

Social Causation Excerpts:

Transcript Excerpt #1. The 11-year-old boy, living with his single mother in a nuclear family, came to school hungry every day. The severe food insecurity at home—and his mother’s illness—took a toll on his mental health. Constant hunger made him anxious and irritable; he argued with classmates and sometimes stole their food. Teachers punished him, and peers avoided him, deepening his sense of isolation. Over time, his confidence eroded, leading to an increase in his absences from school, which in turn caused his academic performance to decline. Struggling with behavioural and emotional problems, he eventually withdrew from school entirely. The cycle was clear: food insecurity at home led to deteriorating mental health, which in turn robbed him of focus, friends, and his future. (Female teacher, 32 years)

Transcript Excerpt #2. The 9-year-old boy, living in an extended family, was neglected and often left without enough food at home. Severe household food insecurity meant his paternal grandmother could not meet his basic needs, especially after his father remarried. Forced to work for food at a young age, he still frequently went hungry and remained physically weak when no work was available. Chronic hunger and neglect took a heavy toll on his mental health—he became stressed and depressed, missed school regularly, and at times collapsed from hunger. Sometimes, he even refused to eat and expressed a wish to die. Isolated and feeling deeply unfortunate, his peers, who grew increasingly defiant and aggressive, and his academic performance suffered. Eventually, he dropped out of school altogether. (Male teacher, 46 years)

Transcript Excerpt #3. The 8-year-old girl from a homeless family slept in a grass-thatched house provided by residents. With no land to cultivate and severe food insecurity at home, she arrived at school hungry each day, carrying only a few pieces of boiled cassava to eat with the unsweetened school porridge. The constant hunger and deprivation eroded her sense of self-worth, leaving her feeling anxious, unfortunate, and unworthy. She often begged for samosas and rice balls from her peers during break time, eventually exhausting their patience. When she once stole a jackfruit and was confronted, she became aggressive—prompting bullying from classmates. As her mental and emotional struggles deepened, her academic performance declined, and she ultimately dropped out of school. (Female teacher, 54 years)

Transcript Excerpt #4. The 8-year-old girl from an extended family lived in a severely food-insecure home. After her parents separated, she was sent to her grandmother, who could provide little beyond one daily meal—supper. With nothing to bring from home, she stayed in the classroom during breakfast, hoping the teacher would notice and offer her food, while her peers ate. She often lingered around the staffroom, seeking attention and comfort in her hunger. The persistent lack of food deeply affected her mental well-being—she grew anxious, absent-minded, and withdrawn. She begged classmates for food but was mostly ignored, which worsened her isolation. She frequently dozed through afternoon lessons, her academic performance suffered, and her language skills declined. (Female teacher, 29 years)

Transcript Excerpt #5. The 13-year-old boy from an extended family lived with his grandmother and alcoholic father in a severely food-insecure household. He brought only boiled sweet potatoes wrapped in banana leaves to school, making him a target of mockery and bullying by his peers. The constant hunger, paired with the fear of being beaten by his father for eating before coming home, wore down his self-esteem and left him feeling isolated and frustrated. He lost interest in athletics, withdrawing from activities he once enjoyed. Instead of joining his peers in sports, he began visiting a nearby container store to steal food, later

admitting he was too hungry to participate. This cycle of hunger and shame not only affected his mental well-being but also caused his athletic talent to suffer. (Female teacher, 33 years)

Transcript Excerpt #6. The 8-year-old boy from a nuclear family lived with his father, a subsistence farmer, who made him work excessively both at home and in the fields. After his mother fled due to domestic violence, the boy was left neglected and without food to bring to school. Driven by hunger, he often left class to steal food from peers, sometimes using force. This behaviour resulted in the loss of friendships and social exclusion, while he grew increasingly aggressive and withdrawn. The persistent food insecurity and lack of support affected his language skills, caused him to miss half his lessons, and left his assignments unfinished. Struggling to keep up, he eventually disengaged from learning, performed poorly, and had to repeat the class. (Female teacher, 48 years)

Transcript Excerpt #7. The 13-year-old girl from a nuclear family lived with her alcoholic father in an impoverished, severely food-insecure home. After her mother, a victim of domestic violence, remarried, the girl was left to fend for herself and was often exploited at home. She usually ate only one meal a day—supper—and came to school visibly weak, emaciated, absent-minded, and sad. Chronic hunger took a toll on her mental health and learning; she often appeared withdrawn and isolated, begging her peers for food but being ignored. On one occasion, she came to school with a fever and nausea, yet quickly became energetic after eating. Persistently lacking food and support, her language skills and academic performance steadily declined, leaving her trapped in learning poverty. (Male teacher, 28 years)

Transcript Excerpt #8. The 13-year-old boy from an extended family lived with his frail grandmother, who struggled to meet even his basic needs. The family was poor, impoverished, and severely food insecure—he survived on a single type of food, usually plain yams with only hot water as a substitute for sauce. To eat and pay his school fees, he was forced into child labour, which often kept him out of class. Though he showed promise in athletics, hunger took a toll: he frequently collapsed after two laps, fainting from having skipped supper and breakfast. Eventually, he was disqualified from sports, despite his talent and passion, which left him deeply sad and discouraged. (Male teacher, 34 years)

Transcript Excerpt #9. The 10-year-old boy from a single-father household underwent significant changes after his parents separated. His father, who smoked and sold cannabis, exposed him to passive drug use and offered little care. When his mother—previously the family’s main provider—left, the home became severely food insecure, and the boy eventually became homeless. Subjected to beatings and being locked out at night, his basic needs were neglected. At school, he arrived hungry, with no food from home, often begging or stealing from classmates. He was constantly stressed and depressed, showing poor academic performance and expressing thoughts of self-harm. (Male teacher, 30 years)

