian. This will avoid children bottling up their feelings which sometimes may end up in disastrous ways as some commit suicide.

d) **Communication** – It is important that parents in the diaspora keep open communication channels with their children, guardians and the school. Situations

where parents do not communicate with their children for long periods of time are not healthy for the children who feel neglected and unwanted and may generally be traumatized. Constant communication with the left-behind learners means that parents are kept up to date on how the child is living and schooling. It is also recommended that the parents keep contact with the guardians. Some of the challenges pointed out by the left-behind learners were that their parents keep silent and this angers the guardians who take out their frustration on their children. Communication with the school also means that the parents are able to keep track of their child's progress as well as being alerted to any other challenges that may arise.

e) **Educating society** – There is no doubt at all that the issue of left-behind learners is a new phenomenon that is not well understood. Society in general come to terms with the fact that left-behind learners are vulnerable and need support rather than scorn. Thus a lot of education has to be done by the government through radio programmes, newspaper publications, community awareness programmes. Churches can also play a role by reaching their members and educating them on how to recognize the challenges, accepting them and helping. This issue requires a collective approach by all stakeholders: government, community groups, churches and non-governmental organizations.

f) **Inclusive education policy**–The successful implementation of inclusive education depends on the existence of a policy and an implementing framework. Many of the problems identified in this study regarding the implementation of inclusive education result from the lack of guidelines on what to do and how to implement. Without legal framework, the implementation of inclusive education will remain elusive. A policy will enable the teacher training institutions to be guided accordingly and for them to also review their curriculum. The implementation of inclusive education in the country was *ad hoc,* without proper guidelines. A policy and an accompanying framework will also enable the raising of the funds necessary to finance implementation of the policy. A policy will also make it mandatory for inclusive education to be implemented. This will stimulate research on vulnerability and inclusivity, broadening the concepts much wider

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than currently understood. Only then can the needs of the left-behind learners be catered for.

g) **Curriculum review** - While the new curriculum unveiled by the government made reference to inclusive education, not much detail was present to enable a proper analysis of what has to be done and how. An effective way of mainstreaming inclusive education is to have a policy and a framework and this will lead to a proper curriculum review where inclusive education is an integral component, not just a side issue. The curriculum review should be developed collaboratively by policy-makers, education practitioners, civil society, political and religious leaders and the media rather than be thrust on the implementers as seems to be the case currently. When crafted and accepted by all stakeholders, inclusive education will become a way of life, a culture and an educational strategy in the country. The curriculum for teacher education in particular should be revisited and restructured to include new vulnerabilities like those of left-behind learners. This also entails preparing the curriculum to link with the practices in schools in terms of inclusion so that no child is left out. Inclusive education needs to be contextualized so that the relevant problems that need to be tackled are identified rather than copying policies from other countries wholesale without localizing them. The people that need to be trained first are lecturers themselves so that they can equip teachers with relevant knowledge and skills to practice inclusive education in schools. This can be done through workshops and in-service training. As Zimbabwe moves towards an inclusive future, teacher training institutions will become pivotal in ensuring that teachers have the appropriate attitudes and skills. Thus the training should be made relevant and appreciate to deliver equitable education through inclusive teaching.

6.5 Areas for further research

The focus of this research was to assess the challenges confronting children who remain in Zimbabwe when parents migrate and to investigate how teachers were equipped to deal with the specific needs of these children as part of inclusive education. While the findings emerging from the study are comprehensive and make a modest contribution to understanding the issue of left-behind learners, there are areas that need to be

researched further. First, this study was conducted only at two public high schools and two teacher training institutions in Harare. Therefore, the findings emerging from this study are not representative of all left-behind children's experiences and vulnerability. Nor are the challenges identified by lecturers at the two institutions a mirror through which all institutions should be seen. Thus future research needs to broaden the settings so that different social, cultural, economic, structural and geographical characteristics are included. Only then can a more comprehensive understanding of left-behind children, teacher education and inclusive education across the country be made. Research, for example, needs to be conducted in rural, private and at boarding schools. Further research also needs to be conducted in primary schools to see whether the challenges are different or if the age of the learner plays a role in moderating or exacerbating the challenges encountered as well as the schooling experiences. While this study canvassed information from learners, teachers and lecturers, further studies may need to include perspectives of different stakeholders in religious and social institutions, from community members and from the guardians as well. While this may be expensive, the study also suggests that future research involve diaspora parents in order to understand their perspectives. Only then can the challenges faced by left-behind learners, their schooling experiences, and the challenges faced by teachers be fully understood and the policy resulting therefrom, be truly all-encompassing.

