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THEME: RE-ENGINEERING EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

THEME: ‘Re-Engineering Education for Sustainable Development

Sub-themes:
- Enhancing quality in education
- Educational reforms and governance
- Research, innovation and knowledge transfer in education
- Application of ICT in education
- Resource mobilization and utilization in education
Quality Learning Environments and Girls’ Education in Nairobi Informal settlements and Arid and Semi-Arid lands

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Abstract

Generally, learning can take place anywhere, but positive learning outcomes pursued by educational systems happen in quality learning environments. In this paper learning environments are contextualised in terms of physical, psychosocial and service delivery essentials. It examines how learning environments facilitate or obstruct girls’ empowerment and participation in formal education, thereby either empowering or marginalizing them. The paper is based on Girl Education Challenge (GEC) qualitative case studies of selected schools in Nairobi and Kilifi counties in Kenya. Six primary schools (4 in Nairobi informal settlements and 2 in Kilifi (arid and semi-arid lands) participated. A sample of 191 informants including 158 children and 31 adults were interviewed individually or in groups. The study utilised observations, interviews, FGDs, and mapping methods to collect field data. The findings revealed that only three schools (two in Nairobi and one in Kilifi had some elements of physical facilities, that enhanced a conducive environment for girls to learn. Child abuse was rife in the schools; the school premises were not only insecure but a health hazard to the children, and the home and community contexts were a threat to their learning. The study concluded that learning environments, to a large extent, were an obstacle to girls’ access, retention and achievement of good learning outcomes that are critical for improving their life chances. The study recommended that the GEC implementing partners in charge of teacher coaching in literacy and numeracy should also include components of gender responsive pedagogy and alternative methods of instilling discipline to pupils.

Key words: Girls’empowerment; marginalisation; physical, psychosocial and service delivery essentials; case studies