CHAPTER 7

Education and Human Capital Development among Geographically Isolated Regions and Marginalized Groups in Kenya

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Introduction

I walked into a manyatta (Maasai homestead) on a Friday morning and caught a view of 20 to 30 children playing outside their kraal. At 10 o'clock in the morning on a bright and shiny day, these children should have been in school. I asked several of them why they were not, and they told me their teacher who lives "on those hills" had not yet arrived. Those hills were about eight kilometers away, near a trading center where teachers could get housing, since the school did not provide it. Unconcerned about their teacher's lateness, they dismissed me and continued playing, shouting and laughing as if that were how their life operated in that part of the world. I later visited their school, a classroom made of wood, with two latrines overused by the number of children and the neighboring community. A few meters from the school, there was a water hole. One philanthropic group who visited this village realized that women traveled

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a long distance to fetch water and decided to drill a well. During the day, I saw many women walking back and forth to this centralized resource. Back in the village, the children's mothers were making beadwork to sell to tourists, fascinated by Maasai culture. With a plethora of ornamental displays, they attracted tourists, bidding for the highest profits by relentlessly negotiating for better prices. These women worked the whole day in the scorching sun to raise money to support their families. The tourists arrived in land cruisers with bottled water, snacks, and expensive cameras.

It was already May, but the rains that usually arrive in April had not yet appeared, so the seasonal rivers were still dry when they were expected to have rushing water. I counted up to 10 dry rivers, as we drove across villages. A few comprised only a mixture of mud and brownish-yellow water, but the rest were completely dried out. Cows had not returned from their migration for greener pastures, except for the few left behind to survive on the meager resources of the dry season to support people who could not migrate. The lack of cows created a scarcity of milk, meat, and other animal products that make up the greater part of the Maasai diet. The common statement in every home was *ekiata olameiyu*, which means, "We have trouble obtaining food because it is a dry season."

The distance from Nairobi to some of the villages I visited in the heart of Maasai land is about 240 kilometers. However, the villages are located about 10 miles from luxurious hotels, hosting tourists from all over the world, who are fascinated by Maasai culture, wildlife, and scenery. The area has about 12 venues, mainly lodges and tented camps. About 30 kilometers from these hotels, an airport gives tourists and elite travelers options to travel by plane (about 45 minutes) or by road (about three hours). In this remote region, in the middle of nowhere, there is access to high-tech facilities, like credit card machines, bottled water, running hot and cold tap water, laundry services, swimming pools, and diverse vehicles from different companies operating safaris—creating an island of affluence in an economically underserved community. Maasai families, threatened by drought and the seasonal loss of cattle, expressed admiration for the way the tourists live. The Maasai mentioned seeing food and both bottled and running water in these five-star hotels during the drought and expressed the desire to educate their children, despite the many challenges, so, like tourists, they can have access to these luxuries.

While these rural areas could be lumped together as poor and needing help, I observed different socioeconomic divisions between rural, elite households, such as those of the principal of a primary school, the local

chief, and the people who run the tourist industry in these villages. The members of these households, though few, told me they could afford to take their children to a private Christian boarding school outside the rural area. Others could pay for transportation to take their boys and girls to a school about 12 kilometers away. The majority, however, could not educate their children beyond the first or second grades of elementary school. More importantly, parents indicated that if they were able to make choices in a wildlife environment, they would always choose boys, not only because of their patriarchal culture in which boys are more advantaged than girls, but because they regarded the environment as more dangerous for girls.

The Maasai live near these tourist facilities in two counties, Kajiado and Narok, the homeland for the Maasai communities, with a game reserve and a national park, respectively. While the Maasai people are largely lumped together conventionally as one homogeneous group socioeconomically, they are very heterogeneous in educational attainment, wealth, and living standards. However, a greater majority, taken in statistical aggregate forms, still lag behind their counterparts, who live in much more affluent and better served counties. They continue to lag behind many parts of the country in economic development, educational attainment, and infrastructure, such as buildings and roads and health facilities (Galabawa 2001; Switzer 2009). More significantly, gender inequality is rampant in educational attainment, with girls underserved compared to boys (Switzer 2009; UNESCO 2010; Yara 2012).

