

Silent Exclusion: The Unheard Voices in Remote Areas of Botswana

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KEYWORDS Silent Exclusion. Remote Area Dweller. Basic Education. Blame-the-Victim. Ethnic Minority. Corporal Punishment. School Withdrawal

ABSTRACT 'Education as a human right' and 'education for all' are common themes sloganeered in every education forum whenever politicians and bureaucrats gather. Little is however, heard from those who are denied educational opportunities and of teachers in some of the educationally disadvantaged zones. One wonders if these slogans will become stories of the past. The 'voice' of the children, parents and teachers in the hard-to-reach ethnic and often marginalised minorities in remote areas cannot be ignored if the goal of improving pedagogical practices and the teacher education programmes toward achieving 'education as a human right' and 'education for all' is to be realised. This paper, which is part of a qualitative case study carried out in Botswana, argues that the 'voice' of the 'child' and the 'teacher' in the poor ethnic remote communities is fundamental in improving inclusion. The study used 30 children, 15 parents and 15 teachers as participants in individual interviews and groups discussions in schools in remote area settlements. The study concludes that while open access to schooling in remote areas has increased, little learning takes place in the classroom and early school withdrawal is high due to several competing in-school factors.