

ADEQUACY OF FUNDING AND MAINSTREAMING SUPPORT FOR OVC IN PUBLIC NURSERY SCHOOLS IN NYERI CENTRAL SUB COUNTRY, KENYA; ADDRESSING CONSTRAINTS AND POLICY.

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Abstract

The goal of expanding educational opportunity for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) is extricably linked to the amount of funding invested in education to maximise student learning and participation. Deprivation of interventions during the early years results in lifelong deficiencies and disadvantages. Therefore, substantial disparities in the amount of funding in Public Nursery Schools (PNS) may cause substantial disparities in the quality of educational opportunities for OVC. The amount of funding provided in PNS influences the specific instructional, curricular and psychological components necessary to deliver national education standards in PNS. Provision of special attention to mitigate barriers that impede OVC access to equal benefit with all children involves adequate funding to establish and sustain support structures in schools. The purpose of this study was to find out the influence of adequacy of finance on

mainstreaming support for OVC in PNS in Nyeri Central Sub-county. The study employed a descriptive survey design with a sample of 19 PNS. Data was collected through questionnaires for head teachers and preschool teachers and an interview with the District Centre for Early Childhood Education (DICECE) programme officer. The study found out that inadequacy of funds for OVC support compromised continuity of OVC, continuous staff development, staff motivation and allocation of funds to support structures such as feeding programmes and provision of bursary funds. To avert this crisis the study recommends that the Ministry of Education in Kenya, the Children's Department and NGO's should increase intersectoral linkages for more budgetary allocations to ECE. More so funds specifically earmarked for OVC support could mitigate the challenges experienced by OVC in preschools.

Key words. Financing ECE, Orphans and Vulnerable Children, Adequacy of finance, Public Nursery School

INTRODUCTION

Education as a basic right for all children and finding the necessary resources to protect OVC has become a priority in international instruments. This right is enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Right of the Child (UNCRC) of 1989, Millennium Development Goals (MDG) of 2000, Education for All (EFA) of 2001 and the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS (UNGASS) of 2010 which provide rights based approaches to child welfare (Abebe, 2009). In this context Early Childhood Education (ECE) centres have become important institutions both as centres of learning and channels through which support services such as daily meals, provision of clothing, learning materials and psychosocial support are provided to OVC. However the support of vulnerable children in ECE is one of the greatest challenges faced in educational transformation as the percentage of the influence of adequacy of finance on support services for OVC is higher compared to how culture treats children outside their maternal homes (Foster and German 2002 in Abebe, 2009). Major global disparities in provision of ECE continue to divide the world's richest and poorest children as the provision of quality education and establishment of OVC support systems is dependent on adequacy of finance received in PNS. Despite significant increases in basic education

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enrolment and completion rates, access to and quality education remains low among disadvantaged children in many countries. Statistics collected by UNICEF in 2008 revealed that pre-primary gross enrolment ratios averaged 79% in developed countries and 36% in developing countries and falling as low as 14 % in Sub Saharan Africa implying that children from wealthiest households and those who receive funding are more likely to attend preschools than those from poor households (UNESCO, 2008). For OVC poverty, illness or death in the household may lead to reduction of resources allocated for the child's schooling creating barriers to access to and retention in education.

Survey data by UNICEF (2004) revealed that by 2003 there were 143 million orphans aged 0-17 years in 17 countries of Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and Latin America and Caribbean. Out of the 143 million, 12% are below 6 years and require early intervention. Kenya has 2.4 million orphans of these, 47% are due to HIV/AIDS. The estimated number of Orphaned and Vulnerable Children (OVC) below 5 years rose from 399,298 to 409,071 in 2007 (USAID, 2009). This signifies that access to ECE for OVC aged 3-5 years remains a challenge as only 28.2 % attend

school (MGCSO, 2007). The rest (71.8%) miss or drop out of school as they are exposed to facets of deprivation, poverty, lack of care, inadequate shelter, lack of access and retention in education, malnutrition and lack of psychosocial support which stems from the unavailability and inadequacy of financial resources for their upkeep (Boler and Carroll, 2003). In Kenya, households are the main source of domestic funding not only for tuition fees but also payment for other inputs needed for children to attend school. The government contribution to ECE is less than 0.1% compared to 61% in primary schools (UNESCO, 2005) making coverage extremely variable and largely dependent on family income or the extent of community involvement. Statistics collected by the Children's Department in Nyeri Central Sub-county shows that the number of households with OVC had reached 4,261 in 2013 with 14,061 OVC yet only 358 households benefitted from Cash Transfer Funds. Access to education for children in low income groups is therefore poor as provision is underfunded. Adequate funding for PNS where poor households opt to enrol children therefore provides better human resource through capacity building, give payments in time, and develop sustainable feeding programmes and provision of learning resources for OVC.