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6.7 Appendices

Appendix A: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR LECTURERS AT TEACHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS (PILOT SURVEY)

Introduction

I am a PhD student in the Department of Educational Studies at the University Limpopo. I am conducting research on: ''Including the excluded': Teaching learners left behind by emigrating parents in some Harare high schools in Zimbabwe as part of inclusive education.' My research aim is to assess the challenges confronting children who remain in Zimbabwe when parents migrate and to investigate how educators are equipped to deal with the specific needs of these children as part of inclusive education. As a Head of Department (HOD)/Lecturer, you have been selected to participate in the study. There are no right or wrong answers. Your knowledge, opinions and experiences are important in helping me understand more about teacher education, inclusivity and how prepared educators are to face challenges of inclusive education in the field. The information that you give will be confidential and only used for academic purposes. No markers will be collected to identify you with the information that you provide. Your participation in this study is voluntary and you are free to terminate the interview any time you want without any prejudice to you. The interview will take approximately an hour.

Are you willing to participate?

| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |

If No, Thank you for your time. Goodbye.
If yes; Do you allow me to tape record the interview or write notes as we progress?

| Use Tape Recorder | 1 |
| Write Notes | 2 |

Do you understand that you have the right to stop this interview any time you want and you can choose not to answer any or all the questions or particular issues that you may not wish to discuss?

| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |

At this time, do you wish to ask me anything or are there issues that you need to be clarified about the survey before we proceed?

| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |

If yes;
Question/clarification………
May I begin the interview now?

| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |

Participant Declaration

1.   I fully understand the purpose of the research.

2.   I am participating in this research on my own free volition without force or coercion.

3.   I am aware that I have the right to terminate this interview whenever I may feel so without any prejudice on my part.

Participant signature ....Date..

Name of Interviewer	
Signature	
Date of Interview	

Section A: Understanding of Vulnerability

- What is your understanding of vulnerability regarding students?
- Which groups of students can be regarded as vulnerable?
- Why do you regard them as vulnerable?
- How do you view children that have been left behind by emigrating parents in terms of their vulnerability?
- Are these children economically and culturally advantaged or disadvantaged? Explain your answer.

Section B: Understanding Educational Inclusion

- What is your understanding of educational inclusion?
- Are there any policies that guide you, as an institution, in understanding what inclusion entails? What policies are these?
- Do you understand these policies and how helpful are they in enhancing your understanding?

Section C: Teaching Educational Inclusion

- Does your curriculum include inclusive education?
- Which important areas of educational inclusion do you cover?
- Do you teach educational inclusion in these programmes?
- Which vulnerable group of learners do you include in your teaching of educational inclusion and why?
- Are educators that you teach aware of the different groups of vulnerable learners that they will meet in the field? Which groups?
- Do you equip these educators with skills to enable them to address the needs of different vulnerable learners in the field? What are these skills?
1. How do you teach educators to mainstream (encompass, intergrate) inclusive education?
- What challenges are the educators likely to face and how do you train them to surmount these challenges?
- How do you demonstrate inclusive practices and behaviours during your lessons?
- How do you influence teacher trainees' attitude in relation to teaching supporting learners in the inclusive classes and schools?
- What strategies and techniques do you use during teaching that your teacher trainees must learn and employ those for effective support?

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- In what way do you think these methodologies will help educators to tackle challenges of inclusive teaching in the field?
- What appropriate terminology do you use in your everyday teaching that may equip educators for challenges in the field?
- What challenges, if any, do you face in trying to meet the demands of inclusive teacher training and support in the college? Or what challenges are you encountering in teaching of inclusive skills?
- What support do you get from the institution to successfully help educators implement inclusive teaching? Or how are these challenges overcomed?
-

Section D: <u>Left-behind Learners</u>

- Are left-behind learners recognized as vulnerable students? Explain your answer.
- Does your curriculum include a focus on this group as vulnerable learners? Explain your answer.
- Has inclusion of left-behind children become important part of inclusive education in teacher education and training in Zimbabwe?
- Are there any recent improvements to teacher training in your department which strengthen teachers' capacity to respond to and address the needs of left-behind children as part of inclusive education?
- What measures can you suggest to improve teachers' capacity to include left behind learners?
- Do you, during teaching practice, encourage your educators to implement inclusive teaching?
- Are they cognizant of the challenges of the left-behind student in their teaching?
- Are they able to handle these challenges? How?
- If they are unable to handle the challenges, what support do you offer them?
- Are there any support programmes/projects that your teacher trainees have initiated while on teaching practice to support left -behind learners?
- In general, can you say teacher education programme is aligned to inclusive teacher training and support? Does this include left-behind children?
- Are there any recommendations that you can make with regards to the teacher education programme so that it can even more adequately equip teacher trainees with knowledge and skills relevant to support learners appropriately within inclusive education.