While some literature has focused on the Maasai disinterest in education, depicting their culture as static in an evolving, and sometimes revolutionary, globalized world, a majority of the Maasai who I interviewed were very interested in their children's education and wished their children would go to school and gain prestigious careers. Cattle rearing, the basis of their economy, faces numerous challenges: harsh and unpredictable climatic conditions; land ownership and fencing; government restrictions on movement; grazing restrictions in wildlife reserves and game parks; the affluent lifestyles of the educated; and the luxurious lives of tourists. An elderly man, about 80 to 90 years old, sat by the fireside and told children's stories. He emphasized the desire for education and the luxurious life of the white tourists, who come to their village and the nearby tourist lodges. A discussion with a group of elders and community activists revealed that the Maasai also admire cars, bigger houses, and financial stability. While the Maasai have a fascinating culture that attracts many tourists, globalization and technology continually challenge their

desire to keep their culture unchanged. The Maasai groups are still negotiating their spaces in debates about development and globalization.

Driving from Nairobi toward one of the counties where most of the indigenous Maasai live, the degradation and inequalities of all social amenities become apparent, as you move away from the big city: from tarmac roads to corrugated roads to almost impassable, weathered roads; from brick houses to wooden houses to mud houses; from cozy schools and school bus transportation in Nairobi to children walking for miles to go to school in the rural communities of Kajiado and Narok. These layers of inequalities have been dichotomized into rural versus urban resources, but the spectrum is too diverse and dynamic to fit into these broader categories, especially when also considering the major slums surrounding Nairobi.

Stories and experiences of the many Maasai girls living in the most remote areas provide an example of one context. Instead of islands of success, as seen in poor US inner city neighborhoods, where a few schools succeed against all odds, the Maasai regions are characterized by educational deprivation, commonly referred to as "hot spots" on global and international educational maps (UNGSD 2015).

Using the case of girls from the Maasai communities, this chapter aims to elucidate inequalities in education and the marginalization of girls among poor, indigenous communities. This debate occurs within the broader global and international discussion of policies related to the education of women and the implementation and implications for development. What has worked, and where has it worked? Where has it not worked and why? This chapter will conclude with recommendations about what could be done to help address girls' education in marginalized groups of the Maasai of Kenya.

Although globally and internationally, there seems to be greater success in girls' education, especially when viewed in aggregate statistical forms, many marginalized girls still face basic challenges, such as access to a school, making it difficult for girls in these marginalized groups to benefit from improvements in girls' education. Education has been identified as one of the major mechanisms for social and economic development, which mostly translates into good health, better standards of living, good governance, and better environmental sustainability, among other outcomes (Gachanga 2005; Omatseye and Omatseye 2008; Ferré 2009). For girls, education lowers fertility and mortality rates, improving their overall health (Oxfam 2008). It is, therefore, almost inevitable that Africa invests in education and the development of human capital. Many African countries have recognized

the importance of education. Since the correlation between girls' education with improved maternal health, economic development, and women's autonomy has long been established, and girls' education continues to lag behind boys' in hardship areas, the struggle continues. Low registration and graduation rates, early marriages, high dropout rates, early pregnancy, forced marriages, and child labor characterize the outcomes for many girls in developing countries (UNESCO 2006).

This chapter begins with an introduction explaining the basis for my argument. The methodology used during my fieldwork among the Maasai villages then follows. In the topic of education and human capital in Africa, I delve more deeply into the education of girls from marginalized groups. Disaggregated data could identify the particular households and individuals needing help the most, information now hidden in categories lumped together. Using the example of Kenya, the chapter also addresses issues related to marginalized groups and communities, looking specifically at the pressures among Maasai girls, and offers recommendations for meeting their educational needs. The last section provides conclusions.

