

Influence Of Non-Governmental Organizations Infrastructural Support On Academic Performance Of Public Primary Schools In Yala Division

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Abstract: The role of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in poverty reduction has been taking shape since Kenya's independence and has become a major mainstream in research today. Their engagement in education, relief, emergency and long-term development has been appraised especially in reducing the financial constraints in public schools following the introduction of Free Primary Education in Kenya. This study sought to assess the influence of non-governmental organizations infrastructural support in enhancing academic performance in public primary schools in Yala division, Siaya County, Kenya. The main objective of the study was to analyze the influence of NGO supported physical facilities on academic performance in public primary schools in Yala Division. The study employed a descriptive design approach. Based on the state of affairs of NGO activities in the county, Out of 60 public primary schools in the division, the study adopted homogeneous purposive sampling to select 45 schools either partially or fully sponsored by NGOs. A Questionnaire comprising closed and open-ended research questions taking the format of five-point Likert scale was used to assemble primary data from head teachers and their deputies, data was descriptively analysed through SPSS ver 21. The study established that NGOs in Yala Division largely contribute to the provision of physical facilities in schools which in turn leads to increased attendance and retention, significantly improving academic performance. The study calls for a strong collaboration between the Ministry of Education and NGOs in meeting the needs of pupils in public schools to consequentially improve their academic performance. The study was limited to attendance, retention, tests and assignments and conducive learning environment as the indicators for academic performance. The study suggests that further study should be done on other factors such as pupil's participation in class, enrollment, school dropout and KCPE performance.

Keywords: Public Schools, NGOs, Academic Performance, Physical facilities, Infrastructure, Yala Division

I. INTRODUCTION

In an effort to realize the Sustainable Development Goals of Education and Education for all, NGOs have planned and implemented educational projects in developing countries. The grassroots demonstration by NGOs in enhancing quality basic education in Kenya has had attention with the Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MOEST) acknowledging NGO activities in enhancing academic performance. The increased enrolments in public primary schools following the introduction of Free Primary Education exerted pressure on

the schools' physical facilities such as classrooms, boreholes, kitchens, desks, social amenities, water tanks and books hindering the teaching and learning processes. While there is large literature analyzing the relationship between school resource level and pupils achievement, there is much to be discerned concerning enhancement of academic performance in public primary schools through NGOs' infrastructural support.

The Global Education Monitoring Report (2016) outlines that the fourth sustainable Development Goal on Education (SDG 4) considers availability of learning material as a key

strategy for achieving inclusive and equitable quality education that promotes lifelong opportunity for all. Mukami (2012) has affirmed that facilities greatly affect not only the levels of students' achievement but also the safety of both teachers and students. Notably, spacious classrooms, availability of textbooks and enough furniture are a basis for good concentration and participation of pupils in class work.

Good classrooms appear to be an important precondition for pupils learning and participation in school activities. Classrooms serve as facilities where pupil's brains are sharpened since most teaching and learning takes place in classrooms. NGOs strive to provide adequate classrooms that are well ventilated, well-lit and spacious. Availability of classrooms, libraries and other physical facilities enhance a learning and teaching environment which is reflected in the examination performance (Akomolafe & Adesua, 2016). Furniture, on the other hand, means physical facilities that are used in schools to facilitate learning. They include chairs, desks, lockers and cupboards. A UNESCO (2004) report shows that uncomfortable and inappropriate furnishings cause harm including pain in the back, poor attention span and writing difficulty, thus reducing education opportunities. Fisher (2006) conducted a study on the impact of school infrastructure on the learners' outcome and behaviour in Georgia. He observed that uncomfortable and unsuitable classrooms cause problems such as poor concentration span and writing difficulties and concluded that academic achievements improve with better building conditions, lighting levels, air quality and temperature. Uwheraka (2005) asserts that facilities falling below the approved standard could lead to reduction in quality of teaching and learning in school resulting to poor pupil's academic performance.

In Bangladesh, a study by Alam (1992) looked at the performance of non-government schools in rural Bangladesh. The study tried to relate performance of the schools with different school-level variables (physical facilities, quality and number of teachers, availability of instructional and, standard/quality of school-management). He tested how far better physical facilities (e.g. larger class-area per pupil), more educated or trained teachers, better financial resources and regular management type relate to performance of schools. The performance-indicators included exam-results and drop-out ratios. Estimates on enrolment, teacher-student ratio, boy-girl ratio and some key physical facilities were presented. He concluded that the existence of a regular management committee, regularity of salary-payment to teachers and existence of larger physical facilities, in that order, are important determinants of performance. Therefore, according to him, bricks and mortars are important in the performance of the schools in Bangladesh.

