

# Influence of School Finance Allocation on Implementation of Free Day Secondary Education Policy in Public Secondary Schools in Narok North Sub County, Kenya

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**Abstract:** The study aimed to investigate the influence of school finance allocation on implementation of Free Day Secondary Education Policy in Public Secondary Schools in Narok North Sub County, Kenya and to suggest remedies for improving the level of financing to the schools. The study targeted 30 head teachers from 30 public secondary schools. The Sub County Education Director and seven (7) Zonal Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (ZQASOs) were also targeted. The total population for the study was 38 subjects. Stratified random sampling was used to group the subjects while simple random sampling was used to select the participants from each stratum. Purposive sampling was used to select the DEO and ZQASOs. Questionnaires were used for collecting data from the head teachers while interview schedules were administered to the Sub-County Education Director and the Zonal Quality Assurance and Standards Officers. Validity of the instruments was determined by experts in research at the Maasa Mara University. Reliability of the instruments was tested by subjecting the instruments to a pilot study whereby the results were computed using the Cronbach alpha reliability co-efficient. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyse quantitative data while qualitative data were analyzed by identifying similar responses. Financial constraints due to delays in policy making and late disbursement of funds to schools were found to affect implementation of Free Day Secondary School policy in spite of the increased school enrolment. The study recommends timely allocation and release of funds to schools to keep the implementation of government policies in the education sector on the right track.

**Keywords:** Challenges, Effective Implementation, Free Primary Education (FPE) Free Day Secondary Education (FDSE).

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## I. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The world has made tremendous advancements in educating the society in areas including health, community development, civic engagement and the economy. This journey aimed at realization of the benefits of an educated society has undoubtedly been a long one, which requires a more educated population and is a priority for any government (UNESCO, 2007). Lewin (2007) once noted that competitiveness in high value added and knowledge based sectors of the economy, depends on knowledge, skills and competencies associated with abstract reasoning, analysis, language and communication skills, and the application of science and technology. Acquisition of all this is critical and is pegged on a well organized secondary education system. It is therefore not a surprise that a discussion about tuition fees for an improved access to education or any social program is a debate towards the right direction and is actually a discussion about government priorities. There is renewed interest and desire to develop new approaches to finance and enhance access to secondary schooling by attempting to overcome financial barriers brought about by increased cost of secondary education. This is as a result of the increase in the number of primary school students which continues to escalate in low enrolment countries creating greater demand for secondary places (Lewin, 2007).

The Government of Kenya's efforts in response to this growing demand can be seen in her endeavour to offer Free Education in her secondary education sector. This is clearly a matter of political will and an indicator of a system that cares for her population seen by the investment in the education sector and other social services, all geared towards a better future. The Country's education sector has over the years taken the largest proportion of the government budget (Otieno and Colclough, 2009). This comes against the backdrop of the challenge on how to expand access to secondary education at relatively low cost while improving the quality of education provided and high cost of that level of education which has led to a 30 percent drop out (MoEST, 2005). The momentum for rapid and urgent expansion of secondary education will become more crucial as Free Primary Education increasingly expands to cover all the school age children.

Many countries around the world have recognized the importance of providing access to secondary education for its citizens by removing financial barriers for students. In a survey of 76 countries by the World Bank, ten countries charged no fees, but required a community/PTA contribution. Those countries are Argentina, Azerbaijan, Iran, Jordan, Maldives, Namibia, Panama, Sierra Leone, Timor-Leste, and Ukraine (Kattan, 2006). Akyeampong, (2009) adds that many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa considered abolishing school fees for secondary education to improve access, a situation that saw substantial increases in enrollment rates. For instance, Uganda increased its enrollment rates by 68 percent and Malawi by 49 percent. Kattan (2006) notes further that when certain countries removed user fees there was a noticeable pattern of increased funding for education by governments. For example, the governments of Malawi, Uganda, Cameroon, Zambia, Tanzania, and Cambodia increased their share of spending on education after eliminating school fees (Kattan, 2006).