Thank you for your participation.

Appendix B: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR TEACHERS AT HIGH SCHOOLS (PILOT SURVEY)

Introduction

I am a PhD student in the Department of Educational Studies at the University Limpopo. I am conducting research on: 'Including the excluded': Teaching learners left behind by emigrating parents in some Harare high schools in Zimbabwe as part of inclusive education.' My research aim is to assess the challenges confronting children who remain in Zimbabwe when parents migrate and to investigate how educators are equipped to deal with the specific needs of these children as part of inclusive education. As educators, you have been selected to participate in this focus group discussion. There are no right or wrong answers. It also alright to agree/disagree with what other members of group are saying and to say things as we have experienced. Your knowledge, opinions and experiences are important in helping me understand more about teacher education, inclusivity and how prepared you, as educators, are to face challenges of inclusive education in the field. The information that you give will be confidential and only used for academic purposes. No markers will be collected to identify you with the information that you provide. Your participation in this focus group discussion is voluntary and you are free to terminate your participation in this discussion any time you want without any prejudice to you. The discussion will take approximately an hour and a half.

Are you willing to participate?

| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |

If No, Thank you for your time. Goodbye.

If yes; Do you allow me to tape record the interview or write notes as we progress?

| Use Tape Recorder | 1 |
| Write Notes | 2 |

Do you understand that you can terminate your participation in this discussion any time you want and you can choose not to answer any or all the questions or particular issues that you may not wish to discuss?

| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |

At this time, do you wish to ask me anything or are there issues that you need to be clarified about the survey before we proceed?

| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |

If yes;

Question/clarification………

May I begin the interview now?

| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |

Participant Declaration (All participants to sign individual declarations)

1. I fully understand the purpose of the research.
2. I am participating in this research on my own free volition without force or coercion.
3. I am aware that I have the right to terminate this discussion whenever I may feel so without any prejudice on my part.

Participant signature……………………………………………Date……………………………………………………………

Name of Interviewer	
Signature	
Date of focus group discussion	

Section A: <u>Understanding Vulnerability</u>
- What is your understanding of vulnerability regarding students? Which groups of students do you regard as vulnerable? Why do you regard them as vulnerable?
- How do you view children that have been left behind by emigrating parents in terms of their vulnerability?
- Are these children economically and culturally advantaged or disadvantaged? Explain your answer.
- Did your training as an educator equip you to understand vulnerability? How?

Section B: <u>Understanding Educational Inclusion</u>
- What is your understanding of educational inclusion?
- Are there any policies that guide you, as an educator, in understanding what inclusion entails? What policies are these?
- Do you understand these policies and how helpful are they in enhancing your understanding?
- To what extent did your training as an educator equip you to understand educational inclusion? How?
- What aspects of educational inclusion do you regard as important and why?

Section C: <u>Practicing Educational Inclusion</u>
- What skills do you have to address the needs of different vulnerable learners at this school?
- How do you teach these different learners inclusively? What challenges do you face in trying to meet the needs of the different learners?
- How do you tackle these challenges?
- How do you demonstrate inclusive practices and behaviours during your lessons? What strategies and techniques do you use during teaching?
- What support do you get from the school to successfully help learners?

Section D: <u>Left-behind Learners</u>
- To what extent do you recognize left-behind learners as vulnerable students? Explain your answer.
- How do you implement your curriculum to include a focus on this group as vulnerable learners? Explain your answer.
- Has inclusion of left-behind children became important part of inclusive education at you school? What challenges do you meet in trying to address the challenges of left-behind children as learners?
- How do you tackle these challenges? Are you able to handle these challenges? How?
- What resources and skills would you need to improve your capacity to deal with this vulnerable group?
- What are your recommendations to improve the way you teach to accommodate the needs and challenges of left-behind learners?