In Ghana, Fielmua and Bandie (2012) carried out a study on the contribution of local Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) in promoting basic education in the Nadowli District. They studied the Sustainable Integrated Development Services Centre (SIDSEC), a local operating NGO in Nadowli District in Ghana that provided physical facilities including teaching and learning materials with the aim of bettering the quality of education in the district. Teachers at basic education level indicated that the reading and counting skills of pupils had improved as a result of the provision of physical facilities by

NGOs. In addition, it led to increased enrolment and retention in the primary schools.

In Kenya, one of the main barriers to excellent academic performance in primary schools is the poor physical facilities. According to the GOK (2013) status report, inadequate physical facilities have severely overstretched learning facilities thereby posing serious risks on the academic performance in schools. A study by Buhere (2007) in Webuye Sub-County revealed gaps in the quality of education in Kenya relative to physical facilities. The study proved that nearly all physical facilities required for teaching and learning were lacking from textbooks, learning materials and inadequacy of library services. As a result, performance in these schools is negatively affected, since learners lack a practical approach to learning in the subjects taught.

Empirical data shows that physical facilities are an important factor in both school attendance and achievement. For this reason, improving primary school infrastructure is a high priority among School Management Committees (SMCs). Over time, communities, parents, development partners and NGOs have been responsible for and have made substantial investments in school infrastructure. However, overtime there has been a major backlog of infrastructure provision and a shortage of permanent classrooms, particularly in poor communities. This can be attributed to the significant increases in primary enrolment. According to Economic Survey (2005), in 2003, enrolment trends increased drastically with the total primary school enrolment increasing by 4.2% from about 7.1 million in 2003 to about 7.4 million. Consequently, this led to acute shortage of physical facilities, proven by the MOEST's Report on the Sector Review and Development, September, 2003. The report points out that there was a critical shortage of textbooks and other learning materials which were the most constraining resource as far as attaining quality education was concerned.

The government, private sector and NGOs responded to the increased need for school buildings to accommodate the newly enrolled students by building new schools. As Bandi (2011) explains, similar to the concept of Harambee in the 1960s and 1970s to satisfy the demands of schools, international NGOs joined the local communities to alleviate the strain on the government to lodge the new 1.5 million students. Classroom sizes swelled with pupil: teacher ratios reaching as high as 120:1 in some regions of Kenya. These ratios, alarming as they are, were one of the multiple problems with providing the physical infrastructure including schools, books, desks, notebooks, pens, pencils and internet access.

In Kenya, a number of studies have been done by researchers on the relationship between educational resources and students academic performance. According to Master Plan on Education and Training (MPET) (1998), physical facilities have a bearing on quantitative growth and quality of education. In the same line, parents from a poor community were likely to construct low quality buildings using cheap labour and materials. MPET (1998) advised that the government should establish essential benchmarks on basic physical facilities for primary schools (Republic of Kenya, 1998). Eshiwani (1981) observed that lack of school materials impact on performance in both primary and secondary schools. In addition, Eshiwani (1983) found out that some of

the performance determinants in primary schools included efficient leadership in the school administration, physical facilities, and educational needs for students, preparation and homework of students, characteristics of teachers in terms of behaviour and professionalism and environmental factors affecting achievement. Further, Eshiwani (1997) argued that poor physical facilities contributed to poor performance in primary schools. Tum (1996), in support of Eshiwani, says that lack of facilities is a major contributing factor to poor performance. In this context, it is clear that shortage of teaching books and other facilities result into poor performance over time. In his dissertation, Rono (2013) explains that with the inception of the Free Primary Education (FPE), the government came up with target supply of instructional resources for both lower and upper primary levels. Since then the targets of instructional materials have not been realized due to delayed disbursement and misappropriate use of funds by some head teachers.

