

Set up to Fail: Inadequate Educational Support for Orphans in Central Kenya

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ABSTRACT

In response to Kenya's goal of free and universal primary education for every child by 2015, this paper describes a few of the obstacles that one of the most visible periphery populations in Kenya, orphaned children, face in attempting to reach this objective. The most frequently cited barriers of children and their caretakers to consistent school attendance included: inability to pay school fees, lack of a school uniform, difficulty in providing assistance to orphaned children, presence of disease/illness in the family and disruption of education due to political violence. Conducted in a Kikuyu community in the Kinangop District of Central Kenya following the 2007/2008 presidential election riots, this study utilized multiple regression, logistic regression and MANOVA statistical tests to determine if families caring for orphaned children of primary school age differed significantly from families with no orphans in the home. Discriminant function and Mahalanobis testing further revealed differences in types of households, with the presence of orphans in the home (particularly AIDS orphans) significantly increasing the amount of school fees owed per family. Qualitative data obtained from semi-structured interviews with families and open-ended interviews with their primary school aged children contextualized study results and inform policy recommendations.

KEYWORDS

HIV/AIDS, Kenya, Regression Analysis, Primary School, Orphans, Child Agency

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