Methodology

From an anthropological perspective, I am interested in how education takes place in different cultural contexts and how social, economic, political, and historical situations affect the process of learning. This chapter is part of my broader study in an ethnographic research project conducted in Kenya. Beginning in December 2013, I started a pilot study on education and elite formation among marginalized groups in Kenya, specifically, the Maasai ethnic group of Narok County. The ethnographic research involved mostly participant observation in the Maasai villages and schools and informal interviews with parents, children, teachers, community leaders, and community activists. I went back in the summer of 2017, and conducted 25 more formal interviews with the Maasai among the emerging educational elites from both underprivileged and privileged neighborhoods. I have also done archival research in databases to review countries' educational statistics and other information about Maasai girls and their contexts. My interviews with educational elites led me to some of the villages where most Maasai children grow up. This chapter is based on children's experiences in these rural areas. Most importantly, the socioeconomic aspects of different households and their influence on students' access to

schooling became apparent. Further, the gender dynamic, where girls faced greater challenges in gaining access to schooling, drew my attention.

As part of this broader research, I am interested in gender equity and schooling. I want to unravel why and how, currently and historically, women have been left behind in education. Preliminary findings indicate that social and political institutions have historically shaped and preselected elite paths for Maasai girls, which reflect economic inequality among different households and neighborhoods, even within these marginalized and geographically isolated groups. While the conventional knowledge that most Maasai girls are not educated holds some truth, especially in aggregated statistical comparisons with other ethnic groups in Kenya, there are girls from privileged backgrounds who have had a long history of access to schooling and have added to the human capital needed in the country by taking prestigious jobs, such as university professors, medical doctors, and political leaders. Encountering this experience of elite women led me to the question: What are the educational experiences of other girls in marginalized, isolated, and underserved geographic locations in the Maasai community? How do they vary by households? What are girls' educational needs? My findings indicate that the majority of other Maasai girls in rural areas continue to experience hardship in gaining access to education.

Education and Human Capital in Africa

In the wake of independence, most governments in developing African countries invested in creating human capital, aimed at increasing work forces for developing the nations. Education was not only seen as the most viable means to social and economic development but also as a panacea to a plethora of other sociocultural, political, and economic problems. Through multivariate methods, these new African economies have appeared to improve over the years. While Africa has generally made substantial progress in human development, with poverty levels falling, incomes rising, and educational and health indicators showing considerable improvement, gender inequality persists in many geographically isolated regions. Marginalized groups from these locales continue to experience lack of access, poverty, poor education, and extenuating health concerns. Lay people use rhetoric such as, "When you educate a girl, you educate a community, and when you educate a boy, you educate an individual" (Lockheed et al. 1980; Hanushek and Woessmann 2007). These

efforts have been effective in improving girls' education overall, especially when taken in statistical aggregate forms (Summers 1994; Behrman and Sengupta 2002; Herz and Sperling 2004; Hanushek and Woessmann 2007).

However, many girls in marginalized groups and geographically isolated communities live in harsh climatic conditions and continue to face many challenges. In addition to the challenges already mentioned, these girls are also hardest hit by second-generation issues facing their counterparts, such as lack of access, safety, quality, transitions, and leadership in education (Hall and Patrinos 2006; Hallman and Peracca 2007; Hannum and Adams 2007). Being marginalized and geographically isolated from most government social amenities, such as schools, universities, and hospitals, those who do gain access to primary school have to travel many miles to boarding high schools, and later, to big cities to college and university, making the transition from primary school to high school and other tertiary institutions extremely challenging. Only recently has Maasai Mara University opened in Narok County, the first university among the Maasai. This underserved region creates a concern, as their dismal situation prevents the improvement in girls' education witnessed globally. Though Kenya has recently worked on decentralization, most geographically isolated and marginalized groups continue to struggle. This phenomenon of inequality in development is seen in many African countries. The areas of European interest during the colonial administration period created a system of "haves" and "have nots," as social amenities centered on European settlements and their surrounding communities. One could argue that development continues to occur in areas that were colonial settlements. People and lands of no interest to Europeans, therefore, remained largely underdeveloped. After independence, these economic structures and institutions were perpetuated in newly formed governments, as more schools, hospitals, and other infrastructures remained in former European settlements and areas of interest. These colonial prioritizations later influenced the distinction, and sometimes construction of the dichotomy, of rural versus urban. Geographically isolated and marginalized ethnic groups emerged, because centralized amenities were used as points of reference: the distance from university, hospitals, schools, and good roads. There is, therefore, not only the need to continue the debate about development in Africa but also to substantiate inequalities within geographic regions and populations in a country to address inequalities in development.

