

Ethnolinguistic Background and Enrollment in Primary Education: Evidence from Kenya

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Abstract

In Kenya, educational enrollment rates increased significantly after 2003, when primary education became free of charge. Unfortunately, approximately one million school-aged children are still not enrolled in school. Earlier literature provides evidence that educational opportunities differ among children, due to poverty, gender and area of residence. Our paper provides new empirical evidence of the importance of children's ethnolinguistic background for their probability of being in school. Using data from the Kenya Integrated Household Budget Survey 2005/06, we found that Somali and Maasai children are least likely to be in school. Girls and boys from the Somali and Maasai groups, but also Mijikenda and Swahili girls, have a lower probability to be in school than their Kikuyu peers. This might indicate that gender norms are stronger in these groups.

Keywords: Ethnolinguistic, Primary education, Gender

Full text: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/1467-8268.12241>