Notice of the Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

of

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MA (University of Victoria, 2007)
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“Narrative Evaluation of a Community-based Child Care and Education Intervention: The Case of Muula Center in Zomba, Malawi”

School of Child and Youth Care

Friday, July 22, 2016
9:00AM
David Turpin Building
Room A144

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Daniel Scott, School of Child and Youth Care, University of Victoria (Supervisor)
Dr. Sybille Artz, School of Child and Youth Care, UVic (Member)
Dr. Ted Riecken, Department of Curriculum & Instruction, UVic (Outside Member)

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Chair of Oral Examination:
Dr. Jeremy Wulff, Department of Chemistry, UVic

Dr. David Capson, Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies
Abstract

This study has evaluated outcomes of the care and educational intervention set up for children of Magalasi and the surrounding villages since 2003. Magalasi Village is located in the rural area of Zomba District in Malawi, Southern East of Africa. The study has investigated perceptions, attitudes and ultimately meanings that participants have attached to this intervention. In doing so, it has established the effectiveness of this intervention, which is based on the principle of partnership, and aimed at improving the care and education of young children of Magalasi Village.

The study employed the narrative inquiry approach situated within a hermeneutic phenomenological framework. Data was collected from 35 community participants using conversational narratives and has been analyzed thematically.

The study has generated numerous findings; way beyond assessing the objectives set out at the beginning of the intervention, 30 themes in total. The major findings are: a) the reversal of child neglect situation; resulting in improvement in the hygiene and personal care of nearly all children in Magalasi village; b) highly improved school performance of most children attributed to improved school preparedness and leading to most children enjoying and staying in school, and successfully completing primary education; c) highly appreciable nutritional support to children; and d) existence of challenges and tensions underlying the implementation process.

Overall, the Muula Center is having a huge positive impact on the care and education of most children of Magalasi village with minimal financial and essential technical support. Therefore, the financial, technical and community ingredients that are responsible for the delivery of the care and educational services in this intervention need to be sustained for continued impact. Also, a good understanding of challenges and tensions underlying the implementation process bears the potential of identifying and addressing critical issues, which will lead to further strengthening of the efficacy of the intervention.

Key Words: Early childhood care and education, Narrative inquiry, Evaluation, Partnership, Phenomenology.