

DO THE MALAWIAN SECONDARY SCHOOL PUPILS' PERCEIVED NEEDS IN HIV/AIDS EDUCATION PROVIDE AN INITIAL MEASURE OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CURRICULA? THE CASE OF ZOMBA URBAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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The needs of young people in classroom based HIV/AIDS education in Malawi have been explored using questionnaires, interviews and document analysis. In contrast to previously reported literature on HIV/AIDS education in Malawi, the present study has drawn pupils' needs directly from the pupils' themselves, focussed on classroom practice, and triangulated the various data sets to give a comprehensive narrative of what pupils perceive to be their needs in HIV/AIDS education and used the same to question the effectiveness of the HIV/AIDS curricula. Pupils identified the need for open discussion climates on HIV/AIDS issues despite a conservative cultural and religious adult world. They also identified a need for explicit and accurate knowledge on HIV/AIDS issues, opportunities to acquire behavioural skills for HIV prevention, and involvement of external speakers. The wealth of the pupils needs identified in this study suggests lack of effectiveness of the HIV/AIDS curricula. This suggestion however needs to be reinforced with data from classroom observations, teacher questionnaires, and interviews with teachers and education advisers in order to inform effective policy and practice.

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