Appendix C: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR LEARNERS WHO REMAIN IN THE COUNTRY (PILOT SURVEY)

Introduction

I am a PhD student in the Department of Educational Studies at the University Limpopo. I am conducting research on: **'**Including the excluded': Teaching learners left behind by emigrating parents in some Harare high schools in Zimbabwe as part of inclusive education.' My research aim is to assess the challenges confronting children who remain in Zimbabwe when parents migrate and to investigate how educators are equipped to deal with the specific needs of these children as part of inclusive education. As children who remain in the country after the migration of parents from Zimbabwe, you have been selected to participate in the study. There are no right or wrong answers. Your knowledge, opinions and experiences are important in helping me understand more about the challenges that you face both within the home and the school environment and how these affect your schooling experiences. The information that you give will be confidential and only used for academic purposes. No markers will be collected to identify you with the information that you provide. Your participation in this study is voluntary and you are free to terminate the interview any time you want without any prejudice to you. The interview will take approximately an hour.

Questions/Guides:
1. Please give me a description of you background, including in your description the circumstances that led you to remain in the country when your parents migrated, your living conditions prior to their migration and after their migration.
2. What changes have occurred in your home and school environment experiences since the departure of your parents?
3. What challenges (if any) do you experiences with regards to your home environment?
4. What challenges do you generally experience with regards to your schooling experiences?
5. How do educators respond to the challenges that you face at school?
6. What are your suggestions to improve your experiences both at home and at school?

APPENDIX D: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR LEARNERS WHO REMAIN IN THE COUNTRY

Introduction

I am a PhD student in the Department of Educational Studies at the University Limpopo. I am conducting research on: 'Including the excluded': Teaching learners left behind by emigrating parents in some Harare high schools in Zimbabwe as part of inclusive education.' My research aim is to assess the challenges confronting children who remain in Zimbabwe when parents migrate and to investigate how teachers are equipped to deal with the specific needs of these children as part of inclusive education. As children who remain in the country after the migration of parents from Zimbabwe, you have been selected to participate in the study. There are no right or wrong answers. Your knowledge, opinions and experiences are important in helping me understand more about the challenges that you face both within the home and the school environment and how these affect your schooling experiences. The information that you give will be confidential and only used for academic purposes. No markers will be collected to identify you with the information that you provide. Your participation in this study is voluntary and you are free to terminate the interview any time you want without any prejudice to you. The interview will take approximately an hour.

Questions/Guides:

7. Please give me a description of your background, including where you are staying, where your parents are, why they left for the diaspora and who you are staying with?
8. Describe and explain the circumstances that led you to remain in the country when your parents migrated.
9. Describe your living conditions prior to their migration and after their migration.
10. What changes if any have occurred in your home since the departure of your parents?
11. Highlight challenges (if any) you are experiences at home due to parental migration.
12. Describe any changes that have occurred in your school environment and in your schooling experiences since the departure of your parents?

13. What challenges do you generally experience with regards to your schooling experiences?

14. How do teachers help you to reduce some of the challenges that you face at school?

15. What are your suggestions to improve your conditions both at home and at school?

APPENDIX E: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR CHILDREN WHO REMAIN IN THE COUNTRY (SHONA TRANSLATION)

Musumo

Ini ndirimudzidzi we PhD muDepartment reEducational Studies paUniversity yepaLimpopo kunyikayeSouth Africa. Ndirikuita zvidzidzo zvangu pamusoro pevana vakasiiwa nevaberek ivavo vachienda kunze kwenyika. Ndiri kuda kutsvagurudza zvinetso zvamunowana mushure mekunge masiiwa nevabereki uye ndichida kuona kuti munonetswa nei pazvidzidzo zvenyu. Ndinoda zvekuongorora kuti vadzidzisi venyu vakadzidziswa zvakadini kudzidzisa vana vakaita semi vane vabereki vakaenda kunze kwenyika. Tsvagurudzo yangu haina mhinduro dzinonzi idzi ndidzo chaidzo kana kuti dzisingabvumirwi. Chandirikuda kuti mundibatsire kuwana ruzivo rwakadzama rwunoenderana nematambudziko enyu imi vana vakasiiwa nevabereki nekuziva matambudziko amunosangana nawo kudzimba uye pazvidzidzo zvenyu. Umbowo neruzivo rwese rwamuchandipa ndinozvichengetedza kwazvo uye ndichangozvishandisa pazvidzidzo zvangu chete. Hapana humbowo kana ruzivo rwandichatora zvinozoita kuti imi muzivikanwe kutindimi makandipa umbowo uhwu. Makasununguka kundibatsira nehumbowo nemafungiro enyu pasina kumanikidzana. Nhuarirano yedu iyi ingangotora nguva inokwana awa rimwechete.