Girls' Education in Africa

While the global statistics are staggering, tremendous progress has occurred in the development of girls' education at the elementary school level (UNESCO 2018). According to the Global Education Monitoring Report: Gender Review, "Between 2000 and 2015, the share of countries that achieved gender parity in primary education increased by 8 percentage points and in upper secondary education by 14 percentage points…Gender disparities in out-of-school rates have narrowed substantially over the last 15 years" (UNESCO 2018, 11). However, sub-Saharan Africa is still home to the largest number of children who have not had any access to schooling. Girls are still the ones more disadvantaged than boys (UNESCO 2017). In addition, even when we look at adult literacy as an outcome of education. Two-thirds of non-literate adults around the world are women, a figure that has not changed since 2000. This gender disparity remains one of the persistent challenges in adult literacy and education (UNESCO 2017). Hence, the struggle for girls' education still persists. Among minority communities, in which access to school is challenged, being a girl aggravates the situation, since girls are more vulnerable than boys, who are sent to school before girls, especially where safety concerns are rampant. In Africa, the most underprivileged girls from rural backgrounds continue to face educational challenges. A shift to focus on these pockets (hot spots) of underprivileged girls in Africa is crucial to achieving equality.

According to Winthrop (2010), sub-Saharan Africa's economy is booming and is almost comparable to the BRICS economies, which include emerging economic powers such as China, Russia, and Brazil. With a projected growth rate of 4.5 percent in 2011, Africa can no longer be ignored (Winthrop 2010). Africa is considered to have been quite resilient during the global financial crisis, recovering faster than Latin America, Europe, and Central Asia. Improving education in Africa is an important part of developing the skills needed to transform Africa into a global economic powerhouse (Winthrop 2010). As we have heard previously, Africa has made important progress in increasing school enrollment, but a crisis in learning exists across the continent (UNESCO 2012).

Girls' Education in Marginalized Groups

For decades, the education of girls has been studied academically, discussed in policy debates, and has been the focus of projects aimed at improving girl's education. While there has been tremendous improvement in girls' education, girls from indigenous and geographically isolated ethnic groups continue to face challenges related to access, transition, quality of education, and leadership capabilities (Hillman 1994; Krätli 2000; Anderson and Broche-Due 2003; Carr-Hill and Peart 2005; FAWE 2009). Educating girls has been associated with eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, eliminating gender disparity in education, improving wage employment, participation in the national parliament, and achieving nutritional and health benefits. Women who are educated and are employed are more productive, gain greater control over family income and decision-making, and invest more in their families (Madhavan and Thomas 2005; Martinez and Waldron 2006; Lesorogol 2008; Omatseye and Omatseye 2008; Oxfam 2008; Ferré 2009). A World Bank study (Hanushek and Woessmann 2007) estimates that women and girls who earn income reinvest 90 percent of it in their families, promoting better health and future productivity. These benefits of educating women spill over to their immediate families and eventually to the whole community.

However, girls from marginalized communities have the most disadvantages. They may face gender discrimination as most of them come from patriarchal cultures; their geographic isolation creates distance from most educational institutions, especially high school and other tertiary institutions; and they come from indigenous minority groups with less say in education policy. While the world has now gravitated toward second-generation issues facing their counterparts such as safety, leadership and quality of education (Hall and Patrinos 2006; Hallman and Peracca 2007; Hannum and Adams 2007), many girls from marginalized communities do not yet have access to schooling.

