

*Review*

# An assessment of the implementation of national development plans in Kenya: The case of education sector programmes

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**This study assessed the success or failure of plan implementation in Kenya by investigating the extent to which planned estimates for educational projects were actually attained. Using six sets of five-year national development plans, we calculated an implementation ratio for each program showing actual expenditure as a ratio of planned expenditure. Our results indicated that out of the 78 implementation cases examined, there were 73 cases of overspending, and only five, of balanced spending, an indication of 93.3% implementation failure rate. We concluded that there is a persistent and substantial shortfall in the attainment of plan targets, a situation that calls for restructuring of the entire planning process.**

**Key words:** Development, education, implementation-ratio, Kenya, plan, standard deviation.

## INTRODUCTION

The education sector in Kenya has over the years, been directed and guided by policy documents generated by the government. Of notable significance in this regard are the national development plans. The concept of development planning is made up of two distinct concepts; "development" and "planning".

Development has been defined variously. Todaro (1982) describes development as a process that is multi-dimensional and which involves the re-organization and re-orientation of the entire economic and social system. It involves the improvement of income and output, radical changes in institutional, social and administrative structures as well as in popular attitudes, customs and belief. Ikeanyibe (2009) defines development to mean improvement, or to become more advanced, more mature, more complete or more transformed.

Planning as a concept has also been defined variously,

but the basic idea is that it embraces all those activities that result into the determination of goals, objectives or targets and the appropriate courses of action that lead to their attainment. Defined in this way, planning is intended to achieve specific results; hence a plan is some form of a blue print for action.

Looked at in this manner, development planning therefore suggests deliberate control and direction of the economy by some central authority for purposes of achieving definite targets and objectives within a specified period of time with a view to improving welfare. Consequently, a development plan outlines development agenda for a specified period of time by setting goals, objectives, strategies as well as programme and project priorities.

Development planning remains one of the most important functions of any government. More often than

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not, planning is the main tool used by governments to set forth their visions, missions and goals. It is one of the only few proven and effective means of realizing development through effective direction and control.

The roots of planning can be traced to the first attempts to plan socio-economic policies. Two branches stand out in this regard; central planning as developed in the Soviet Union in the late 1920s onwards and indicative macro planning as elaborated in some western countries after the second- world war. Central planning evolved from a few general principles by trial and error and, by successful refinement. This haphazard approach nevertheless, resulted in a workable framework for achieving specific objectives, although its features differed from country to country.

Various forms of indicative planning developed in Western Europe after World War II. British cabinet office made planning related studies during the war, directed at solving war finance problems. In the USA, the council of economic advisers was established to develop a framework of government policies soon after the war.

In France, a form of indicative planning was developed much closer to compulsory planning, and institutionalized in the Commissariat au Plan. As in the Soviet Union, five-year plans constituted the formal framework for this set-up. In Norway, the government preferred a less elaborate form of planning, while in the Netherlands, indicative planning started immediately after the war. Among the developing countries, India was the first to introduce its own planning system (Cohen et al., 1984).

With an increasing number of former colonies becoming independent, the formulation of development policies as part of governmental task, increased. This was enhanced by institutions like the World Bank and the IMF, which needed a basis of evaluation of the loans extended to the developing countries.

In Kenya, as in most other ex-British colonies in Africa, planning can be traced back to the early 1940s. The first attempt was made during the second- world war. The need for increased self reliance and intensive use of the available resources resulted into the creation of an elaborate planning machinery in East Africa, for allocation of scarce manpower, capital, land and imports.

Although much of this machinery was dismantled and many of the direct controls abandoned after the war, the essential idea of planning was retained and given a new lease of life by the need to prepare programs for the expenditure of colonial development and welfare funds, made available after the second, world war. The first, a ten-year plan, was published in 1946. This was followed by a set of three, three-year plans of 1954 to 57, 1957 to 1960 and 1960 to 1963. The planning machinery then, consisted of a few officials of the ministry of finance, and the plan itself was an extension of the ministry's traditional role of drawing up the annual development estimates of the central government. The implementation of these projects was in the hands of the operating

ministries, but the ministry of finance controlled disbursements and ensured proper usage of funds.