Mibvunzo

1. Unganditaurirawo here nhoroondo yeupenyu hwako, uchisanganisira zvakaita kuti vabereki vako vazoende kunze kwenyika kwaunogara, vaunogara navo, uye kuti vabereki vako vari kupi.

2. Ungatsanangurwo here zvizere zvakaita kuti vabereki vako vaende vachikusiya muno munyika uye nevauri kugara navo.

3. Ungatsanangurawo here magariro awaiita vabereki vasati vaenda kunze kwenyika nemagariro awakuita iko zvino paugere uchiburitsa kana paine fanano nesiyano.

4. Ungatsanangurawo here zvaungati zvachinja (kana zviripo) mumagariro nemuhupenyu hwako hwekumba kubva zvakaenda vabereki vako kunze kwenyika?

5. Ungajekesawo here zvimbingamupinyi kana matambudziko (kana aripo) auri kusangana nawo kumagariro nemararamiro ako kumba nevauri kugara nawo kubva zvaenda vabereki vako kunze kwenyika?

6. Tsanangura kana paine zvashanduka kuchikoro kusanganisira kudzidza kwako, hupenyu hwako kuchikoro basa rako rechikoro uye zvose zvinoenderana nedzidzo yakokuchikoro

7. Ndeapi matambudziko aunowanzosangana nawo pabasa rako rechikoro uye nezvimwewo zvinoenderana nemadzidziro ako kuchikoro nekuda kwekuti vabereki havapo. Tsanangura zvizere?

8. Vadzidzisi vako vanokubatsira zvakadini uye nenzira dzipi pamatambudziko uonowana pamadzidzidziro ako uye zvimwewo zvinoenderana nekudzidza kwako?

9. Ndezvipi zvinhu zvaunofunga kuti zvakafanirwa kuitwa kuti kudzidza nekugara kwakonekwe vamwe vakaita sewe vane vabekeki vakaenda kunze kwenyika kuve nani?

Ndinotenda nekubatsira kwenyu

APPENDIX F: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR LECTURERS AT TEACHER TRAINING INSTITUTIONS

Introduction

I am a PhD student in the Department of Educational Studies at the University Limpopo. I am conducting research on: 'Including the excluded': Teaching children left behind by emigrating parents in some Harare high schools in Zimbabwe as part of inclusive education. My research aim is to assess the challenges confronting children who remain in Zimbabwe when parents migrate and to investigate how teachers are equipped to deal with the specific needs of these children as part of inclusive education. As a lecturer, you have been selected to participate in the study. There are no right or wrong answers. Your knowledge, opinions and experiences are important in helping me understand more about teacher education, inclusivity and how prepared teachers are to face challenges of inclusive education in the field. The information that you give will be confidential and only used for academic purposes. No markers will be collected to identify you with the information that you provide. Your participation in this study is voluntary and you are free to terminate the interview any time you want without any prejudice to you. The interview will take approximately an hour.

Are you willing to participate?

| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |

If No, Thank you for your time. Goodbye.

If yes: Do you allow me to tape record the interview or write notes as we progress?

| Use Tape Recorder | 1 |
| Write Notes | 2 |

Do you understand that you have the right to stop this interview any time you want and you can choose not to answer any or all the questions or particular issues that you may not wish to discuss?

| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |

At this time, do you wish to ask me anything or are there issues that you need to be clarified about the survey before we proceed?

Yes	1
No	2

If   yes;
Question/clarification..…
....

May I begin the interview now?

Yes	1
No	2

Participant Declaration

1.   I fully understand the purpose of the research.

2.   I am participating in this research on my own free volition without force or coercion.

3.   I am aware that I have the right to terminate this interview whenever I may feel so without any prejudice on my part.

Participant
signature..Date...

Name of Interviewer	
Signature	
Date of Interview	

Section A: Understanding of Vulnerability

- What is your understanding of vulnerability regarding students?
- Which groups of students can be regarded as vulnerable?
- Why do you regard them as vulnerable?
- What are your views on children that have been left behind by emigrating parents in terms of their vulnerability?
- Are these children economically and culturally advantaged or disadvantaged? Explain your answer.