Disaggregation

Researchers have been able to statistically disaggregate and aggregate girls' education experiences by global regions and even by ethnic groups. However, important details are missing. There needs to be more statistical disaggregation of girls' education experiences from global to minute details, such as households and specific individuals. Equally important are

ethnic groups, neighborhoods, and households, as well as the socioeconomic status within each group. Viewing the Maasai people as all nomads or semi-nomads in conventional debates, considered disadvantaged at every level, ignores the elite and educated among them. The lack of a heterogeneous outlook among indigenous communities could contribute to a lack of access by those in dire need of resources and benefit only elite groups who primarily act or pose as gatekeepers, opinion leaders, community representatives, and the channels through which development gets approved. While this clique among groups is important, everyone needs to be engaged, to disaggregate which particular Maasai girls from which households or particular individuals need which specific educational resources, and which girls have or lack access to social amenities such as schools, hospitals, and universities. One-size-fits-all does not apply, as each category, group, or individual has some unique problems that vary across the socioeconomic continuum. Even with the marginalized and geographically isolated populations, stratification abounds, with some more underserved than others. This layering becomes crucial, because most of the time, resources do not trickle down to the ones in dire need who require extra assistance.

Most marginalized communities have distinct histories and unique challenges. For pastoralists like the Maasai, Turkana, Samburu, and Pokot, insecurity is heightened due to cattle rustling and clashes over water resources and grazing land. Yet, among these communities, although all are nomads and face similar problems, those in northern Kenya also live in constant fear of terror attacks from shifters and al-Shabab, making security a major concern. The worst attack occurred at the Garissa University, where more than 147 students died. The Maasai live near game reserves and national parks, making it unsafe for girls to travel long distances to school. Women from hunter and gatherer groups find themselves displaced and forced to live as squatters, while fisherwomen like the Abasuba face environmental degradation and fluctuation of fish prices (Anderson and Broche-Due 2003; Branyon 2005; Bonini 2006).

Kenya

Since independence, Kenya has prioritized education as one of the main goals toward economic development (Branyon 2005; Gachanga 2005; Sifuna 2005, 2007; Mathooko 2009). Kenya has engaged in and subscribed to national and international policies and declarations to enhance

education and make sure all children have a right to a good education. At a national level, Kenya has had various policies. For example, in 2006, the Early Childhood Development and Education initiative aimed to meet the learning needs of children, youth, and adults by 2015. The 2008 Kenya Vision 2030 sought to provide a globally competitive education, reduce illiteracy, and improve transition rates and quality. The enactment of the new constitution in 2010 instituted free and compulsory primary education (Mathooko 2009; Republic of Kenya 2010). In 2012, the policy of technical and vocational education and training was also introduced. At the international level, Kenya subscribed to Education for All (EFA), Dakar Framework for Education, and in 2000, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (OHCHR) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). The status of education in Kenya is presumed to have greatly improved. According to UNESCO, Kenya is achieving gender parity in primary education enrollment and near parity in secondary school enrollment. This gender parity does not mean universal access has been achieved, because boys' and girls' enrollment still remain very low at 51 and 48 percent, respectively.

Marginalized Groups and Communities

The Kenyan constitution makes a distinction between marginalized communities and marginalized groups. Groups consist of women, children, the disabled, and the elderly. Communities encompass many ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples. The new constitution considers women, as a whole, to be marginalized. Marginalization by gender in education stems from a history of colonialism and Christian religious schools that educated more men than women, including gendered selection of careers, in which women took more jobs with subordinate positions and at less empowering levels while men engaged in more technical, administrative, and leadership positions (Shani 2006). This career–gender determinism worked well with the majority of patriarchal societies. Geographic advantage also played a major role, as demonstrated by the history of European settlers in central Kenya, that is, the so-called white highlands. In areas of interest to them, the Europeans developed schools, universities, hospitals, and communication infrastructure. Areas of no interest lacked universities for many more decades, after those in the Nairobi area were constructed. As mentioned earlier, Narok County, where many Maasai reside, only opened a university in the twenty-first century. These

areas are also geographically isolated from all major social amenities. Only recently, five decades after independence, decentralization of institutions of higher learning took place.