Transcript Excerpt #10. The 8-year-old girl from an extended family lived with her alcoholic grandparents, who neglected her. Severely food insecure, she survived on only one type of food—usually cassava with hot water and no sauce. At school, she lingered near the staffroom, hoping for leftover food from teachers, and sometimes stole from classmates’ containers. Her peers mocked and shamed her, pushing her away and increasing her isolation. The constant hunger and rejection made her extremely sad, and over time, she became completely mute. (Male teacher, 42 years)

Transcript Excerpt #11. The 11-year-old orphaned boy from an extended family lived with his grandparents in a severely food-insecure household after his father's death. He often skipped breakfast and lunch at home, resorting to stealing food from classmates at school and fighting anyone who reported him. When unable to find food to steal, he grew anxious and, in desperation, once attempted to harm himself by drinking paraffin. He attended school only two or three days a week, spending the rest of his time fetching water for neighbours in exchange for food. Chronic hunger and anxiety took a toll on his academic performance, which declined steadily until he had to repeat the class and eventually dropped out of school. (Male teacher, 45 years)

Transcript Excerpt #12. The 13-year-old orphaned boy from an extended family lived with his grandmother, who had started drinking local brew, leaving their severely food-insecure household even more neglected. To pay his school fees, he worked in a pineapple field, often eating pineapples as his main meal—causing him to urinate frequently and suffer persistent headaches. Chronic hunger and hardship made him unkempt, forgetful, and hopeless; he often cried alone. He arrived late at school, used the latrine repeatedly, and looked weak and distracted. Ashamed of his situation, he hid pineapples in the bush rather than bringing them for lunch. His distress increased—he cried when spoken to and struggled to complete classroom work. Eventually, he dropped out of school. (Male teacher, 43 years)

Transcript Excerpt #13. The 13-year-old girl from a nuclear family faced severe food insecurity. Her mother, who managed the household, often drank local brew and frequently forgot that the children needed food. Over time, the girl adopted survival strategies, including stealing money from neighbours to get by. She interacted with unruly peers and engaged in risky sexual behaviours. Despite being hungry, she could not eat porridge because it lacked sugar. Eventually, she became pregnant, felt shame and isolation, and lost focus on her studies. She eventually dropped out of school. All these issues are derived from hunger at home. (Female teacher, 41 years)

Transcript Excerpt #14. The 10-year-old boy from a child-headed family went to school hungry every day, never bringing any food. After his parents separated, he and his siblings were cared for by a 13-year-old brother, with limited support from a local leader. Chronic hunger made him anxious and fearful for their survival. To cope, he often stole food from others, which led to bullying, social isolation, and frequent punishment by teachers. Peer rejection and discipline at school further undermined his focus and well-being, with hunger underlying all these challenges. (Female teacher, 46 years)

Transcript Excerpt #15. The 10-year-old boy from a nuclear family came from a severely food-insecure household. He ate only boiled cassava each day, which he also brought for school breakfast. He always finished his food quickly, yet he remained hungry, appearing weak and sleepy in class. Visibly wasted, he repeatedly stole boiled rice from other children. This behaviour led to ostracism and shaming from peers, causing him to withdraw socially. Even after receiving regular meals, the earlier exclusion and stigma left him anxious, and his cognitive focus continued to lag socially. (Female teacher, 39 years)

Transcript Excerpt #16. The 12-year-old girl from a nuclear family often saw her parents in physical fights; both drank heavily and neglected the family. The household was severely food insecure. She frequently dozed off in the mornings, explaining that she hadn't eaten supper due

to conflicts at home. Her hunger affected her studies, as she struggled to complete assignments and often rested her head on her desk. Constantly begging for food led to her peers isolating her, which left her feeling excluded and withdrawn. (Male teacher, 44 years)

Transcript Excerpt #17. The 11-year-old boy from an extended family lived with his paternal grandmother in a household with moderate food insecurity. Each day, his grandmother could only provide salted cassava or boiled sweet potatoes, leading him to fixate on the school kitchen for a chance at porridge or rice. After being confronted for seeking food, he panicked and tried to defend himself, and later stole the teacher's fried rice because it felt special. His peers shunned him, and the resulting exclusion and shame left him extremely anxious, eventually causing him to stop attending school. (Male teacher, 55 years).

Transcript Excerpt #18. The 8-year-old girl from an extended family lived in a severely food-insecure household, sometimes relying on neighbours for food. She usually brought a plastic bottle of unsweetened cassava porridge to school. Her grandmother could only provide yams and cassava in exchange for labour. To avoid being mocked at breakfast, the girl refrained from begging, which led to anxiety, stress, and social exclusion. After finishing her porridge, she would sit alone watching others eat, her shoulder bones visible and energy depleted. She often dozed in class, lost interest in play, became self-loathing, and occasionally skipped school. (Female teacher, 30 years).

Transcript Excerpt #19. The 11-year-old boy from a single-mother, nuclear family lived with his alcoholic mother. Neglect left him with jigger-infected feet and lice-infested hair. Facing severe food poverty, he usually ate only bean leaves or salted raw cassava and couldn't bring food to school, forcing him to scavenge for leftovers. Chronic hunger led to bullying and isolation, which in turn made him feel depressed. Mocked by peers, he grew aggressive and was further excluded. Tired and unfocused, he left school. (Male teacher, 54 years)