According to the Global Education Monitoring Report (2016), textbooks are types of teaching and learning materials that are commonly used. They are important in improving academic performance in developing countries with large class sizes and unqualified teachers. Both teachers and students need textbooks that support their learning experiences. An efficient book loan system where library services are not feasible, provision of textbooks and reference material enhance quality of education. Studies carried out by UNICEF (2002) and UNESCO (2004) concluded that without materials, classes will always be teacher centred with students not able to learn independently or in groups.

Alam (1992) outlines that in the Philippines, an attempt to increase the ratio between textbook and pupils from 1:10 to 1:2 led to a sizable impact on pupil's performance. Therefore this proves that teaching and learning materials like textbooks, chalkboard, and exercise books enhance both leaning and teaching activities - thus promoting high levels of achievement since they are visual and enhance coordination of both eyes and the mind of the learner. Jagannathan (2001) elaborates that primary school programs include an integrated curriculum, teaching learning materials, teacher training, and continuous capacity building for teachers.

In Africa, textbooks play a vital role in the education system. In many countries, pupils are forced to share textbooks or at times they lack them completely. In a study by World Bank (2002) that involved over 89 education projects across Africa, it was found that cost effectiveness and importance of localized and customized reading materials increased literacy skills in school settings. In 2007-2009, a research study was implemented to analyze the impact of text and library books upon reading comprehension and fluency upon students in Tanzania (Plonski, 2009). This study used a comparative case study that incorporated a mixed methods design. The results of the investigation indicated there were some significant differences in student fluency and reading comprehension achievement scores (Plonski, 2009). In addition, a study by Fuller (1985) discovered that pupils who had more than two textbooks were almost 3 times likely to pass with 67% completing school compared to pupils who had no textbooks in school recording a 24% on completion.

Therefore, textbooks are very significant for academic achievement.

In Kenya, due to the increased enrolment as a result of the free primary education, the government funds schools to cover non-salary expenditure, including textbooks. According to the Global Monitoring Report (2016), these grants are always little and vulnerable to budget reductions. The current unaffordable, unsustainable and unpredictable financing of textbooks have often left parents covering the cost of learning materials for their children, which further exacerbates inequalities in learning by wealth, disadvantaging families who cannot afford these out-of-pocket expenses. Founded on the impact of availability of physical resources (infrastructure) on academic achievement, there is need for NGO involvement, to alleviate the problem of lack of facilities. This paper therefore is an in-depth analysis of the contribution made by NGOs through provision of physical facilities on academic performance of pupils in public primary schools in Yala Division.

II. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive design using the survey approach. Seeking to establish the contribution by NGOs on academic performance in primary schools in Yala Division, Gem Sub County, and the author focused on provision of physical facilities as one of the activities the NGOs engage in. The descriptive survey design was therefore chosen based on the interest of the author to study the state of affairs already existing in the field with NGOs support through provision of physical facilities and academic performance. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed in this study. A questionnaire was utilized to collect quantitative and qualitative data from head teachers and deputy head teachers. It comprised of open and closed-ended questions that included scaled responses in the format of Likert scale. The respondents answered by choosing one of the five agreement choices. Returns from the head teacher's office and area education officer were also use used for qualitative analysis. This is in line with Kombo and Tromp's (2006) approach where collection of data, analysis and interpretation is developed from the available information.

The target population comprised the head teachers of sixty public day primary schools and their deputies. In the study area, most of these are mixed day schools. Of these schools, forty five primary schools are partially sponsored by NGOs (District Education Office, Statistical Department, 2016). The 45 schools thus formed the sample size from which a total population of 90 participants composed of 45 head teachers and 45 deputy head teachers were selected. This sample was selected through homogeneous purposive sampling following distribution within the three zones of Yala Division: Nyawara Zone (with a total of 26 public primary schools); Bar Kalare Zone (with 15 schools); and Malanga Zone (with 18 public primary schools). The study used questionnaires and document analysis for data collection. For document analysis, the information in records related to the academic performance of the pupils and the support provided by NGOs was critically examined (Oso & Onen, 2008). On

the other hand, questionnaires involved the use of open ended and closed-ended questionnaires (Orodho & d Kombo, 2002). The collected data was then analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) ver 21. Qualitative data was operationalized by categorizing, tabulating and recombining evidences to address the research question while quantitative data was presented through tables and inferences made from them. Descriptive data was presented in prose form.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

High-quality facilities appear to be a fundamental prerequisite for pupil's education. This study was deemed relevant since it would help in the verification of the influence physical facilities have on academic performance. The author thus makes reference to physical facilities such as classrooms, toilets, textbooks, learning material, electrification and, computers and furniture. Based on the assumption that physical facilities played a significant role in academic improvement in schools, the author sought information on whether respondents had received the physical facilities from the sponsoring NGOs. Mukami (2012) affirmed that facilities greatly affect not only the levels of students' achievement but also the safety of both teachers and students. Spacious classrooms, availability of textbooks and enough furniture are a basis for good concentration and participation of pupils in class.

