



Education Research

APHRC investigates access and quality of education issues in East Africa in order to generate evidence that informs policy

The education research program at APHRC is currently undertaking three unique and major education research studies. The first, which started in 2005, is a longitudinal study to assess the impact of the free primary education (FPE) policy implemented by the Kenyan Government in 2003 on educational outcomes of urban populations living in slum and non-slum areas of Nairobi. The results of this study have shown that different urban populations responded to the introduction of FPE differently, with the poor slum residents not fully benefiting from the policy as had been anticipated. A second study has investigated classroom interactions in Kenyan schools with the aim of generating evidence on the quality of teaching, teachers' subject knowledge, and pupil achievement. This study was carried out in 2009 in 72 schools in six districts across Kenya, and has generated a rich cross-sectional dataset which is presently being analysed. The study involves classroom observations using video cameras, assessing learners and teachers knowledge in mathematics and interviewing school managers on various aspects of school climate. The third study under the education research program at APHRC evaluates the impact of a new instructional model on pupil achievement in numeracy and literacy. It is designed as a randomized control trial (RCT) involving more than 220 public primary schools in two districts in Kenya and two districts in Uganda. The 'new' instructional model known as Reading to Learn (RTL) is being implemented as a teaching and learning intervention by the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) for pupils in early grades 1-3.

Primary school participation among slum and non-slum children in Nairobi within the context of the Free Primary Education policy in Kenya

The initial sample in 2005 targeted individuals aged 5-19 years in order to capture those of school-going age. A total of 13,256 individuals were identified. The education research program has continued to update information on individuals in this sample who continue to be members of the Demographic Surveillance Area (DSA). Those ceasing to be members of the DSA through out-migration or death are dropped from the study (but their data records maintained) while those becoming members through in-migration or attainment of five years of age in subsequent rounds/waves of data collection are admitted into the study. We targeted 24012 individuals aged 5-23 years in the fifth wave of data collection in 2009. In the first quarter of 2009, we were also able to update data in 212 schools as well as interview teachers in those schools.

Analysis of data up to 2007 show that 43% of the pupils in the slums were enrolled in informal private schools which do not benefit from FPE policy. The implication of this finding is that the policy has not reached the poor whom it ought to have reached first and benefited most. While net enrollment ratio (NER) is 80, which is not a very impressive record for realization of UPE, a more worrying trend observed in our data is the yearly increment in the number of pupils enrolled in informal private schools since 2005, even amongst the slum poor. With FPE now in its seventh year, we would have expected proportionately more pupils from low socio-economic backgrounds such as those living in the slums to be enrolled in the public schools than they currently are. Visit <http://www.aphrc.org/insidepage/page.php?app=publications> for free downloads of working papers.

Classroom Observation: The Quality of Teaching and Learning in Primary Schools in Kenyan classrooms

Quality teaching and learning is arguably one of the greatest challenges that developing countries currently face when implementing FPE policies with the aim of realizing Universal Primary Education (UPE). A recent study by APHRC sought to understand and document what happens in the primary school classrooms. The purpose of this study is to highlight critical issues confronting the teaching process and to generate evidence on best practices that can be used to objectively inform policy on the quality of teaching and learning in Kenyan classrooms. APHRC's classroom observation study was motivated by a growing concern that efforts to expand enrolment must be accompanied by attempts to improve educational quality if children are to find schools attractive, stay enrolled and achieve meaningful learning outcomes. This study provides evidence upon which this debate can be carried forward in a meaningful way.

Six districts in Kenya which have consistently been ranked in the bottom 10% of the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) examinations over the past 5 years, and those that have been consistently ranked within the middle, and those that have consistently appeared in the top 10% of the annual ranking over the same period were purposely selected for the study. A total of 72 public and private schools (12 in each of the six districts) were randomly selected from the pool of poor performers, middle performers and top performers, for the study. The six districts are nationally representative and therefore ensure a mix of rural, urban and peri-urban schools in the sample.

The data was collected using a combination of methods, including the use of video recording (filming) of lessons, administering of numeracy assessment test to teachers and pupils, questionnaires and interviews. A classroom checklist was also developed and used in combination with the filming of lessons in order to ensure that total classroom observation was captured by the study. The objective of the filming and subsequent analyses of the films is to check teacher-pupil classroom interaction as well as 'Opportunity To Learn' (OTL). The data collected will shed light on what is happening in Kenyan schools and lead to better understanding of why some schools consistently perform at the bottom while others consistently perform at the top, when presumably they have teachers trained from a common pool of teacher training colleges across the country. It will provide evidence upon which to engage policy makers on best teaching practices and recommendations on what needs to be improved.

East Africa Quality in Early Learning (EAQEL) in Kenya and Uganda

This is a unique and rare study that provides the opportunity to assess how a new instructional model affects pupils' achievement in reading and numeracy in early grades 1-3. By using RCT design, considered the 'gold standard' in impact evaluation, the study seeks to generate robust evidence that can convince governments on the new instructional model and its effectiveness, if it is effective at all. The study is being implemented in partnership with Aga Khan Foundation (AKF). There are over 220 schools involved in this study in four districts (two in Kenya and another two in Uganda). Besides the teacher and school component, the study also has a component which

supports parents/guardians to assist their children in early grades 1-3 to master numeracy and literacy skills on their own using locally available materials. The impact evaluation therefore includes two components, that is Core Module (at schools level) and Core Plus Module (school level in combination with support to parents). The first phase of baseline was undertaken between July and August 2009, and the second phase of the baseline, which will include the incoming grade 1 of 2010 will be carried out between January and February 2010.

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