According to UNESCO's assessment report of Free Primary Education in Kenya after its inception in 2003, an additional 1.5 million children were able to attend schools for the first time (UNESCO, 2005). An outstanding revelation was that there was improved access in primary schools with a high level of enrolment witnessed (Mathooko, 2009; Orodho, 2014). To address this challenge, the government introduced Free Day Secondary Education (FDSE) in 2008 as earlier promised in 2007 election campaigns. This was meant to address illiteracy, low quality education and low completion rates at the secondary level, high cost of education and poor community participation (Republic of Kenya, 2005). It was a show of government commitment to increase transition from primary to secondary schools by seventy percent (Ohba, 2009). Many parents on their part saw this as a panacea to their problems regarding education (Orodho, 2014). According to the Free Day Secondary Education policy, the government was expected to meet the tuition fees of Kshs 10,265 per student, while the parents were required to meet other requirements like lunch, transport and boarding fees for those in boarding schools, besides development projects. This was in line with the government commitment to ensure that regional special needs and gender disparities were addressed, viewed then as a positive move towards the realization of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Education for All (Ohba, 2009).

According to Lewin (2008), projections of the financing required for a significant expansion of access to secondary education including progress towards a basic education cycle of 9 or 10 years indicate that enrolments in secondary education cannot be expanded at the present unit cost levels. A look at the Kenyan situation through a Research on FPE indicated that there were many challenges facing implementation of the policy (Republic of Kenya, 2005). For example, an assessment by UNESCO (2005) found out that some of the major challenges facing free primary education initiative in Kenya were: increased student numbers, shortage of teachers, lack of clear guidelines on admission, lack of consultation with teachers and parents, delay in disbursement of funds by the government and expanded roles for head teachers. It was however not clear about the financial challenges that were being faced, more so as the Government rolled down and began implementing the Free Day Secondary Education. This was the concern that the current study sought to investigate and also suggest possible remedies to.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Kenya has made several attempts to address the challenges facing her education sector through several Commissions, Committees and Taskforces. This follows the revelation that it has low participation rates, as attested to by low transition rates, low gross enrolment rate and low net enrolment rate, which have been partly attributed to the high cost of secondary education. The revelation that the growth in the number of secondary schools has not matched that of primary schools compounds the situation. Government efforts in providing Free Day Secondary Education (FDSE) in 2008 was a positive trend for the education sector since it increased enrolment at that level of the education system. It however, did not meet the most basic goals due to lack of accessibility to appropriate resources. Although Boarding Schooling is a popular phenomenon in the country, most students in secondary schools are actually enrolled in day schools where the Government together with development partners has endeavoured to provide facilities for the realization of the free education agenda. With the influx of the students in schools financial challenges are still bound to persist making it hard to make significant progress in addressing the current challenges facing the secondary education sector. This study sought to evaluate and create an understanding about influence of financial challenges on the development and sustainability of free secondary education.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of this study were to:

- i) Examine the influence of school finance allocation on the implementation of Free Day Secondary Education in secondary schools in Narok North Sub County.
- ii) Suggest remedies for improving the level of financing to the schools.

### **Significance of the Study**

The study would provide valuable insights to stakeholders in the education sector concerning challenges to financing of education in Kenya and elsewhere in the world where education provision is subsidized. Governments, education managers, teachers and development partners would have awareness on

effects and challenges likely to be encountered during the implementation of the subsidized education plans. Data from these findings could provide the Ministry of Education with useful information on how to effectively manage and implement the Free Day Secondary Education initiative. Useful knowledge contributed here would assist the government to improve educational access, retention and transition to higher levels.

