KJEP 8:2 (2011), pp. 323-344

Bottlenecks in the access to primary education in Tanzania: The struggles of vulnerable school children in Makete District

William A. L. Anangisye
University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

Abstract

This paper examines the survival strategies that Vulnerable School Children (VSCs) employ to attain primary education in Tanzania. Data was generated in Makete District which is hard-hit by HIV/AIDS and abject poverty. Pupils, teachers, community leaders, religious leaders, NGO officers and education officers shared their experiences on how hard VSCs struggle to participate in primary education. The study revealed that every school in the district contains VSCs. These VSCs employ various survival strategies to fulfil school and home needs, such as charcoal - burning and selling, carrying raw timbers, digging and weeding farms, fetching water, carrying bricks, and crushing stones. These preoccupations take their toll on the educational, health and physical development prospects for these VSCs. Without remedial steps being taken at the policy level, as well as other interventions, these difficult circumstances may hinder the realization of basic education for every child in Makete and other areas in the country.

Keywords: EFA, Makete, primary education, Tanzania, vulnerable school children

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