

EDUCATION EQUITY AND QUALITY IN NAMIBIA:
A CASE STUDY OF MOBILE SCHOOLS
IN THE KUNENE REGION

by

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ABSTRACT

The main thesis of this study is that access to education, important as it is in terms of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), is not enough. Education that is not of an acceptable quality may not serve the purpose or the intent of the MDGs, nor of the Education for All movement. The study aims to examine the Namibian education policies related to education equity and quality for nomadic pastoralist people living in the Kunene region where socio-economic and cultural factors mitigate the provision of education. The study takes a broad view in an effort to explore the phenomenon of education provision to nomadic people and its actual outcomes beyond the classroom perspective and beyond the limits of its expected results.

The data were collected over a period of five weeks. In this regard, a qualitative research design with critically quasi-ethnographic elements using semi-structured interviews to gather data from participants was used. Purposive sampling was used to select mobile school units, educators, nomadic leaders and community members. Data were collected through document analysis, audio-taped interviews and transcribed for inductive analysis.

The intent of this case study is to illuminate attempts, through various education policies and strategies used by the Namibian government, to address equity and quality in education to marginalised and nomadic pastoralist groups, and reflect the insufficiency of such efforts that are not compatible with the intended groups' culture and lifestyle. In this study *horizontal, vertical equity and equal opportunity* were used as lenses in analysing the degree to which equity has been achieved in Namibia. It became evident that the policies developed in Namibia support the notion of horizontal equity, but do not differentiate on the distribution of resources to equalise and standardise the provisioning despite unequal social circumstances.

It is argued that if equity and quality in education aimed at nomadic and pastoralist groups are to be achieved, policymakers have to be prepared to be more flexible in the kind of practices and organisational structures which they develop in order to provide education, especially for these marginalised groups.

Mere expansion of formal education provision, based on a model of what works in urban situations, is not enough to ensure equity and quality education reaches all primary school age children, especially nomadic and pastoralist children. Added to this, education aimed at nomads and pastoralists should be flexible, multi-faceted and focused to target specific structural problems such as social and economic marginalisation, lack of political representation, and interacting successfully with the new challenges raised by globalisation.

The research findings contribute to the debate and discussion concerning equity and quality in education aimed at nomadic and pastoralists in the larger context of education systems in developing nations with circumstances similar to those in Namibia.

Key words

Education policy

Provisioning education

Equity

Quality

Mobile school

Nomads

Pastoralists

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my uncle, **Lazarus Nghituwamata Nghifikwa**, who was my mentor and the pillar of my life.

DECLARATION

I, Onesmus Hailombe, declare that this thesis is my own unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Pretoria. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other university, nor has it been prepared under the aegis, or with the assistance, of any other body or organisation or person outside the University of Pretoria.

Onesmus Hailombe

Date

ACRONYMS

ADEA	Association for the Development of Education in Africa
BEAP	Basic Education in Africa Programme
BETD	Basic Education Teacher Diploma
ECCE	Childhood Care and Education
ECP	Education Certificate Primary
EDI	All Development Index
EFA	Education for all
EMIS	Education Management Information System
EQUIP1	Educational Quality Improvement Programme 1
EQUIP2	Educational Quality Improvement Programme 2
ETSIP	Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GER	Gross Enrolment Rate
GMR	Global Monitoring Report
HIPO	Hizetjitwa Indigenous People's Organisation
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
HoDs	Head of Department(s)
MBESC	Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture
MDGS	Millennium Development Goals
MEC	Ministry of Education and Culture
MoE	Ministry of Education
NAMAS	Namibian Association of Norway Namibia
NEPRU	The Namibia Economic Public Research Unit
NER	Net Enrolment Rate
NGO	Non Government Organisations

NIED	National Institute for Education Development
SACMEQ	Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality
SWAPO	South West Africa People's Organisation
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UPE	Universal Primary Education
USA	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Aid Development
WCEFA	World Conference of Education for All

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