Pressures Among Maasai Girls

Most of the pressures for girls' education in Kenya fall into major categories: influenced by political administration of the country and the allocation of resources; socioeconomic status of most Maasai households; environmental factors; and cultural perspectives (Ipensburg 1992; Alwy and Schech 2004). Only 48 percent of Maasai girls in Kenya ever enroll in school, and of those who enroll, only 5 percent ever reach secondary school. Girls' dowries have been important sources of income for parents for many years, making girls more likely to be married at an early age. Female genital cutting, a rite of passage that takes children out of school to be circumcised and then married, worsens the situation (Lopes 2001; Shadle 2003; Coast 2006; IPPF 2006; Messing-Mathie 2008). Living within a patriarchal setting, women face unprecedented poverty and a lack of economic opportunities, as they are not entitled to own either land or cattle. Traditional gender roles, with women doing the bulk of the work at home and then married off, favor the education of boys, who carry on the family name. Access to education is a problem for girls, who have to travel many miles to go to school; thus, parents opt to send their boys to faraway schools, rather than their girls, as I witnessed in the villages I visited. This is even more prevalent in areas where insecurity abounds and where wild animals live. Ecological and environmental degradation, resulting from global warming, challenges the economic base of the Maasai, and their main sources of income are quickly disappearing as rainfall and seasons become more unreliable. Selling cows, as a means to raise school fees for secondary schools, and the many hidden costs of a "free" primary school education, such as uniforms, books, pens, pencils, and school development funds, become a problem. Unpredictable droughts have continually reduced the number of cows, further weakening the Maasai's main economic resource.

As one of the MDGs, universal education is of paramount importance, and so is gender equality (Lewis and Lockheed 2006). Though more girls than boys are enrolled in schools in Kenya, they still lag behind boys in isolated and marginalized communities. These geographically isolated

communities are mostly in northeastern Kenya, coastal regions, and some parts of the Rift Valley (Alwy and Schech 2004).

The Maasai ethnic group, the population discussed in this chapter, has low enrollment, poor attendance, and limited transition to various levels of schooling. In a patriarchal society and in poor households, the education of sons is sometimes supported at the expense of their sisters. Many complex and competing explanations are given in statistical aggregate forms, but it is generally accepted that girls in more marginalized groups experience more pressures than those of the majority group (Messing-Mathie 2008). The following are political and socioeconomic factors that pose challenges for Maasai girls.

Political

When looking at educational attainment among Maasai women in Kenya, it is imperative to consider regional disparities and the unequal distribution of resources that render many areas poverty-stricken, while a few privileged regions flourish. The social, political, economic, geographic, and historical backgrounds of many parts of Kenya have shaped the have-and-have-not dynamic that is also visible in other parts of Africa. The regional inequalities can be traced to the British colonial system, in which educational, political, and economic resources were unevenly distributed throughout the country. The contemporary Kenyan governments seem to have perpetuated these regional disparities. Therefore, following independence, there have been more qualified teachers, well-equipped schools, lower dropout rates, and better exam performances in the economically and politically stable regions, in contrast to poorer, far-removed, semiarid areas of the country, such as the Northeastern Province, the coast, and some parts of the Rift Valley (Ipensburg 1992; Alwy and Schech 2004).

Abagi (1997, 42) argues that "regional differences in the provision of education opportunities for girls correspond with regional variations in economic and political development in the country." Education for women in Kenya has differed greatly by region in the past five decades in categories such as the number of girls enrolled per year in primary schools, the number of those who move on to secondary school, and the number who drop out (Abagi 1997; Alwy and Schech 2004). The highest dropout rates for women can be found in the rural areas, while higher retention rates and transitions to secondary school are mainly in the largest municipalities and highly agricultural regions such as the Central Province. Areas like the Central Province are highly fertile and are therefore the locations

where the colonial government and missionaries originally set up schools, churches, and hospitals (Ipensburg 1992; Vavrus 2003). The Nairobi area and surrounding Central Province in Kenya were privileged in this way. After independence, the government took over the schools there. Already stratified at independence, the classifications, location, and proximity to schooling resources formed the structure of inequality in access to education that continues to occur in Kenya.