Statement of the Problem.

Expanding and improving comprehensive Early Childhood Education (ECE) for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children is the first of the international communities commitment to ensure that basic learning needs of every child are met. This goal was adopted in the Dakar Framework for Action in 2000. However the progress since Dakar has been driven partly by strong policies in education but more so accelerated growth and poverty reduction in various countries (UNESCO, 2010). However slower growth and declining revenue are jeopardizing public education especially in Sub-Saharan Africa (UNESCO, 2007). National goals of education can only be reached through adequate funding starting from early years. Adequacy of funds therefore guarantees all children an opportunity for success by ensuring that teachers are more qualified and well paid, ongoing teacher training, sustainable school feeding programme, reduction of direct and indirect of education for OVC and provision of curriculum support materials (UNICEF, 2009). Requirements to pay for such inputs may prelude OVC from attending school as households with OVC opt to enrol them in PNS as the cost of provision in private schools is higher. It is in this view that the study sought to establish how adequacy of finance has influenced mainstreaming support for OVC in PNS in Nyeri sub-county.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.

Research Design

The study applied a survey design to source for primary data from PNS head teachers, teachers and District Centre for Early Childhood Education (DICECE) programme officer. Secondary data was sourced from wide range of literature review which comprised of documentary sources on similar studies and policy documents on ECE.

Sampling Technique and Sample size

The study covered a population of 40 PNS in Nyeri central sub-county. Krejcie and Morgan (1970) equation was used to get a sample of 36 schools. However the

sample size was big and Cochran's 1997 correction formula for large samples was used to narrow the sample size to 19 PNS. The respondents were sampled using simple random procedures and purposive sampling for the DICECE programme officer.

Research Instruments

The main instruments for collecting data were questionnaires for head teachers and teachers. An interview was conducted with the DICECE programme officer.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS.

Sources of funding and mechanisms through which revenues are raised have implication on adequacy in education finance. Achieving adequate educational outcomes therefore requires a reliable and adjustable supply of resources (Emiliana, Alexandra and Chelsea, 2011). The study sought to establish the main source of funding for the sampled PNS based on the fact that mainstreaming support for OVC is enhanced by a major supply of funds. There was unanimous response 16 (100%) that the major source of funds for ECE centres was levies paid by parents. On the same note the DICECE programme officer stated that ECE department at the district level was financed by government, parents and community support programmes but financing from the government did not cater directly for education of children in ECE centres. The funds were used for coordinating DICECE programmes and in-service training for preschool teachers. Support for OVC was compromised as head teachers of PNS had the jurisdiction of developing mainstreaming policies for OVC support and implementation.

Specific Funding for OVC in PNS

In order to retain disadvantaged children in school and realize equality, schools need additional resources for children with special needs such as the physically challenged, orphans and HIV/AIDS infected and affected. All the 16 (100%) schools, lacked specific funding sources earmarked for OVC support. Earmarked vote head for OVC support though necessary seemed to be a challenge in all schools which jeopardized head teacher's ability to mainstream maximum support for OVC. The allocation of specific grants for schools enables institutions to provide school based care and to meet material needs of learners where appropriate. On the same theme the DICECE programme officer said that there were no specific funding systems for OVC at the ministry of education office although some benefited from community support grants and sometimes from NGO's for some children living in charitable children's homes. This situation left those OVC outside children's homes to more vulnerability due to lack of funds as other institutions offered supports were the schools yet they mostly relied on fees paid by parents.

Funds Received, Expected Expenditure and Support for OVC

The study sought to find out whether funds received annually were equivalent to expected expenditure per child within the ECE centres. Respondents were asked to indicate the levies received and the expected expenditure for each child annually. Table 1 shows the responses.