The post independence era has however, seen the country step-up its planning efforts, with the government channeling more resources towards this end. The first post-independence plan covered the period 1964 to 1969. This plan was subsequently revised extensively and a new one covering the period 1966 to 1970, published in 1966. The next plan covered the period 1969 to 1974.

Between 1963 and 2003, Kenya had a total of nine conventional, five-year National Development Plans. Between 2001 and 2004, the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) became the new planning document. This was followed by the Economic Recovery Strategy Paper (ERS) which covered the planning periods 2003 to 2007. In 2003, the country embraced a long term development blue print; the Vision 2030 (Republic of Kenya, 2007). Vision 2030 is implementable through five year Medium Term Plans, the first of which covered the period 2008 to 2012. Other forms of plan in Kenya include District Development Plans, Sector Plans, Specific Sector Frameworks, Community Action Plans, Strategic Plans and Annual Work Plans.

### **Formulation and implementation of plans in Kenya**

Plan implementation is the choice of the means and ways to be employed in achieving plan targets and objectives. It consists of the organization of the planning function and its administrative relationship with the chief executive, the policy-making and operating departments of the government and the legislature. It also consists of the assignment of responsibilities of carrying out its component programmes, the relationship of the plan to the national budget, the role of the fiscal and monetary authorities, the provision for progress reporting and evaluation and the selection of the planning personnel.

Unlike most countries, Kenya does not have a system of working parties consisting of major stakeholders involved in the formulation of the plans. Today, the major responsibility for plan formulation rests with the planning division of the Ministry of Planning and National Development in conjunction with the Ministry of Finance. Plan implementation is however, the responsibility of the operating ministries.

Although planning has helped promote growth in many countries, it is widely acknowledged that the process of plan implementation is certainly the most important aspect of the planning process. In this sense therefore, it is possible to formulate several different development plans, each of them rational and applicable. With proper execution, such plans may work out quite well and make significant contribution to development. But the best plan that could be devised would not make such a contribution, if it had the misfortune of being poorly

implemented.

### Evidence of plan failure

Plan failure is not limited to Kenya, but is widespread among most developing countries. In Asia, where countries have had more experience with planning than in any other region, the rates of economic growth recorded in the 1960's had in fact fallen short, not only of the planned target but also of the growth rates of the 1950's. The only exceptions were Japan, Pakistan, Thailand and Taiwan (United Nations, 1980). The first four years of Indonesia's eight – year National Development Plan for instance provided that proceeds from eight large projects named B were to supply most of the 240 billion rupias needed to finance 335 projects named A. But since non of the eight B projects had been realized at the plans' half-way mark, only 200 of the 335 A projects could be began and far fewer completed.

In India, the national income increased by 3.4% annually during the period of the first five year plan, compared with a target of about 2%, during the period of the second five year plan, it increased by 3.7% compared with a target of 5%, and by only 3.1% during the first three years of the third five year plan compared with a target of 5.4%. In Morocco, none of the targets in the five year plan of 1960 to 1964 was realized and the plan itself was virtually scrapped in 1962. Dahomey, Gabon, Sierra Leone and Ivory Cost have had to abandon or replace their plans at one time or another before they are scheduled to end. Some have had to extend the periods of their plans when it proved impossible to implement them in the time originally set.

In Kenya, the target annual growth rate of 6.3% set in the fourth National Development Plan (1979 to 1983) had to be reduced to 5.4% to make it achievable. As at 1980, the current account deficit for the five-year period was now estimated at twice the size forecast in the plan such that although the inflow of capital was expected to exceed the plan levels, the revised overall deficit was estimated at £203 million predicted earlier. Similarly, the revised estimates for the fiscal year 1979/80 indicated that the shortfall in sales tax receipts was £10 million and the income tax revenues £5 million lower than had been anticipated.