Section B: Understanding Educational Inclusion

- What is your understanding of educational inclusion?
- Are there any policies that guide you, as an institution, in understanding what inclusion entails? What policies are these?
- Do you understand these policies and how helpful are they in enhancing your understanding?

Section C: Teaching Educational Inclusion

- Does the include inclusive education approach included in your curriculum? If yes which important areas of educational inclusion do you cover?
. Which vulnerable group of learners do you include in your teaching of educational inclusion and why?
- Are teachers that you train aware of the different groups of vulnerable learners that they will meet in the field? Which groups?
- Which skills do you equip these teachers with to enable them to address the needs of different vulnerable learners in the field?
- How do you train teachers to mainstream (encompass, integrate) inclusive education?
- What challenges are the teachers likely to face and how do you train them to surmount these challenges?
- How do you demonstrate inclusive practices and behaviours during your lessons?
- How do you influence trainee teachers' attitudes in relation to supporting learners in the inclusive classes and schools?
- What strategies and techniques do you use during teaching that your teacher trainees must learn and employ those for effective support?
- In what way do you think these methodologies will help teachers to tackle challenges of inclusive teaching in the field?
- What appropriate terminology do you use in your everyday teaching that may equip teachers for challenges in the field?
- What challenges, if any, do you face in trying to meet the demands of inclusive teacher training and support in the college?

- What support do you get from the institution to successfully help teachers be equipped with inclusive teaching skills? How can these challenges be overcome?

Section D: Left-behind Learners
- Are left-behind learners recognized as vulnerable students? Explain your answer.
- Does your curriculum include a focus on this group as vulnerable learners? Explain your answer.
- To what extent has inclusion of left-behind children become an important part of inclusive education in teacher education and training in Zimbabwe?
- Are there any recent improvements to teacher training in your department which strengthen teachers' capacity to respond to and address the needs of left-behind children as part of inclusive education?
- What measures can you suggest to improve teachers' capacity to include left behind learners?
- Do you, during teaching practice, encourage your trainee teachers to implement inclusive teaching? If yes, how do you encourage them?
- Are pre-service teachers cognizant of the challenges of the left-behind student in their teaching?
- Are they able to handle these challenges? If yes, how?
- If they are unable to handle the challenges, what support do you offer them?
- Which support programmes/projects if any that your teacher trainees have initiated while on teaching practice to support left -behind learners?
- In general, can you say teacher education programme is aligned to inclusive teacher training and support and yes, does this include left-behind children?
- Are there any recommendations that you can make with regards to the teacher education programme so that it can even more adequately equip teacher trainees with knowledge and skills relevant to support learners appropriately within inclusive education.

Thank you for your participation.

APPENDIX G: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR TEACHERS AT HIGH SCHOOLS

Introduction

I am a PhD student in the Department of Educational Studies at the University Limpopo. I am conducting research on: 'Including the excluded': teaching children left behind by emigrating parents in some Harare high schools in Zimbabwe as part of inclusive education.' My research aim is to assess the challenges confronting children who remain in Zimbabwe when parents migrate and to investigate how teachers are equipped to deal with the specific needs of these children as part of inclusive education. As teachers, you have been selected to participate in this focus group discussion. There are no right or wrong answers. It also alright to agree/disagree with what other members of group are saying and to say things as we have experienced. Your knowledge, opinions and experiences are important in helping me understand more about teacher education, inclusivity and how prepared you, as teachers, are to face challenges of inclusive education in the field. The information that you give will be confidential and only used for academic purposes. No markers will be collected to identify you with the information that you provide. Your participation in this focus group discussion is voluntary and you are free to terminate your participation in this discussion any time you want without any prejudice to you. The discussion will take approximately an hour and a half.

Are you willing to participate?

Yes	1
No	2

If No, Thank you for your time. Goodbye.

If yes; Do you allow me to tape record the interview or write notes as we progress?

Use Tape Recorder	1
Write Notes	2

Do you understand that you can terminate your participation in this discussion any time you want and you can choose not to answer any or all the questions or particular issues that you may not wish to discuss?

Yes	1
No	2

At this time, do you wish to ask me anything or are there issues that you need to be clarified about the survey before we proceed?

Yes	1
No	2

If   yes;

Question/clarification..

May I begin the interview now?

