

## Enrolment Dynamics of Primary Schools in Eldoret West Sub County, Kenya

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### Abstract

This paper examines the dynamics surrounding enrolment interventions that have been put in place by key stakeholders in promotion of the 100% enrolment rates in primary schools. The study was guided by the following objective: to determine enrolment dynamics of primary schools in Eldoret West Sub County, Kenya. The study was based on the social demand approach, a model which when applied to education, refers to the aggregate/total demand for school places in a nation (Zimmer, 1985). The researcher adopted a survey research design which aimed at obtaining complete and accurate findings. The design was appropriate for the study since the researcher intended to critically examine enrolment dynamics in Eldoret West, Kenya. From the 177 primary schools in the sub county, a total of 53 schools were sampled. All the 53 Headteachers and all the 5 Quality Assurance Officers in the Education sub county office participated in the study. Data was collected by use of questionnaires, interviews and documents analysis. It was established that there was a significant growth in enrolment due to current government policies. The stakeholders should be mobilized to provide resources needed to expand primary school facilities to ensure equal access to education opportunities for all.

**Keywords:** Enrolment dynamics, Enrolment trends, Household poverty, School health, Public private partnerships.

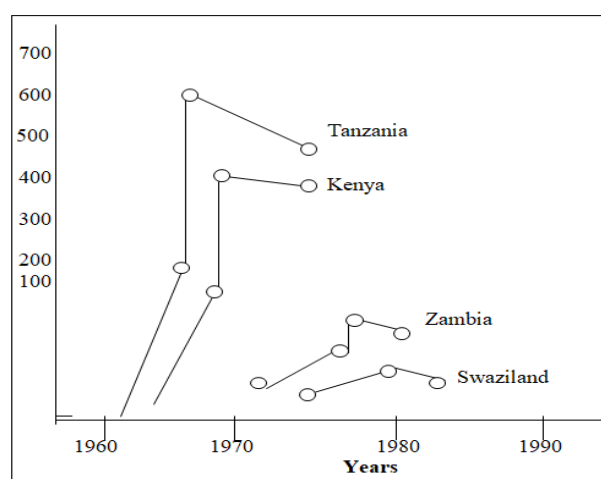
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### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The expansion in primary school enrolment in Kenya was partly accelerated by Free Primary Education (FPE) introduced in 1974. The total enrolment for standard one to six, for example, increased from 1.8 million in 1993 to nearly 2.8 million in January 1994 (Sifuna, 1988). According to Kazzim (1987), the seven year primary education continued until 1984, when Kenya switched to eight year primary, four years secondary and four years university (8.4.4) education system. The eight years uninterrupted primary school system led to the expansion of primary education. The growth was 8% in primary schools. Between 1964 and 1988 growth was at the rate of 5.5 % per annum, from 980 ,849 pupils in 1964 to 1, 2009, 680 in 1968 (Bogonko, 1992). By 1983 expansion in enrolment had more than quadrupled from 891, 553 in 1963 to about 4.3 million in 1983 in 1983. The highest rate of expansion was witnessed since 1970 climaxing in 1974.

That trend was due, first, to the elimination of school fees in arid and semi-arid areas and extension of free admission for needy cases throughout the country. Secondly, provision of free education was extended to standard VII and to standard VIII when 8.4.4 system

was established (Bogonko, 1992). The growth in primary education in Kenya was due to the government aim of achieving UPE by 1980 as had been agreed at the Addis Ababa conference in 1961.



**Fig 1.1: Trend in primary school enrolment in Eastern and southern Africa from independence to the mid-1980s % Increase Over Base 700 years**  
 Source: Ishumi, (1994)

The immediate expansion of primary education was triggered by international bodies that had a significant impact on the collective thinking and rationalization of African governments (Ishumi, 1994). At independence, the Government of Kenya recognised that education was the basic tool for human resource development, improving the quality of life and cultivating nationalistic values. Over the years, the education sector in Kenya faced serious challenges relating to access, equity and quality. The Kenya African National Union (KANU) Manifesto had among other things, promised the provision of Universal Primary Education (UPE) and also noted the important role that education would play in meeting other socio-economic goals of the Nation. This was in accordance to the concept of Adam Smith who emphasized the importance of investing in human skills (Psacharopoulos and Woodhall, 1985).