Infact, statistical evidence show that from the fiscal year 1964/65; the first year of the development plan 1964 to 1969, there has continued to be persistent and substantial shortfalls between final and approved estimates and the actual development expenditure carried out. Ghai (1972), estimates that the ratio of shortfalls to final approved estimates in Kenya rose from 20% in 1964/65 to nearly 25% in the next two years. In the plan period 1997 to 2001, an annual GDP growth rate of 5.9% was projected. The economy however, only managed to register 0.3% growth rate at the end of the plan period in

2001.

In a general sense, failure in planning can be attributed to diverse reasons. A plan is bound to fail if for instance, the formulation process is not well done such that there is for instance, no specificity in the definition of plan purpose. Determination of the resources, actually and potentially available for achieving goals and targets, the selection of the means of resource mobilization and the formulation of specific programmes on targets, priorities and timing are the other major causes of failure. But by and large, as the sixth Kenya National Development Plan acknowledges, implementation failure is the greatest obstacle to plan success. It is for this reason that this paper zeroes in on the latter.

### Statement of the problem

While the planning industry has continued to thrive in Kenya as in most other less industrialised countries, a lot of doubt has been expressed with regard to the value of its output. Kenya has not been alone in this. Even in the few countries that have done extremely well in this front such that their plans have been prepared with a great deal of care so as to make them as comprehensive, realistic, specific and consistent as possible, (Republic of South Africa, 2011) their implementation has often been slow, partial and inefficient. The attendant public results have therefore been worse than those expected to follow in the absence of any plan. This study seeks to confirm whether the general disenchantment based on the belief that national development plans in Kenya are never successfully implemented has any logical basis.

### ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

The framework of analysis used in this paper is based on an evaluation method first used by Killick and Kinyua (Killick, 1981). In this method, the actual project-by-project spending is compared with the annual estimates in the plans. An implementation ratio is then calculated for each project in each plan period showing actual expenditure as a ratio of planned estimates. The implementation ratio (m), is calculated as a ratio of actual to planned expenditure such that

$$m = \frac{\text{Actual Expenditure}}{\text{Planned Expenditure}}$$

If implementation is perfectly done, then this ratio should equal unity. Success or failure of implementation is then looked at in terms of dispersions around unity, as measured by the standard deviation.

For purposes of this study, implementation was considered successful for a given plan period, if it had a

standard deviation lying between  $\pm 2^1$  such that if the implementation ratio is denoted by  $m$ , then  $-2 < m < +2$ . The plan was therefore assumed to have failed if either  $m > +2$  or  $m < -2$ .

The data for computation was extracted from planned and actual estimates in various issues of the five-year National Development Plans and Economic Surveys. The units of study selected were six sets of five-year National Development Plans for the years 1974 to 1978, 1979 to 1983, 1984 to 1988, 1989 to 1993, 1994 to 1996 and 1997 to 2001. Due to rates unavailability, the expenditure data was not adjusted for inflation.

This study focused on implementation of education policies, looked at in terms of spending on Primary school, Secondary school and University level education programmes. From amongst the various projects and policies in the plans, a choice was made on the education sector on the basis of its significance to the process of economic development and growth through manpower development effect. The other consideration for choice of this sector was the heavy weight assigned to it in the total government expenditure.

Republic of Kenya (1966) emphasizes this point further; "At Kenya's stage of development, education is much more an economic than a social service. It is our principal means for relieving the shortage of domestic skilled manpower and equalizing economic opportunities among all citizens".

## DISCUSSION

The calculated implementation ratios ( $m$ ) for the various plan years are reported in Tables 1 to 6 in the appendix. The resultant standard deviations computed for all the six plan periods, with respect to the three programs under study are reported in Table 7 in the appendix.

A total of six plan periods were considered for each of the three programme areas. On the basis of the pre-determined implementation benchmark, four of the six plan periods under the primary level programme registered implementation failure as did another four of the six plan periods under the secondary level programmes. For the university level programmes, the failure was even higher with five of the six plan periods registering implementation failure.