Table 1. Funds Received and Expected Expenditure

Category	Average of Funds received per child (in Ksh)	Average Expenditure (in Ksh)	Expected per child	Deficit
Southern zone	1542	3350		1808
Northern zone	1080	3500		2420
Average	1311	3425		2114

On average, schools in the Northern zone received Ksh 1,080 annually from each child which was less compared to schools in the Southern zone which received Ksh 1,542. On average schools received Ksh 1,311 per child with the expenditure being more thrice the consumption value; Ksh 3,425. This implies that the economic cost per child in each school was too high compared to available funds. Head teachers faced challenges in scaling up interventions for OVC as adequate funding was required for each student in order to guarantee the opportunity for an appropriate education for all children. The findings further indicate that in both Southern and Northern zone there was a deficit in terms of the amount received and the expected expenditure per child with the Northern zone having a larger deficit of Ksh 2,420 compared to the Southern zone with Ksh 1,808 annually. The unexpected fluctuations in per pupil funding hampered the ability of schools to provide a constant educational experience for all children each year.

Equivalence of Funds Received and Provision of Basic Educational Inputs.

When asked whether the funds obtained were equivalent in provision of basic educational inputs of ECE centres, 12 (75%) out of 16 (100%) respondents said that funding was inadequate for all schools. In the same context respondents who responded on the negative were asked to explain the reason why funds available did not cater for provision of educational inputs. Respondents indicated that the demands of some vote heads such as paying of wages for staff and purchase of teaching and learning materials were not met as the level of default was higher compared to irregular payments of school levies by parents. This culminated to challenges for school head teachers in establishing school support systems for OVC. This situation heightened the risk of OVC missing out on education.

Finance and Record Keeping for OVC

Record keeping for OVC in schools is essential for the formulation of effective policy, planning and budgeting for their education. In the absence of such data, policy makers would not comprehend the magnitude of children's needs and the financial resources needed to address them. On this note teachers were required to indicate the different types of records kept for all children in their classes. All the respondents 15 (100%) indicated class registers were used for class attendance, child's age and names of parents and guardians. In contrary teachers did not keep specific documents with OVC data for follow up and their participation in school. Respondents stated that it was expensive to buy files for each individual child. This adversely affected interventions for OVC as details on the plight of OVC could not be documented for ease of follow up. On the same context the DICECE programme officer said that the education office at the district level was aware of some vulnerable children especially orphans, HIV infected, jigger infested, children living with grandparents and destitute among others. However the

office did not have concrete data on the number of OVC enrolled in PNS as the interviewee claimed that getting data for OVC in school was not within the scope of MOE office at the district level but that of the Children Department. The office also depended on verbal reports given by the school teachers and head teachers during routine inspection. Though aware of the magnitude of vulnerable children in the nursery schools the education office lacked concrete data for follow up and financial sustainability of OVC support programmes. This can be supported by Smart (2012) sentiments that though education sectors have good data systems where information is gathered and analysed annually on pupil enrolment, pupil drop-out, teacher/pupil ratios, teacher attrition, facilities at schools, and provision of infrastructure but as far as OVC are concerned, these regular assessments do not capture any information about OVC. Lack of funding specifically by the government for OVC culminated in negligence of the situation at the school level.

Finance, Teacher Remuneration and OVC Support.

Remuneration as well as staff working conditions affect a teachers motivation levels. A satisfied teacher is likely to offer quality services to OVC compared to a dissatisfied one. It's on this view that the study sought to find out the range of teachers' salaries. Table 2 shows the findings.

Table 2 Monthly Income of the Teacher

Salary (Ksh)	Northern zone		Southern zone		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Below 3,000	1		-		1	7
3,000-5,000	14		8		14	93
6,000-7,000	6	86	100		-	-
Total	7	100	8	100	15	100

On teachers' salary, cumulatively majority 14 (93%) of the 15 respondent teachers earned between Ksh 3000-5,000 per month while 1 (7%) earned less than Ksh 3,000. This indicates that teachers' earnings were relatively poor in both categories. Similarly all teachers 8 (100%) from the Southern zone earned less than 5,000 whereas in the Northern zone majority 6 (86%) earned between Ksh 3,000-5,000 with 1 (14%) earning less than Ksh 3,000. The findings depict that 14 (93%) of teachers were not in a capacity to financially assist OVC due to poor pay. These findings concur with UNESCO (2005) that preschool teachers in Kenya earn a monthly salary that is generally less than half of that of primary school teachers. This low and irregular pay makes the profession unattractive to many. On the same note a poorly paid teacher may not offer any financial and psychosocial support to OVC as low pay leads to low teacher morale in curriculum implementation and response to emerging issues such as children vulnerability.