Socioeconomic and Environmental

Given their geographic location, different communities adapt to different activities. The Maasai are an indigenous group in Kenya internally known for their persistence in practicing their traditions and adapting to change in the slowest ways possible. Maasai live in the semiarid Rift Valley regions of Kenya and Tanzania, and they own large herds of cattle, sheep, cows, and goats. They move seasonally in search of grazing grounds and water. Maasai women are responsible for all domestic tasks: milking cows, collecting water (a heavy and arduous task), cooking, and looking after the children. Given government policies, such as preserving parks and reserves, the traditional cultures appear to be challenged with increasing poverty and migration. Subdivision of Maasai land reduced the amount of land available for cattle, the number of cows per household, and food production. Once viewed as a proud and self-sufficient group, the Maasai now face socioeconomic and political challenges. Their economic base and nomadic lifestyle do not help, as there are no mobile schools and climatic conditions make water, food, and other resources hard to obtain. Their geographic location keeps them away from most government social amenities, making education a luxury beyond the basic needs of survival. In a patriarchal society, women are the last to be educated.

Recommendations

Addressing the status of girls from marginalized minority groups like the Maasai is a complex task, given the plethora of issues. Although there are many suggestions for addressing the educational issues of minority and marginalized girls, I suggest there is no one-size-fits-all formula. General suggestions have addressed general problems, but specific and unique problems from unique rural backgrounds—and especially, individual households—have not been addressed. Since girls' educational issues include a multitude of challenges (economic, sociocultural, political,

environmental, historical, religious, and security-related, among others), governments need to substantiate the specific problems facing each group of marginalized girls. For Maasai girls from Kajiado and Narok counties in Kenya in the most rural parts of the country, the greatest challenges are: access, as girls have to travel long distances; limited food; and unsafe conditions due to wild animals from the nearby Amboseli National Park and Maasai Mara National Reserve. Girls in northern Kenya face a different challenge: even those with access to education live in constant terror as a result of school attacks, like the most recent Garissa University shooting, which took the lives of 147 students. Ambushes in the nearby homestead and the killing of parents and other Kenyan nationals could also pose threats and trauma to girls, affecting their access to and enrollment rate in school. In these northern areas, therefore, ramping up security measures is crucial. While the two places are sections considered to have a majority of underserved girls, their problems are both general and specific and need to be addressed as such.

The government needs to invest in constant research and evaluation. For example, it is important to hear from the girls themselves. Their attitudes toward schools may be related to their own definitions of educational success, which may contradict the expectations of educational systems and institutions. Although scholars may develop generalized policies to improve girls' education, social scientists can attest to the fact that there is no single approach. Understanding meanings, values, and attitudes of girls from specific ethnic groups, socioeconomic status, geographic locations, and different levels of exposures to technology will help develop more informed, culturally competent policies, specific to place and time in ever changing and evolving communities. The girls' experiences in school will help build the knowledge base of what is required to improve opportunities and outcomes for girls—specifically, those in marginalized and geographically isolated groups—from the perspective of those girls that the policies are intended to help. This research can also be replicated in many settings and may yield similar or different outcomes, which may reveal unique, specific, or similar education policies and educational practices.

Disaggregating the rural, minority, and marginalized categories, which are normally taken together as homogeneous categories, can reveal the minute details of households or individuals. Locking these categories into statistical aggregation curtails the many differences inherent in them, and hence, prevents resources from reaching the needy, including for those

who do not even have access to schools and other social amenities available to elite groups in these communities. When available, resources for girls' education also get channeled through rural elites, raising questions about the trickle-down effect to the people really in need or preventing marginalized girls' awareness of such resources. These questions need answers: Who are the poor among marginalized groups? Which girls from which households need help? Which and what amount of help do they need? Disaggregation needs to reveal the minute details.

When debates occur about improving education for girls, most patriarchal societies have put men at the center of making decisions and providing economic support and security for their families. Women's decision-making is limited and faces challenges, as it is often solidified within men's settings and interpretation. Among the Maasai community, men pay school fees, as they own cows and land and children carry their father's names. Advocacy for girls' education and empowerment of their mothers would be more effective if the heads of families, who are mainly men in patriarchal communities, are convinced that girls' education matters. Therefore, fathers have to be engaged and must be a central part of these discussions.