On a plan by plan basis, the results show that the plan period 1994 to 1996 had the highest implementation

failure rate, followed by the period 1997 to 2001 and 1979 to 1983 in that order. The period 1984 to 1988 had the highest implementation success rate followed closely by the period 1974 to 1978.

Over the plan period 1974 to 1978, implementation was within the success range at 0.95 for both the primary and secondary level programs. It was however, slightly off target for University level programs at 2.63. Overall, this plan period goes down as one in which implementation was well managed.

In the third plan period 1979 to 1983, the dispersion was identically wide off the success range for all the programs at 7.20. The fourth plan period of 1984 to 1988 registered an identically high implementation success rate at 0.00.

In the fifth plan, 1989 to 1993, the three programme areas all registered implementation failure. It is worth noting however, that implementation was only slightly off the mark for primary programs at 2.14, and not so widely off for both the secondary and university programs at 2.9 and 3.97 respectively. The sixth plan period, 1994 to 1996 came up tops in terms of implementation failure, with deviations ranging from 81.15 to 561.02, the highest for the entire period under analysis. The seventh plan period, 1997 to 2001, though not as bad as the preceding period, also exhibited deviations that were way off the target at 7.50, 6.68 and 9.82 for primary, secondary and university levels respectively.

## CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The results of this study show that for the period under analysis there was massive implementation failure. There was however, no clear pattern of implementation success that emerged across the plan periods. With regard to the levels of education, the general pattern of implementation success was not indicative either. The relative level-specific spread, however, showed that implementation failure rate was lowest for secondary level programs, and highest for university level programmes.

### Probable causes of implementation failure

In Kenya, the failure of plan implementation process can be attributed to a number of factors. First, the implementation process in Kenya lacks an effective method of monitoring and evaluating the programmes and projects. The existing monitoring and evaluation activities are largely uncoordinated and do not easily facilitate the analysis and reporting in real terms. Following the launch of the Monitoring and Evaluation Directorate, it is expected that this particular drawback will now be adequately addressed.

Second, implementation methods are not designed to provide information on any specific development issue

<sup>1</sup> Since the area under a frequency curve equals one, the following area relationships obtain, assuming standard deviation is denoted by  $s$  and mean, by  $X$

- Area between  $X \pm 1s = 68.27\%$
- Between  $X \pm 2s = 95.45\%$
- Between  $X \pm 3s = 99.73\%$

In benchmarking the implementation ratio, we used  $X \pm 2s$  specifically because the further one moves into the tail of a distribution, the more critical is the contradiction in assumption, and the more sparse are the data on which to base the estimates. Consequently, the margin of error becomes greater.

and quite often, they have resulted in significant duplication of effort. Third, given the roles of the ministry of planning and national development on the one hand and the ministry of education on the other in planning and budgeting respectively, there has developed a poor linkage between two vital processes, thereby making the allocation of financial resources difficult to rationalize in terms of priority activities.

Fourth, within the plan periods studied, there appeared to be an over emphasis by the Kenya government on financial targets rather than the physical output targets which the programs are aimed at achieving. This explains the absence of physical output target attainments in the official plan documents. This orientation towards achieving financial targets can lead to the neglect of physical planning and programming. It is clearly noticeable in the sixth, seventh and eighth national development plans that financial plan targets have been dropped altogether. One would hope that this is an attempt to correct the earlier anomaly.

Lastly, plan implementation failure in Kenya may also have been caused by institutional weaknesses. Within the current planning framework in which the ministry of education as the line ministry undertakes the overall management in terms of monitoring and evaluation while the ministry of planning and national development undertakes the formulation, it is becoming increasingly difficult to determine the planning agency appropriately in the machinery of the government. Because of this, it is difficult to coordinate communication between the various interest groups. Cumbersome bureaucratic procedures are also products of the weak institutional structures.

### **Improving conditions of implementation**

Improving on plan implementation depends on improvement in administrative and organizational efficiency. For any meaningful changes to be achieved therefore, the government must be prepared to institute basic measures required to reform public administration. More specifically, it should consider a number of factors.