Respondents were further asked whether salary paid at the school was commensurate with the services rendered by teachers especially for OVC support. All the respondents 15 (100%) indicated that the salary did not commensurate with the services rendered. In the same theme the DICECE officer stated that though teachers in the district were qualified to handle ECE and care for OVC,

they lacked support from head teachers. Sometimes they stayed for months without pay which placed them at a disadvantage as they could not support OVC out of their irregular earnings. The officer further said that ECE teachers should be better remunerated as better salaries would enable them to assist OVC in situations where there is no specific funding for OVC through paying fees and provision of learning materials. From sentiments of the DICECE officer, teachers were poorly paid thus implying that their financial capacity was too low to enable them support themselves and then OVC in classes.

Adequacy of Finance and Feeding Programme for OVC Support.

School feeding is seen as one of the many interventions that support nutrition for pre-primary children as it gives children a healthy head start and paves the way for a promising future (Subbarao and Coury, 2004). School feeding is therefore a productive safety net for children aged 3-5 even those already enrolled in ECE centres. Respondents were asked to estimate the percentage of funds allocated to feeding programme. The findings indicated that 4 (25%) out of the 16 schools did not have a school feeding programme as no funds were allocated to it, 6 (37.5%) allocated 1-19% and 6 (37.5%) allocated 20-39% to the feeding programme. (Table 3). Due to inadequacy of funds 4 (25%) of the head teachers had done very little to support OVC in terms of provision of a daily meal.

Table 3 Funds Allocation to Feeding Programme

Allocated Funds (%)	Northern zone		Southern zone		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
None	2	25	2	25	4	25
1-19	4	50	2	25	6	37.5
20-39	2	25	4	50	6	37.5
40-59	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	8	100	8	100	16	100

The data further shows that though majority 4 (50%) of the schools in the Northern zone had managed to have a feeding programme yet the allocation was too little (1-19%) to fully cater for good and balanced meals for OVC. Southern zone schools allocated more with 4 (50%) allocating 20-39%. It can be concluded that very little was allocated to feeding programmes both in Northern and Southern zone schools. The implication of this little funding and less allocation affected any efforts aimed at assisting OVC through viable school feeding programmes. In the same context the study sought to find out whether there were funds specifically earmarked for OVC support. The findings are summarised in Table 4.

Table 4 Percentage of Funds Allocated to OVC Support

Allocation (%)	Northern zone		Southern zone		Total
	N	%	N	%	
None	3	37.5	5	62.5	8
1-19	3	37.5	1	12.5	4
20-39	2	25.0	2	25.0	4
Total	8	100	8	100	16

100	100	100
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The findings in Table 4 indicate that majority 8 (50%) of the 16 schools did not allocate any funding to specifically support OVC implying that retention of OVC in school was jeopardized as OVC specific interventions such as school subsidies and abolition of school fees were unmet. The other 8 (50%) schools had to some extent managed to support OVC as 4 (25%) allocated between 1-19 % the other 4 (25%) allocated between 20-39%. When schools were further stratified into Northern and Southern zones the study found out that 5 (62.5%) of the 8 Southern zone schools and 3 (37.5%) in the Northern zone did not allocate any funds to support OVC. When head teachers who had not allocated any funds for OVC were asked to cite the reasons for non-allocation, majority said that funds received from parents were meant for school programmes such as teachers' salaries and furniture. Earmarking funds for OVC meant that needs such as teachers' salaries were not met.

Adequacy of Finance and Continuity for OVC

In this question head teachers were asked to state how often they sent children home to collect school levies as abolition of tuition fees would benefit all children especially OVC living in resource constrained households. Table 5 summarizes the findings.

Table 5 Frequency of Sending Children for School Fees.

Responses	Northern zone		Southern zone		Total
	N	%	N	%	
Every month	3	37.5	5	62.5	8
Once per term	3	37.5	3	37.5	6
Never	2	20.0	-	-	2
Total	8	100	8	100	16

The findings in Table 5 shows that cumulatively 8 (50%) out of the 16 head teachers sent the children home to collect school fees every month, 6 (37.5%) sent them once per term and 2 (12.5%) never sent children home. This implies that majority of the schools 14 (87.5%) had very low capacity to support OVC as they lacked steady flow of finance to sustain support systems. In the same context the study found out that out of the 8 schools in Northern zone 3 (37.5%) sent children home for school fees every month, 3 (37.5%) once per term with a few 2 (20%) who never sent children home. Schools in the Southern zone faced more challenges on adequacy with all 8 (100%) of the schools sending children home to collect school fees. From the findings it can be concluded that 14 (87.5%) out of the 16 schools did not have steady flow of finances for supporting school operations and head teachers had to reminding the parents to pay by sending children home. This posed challenges in 8 (50%) of the 16 schools in providing support for OVC in the school as support for OVC is possible if there is a reliable source of funds that are adequate in the support for school operations. After establishing that Children were sent home for fees, teachers were asked to state whether OVC were among those sent home. The responses are summarized in Table 6

