

“Low-Cost” Boarding and “Child Renters”: Boys and Girls Schooling in Risky Physical and Social Environments in Bulilima and Mangwe

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Abstract

The physical and socio-economic environments and unequal development in Zimbabwe have given rise to phenomena known as low-cost boarding and child renters. Absence of parents, distances to school, unreliable caregivers, shifting of residence, care and schools as well as shortage of financial resources for fees in formal government and mission boarding schools have led to the sprouting of low-cost boarding, “bush boarding” and child renters. There are few secondary schools which are far apart and inaccessible by some communities. Low-cost boarding and child renting were made to ease access to schooling but instead have created risky physical and social environment for learners. Some of their parents cannot afford low-cost boarding and their children resort to child renting. Child renting impacts negatively on both genders but to greater extent on girls’ access and retention at secondary school. Learners have however demonstrated capacity of resilience in such challenges by engaging in various strategies.

Keywords: Low-cost boarding, Child renters, Risky environments, Physical environments

Bush boarding, Annex/Satellite schools