## II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study employed the Human Capital Theory which presents major highlights and evidence on the private and social returns to education. Psacharopoulos (2006) notes that the education finance policies most conducive to social welfare are those that give priority to investment in the lower levels of education, including preschool. He notes that the State as tax collector and the financier of education can create equity in the distribution of education resources. This would open access to education opportunities for all learners who would otherwise miss out due to their economically disadvantaged backgrounds. This Theory was used to examine the influence of school finance allocation on the implementation of Free Day Secondary Education policy in Kenya, a provision which is geared towards providing a wider access. The key desired outcome of Free Secondary Education policy is that of provision of quality secondary education to every Kenyan child graduating from primary school, regardless of gender, ethnic background, or socioeconomic status.

Psacharopoulos (2006) states that expenditures on education (the input side) are treated as investment in human capital whose value is measured by the returns it yields over the lifetime of a more educated person relative to a less educated one (output side), over and above the investment costs. In their model of the concept of investment in human capital and the measurement of its value, Becker (1964) and Mincer (1974) as in Psacharopoulos (2006) noted that the formation of human capital entails the sacrifice of resources today for the sake of a stream of benefits in the future. It is therefore prudent that the Government invests more capital in her secondary education system for better access and further returns in the education sector.

## III. LITERATURE REVIEW

### History of Free Education in Kenya

The initiatives by the Government of Kenya to address key policy issues in the education sector are aimed at regularly reviewing and rationalizing fees and levies in secondary schools in collaboration with DEBs to reduce the cost burden on the Government, parents and communities (MoEST, 2005). This began with an earlier desire to have a free education system in 1963, when Kenya attained independence, under the then ruling party Kenya African National Union (KANU). In her Manifesto KANU stated the government commitment to the provision of Universal Free Primary Education in tandem with the Addis Ababa Conference of African Ministers held in 1960 (Sifuna, 1990). The government in this accord adopted a policy of universal primary education in order to fight disease, ignorance and poverty (Republic of Kenya, 1964).

An initial successful attempt to make primary education free came in 1974 although it was later scrapped as a result of the structural adjustment programme (Sifuna, 1990). After a political transition that removed KANU from power in 2002 NARC party ascended to power and, as it had promised, through the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, the NARC government introduced FPE in January 2003. As was expected, the response was overwhelming in terms of a swollen enrolment (Mathooko, 2009). As Otieno and Colclough (2009) note the declaration of free primary education called for infusion of substantial resources at the primary level, a signal to aid agencies to channel funds into the Country's education as a step towards meeting the objectives of the Millennium Development Goals. This policy initiative, Achoka, Odebero, Maiyo & Mualuko (2007) assert, focused on the attainment of Education for All (EFA) and, in particular, Universal Primary Education (UPE).

According to Bogonko (1992) the move towards offering free secondary education was taken further by terminating school fees in Forms V and VI in 1964 in the low cost schools and reducing it in the high cost schools so as to keep many students at that level in schools. The Country therefore introduced Free Secondary Education by giving funds to schools while the parents meet various other costs such as school development projects and boarding fees (Republic of Kenya, 2005). This milestone was internationally acknowledged in 2008 during the United Nations "High level Event" on MDGs held in Washington DC, USA in September 2008 (Ngacha, 2009). Although this is a positive trend towards achieving EFA other scholars suggest that more effort should be employed to improve the quality of education and enhance retention. Achoka et al (2007) in their scrutiny of the inherent concerns in the Country's education sector indicated that the effectiveness of the current 8-4-4 structure and system of education is hampered by decline in enrolment and retention particularly at the primary and secondary school levels. This therefore is an indication that the implementation of the policies of Free Primary Education of 2003 and Free Day Secondary Education of 2008 programs continue to face many challenges in their implementation that need to be unearthed.

