

Kenya's HIV/AIDS Education Sector Policy : Implications for Orphaned and Vulnerable Children and the Teaching of HIV/AIDS Education

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Abstract

This paper results from a study conducted in 2005-2006 on the 2004 HIV/AIDS Education Sector Policy. It investigates the practical implications of the policy document in addressing provisions related to orphaned and vulnerable children and the teaching and learning of HIV/AIDS education. The paper further assesses practitioners' understanding of the policy. Data was collected from three districts in Kenya, Bondo, Nairobi and Garissa, which were selected to represent high, middle and low HIV prevalence, respectively. A total of 12 institutions were sampled. A cross cutting population of learners, teachers and teacher trainees, parents/guardians, and education officers were reached primarily via qualitative methods of interviews, group discussions and observations. The data was analyzed using MAX qda, a computer package for analyzing qualitative data. The study findings show that the basic needs of vulnerable children remain unmet, curtailing their full participation in the schooling process. This notwithstanding, most children had detailed factual knowledge of HIV and AIDS even though it was not apparent how such knowledge was translated into skills of life. Although some head teachers were aware of the HIV/AIDS education sector policy, relatively few teachers were conversant with its contents. The study concludes that national educational targets would be difficult to attain unless capacity development for teachers and school administrators was improved in the area of HIV/AIDS education and policy. There is a need to locate the OVC at the centre of child well-being strategies that are sensitive and responsive to their special circumstances.

Keywords: Teaching and Learning, HIV/AIDS education

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