

What are the socio-economic barriers for girls to accessing secondary school in Tanzania?

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Objective:

REALISING OPPORTUNITIES: APA – CVM are promoting women's and girls' rights in the district, increasing their awareness on human rights violations; the project they required me to follow is related to the causes of girls dropout of school such as difficulty to access to the structure or to the basic services within the school, parents or husband economic status or financial difficulties, discrimination, corporal punishments or sexual harassment, pregnancy, etc... Their target on this issue is to achieve the 25% decrease in girl's dropout of school (primary and secondary) in Bagamoyo. "The barriers are many and culture plays a strong role".

Main Research question: WHAT ARE THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC BARRIERS FOR GIRLS TO ACCESSING SECONDARY SCHOOL?

(THROUGH ADULT PERSPECTIVE)

Sub questions:

1. Challenges for girls to access to secondary education
2. Challenges for girls to remain in secondary education – dropout rates, causes
3. Implications and impact on large number of girls having to drop out of the educational system – in depth understanding of the topic and related issues

Justification: the Tanzanian MOE launched 5 years ago a program named Plan for Secondary Education Development (SEDP) but the secondary school enrolling rates are around 56% and gender disparities are enormously affecting the percentage of girls that actually conclude the School. The reasons for the dropout rates can involve family financial status, discrimination, corporal punishments, pregnancy, child marriage, sexual harassment, basic infrastructures within the school itself or transportation difficulties. I will try to better understand the reason why the girls in Bagamoyo District are not enrolled in the local schools, their everyday life and the role in the families and the broader effects on the community.

"Discrimination, abuse and violence against women and girls (VAWG) is wide-spread and common in Tanzania due to patriarchal and traditional norms. Two out of five women in the 15 to 49 age range have experienced physical violence. One out of ten women aged 15 to 49 years have experienced forced sexual intercourse against their will. Levels of discrimination, intolerance and violence against women and girls are extremely high" (UNWomen).

Tasks:

- To carry out a literature review of existing documents and data to better understand the topic and broader implications. The document mentioned as fundamental for this research is the HRW

report “I Had a Dream to Finish School” Barriers to Secondary Education in Tanzania but then the literature review will be completed with other documents and reports about international organisations’ country overview or topic approaches (UNICEF, UNESCO, UNWomen, Human Rights Watch, Ophi, etc...), Policies, MOE initiatives, Laws, Academic literature, etc...

- Because the area I’ll work in is limited, I’ll compare the secondary data found to the actual situation I’ll live in.

During the Fieldwork a mixed method approach will be needed.

- Gathering quantitative data with a structured questionnaire with the same questions but written in 3 different ways – for mothers, for men and for teachers – about the girls’ reasons for not being at school, family attitudes and necessities to have them at home, etc... The organization suggested me to have max 20 questions focused on both girls’ everyday life and family attitude.

- Gathering qualitative data with interviews based on the results obtained through the questionnaire.

- Organizing some focus groups on the topic involving 6-10 members of the community to discuss previous girls’ schools results, dropout causes, girls’ role in the family, etc...

- If possible, better understanding the community through a participative approach

- To summarize all above in an overall research report.

- To prepare an oral presentation on the research process and results (by the end of the 10th week)