### Challenges Related to Finances

The Secondary education sector especially in Sub Sahara Africa is faced with two main challenges; that of equitable expansion of access and improving quality and relevance (World Bank, 2005, as in Verspoor and

Bregman (2008). This situation, the World Bank notes is largely dependent on accelerating economic growth and the ability of the government to mobilize public resources to that sector whose financial framework even under the best of circumstances is extremely strained. Proper management of finance is a crucial aspect in any organization's endeavour to achieve her set goals. The secondary education sector is not exceptional. Achoka (2007) compares the secondary school principal's role to that of a pilot of the education aero plane who ensures a safe landing to all on-board. In order to create the much needed change the pilot must provide and take the necessary and relevant action. This role, on the head teacher's part includes effectively managing the financial resources allocated to the school for smooth management. It therefore remains the role of the head teacher and Board of Management to ensure that school funds are well spent and accounted for.

As noted by scholars challenges abound pertaining to the use of public funds which are often disbursed to schools late (Khamati and Nyongesa, 2013). Ohba (2009) notes that school facilities are limited and overstretched due to the increased number of students, inadequate numbers of trained teachers and increased financial demand in the institutions which hinder normal institutional operation. This, they note, has often resulted in planning and procurement challenges within the schools notwithstanding the increased enrolment and inadequacy of the teaching staff in secondary schools. Muchiri (2012) in a similar study noted further that with the introduction of Free Day Secondary Education two streamed classes had increased in many schools with a reduced level of single streamed ones as a result of the increased enrolment. The same study indicated that funds released by the government towards the funding of the free learning programme were not adequate and were sometimes disbursed late in a manner that is not synchronized with the school programme. Late release of the funds to schools disrupts the school programme and may lead to delayed syllabus coverage, increased level of drop out and delayed completion of school development programmes (Muchiri, 2012).

A historical analysis of patterns and trends of education financing in Kenya reveals public spending which has often escalated. For instance, the Ministry's total development expenditure grew by 41.9 per cent from KSh 27.0 billion in 2012/13 to KSh 38.3 billion in 2013/14 while development expenditure on primary education sector alone grew considerably from KSh 330.0 million in 2012/13 to KSh 16.1 billion in 2013/14 (MoEST, 2014). The recurrent expenditure on secondary education is mainly attributed to Free Day Secondary Education which increased it from Ksh 14,455.5 million in 2009 to Ksh 21,324.6 million in 2013 (MoEST, 2014). This makes Kenya's level of expenditure in education per student one of the highest out of the education GDP in Africa.

In spite of the huge expenditure in education, Adan and Orodho (2015) note, the Kenyan Government funding in the education sector left out some key areas that make learning to go smoothly in the schools. Such areas include infrastructure development that include classrooms, libraries and laboratories among others, provision of meals to the students while they are in school and buying school uniforms. The negative response to this is that there is the feeling that the government provides free education which has led to unwillingness by many parents to make any payments to the schools (Adan and Orodho, 2015). This has often led to low participation rates, as attested by low transition rate; low gross enrolment rate and low net enrolment rate, which Oketch and Rolleston (2007) attribute to the high cost of secondary education. This in-turn has meant that the growth in the number of secondary schools has not matched that of primary schools hence has continued to strain secondary education in the country. For instance, by the end of 2008, the number of primary schools stood at 26,104 compared to 6,485 secondary schools, 12 percent of which are private (Oketch and Rolleston, 2007). The fact that day schools are more accessible to the larger population in the country calls for more budgetary allocation to the sector.

#### IV. METHODOLOGY

This study used descriptive survey research design. This design allows researchers to gather information, summarize, present and interpret information for the purpose of clarification (Orodho, 2008). Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) on the other hand give the purpose of descriptive research as determining and reporting things the way they are. The study targeted 30 head teachers from the 30 public secondary schools in Narok North Sub County. The Sub County Education Director and the seven (7) Zonal Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (ZQASOs) in the Sub County were also targeted. Therefore the total population for the study was 38 subjects. Stratified random sampling procedure was used to group the population into three strata; Head teachers, ZQASOs and the Sub-County Education Director. Simple random sampling was then used to select the participants from each stratum. Gay, Mills and Airasian (2006) recommend that when the target population is small (less than 1000 members), a minimum sample of 20% is adequate for an educational research.