The head teachers and deputy head teachers were asked their opinion based on strength on physical facilities provided by NGOs in relation to the pupils' academic performance. This was tested on a five-point Likert scale where respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement from on a scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neutral (N), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The results are illustrated in Table 1.

Physical Facilities	SA	A	N	D	SD
1. NGO's have increased the number of classroom in the school.	60(75.00)	11(13.75)	6(7.50)	2(2.50)	1(1.25)
2. NGO's have increased the number of textbooks in the school.	63 (78.75)	12(15.00)	3(3.75)	1(1.25)	1(1.25)
3. NGO'S have increased the number of learning materials in the School (such as pens, exercise books. Chalk)	61(76.25)	11(13.75)	6(7.50)	2(2.50)	0(0.00)
4. NGO's have increased the number of furniture in the school.	47(58.75)	25(31.25)	3(3.75)	3(3.75)	2(2.50)
5. NGO's have increased the number of computers in the School.	38(47.50)	33(41.25)	5(6.25)	1(1.25)	3(3.75)
6. NGO's have assisted in the connection of electricity in the	18(22.50)	20(25.00)	10(12.50)	27(33.75)	5(6.25)

school.					
7. NGO's have built more toilets in the school.	61(76.25)	15(18.75)	2(2.50)	1(1.25)	1(1.25)
8. As a result of the increase in classrooms, learners are able to come to school regularly.	46(57.50)	18(22.50)	12(15.00)	3(3.75)	1(1.25)
9. After engaging with NGOs, students easily get textbooks to read.	61(76.25)	11(13.75)	6(7.50)	2(2.50)	0(0.00)
10. After engaging with NGOs, students have comfortable desks and chairs.	47(58.75)	25(31.25)	3(3.75)	3(3.75)	2(2.50)
Mean	50.2	18.1	5.5	4.5	1.7

Table 1: Physical Facilities Supported by NGOs and Academic Performance

From the study findings, on NGO's having increased the number of classrooms in the school; 61(76.25%) of the respondents strongly agreed that NGOs had increased the number of classrooms in their school while 11(13.45%) agreed. However, it is important to note that some 6(7.50%) respondents were neutral, 2(2.50%) disagreed and none of them strongly disagreed. This implies that most (89.7%) of the respondents indicated that NGOs had increased the number of classrooms. In some instances, however, NGOs had increased only one classroom while in some cases they had increased the number of classrooms by eight. Classrooms are very essential because teaching and learning takes place in the classroom and therefore it is a very important component in ensuring good academic performance. This therefore means that many schools had been supported in the construction of classrooms by NGOs. This was attributed to the NGOs' knowledge on the key role classrooms play in process of teaching and learning. Availability of neat, spacious and well ventilated classrooms motivates pupils to come to school and learn. Apart from that, it reduces absenteeism by minimizing the spread of communicable and air borne diseases.

On the issue of textbooks and whether NGOs had increased the number of textbooks in the schools, the findings on Table 1 show that 63 (78.75%) of the respondents strongly agreed that NGOs had increased the number of textbooks in their school with 12(15.00%) agreeing to this statement. Notably, (3.75%) were neutral, 1(1.25) disagreed and 1(1.25) strongly disagreed. Therefore more than half of the respondents in totality 75 (93.75%) were in agreement that NGOs provided textbooks to their schools. This finding was attributed to the NGOs knowledge on the key role textbooks play in the process of teaching and learning. However, not all schools were given textbooks due to the fact that different schools had different resources and varying needs.