*The Kenya Vision 2030* is a highlight of one of the strongest and most diverse human resource pools in the region (Republic of Kenya, 2007). The attempt to diversify human resource has seen the total number of educational institutions increased by 1.3 per cent from 69,916 units in 2007 to 70,790 units in 2008. The total number of primary schools registered as at 2008 were 26,206 as compared to 26,104 in 2007. The number of secondary schools rose from 6,485 in 2007 to 6,566 in 2008 as identified by *The Kenya Economic Survey* (Republic of Kenya, 2009). The number of training colleges and universities remained unchanged over the period. Most of the public schools have been established through the community initiatives such as Harambee, Constituency Development Fund (CDF) and Local Authority Transfer Fund (LATF). Schools classified as private are owned by individuals, religious organization or companies.

The Government in its policy aimed to ensure that all children, including girls, children in difficult

circumstances have access to complete free and compulsory education by 2010 and to improve transition rate from primary to secondary schools by 70 percent from 47 percent and raising the quality and relevance of education. There has been a substantial increase in the number of students enrolled at various levels of education. In Early Childhood Development and Education (ECDE), enrolment grew from 483,148 children in 1982 to 1.7 million in 2008. The number of trained Early Childhood Development (ECD) teachers increased by 7.0 per cent from 54,177 in 2007 to 57,976 in 2008. This was attributed to the increased access to ECD Teacher training colleges that have provided opportunity to untrained teachers. Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) for pre-primary school increased slightly from 59.3 per cent in 2007 to 59.8 per cent in 2008, while Net Enrolment Rate (NER) increased from 39.7 per cent to 43.0 per cent in the same period according to *The Kenya Economic Survey*, 2009 ( Republic of Kenya, 2009). The Government continued to implement FPE under the Kenya Education Sector Support Programme (KESSP). Also the Ministry of Education continued to support construction of new classrooms under the school Infrastructure Investment Programme and the CDF with more funds directed to the areas that were affected during the post election violence. *The Economic Survey*, 2009 points out that the overall primary school enrolment rose by 2.8 per cent to 8.6 million in 2008. The GER in primary schools increased from 108.9 per cent in 2007 to 109.8 per cent in 2008 (Republic of Kenya, 2009). Transition rates from primary school to secondary learning institutions have already risen from 45.8% in 2006 to 59.9 per cent in 2008. According to *Economic Survey*, 2016, Gross Enrolment Rate increased marginally from 103.5% in 2014 to 103.6% in 2015. Net Enrolment Ratio increased by 0.2% points to 88.4% in 2015. The actual enrolment rates by gender is as indicated in the Table 1.1 below.

**Table 1.1: Enrolment in primary schools by gender, 2011-2015**

Year/ Class	2011		2012		2013		2014		2015	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
<b>Class 1</b>	713.9	656.8	712.2	658.1	710.5	659.1	712.1	770.5	702.0	659.4
<b>Class 2</b>	679.4	651.8	677.8	654.9	676.2	639.8	679.9	644.9	682.7	648.3
<b>Class 3</b>	677.6	646.5	676.0	648.6	676.1	652.0	674.5	637.7	675.9	641.9
<b>Class 4</b>	676.0	637.4	674.2	643.3	672.6	645.3	677.9	651.7	683.9	657.3
<b>Class 5</b>	603.0	579.5	646.5	625.7	644.8	631.5	640.5	628.2	657.5	641.1
<b>Class 6</b>	575.5	560.9	589.0	567.5	631.4	613.0	621.4	618.5	634.7	633.9
<b>Class 7</b>	510.2	512.9	542.2	553.9	560.0	560.3	598.2	601.0	616.6	619.7
<b>Class 8</b>	451.6	428.1	449.8	433.0	448.1	436.8	448.0	446.1	470.1	461.3
<b>Sub-total</b>	4,887.3	4,673.8	4,972.7	4,784.9	5,019.7	4,837.9	5,052.5	4,898.5	5,127.9	4,967.9
<b>Grand Total</b>	9,561.1		9757.6		9857.6		9951.0		10090.8	

Source; Republic of Kenya, 2016

### 1.1 Statement of the Problem

During the period 2011 to 2015, the total enrolment in schools in Kenya increased by 5.54% from

9,561,100 to 10,090,800 (Republic of Kenya, 2016). This positive trend in enrolment may be attributed to government policies such as the FPE, efforts towards

sustainable education, county government's interventions on expansion of pre schools and the private public stakeholders' intervention on primary education provision. Despite the growth in enrolment, children of school going age are still out of school due to other factors such as household poverty, school health, minimal parental participation in education, constraints facing public private partnership in education. The present study therefore investigates the dynamics of enrolment in primary schools in Eldoret west Sub County in Kenya.

