

Principals' Perspectives on Socio-psychological Support to Learners in Primary Schools: Caring for Those in Need

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ABSTRACT The present exploratory study examined the perspectives of primary school principals on their understanding of South Africa's inclusive education policy that was introduced in 2001, herein referred to as Education White Paper 6 [EWP6]. The research was conducted in disadvantaged rural primary schools in the Eastern Cape, a province in South Africa. A total of 80 principals (53 males and 27 females) participated for data collection purposes through questionnaires. The SPSS was mainly used in the analysis of data. Findings indicated that learners who were psychologically in need of support (LePINS) received minimal socio-psychological support (SPS), experienced exclusion, stigmatization, marginalization and discrimination in the school education system even after 14 years of the adoption of the EWP6 policy document of 2001. Principals were found to be unfamiliar with the basics of the policy, and related documents. Besides, there was little effort exerted by the district-based support teams (DBSTs) in respect of implementation of inclusive education in their respective districts.