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Academic Unit: Postgraduate Unit
Title of Dissertation: **ISSUES AND PROGRESS IN ACHIEVING UNIVERSAL
PRIMARY EDUCATION IN RWANDA: A CASE STUDY OF
THE NYARUGURU COMMUNITY.**

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Submission date: July 2011

ABSTRACT

The study was conducted in Nyaruguru community with an overall purpose to review progress and implementation, and policy issues in the way towards achieving universal primary education for all (MDG No. 2) taking the Nyaruguru community as a case study. A total of 110 households were interviewed using a structured questionnaire that was developed based on the information needed such as household characteristics, school attendance and household resilience while other related information was collected using document review method. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS version 16.0. The results showed that primary school enrolment rate for children aged 7 years is still low (70.5%) with no gender disparity (70.1% female and 71.0% male) which largely fall far below the national level (94.2%). This enables one to conclude that school attendance in Nyaruguru is off track when compared to the national situation and the UN MDG 2. In Nyaruguru community, primary education completion is not on track since the results showed a trend whereby the mean completion levels of children aged 13 years is considerably low (2.3)???. The mean completion levels for all grades were below the recommendable level of completion (Table 4.4, figure 4.2). Despite the fact that a lot has been achieved to ensure gender parity in school enrolment, a substantial gap is still noticeable in education completion rate by gender: the same results showed a gender disparity on education completion favoring boys. The following are some of the recommendations from this study. There is need to gender mainstream policies with extensive focus on their implementation in rural areas; such policies would seek for women economic empowerment and increased community awareness on child rights for both girls and boys alike. The decentralized local government should be empowered enough to implement gender related policies; and mechanisms for monitoring their implementations should be put in place so as to evaluate the policy performance and suggest changes wherever deemed necessary, which would improve chances of realizing MDG 2. Interviews on household resilience indicated that 86.9% reduced the number of meals per day while 75.9% would pass one or more days with no meals as a result of food scarcity. Such situation of food insecurity affects children of school age to a great extent hence hindering their school attendance and performance. The correlation analysis confirmed this relationship between school attendance and food security situation, whereby school attendance would decrease among food insecure households. Thus in order to ensure full enrolment and education completion among all children in Nyaruguru as one of the rural areas, the GoR, along with its development partners, should sharpen its focus on interventions targeting the improvement of sustainable livelihood for rural families. While a lot has been achieved as of ensuring free primary education, a lot is also

needed to ensure that rural households are food secure and their vulnerability to external shocks is kept at minimum levels. A countrywide study is so important to assess whether other rural areas like Nyaruguru are not far behind the national level in terms of achieving the second Millennium Development Goal, which seeks to ensure that by 2015 all children everywhere, girls and boys alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.