## 1.2 Objective of the Study

This study was guided by the following objective: to investigate the enrolment dynamics of primary schools in Eldoret West Sub County in Kenya.

## 2.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researcher adopted a pragmatic approach in order to gain an understanding of the dynamics of school enrolment in Eldoret West Sub County in Kenya. Despite government efforts to ensure that all children of school going age are enrolled and retained in schools, many children in this age category are still excluded from either public or private primary schools. Survey research design was adopted with the aim of

obtaining complete and accurate findings. The study was carried out in Eldoret West Sub County, Rift Valley Province in the Republic of Kenya. The study adopted Purposive sampling technique that allowed the researcher to use cases that have the required information with respect to the objective of the study 5 statistic officers in primary section. The Education officers were chosen because they had information that was relevant to the study. Data was collected by use of questionnaires, interviews and documents analysis. These instruments were administered to statistic officers in primary and secondary sections in Sub County Education office.

## 3.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study sought to establish the enrolment dynamics in Eldoret west subcounty in Kenya. Enrolment dynamics was looked at by examining the following variables: trends of enrolment, household poverty, private public partnerships in provision of education and school health.

### 3.1 School Health and enrolment in primary schools

The respondents were asked to indicate their opinion in relation to items given. The responses are as indicated in the Table 3.1 below.

**Table 3.1: The Effect of School Health on Enrolment of Pupils in Primary Schools**

	SA	A	UN	DA	SD
Access to clean and safe water within this school has increased enrolment of pupils	21 (39.6%)	22 (41.5%)	4 (7.5%)	4 (7.5%)	2 (3.8%)
Access to health services such as vaccination, deworming and vitamin A supplements in schools have boosted school enrolment	17 (32%)	19 (35.8%)	6 (11.3%)	5 (9.4%)	6 (11.3)
Our well maintained and clean school compound has attracted a larger enrolment of students	20 (37.7%)	15 (28.3%)	7 (13.2)	2 (3.8%)	9 (17%)
Health and life skills offered in the school curriculum has enhanced school enrolment	16 (30.2%)	18 (34%)	2 (3.8%)	7 (13.2%)	10 (18.9%)

The study sought to establish whether pupils' access to clean and safe water within the school is a factor that increases enrolment in primary schools in Eldoret west sub county. The findings indicate that 41.5% agreed that clean and safe water within the school has influenced the increase in enrolment in schools. A further 39.6% strongly agreed on the same issue but it is noted that 3.8% strongly disagreed that clean and safe water has any influence in the enrolment. It was also pointed out that 35% Agreed that access to health services such as vaccination, deworming and vitamin A supplements has boosted enrolment in schools in Eldoret west sub county and 32% strongly agreed that health services positively influenced pupils enrolment in schools. The least number of respondents were those who disagreed (9.4%). The respondents were also asked to indicate their opinion as to whether a well maintained and clean school compound has attracted a higher enrolment of pupils in these schools. The responses indicated that 37.7% strongly agreed that

a well maintained and clean compound has a positive influence in enrolment in primary schools and 28.3% also Agreed but it was noted that 3.8% disagreed that well maintained and clean compound has increased enrolment. On the issue of health and life skills offered in schools it was noted that 34% of the respondents Agreed on the issue while 3.8% of respondents were undecided.

Health and nutrition are factors which can cause absenteeism as well as reduce energy levels in class. Lack of nutrition at home can lead to poor performance even if attendance is regular. This shows that reduced learning capacity can result from poor health and nutrition. The ability to read also is important in educating communities about clean water and sanitation, particularly if families need to use filters or boil water before drinking it to avoid waterborne illnesses.

### 3.2 Public private partnerships

The sub County education officers were interviewed in relation to the public and private bodies collaborations to increase enrolment in the subcounty. It was noted that Public private partnership in education, between the government and the private sector had helped to reduce government spending in education, increase access, equality and equity in the provision of education in Eldoret West Sub county. The respondents noted that the private sector is instrumental in supplementing government efforts in providing services in the education sector.. The respondents also pointed out the need for use of cash transfers and vouchers for vocation education have been used by the government to enhance access to education in poor regions in the country. It was noted that the government had expanded schools in Eldoret West in order to increase space to accommodate the high influx of pupils to primary schools. The respondents also recommended the need for the government to facilitates the creation of a

revolving fund which would be accessed by school communities at a lower interest rate for both short term and long term interest in education projects All these interventions would reduce the widening education gaps among the communities in the sub county. It is notable then, that the government has a well-developed Public Private Partnership in education policy and entrenches it in low private investment in education.