Education outside the classroom needs to be emphasized. In many rural villages, there are few role models to emulate. Success stories include Kakenya Ntaiya, a Maasai woman who was betrothed to be married at a very young age, went through female genital cutting, and then managed to convince her village not to marry her off, because she needed to go school. She is now recognized as the first girl in her village to earn a college degree. She also holds a doctorate from the University of Pittsburgh. She went back to the community and started a girls' school. Moreover, she is married with two children and is considered to be a success in both realms: getting married and having children, and attaining the highest degree of education acknowledged worldwide. Her story has been covered by international media, and many girls and parents in marginalized areas would benefit from her experience.

More schools need to be constructed. While there are many ideas about how to improve schools for nomadic indigenous groups in the country, including the recent development of mobile schools, there is still a dire need to build schools for those students who have to travel three to five hours to the nearest schools. In northern Narok, for example, most Maasai combine keeping animals with farming crops. High rainfall and fertile soils in the areas mean the people are less mobile. It is different from the

semiarid areas in southern Narok, where there are limited resources for people to farm and feed their livestock. Grass and water are scarce in the dry season, leaving them no choice but to move to greener pastures. Since their migratory pattern is predictable and normally established every year (for example, from point A to point B and back within certain time periods), nomadic schools should be constructed at both locations. These will provide year-round access to schooling and improve the length of time girls spend in school. Distances to school in both locations differ, with longer distances in the semiarid areas than in northern Narok, with its highland vegetation (Phillips and Bhavnagri 2002; Ngome 2005; Sifuna 2005; Omolewa 2007).

Conclusion

In the quest for the best outcomes and equality, schooling continues to be seen as the main mechanism for developing human capital, a much needed resource for the newly established African nations. In the wake of independence in African nations, education was and remains not only the main viable means to social and economic mobility but the road to solving the problematic human conditions related to health, economic, social, cultural, political, and security issues. While there have been major strides in educational attainment for both boys and girls, girls are still lagging behind boys at all academic levels. Even when girls' education has improved overall, many geographically isolated and marginalized girls, such as the Maasai girls discussed in this chapter, continue to face basic issues of access that have been addressed in other areas. The girls may not join in the progress portrayed in statistical aggregate forms that omit the many girls living in underserved communities.

While it can evaluate success, this lumping together of girls' access to education by global, continental, and national statistical forms becomes problematic as the only means of measurement. More minute details need to emerge by disaggregating these large categories. For example, within the underserved communities of the Maasai girls, these questions need to be addressed: Which households have the greatest need for access? Which individuals within each household are most affected? What kind of challenges does each neighborhood face? Which students are near schools, and which are not? How are these communities stratified in their socioeconomic status? Who has the greatest needs? These forms of disaggregation can help capture minute details and could provide a more feasible means

for resources to trickle down to the neediest individuals. Since the girls in geographically isolated groups face ongoing challenges; the struggle for girls' education continues.

The importance of girls' education and the benefits that result cannot be overemphasized. Their education is closely linked to better heath and economic autonomy, among other improvements. More importantly, as mentioned earlier, the benefits that accrue to educated girls spill over to their immediate families, communities, and ultimately to nations, continents, and the world. Investing in girls' education should be one of the major policies under debate and implemented. While the world moves onto second-generation issues and challenges affecting girls' education, such as leadership, quality of education, and transition rates, many geographically isolated and marginalized girls have no access. Investing in access to education for marginalized girls becomes even more important, as it reduces inequalities that persist and can improve their livelihoods and the incomes of those around them.

The situations of most marginalized and geographically isolated girls are complex and may require multifaceted, specific, and unique approaches to address them. Creating mobile schools for nomadic groups, starting lunch programs in semiarid areas, increasing the number of schools, shortening the distances to schools, increasing security, constructing health facilities, and implementing any combination of these initiatives could help more marginalized girls attend school. Considering the big picture and the solutions is equally as important as discovering the minute uniqueness of each group, household, and individual. Therefore, planning and implementation of education development should include these specific factors.

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