Yes	1
No	2

Participant Declaration (All participants to sign individual declarations)

1.   I fully understand the purpose of the research.

2.   I am participating in this research on my own free volition without force or coercion.

3.   I am aware that I have the right to terminate this discussion whenever I may feel so without any prejudice on my part.

Participant signature....................................Date.......................................

Name of Interviewer	
Signature	
Date of focus group discussion	

Section A: Understanding Vulnerability

- What is your understanding of vulnerability regarding students? Which groups of students do you regard as vulnerable? Why do you regard them as vulnerable?
- How do you view children that have been left behind by emigrating parents in terms of their vulnerability?
- Are these children economically and culturally or socially advantaged or disadvantaged? Explain your answer.
- Did your training as teacher equip you to understand vulnerability? How?

Section B: Understanding Educational Inclusion

- What is your understanding of educational inclusion?

- Are there any policies that guide you, as a teacher, in understanding what inclusion entails? What policies are these?
- Do you understand these policies and how helpful are they in enhancing your understanding?
- To what extent did your training equip you to understand educational inclusion? How?
- What aspects of educational inclusion do you regard as important and why?

Section C: Practicing Educational Inclusion
- What skills do you have to address the needs of different vulnerable learners at this school?
- How do you teach these different learners inclusively? What challenges do you face in trying to meet the needs of the different learners?
- How do you tackle these challenges?
- How do you demonstrate inclusive practices and behaviours during your lessons? What strategies and techniques do you use during teaching?
- What support do you get from the school to successfully help learners?

Section D: Left-behind Learners
- To what extent do you recognize left-behind learners as vulnerable learners? Explain your answer.
- How do you implement your curriculum to include a focus on this group as vulnerable learners? Explain your answer.
- Has inclusion of left-behind children became important part of inclusive education at you school? What challenges do you meet in trying to address the challenges of left-behind children as learners?
- How do you tackle these challenges? Are you able to handle these challenges? How?
- What resources and skills would you need to improve your capacity to deal with this vulnerable group?
- What are your recommendations to improve the way you teach to accommodate the needs and challenges of left-behind learners?
  Thank you for your participation

APPENDIX H: RESEARCH ETHICS CLEARANCE FROM UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO

University of Limpopo
Department of Research Administration and Development
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TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

MEETING: 03 November 2016

PROJECT NUMBER: TREC/183/2016: PG

PROJECT:

Title:	Including the Excluded: Teaching children left behind by emigrating parents in Harare, Zimbabwe
Researchers:	Ms MC Tawodzera
Supervisor:	Prof MJ Themane
Co-Supervisor:	N/A
School:	Education
Degree:	PhD in Educational Studies

PROF TAB MASHEGO
CHAIRPERSON: TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

The Turfloop Research Ethics Committee (TREC) is registered with the National Health Research Ethics Council, Registration Number: REC-0310111-031

Note:
i) Should any departure be contemplated from the research procedure as approved, the researcher(s) must re-submit the protocol to the committee.
ii) The budget for the research will be considered separately from the protocol.
PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES.

Finding Solutions for Africa

APPENDIX I: RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER FROM MINISTRY OF HIGHER AND TERTIARY EDUCATION

Reference:

MINISTRY OF HIGHER AND TERTIARY
EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND
TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT
P. BAG CY 7732
CAUSEWAY

ZIMBABWE

10 May 2017

University of the Limpopo
Faculty of Education
Private Bag X1106
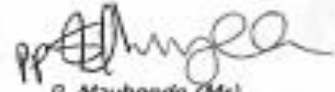Sovenga, 0727
South Africa

Dear Mrs. Mazvita Cecilia Tawodzera

RE: **REQUEST OF AUTHORITY TO CARRY OUT A RESEARCH ON "INCLUDING THE EXCLUDED: TEACHING CHILDREN LEFT BEHIND BY EMIGRATION PARENTS IN HARARE, ZIMBABWE": MINISTRY OF HIGHER AND TERTIARY EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT**

Reference is made to your, letter in which you requested for permission to carry out a research on "Including the excluded: teaching children left behind by emigration parents in Harare, Zimbabwe".

Accordingly, please be advised that the Head of Ministry has granted permission for you to carry out the research.

It is hoped that your research will benefit the Ministry and it would be appreciated if you could supply the office of the Permanent Secretary with a final copy of your study, as the findings would be relevant to the Ministry's strategic planning process.

P. Mawhondo (Mr)
A/Director – Human Resources
For: PERMANENT SECRETARY