

Educational Marginalization: Examining Challenges and Possibilities for Improving Educational Outcomes in Northeastern Kenya

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Abstract

As a developing country in sub-Saharan Africa, Kenya has fared comparatively well in educating its young people. The new constitution of Kenya and various acts of parliament identify education as a fundamental human right and mandates the government to provide basic education for all. Consistent with the government's Vision 2030, most political, religious, and civil society leaders recognize education as critical to individuals attaining full potential and then contributing to nation building. However, educational access and equity remain quite elusive in rural and less economically viable areas, such as northeastern. The region and its people have been marginalized for many years, dating back to the colonial era and still remain very undeveloped, under-resourced, and impoverished. Given the endemic discrimination and marginalization of the nomadic people of northeastern Kenya, harsh geographic conditions, constant migration of the people, and heightened insecurity in the region, there is limited data, information, and understanding of these people's life experiences. The purpose of this article is to highlight these challenges that minimize educational opportunities for young people in northeastern Kenya by reviewing the historic political isolation and marginalization, sociocultural practices (e.g., nomadic lifestyle, female genital mutilation), resource deprivation and poverty, harsh geographic conditions, and poor infrastructure. Additionally, the article examines emerging efforts and opportunities (e.g., government and non-government organizations) to improve educational opportunities in the region through the devolution framework in the new Constitution of Kenya, constituency development funds (CDF), mobile schools, and boarding schools.

Keywords: Northeastern Kenya, Nomads, Pastoralists, Education, Marginalization

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