First, a strong, efficient and incorruptible administration is an important ingredient for successful implementation. Competent administrative staff should be appointed in the line ministry to prepare good feasibility reports for the proposed ministry of education projects and programs.

Second, there is need to improve the framework for coordination. To start with, the overall management of the educational program monitoring and evaluation should be the responsibility of the ministry of planning and national development. To facilitate the management of the program, there is need for a special project management and policy analysis department. For management and coordination within the government, the ministry of education should monitor and manage evaluation activities through its ministerial planning unit. This unit should, if possible, incorporate staff from the ministry of planning

and national development as well.

For district level coordination, the direction of information flow should emanate from district development committees to the provincial monitoring and evaluation committees to the ministry of education and thereafter, to the ministry of planning and national development. Data and information on project/program implementation status from the district and ministry of education should be sent to the ministry of planning and national development for processing, analysis and updating of the national project registry. Such data should then be passed on to the ministerial committee for review and authorization of further policy analysis and report preparation. The reports should then be presented for approval to the ministerial committee. Once approved, the reports can be sent for review to the committee of permanent secretaries.

### **Policy implications**

The prime consideration in this paper is not so much the desirability of the policy changes set out in the plan, but rather the extent to which what was planned is actually attained. With this in mind therefore, the disparity gaps can be seen to illuminate the programs deserving attention, for instance university level, which has shown the highest average implementation failure rate.

The results of the analysis also provide information on the level of resource reallocation necessary. In the 78 implementation cases examined, there were no cases of under-spending. There were 73 cases of overspending and only 5 cases of balanced spending. It's worth noting that an over-spending or under-spending denotes that either of these has been attained at the expense of the other. Re-allocation would therefore aim at shifting resources from over-spending cases to under-spending ones to create a balance. Given that, more than half the total number of programs, were unsuccessfully implemented, there's a definite need for planners to re-structure the whole process.

### **Limitations**

This kind of analysis is not without its limitations. In the study, planned recurrent data for 1974/75 and 1975/76, was not available; the study did not take into account any new information or revisions incorporated into the plan after the first plan year; no physical effects of planning were observed such that the analysis of implementation was limited to figures and finally, the study looked at a plan more as document than a process.

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**Appendix****Table M1.** Plan period I: 1974-1978.

		<b>Total actual exp.</b>	<b>Total planned exp.</b>	<b>Implementation ratio</b>
1974/75	Primary	678,922,000	148,228	
	Secondary	221,462,000	1,579,140	
	University	148,756,000	845,110	
1975/76	Primary	872,174,000	51,801	
	Secondary	210,786,000	936,854	
	University	133,704,000	349,010	
1976/77	Primary	934,028,000	47,739,984	20
	Secondary	220,708,000	11,009,036	20
	University	171,816,000	6,616,640	26
1977/78	Primary	1,114,596,000	50,159,762	22
	Secondary	247,422,000	11,251,091	22
	University	183,610,000	8,957,350	20
1978/79	Primary	1,197,384,000	58,876,584	20
	Secondary	282,558,000	14,168,352	20
	University	243,160,000	11,357,400	21

**Table M2.** Plan period II: 1979-1983.

		<b>Total actual exp</b>	<b>Total planned exp</b>	<b>Implementation ratio</b>
1979/80	Primary	1,486,080,000	743,040,000	2
	Secondary	296,546,000	148,273,000	2
	University	266,708,000	133,354,000	2
1980/81	Primary	1,953,278,000	976,639,000	2
	Secondary	397,380,000	198,690,000	2
	University	358,292,000	179,146,000	2
1981/82	Primary	2,154,194,000	1,077,097,000	2
	Secondary	478,686,000	239,343,000	2
	University	374,147,552	212,824,000	2
1982/83	Primary	2,306,256,000	1,153,128,000	2
	Secondary	509,512,000	254,756,000	2
	University	493,660,000	246,830,000	2
1983/84	Primary	2,558,200,000	127,910,000	20
	Secondary	514,400,000	25,720,000	20
	University	420,200,000	21,010,000	20