Questionnaire and interview schedules were used for data collection. Gay et al (2006) maintains that questionnaires give respondents freedom to express their views or opinion and also to make suggestions. The questionnaires which had both Likert scaled and open ended questions were used to collect data from the head teachers. Interview schedules were used to guide interviews to be conducted with the DEO and ZQASOs. Both content and face validity of the instruments were established by experts in Research and Evaluation at the Maasai Mara University. A pilot test was conducted in five schools involving five head teachers and one

ZQASO. Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient was used to establish internal consistency in the responses. Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.74 was obtained for the head teachers' questionnaire. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyse quantitative data while qualitative data were analysed thematically. Descriptive statistics were used to present the findings using percentages and frequencies.

## V. FINDINGS

### Challenges Associated with Provision of Finances

Financial resource allocation is crucial to implementation of government policies in schools. It was therefore seen necessary to seek information on the adequacy of funds allocated by the government for effective implementation of Free Day Secondary School Education. Opinions of school managers were sought on adequacy of government finance allocation. Responses from the head teachers out of the total 30 were summarized in table 1.

**Table1: Challenges Faced by the Head Teachers in Relation to Finances for FSE**

Challenges faced	No. of H/teachers	Percentage
Insufficient level of Government funding to schools	30	100
Delayed disbursement of funds to schools	27	90
The government did not consider funding ongoing projects before implementing FSE	19	63.3
Late submission of bursary funds to needy learners	23	76.7

As indicated in table 1 all the 30 (100%) of the head teachers gave their response that the funds released to schools were not sufficient to meet the desired projects within the schools while 27 (90%) indicated that Free day Secondary Education funds were released late, implying that the daily running of the schools was hindered by this delay. It also appears that the school projects that were initiated prior to the beginning of the FDSE programme missed Government funding after the onset of the new scheme as indicated by 19 (63.3%) of the respondents. This to a great extent hindered schools because they had already organized their ways of funding projects before the government offered to pay for school tuition and most projects did not succeed as a result. There was also higher level of response 23 (76.7%) that bursary schemes to learners who are in need were submitted late to the schools thereby affecting the smooth running of the affected schools. The results indicate that in almost all the schools the challenges affecting them due to the FDSE funds affect their operations due to the factors identified in the study.

### Head teachers coping strategies with the shortage of funds for FDSE

It was important to find out the strategies employed by the head teachers to cope with the challenges related to school financing. The heads of the schools were asked to indicate whether they agreed or did not agree with the various statements on strategies given. Table 2 indicates the results.

**Table2: Head Teachers Coping Strategies with the Shortage of Funds for FDSE**

Coping Strategies	Agree	Not sure	Disagree
Readjusting budget to suit the demand	30(100%)	-	-
Seeking CDF partnership funding	21(70%)	2(10%)	6(20%)
Soliciting for donations form other bodies	13(43.3%)	-	17(56.7%)
Subsidizing with PTA funds	26(86.7%)	-	4(13.3%)
Organizing fundraisings to supplement funds	11(36.7%)	-	19(63.3%)
Acquisition of goods on credit from suppliers	20(66.7%)	3(10%)	7(23.3%)
Borrowing money from other school heads	1(3.3%)	1(3.3%)	28(93.3%)
Postponing tasks until funds are available	27(90%)	-	3(10%)

As strategies to cope with shortage of funds table 2 shows that the head teachers adjusted their budgets in line with the demand as indicated by 100%, sought CDF partnership funding (70%) while 56.7% disagreed with the fact that they solicited for funds from other bodies with only 43.3% agreeing to that. Eighty-six percent (86.7%) indicated that they often subsidized the required finances with PTA funds. Majority 63.3% however indicated that they never organised fund raisings to supplement school finances with only 36.7% indicating that they did so. Other strategies that the respondents indicated they used included requesting suppliers to give them goods on credit, 66.7% and postponement of tasks to a later date pending availability of funds by the Government (90%). Majority 93.3% objected to the idea of borrowing from other schools, probably due similar challenges experienced in most schools. This indicated that the head teachers have to be very keen on what to do to ensure that they achieve their objectives, even if it means that they seek other sources of financing their activities in order to avoid delaying the operations of the school brought about by delays in release of the funds.