Table 6 Responses for Sending OVC Home for School Fees

Responses	Northern	Southern	Total
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	zone		zone	
	N	%	N	%
Yes	6	75	5	62.5
No	2	25	3	37.5
Total	8	100	8	100

The findings in Table 6 indicate that there was a significant number of schools 11 (68%) out of the 16 in both Southern and Northern zones that sent OVC home for school fees implying that the schools did not have enough funds for mainstreaming support for OVC by not sending them home for school fees. This placed a burden to families with OVC as these findings concur with Belfield (2006) who says that while school fees may be needed as a source of revenue for the schools in the low income families it represents a burden to the parents with low income, the poor and disadvantaged. Though this is the case the findings also show that there is quite a substantial number of schools 5 (32%) out of 16 that had managed to retain OVC in schools. This is in line with recommendations by Boler and Carroll (2003) that schools should abolish school fees or create inclusive policies and practices in order to avoid drop out of OVC due to unaffordable school fees.

Finance and Relevance of Teacher Qualifications for OVC Support

In order to check the specific contributions made by teacher qualifications in supporting OVC respondents were asked to indicate whether their qualifications were relevant in handling preschool children and giving support to OVC. This was based on the fact that funding for school improvement and for teachers professional development is essential in any education institution. The responses are summarized in Table 7

Table 7 Relevance of Professional Skills

Response	Northern zone				Southern zone	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Relevant	2	29	3	37.5	5	33
Fairly relevant	5	71	4	50.0	9	60
Not relevant	-	-	1	12.5	1	7
Total	7	100	8	100	15	100

The findings from Table 7 revealed that cumulatively 5 (33%) out of the 15 teachers felt that their professional skills were relevant in supporting OVC, 9 (60%) felt that their professional skills were fairly relevant while 1 (7%) felt their skills were irrelevant in supporting OVC. From the findings it can be concluded that there was a substantial number of teachers 10 (67%) in both zone who needed financing for capacity building through refresher courses in order to enhance their skills for curriculum implementation and OVC support. In the same theme respondents were further asked whether they had been sponsored by the management of their schools to attend professional refresher courses. Table 8 summarizes the findings.

Table 8. Sponsorship of Teachers for Refresher Courses

Respon se	Northern zone		Southern zone		Total	
	N	%	N	%	Freque	%

					ncy	
	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Yes	2	5	7	29	13	42
No	-	8	8	-	100	100
Total	2	13	15	29	113	142

In both zones a few 2 (13%) of the 15 (100%) had been sponsored for refresher courses while majority 13 (87%) of the teachers had not secured sponsorship to professional refresher courses from the management of the schools. Inadequacy of funds had jeopardized capacity building for majority of the teachers in order to enhance their skills in class integration of OVC. A closer look at the findings indicate that Southern zone was more affected with all 8 (100%) responding on the negative. Similarly very little had been done to equip teachers with relevant skills to support OVC in the Northern zone as only 2 (29%) of the 7 (100%) teachers had been sponsored for refresher courses. Conclusively, the findings depict that inadequacy of funds for capacity building caused teachers to be ill equipped for support of OVC. As such, the teachers lagged behind in key developments taking place in their areas of concern such as the increased enrolment of OVC in their classes and the mechanisms for scaling support which has impacted negatively on their effectiveness. Policy makers have a responsibility to ensure that teachers within the schools engage in continuous professional learning and apply that learning to increase student achievement. Since teachers face familiar and unfamiliar issues, with extra financial support they become more effective in overcoming daily challenges such as those facing OVC in schools and at home.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

The findings of this study indicate that funds were inadequate for mainstreaming support for OVC. Inadequacy of funds stemmed from the limited sources of funding as funds for school operations were acquired through levies paid by parents. This caused a big financing gap between funds received and expected expenditure which compromised establishment and sustainability of support structures such as low allocation to feeding programme, capacity building and better pay of staff and record keeping for OVC.

The study recommends that PNS should seek for alternative sources of funding such as global grants for OVC and community based support to facilitate OVC interventions at the school level. The fact that school fees from parents constitute the main source of funding in PNS is critical considering the high poverty levels of families taking care of OVC.

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