**Table M3.** Plan period III: 1984-1988.

		<b>Total actual exp</b>	<b>Total planned exp</b>	<b>Implementation ratio</b>
1984/85	Primary	2,651,000,000	132,550,000	20
	Secondary	643,400,000	32,170,000	20
	University	554,000,000	27,700,000	20
1985/86	Primary	3,491,000,000	174,550,000	20
	Secondary	784,600,000	39,230,000	20
	University	719,400,000	35,970,000	20
1986/87	Primary	3,801,000,000	190,050,000	20
	Secondary	998,000,000	49,900,000	20
	University	1,040,200,000	52,010,000	20
1987/88	Primary	4,440,400,000	222,020,000	20
	Secondary	1,190,000,000	59,500,000	20
	University	1,468,600,000	73,430,000	20
1988/89	Primary	4,503,800,000	225,190,000	20
	Secondary	1,531,000,000	76,550,000	20
	University	1,749,800,000	87,490,000	20

**Table M4.** Plan period IV: 1989-1993.

		<b>Total actual exp</b>	<b>Total planned exp</b>	<b>Implementation ratio</b>
1989/90	Primary	4,959,800,000	298,656,016	17
	Secondary	1,611,800,000	91,542,930	18
	University	2,193,600,000	133,255,925	16
1990/91	Primary	5,864,200,000	297,496,417	20
	Secondary	1,861,600,000	78,605,265	24
	University	3,274,600,000	122,935,302	27
1991/92	Primary	7,039,200,000	309,706,633	23
	Secondary	2,069,200,000	86,008,735	24
	University	2,429,400,000	135,626,507	18
1992/93	Primary	7,905,600,000	377,954,607	21
	Secondary	2,500,600,000	100,185,525	25
	University	3,181,400,000	175,250,177	18
1993/94	Primary	11,038,200,000	605,404,109	18
	Secondary	3,224,000,000	169,372,335	19
	University	3,217,000,000	191,482,278	17



**Table M5.** Plan period V: 1994-1996.

		<b>Total actual exp</b>	<b>Total planned exp</b>	<b>Implementation ratio</b>
1994/95	Primary	673,000,000	46,453,735	14
	Secondary	361,600,000	16,841,468	21
	University	4,399,400,000	212,522,802	21
1995/96	Primary	740,600,000	22,099,861	34
	Secondary	359,400,000	27,172,969	13
	University	5,666,400,000	266,838,361	21
1996/97	Primary	788,800,000	2,680,571	294
	Secondary	565,000,000	2,996,870	189
	University	45,231,600,000	31,411,781	1440

**Table M6.** Plan period VI: 1997-2001.

		<b>Total actual exp</b>	<b>Total planned exp</b>	<b>Implementation ratio</b>
1997/98	Primary	759,600,000	52,640,459	14
	Secondary	530,600,000	41,871,208	13
	University	5,945,200,000	269,073,233	22
1998/99	Primary	521,030,000	52,494,844	10
	Secondary	322,680,000	40,269,680	8
	University	6,603,710,000	311,038,092	21
1999/00	Primary	768,200,000	36078883	21
	Secondary	598,200,000	33286374	18
	University	5,524,400,000	282,283,156	20
2000/01	Primary	1,052,020,000	639,943,463	2
	Secondary	706,990,000	640,898,767	1
	University	5,931,320,000	5,900,789,714	1
2001/02	Primary	892,180,000	668,687,025	1
	Secondary	670,410,000	662,779,613	1
	University	6,926,290,000	6,005,314,322	1

Source: Own computations.

**Table 7.** Dispersion around benchmark implementation ratio.

<b>Plan period</b>	<b>Primary level</b>	<b>Secondary level</b>	<b>University level</b>
1974-1978	0.95	0.95	2.63
1879-1983	7.20	7.20	7.20
1984-1988	0.00	0.00	0.00
1989-1993	2.14	2.90	3.97
1994-1996	127.80	81.15	561.02
1997-2001	7.50	6.68	9.82

Source: Own computations.