

ABSTRACT

Social Capital and Education: The Case of Busia, Western Kenya

by

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This proposal explores the association between social capital and educational achievement in a developing country. Increasingly, social capital has been identified as an important source of social change, development, and stability, especially in the developing world. Educational achievement in much of the developing world, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, is hampered by lack of resources including teachers and textbooks. Given the few options available to poor societies to rapidly increase their level of support to the educational sector, innovative ways to boost support to schools are being explored. Boosting social capital in society is one such method. The study focuses on Busia district in western Kenya, a poor rural area. Anecdotal evidence suggests that despite the district's high poverty levels primary schools in some communities within the district perform relatively well in national examinations. The study hypothesizes that communities with better achieving schools have a higher stock of social capital compared to those whose schools do poorly. The study will examine qualitative and quantitative data to explore relationships between social capital and educational outcomes measured by performance in national examinations. In-depth structured interviews in four school-communities constitute the qualitative part of the study. A regression analysis of a random sample survey of approximately 500 parents whose children sat for the primary leaving examination in the last three years will be conducted, and constitutes the quantitative section of the study. Data on individual student performance over the past three years are available.

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Current Status: Field work not complete.