Responses from the Sub-County Education Director and ZQASOs indicated an agreement with the fact that the schools were operating on tight budgets due to delays in funds disbursement to schools and inadequacy of such required funds. They gave a suggestion that the Government can increase the budgetary allocation to all students if the free day education policy is to succeed. This finding is in agreement with assertions by

economists like Lewin (2008), Verspoor and Bregman (2008) who noted that Sub Sahara African education systems face challenges of equitable access due to shortage of funds, improving quality and relevance. They also experience insufficient supply of essential inputs in schools in spite of increased class sizes, shortages of textbooks, instructional materials and supplies and poorly stocked libraries which adversely affect the curriculum supervision and implementation. The Sub-county Education Director and the ZQASO noted that despite the role of the government in ensuring that it provides these funds in order to effectively manage the schools and improve on the service delivery there is a big challenge since there is never enough funds to manage the institutions. They noted that in some cases the funds are also diverted due to poor management in the schools hence making it even harder for the schools to effectively run. The inadequacy of the funds has led to poor performance in the schools due to strain that the few resources have been put to by the increased enrolment of the students.

## VI. CONCLUSION

Findings from the study indicated that all of the head teachers who participated in the study stated that the funds allocated to their schools by the government were inadequate. This situation, they noted, affected the quality of education by lowering performance due to understaffing in the affected schools and causing management gaps as a result of the overstretched facilities and increased enrolment. All the head teachers indicated that the schools are straining to meet their daily obligations because of the funds which are inadequate and at times released to schools late. The head teachers indicated that delays in remitting the funds to schools brought negative implications on the entire education system. These include; inadequate teaching/learning facilities, which caused shortage of teaching personnel and lack of sanitation facilities. This shows that despite the increase in the enrolment of the students due to the perceived implementation of FDSE, the head teachers could not rely on the funds and had to look for alternative means of raising funds for the schools. They indicated that they often sought further assistance to cover the deficit from the parents and other sources; however they noted that it was not easy. It was also noted that the government did not consider funding on-going projects before the implementation of FDSE; a situation that has stagnated such projects. This forced them to leave some of the projects unattended instead of starting and leaving them incomplete, a situation that affected the general effectiveness of the school. In spite of the challenges it faces Free Day Secondary Education policy is a good initiative which enhances access to education in Kenya especially to the needy and has generally led to an increase in secondary school enrolment since its initiation in the Kenyan education system. Although challenges abound pertaining to the implementation of Free Day Secondary Education Policy, The Sub-county Education Director and the ZQASOs decried poor management of the little funds available noting that in some cases the funds were diverted to other unintended uses by the school managers leading to poor implementation of Government policies.

### Recommendations

The government should allocate enough funds to secondary schools to enable free secondary school education run smoothly without putting unnecessary pressure on the head teachers and hence interfering with proper management of the schools. Enough financial resources will enable the head teachers manage the FDSE effectively and to complete the development projects and required infrastructure particularly the classrooms and sanitation facilities. The Government should in turn check on the timeliness of funds disbursement to ensure that the schools are able to run effectively.

### Limitations of the Study

This study used the Descriptive Survey method which relied on opinions of the subjects using questionnaires and interview schedules. This means that the researcher was not in a position to authenticate the clarity of information given by the respondents. It is possible that some administrators and Education Officials may have overrated their competences in some areas of school administration and education management, which may lead to the wrong conclusion on the area of study. The researcher resorted to self administration of the research instruments in order to clarify areas that would otherwise cause lack of cooperation. It was therefore possible to discuss with the respondents on the study areas and be able to observe firsthand the working conditions of the respondents.

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