

Parental education and children's educational access over time: Evidence from six African countries

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July 2010

Abstract

This paper analyses the gap in educational access according to parental education over 10 year period using evidence from the Demographic Health Surveys (DHS) in six African countries (Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia). Each country contains two DHS datasets, separated by at least a decade. The study uses the model of "zones of exclusion" developed by the Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transitions and Equity to operationalised educational access for children. Parental education is defined according to years of schooling.

To investigate narrowing or widening in the gap in educational access according to parental education a probit model is used to estimate the likelihood that 15 to 19 years old children move out of the zones of exclusion and reach meaningful access. Three cohorts of parents and two cohorts of children are identified from our datasets. We estimated the slope of the relationship between parental education and children's educational access for all combinations of parent-children cohorts. Our results show a widening of the gap in Kenya, narrowing of the gap in Malawi and Uganda, and to a lesser extent in Nigeria and Zambia. In Tanzania there have been no changes in the gradient. Our methodology enables us to identify whether these changes are the result of the institutional educational system experienced by mothers, their children or a combination of these.

Keywords: zones of exclusion, educational access, intergenerational transmission of education.