On the statement on whether NGOs have increased the number of learning materials in schools (such as pens, exercise books and chalks), 61(76.25%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 11(13.75%) agreed, 6(7.50%) neutral, 2(2.50) disagreed and none of them strongly disagreed. This means that 72(90%) of the respondents were in support that NGOs provided learning materials. The learning materials are important in the teaching and learning process. Teachers were also provided with teaching and learning materials to encourage an appropriate learning environment. NGOs in Yala

Division believed that procurement of learning materials acted as an incentive and motivated pupils to attend school and learn up to completion, for the reason that learning material greatly influences academic performance.

The study also sought information from respondents on whether NGOs helped schools build toilets. This was to establish the extent to which NGOs were assisting schools to build toilets and the results are depicted in Table 1. The results showed that 61(76.25%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 15(18.75%) agreed, 2(2.50) disagreed while 1(1.25%) strongly disagreed that NGOs had assisted in the building of toilets. This indicated that NGO did help schools acquire toilets but not in all areas. This was because the toilets were built according to the needs of the school. Gender separated latrines were constructed and they were useful for girls since at puberty adolescent girls need privacy to accommodate their needs especially during menstruation. Without access to sanitation facilities during that time, girls are more likely to miss school and even drop out. Toilets play a vital role in academic performance in that enough toilets minimize time wastage since pupils don't have to make long queues due to a shared multitude waiting to use the same toilets. Enough toilets can easily be maintained in terms of hygiene and sanitation hence preventing the spread of diseases that may hinder pupils' school attendance. Enough and clean toilets can also motivate pupils to come to school and learn, hence improved academic performance.

More so, the author sought to establish as a result of the increase in classrooms, whether learners were able to come to school regularly. It was found out that 61(76.25%) of the respondents strongly agreed while 11(13.75%) agreed. However, 6(7.5%) were neutral, 2(2.50) disagreed and none of the respondents strongly disagreed. From these findings, most of the respondents 72(90%) acknowledged that as a result of NGOs support to increase classrooms, learners were able to come to school regularly. This is because in crammed classrooms teachers are not innovative and they become exhausted trying to make the classes organized. In addition, unfavourable classroom create strain on teachers and learners leading to a poor attitude towards school hence absenteeism. This is supported by Fisher (2006) who observed that uncomfortable and unsuitable classrooms cause problems such as poor concentration span and writing difficulties. Therefore the increase in classrooms by NGOs has led to improved attendance hence improved performance.

Concerning physical facilities and academic performance, therefore, a mean of 50.2 respondents strongly agreed that physical facilities were provided by NGOs and a mean of 18.1 agreed to the same. Cumulatively a mean of 68.3 undoubtedly indicated that NGOs in Yala Division engaged in the provision of physical facilities and in turn the physical facilities led to increased attendance and retention which signify improved academic performance in the study. In the provision of physical facilities, NGOs undertook specific activities depending on the needs of the school. For example in some schools NGOs supported physical facilities by providing building and construction material such as cement, timber, iron sheets, nails, bricks or blocks among others. In some cases, the old and dilapidated classrooms were repaired and in most cases new infrastructures were constructed. In addition,

NGOs donated textbooks, learning materials such as chalks, pens and exercise books as well as computers to needful schools. They also constructed toilets and in some rare cases they helped schools cater for electricity connection and maintenance. Uwheraka (2005) asserts that facilities below approved standard could lead to reduction in quality of teaching and learning in school resulting to poor pupils' academic performance. This is supported by Fisher (2006) who found out that academic achievement improve with improved building conditions, lighting levels, air quality and temperature in schools.

IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This paper sought to identify some of the infrastructural support provided by NGOs especially on provision of physical facilities to enhance academic performance in public primary schools in Yala Division. Many public primary schools in Yala Division are beneficiaries of NGO supported physical facilities, which in turn lead to improved academic performance. It is therefore important to note that the academic performance of pupils in public schools largely depends on the availability of infrastructure to make easy the teaching and learning process.

The study therefore concluded that NGOs provision of infrastructure in public primary schools led to improved academic performance. While accepting that infrastructure is just one determinant factor, it would not be farfetched to conclude that infrastructure has played a key role in the above average performance of pupils in Yala Division.

However, not all schools received infrastructural assistance hence the need for NGOs to scale up in terms of provision of physical facilities. NGOs contribution is likely to have more impact when they provide more assistance in form of physical facilities. Since it would provide students and teachers with a better learning and teaching environment respectively, and the necessary equipment that support pursuit of studies.

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