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Orphanhood, Vulnerability and Primary School Attendance: Evidence from a School-Based Survey in Two Regions of Tanzania

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Abstract

This paper addresses two frequent overgeneralisations in the orphanhood literature in Africa: about the 'vulnerability' of children and about 'orphans'. It specifically examines school attendance, given the common presumption that orphans are less likely to attend school than non-orphans. Using survey data from two regions in Tanzania, analysis by primary school attendance categories (regular attenders, irregular attenders, dropouts, never attenders) shows that orphans should not be compared only with non-orphans since there are other vulnerable groups of children, all with different levels of social and spatial disadvantage. Both orphans and a second large and potentially vulnerable group of children, children who have not lost a parent, but who live with only one or neither of their parents, are less likely than other children to attend school in urban and roadside settlements, but there is no clear relationship for rural areas between vulnerable groups and attendance and dropout

Keywords

Orphans; Vulnerable children; Primary school; Dropouts;
Urban-rural

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DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.11564/23-2-324>

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ISSN 2308-7854

(online); ISSN 0850-5780 (print)

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