### 3.3 Effect of Household Poverty on enrolment in primary schools

The study sought to find out the effect of household poverty on the level of enrolment in primary schools in Eldoret west Sub County. Headteachers of 53 primary schools were responded to the questionnaire item. A likert type of rating was used with the following levels: Strongly Agree(SA), Agree(A), Undecided(UN), Disagree(DA) Strongly Disagree(SD) The findings are illustrated in the Table 3.2 below.

**Table 3.2: Effect of household poverty on enrolment of pupils in primary schools**

	SA [%]	A [%]	UN [%]	DA [%]	SD [%]
Low parental income/wages in the sub county negatively affects the level of enrolment of pupils in school	22 [41.5]	19 [35.8]	7 [13.2]	3 [5.7]	2 [3.8]
Children drop from this school to engage in hawking/farm labour or other income generating activities to supplement household income	21 [39.6]	20 [37.7]	6 [11.3]	4 [7.5]	2 [3.8]
Families withdraw their children from schools because of lack of monies for uniforms and stationery, transport.	23 [43.4]	21 [39.6]	5 [9.4]	3 [5.7]	1 [1.9]
Large family size and advanced parental age negatively affects school attendance of children in those households	22 [41.5]	20 [37.7]	6 [11.3]	3 [5.7]	2 [3.8]

From the findings in the Table 1.3 above it was observed that parental income and wages strogly determined the enrolment of children in primary schools. It was noted that majority of the respondents strongly agreed (41.5%) that the low parental income and wages negatively affected the enrolment of children from such families. A further 35.8% agreed that the parental level of income negatively affected enrolment of children in schools in Eldoret west. A small number of respondents(3.8%) strongly disagreed with the statement and felt that parental level of income/ wages had no effect on enrolment of pupils in primary schools. This findings are corroborated by those of Muchimuti and Limo(2018) in their study on household level and retention in public universities in Kenya. It was further noted that children in Eldoret west dropped out of school to engage in income generating activities such as hawking and farm labour. Majority of respondents strongly Agreed with the item (39.6%), followed by 37.7% who Agreed. The least category were those who strongly disagreed (3.8). It was also pointed out that hidden costs had an effect on enrolment of pupils in primary schools. Those who strongly agreed were 43.4%, followed by those who Agreed (39.6%). The least number of respondents were those who strongly disagreed (1.9%). It is noted that in many countries, basic education is free, but there are hidden costs

incurred in provision of uniforms, books, lunch and transportation, especially in rural areas and urban schooling. Access to school and enrolment rates in poor regions is critically affected by costs incurred by parents indirectly (World Bank 2004). The study also established that a large family size and advanced parental age negatively affected primary school enrolment. Majority of the respondents Strongly Agreed (41.5%) followed by those who Agreed(37.7%). The lowest category was those who strongly disagreed (3.8%) that the parental age and family size did not affect enrolment. From the above responses it was learnt that poverty is a major challenge in attainment of full enrolment and participation in Free Primary Education in Kenya.

### 4.0 CONCLUSIONS

From the study findings it is evident that school health plays a crucial role in increasing enrolment in primary schools in the sub county. In fact, health and nutrition are factors which can cause absenteeism as well as reduce energy levels in class. Ill health amongst the pupils can lead to poor performance as well as irregular school attendance amongst those already enrolled. The government provides adequate incentives to private investors in education so that they

are able to effectively contribute to improving access, quality, equity and relevance.

From the study findings it was learnt that poverty is a major challenge in attainment of full enrolment and participation in Free Primary Education in Kenya. It was noted that the hidden costs such as those of uniforms transportation were factors that lowered enrolment in schools. Due to low parental level of income children dropped out of school to engage in income generating activities at the expense of undergoing schooling.

## 5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

There is need for more concerted efforts and collaborations between stakeholders in the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health towards improving school health as a way of encouraging better enrolment trends in primary schools in Kenya.

There is need to identify and target children from poorer households and provide incentives to their household in order to address poverty issues that were seen to have direct influence on the enrolment levels of children in the schools. Such children should also receive increased funding in their education to cover hidden costs.

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