

Influence of County Government Financing of Physical Facilities on Access to Pre-Primary Education in Baringo Central Sub-County, Baringo County, Kenya

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Abstract: *ECDE financing has not been adequately investigated since the inception of the new constitution which devolved its governance and management to the county government. The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of county government financing of physical facilities on access to pre-primary education in Baringo central sub-county, Baringo County, Kenya. The study adopted descriptive survey design where the target population included One hundred and twenty-four (124) head teachers, One hundred and twenty-four (124) ECDE teachers, One hundred and twenty-four (124) PA representatives, One (1) ECDE Sub County Coordinator Officer and One Sub-County Education Officer in Baringo Central Sub-county, Kenya. The teachers and PA representatives who participated in the study were selected using simple random sampling. The data analysis for descriptive statistics and inferential statistics was computed using Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS). The main findings and results of the study shows that there is a statistically significant relationship between the physical facilities influence on access to pre-primary education in Baringo central Sub County, ($P < 0.05$). The study concludes that county government financing of physical facilities has generally enhanced the access to pre-primary education in Baringo central sub-county Baringo county. The study recommends that the amount of money disbursed by county government to build physical facilities is not enough, hence schools should have various incomes generating activities. This will generate more funds to support the county government educational subsidies. Suggestions for the further studies have also been given which include; conducting a study of this nature in wider areas for instance covering the whole of the Baringo County or other Counties, similar study to be carried out in public day secondary schools in Baringo County to establish influence of County governance financing on access to public day secondary education.*

Keywords: County government financing, physical facilities, access and pre-primary education

1. Background of the paper

Early Childhood Development and Education (ECDE) is an educational programme imparted to a child in an education centre. The critical purpose of ECD is to prepare young children for primary education Ng'ang'a, (2009). ECDE specialists' emphasis on quality of preschool program for young children that results to improved social skills, better school grades performance, improved attention span and enthusiasm for lifelong learning Child Ventures, (2017).

Being viewed as an investment, individuals, societies and governments of various countries have developed a concern on how to finance education. However, the process of financing education has been faced with challenges because it is done at pre-school level, primary level, secondary level and tertiary level. Scholars have been trying to come up with ways of solving these challenges of educational financing. Studies indicate that access to quality education, has significant contribution to sustainable development Robert et al, (2016). In Iceland, for instance, pre-school education lays the foundation for the children to be independent, active, thoughtful and responsible participants in a democratic society (Norddahi, 2008). Some of the states in the US for instance, use tax revenue to fund pre-schools. Other imposes child care fees, collaborate with private entities to provide childcare, and encouraging business to subsidize for those working with them (Belfield, 2006).

In China, Early Child Care and Education (ECCE) is divided into kindergarten with children of age 3-6 and nursery age below 3. The kindergarten is under the responsibility of the ministry of education while those under 3 years are responsibility of the ministry of health (Pang & Wong, 2002). In some provinces in China, pre-school is attached to primary schools and use their facilities. In Germany, Early Childhood Care and Education is split into state and local governments. Children between 0-3years are funded by the local authorities while for children between 3-5 years are funded through the Ministries of Social Affairs and Education (UNESCO, 2003).

In Mexico, ECCE is considered as compulsory basic education at ages 3-5 years, leading to primary school. The burden of financing ECCE in Mexico is shared across public agencies which include different government ministries and private entities. Pre-school education is mainly funded from national budget supplemented by the states, municipalities, other agencies and parent fees contributions. South Africa has a comprehensive policies and programs for children at the birth to age 9 with active participation of both parents and care givers. Seleti (2009) argues that ECD units and section in South Africa are well established in the department of education and social development. Despite government support, ECD financing is still inadequate and tracking dispatched finances is yet to be in place (Seleti, 2009).

According to National Pre-primary Education Policy (2017), the Government of Kenya takes cognizance of Pre-primary

education as a crucial foundation stage for primary education, character formation and lifelong learning. This is in line with the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Number 4. Target 2 which obligate States to ensure that all children access quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for formal schooling. Increased attention to Early Childhood Development and Education (ECDE) has been observed in all the counties in Kenya but my focus here is on a current picture of ECDE in Baringo Central Sub-County. Ngaruiya(2006) argues that funding affects the process of teaching as well as learning of children. Adequate funding means; hiring qualified teachers, recommended pupil-teacher ratio, adequate learning materials, subsidized tuition fees and good leaning physical facilities.

In Baringo County, the enrolment of children in pre-primary has been increasing. In 2014, the enrolment was at 36,515 and 42,079 in 2017 with an enrolment rate of 15.24%. Baringo central in particular, the sub-county had an enrolment of 4665 in 2014 and 5128 in 2017 with an enrolment rate of 9.92%. Despite the increasing enrolment, county government financial contribution has yet to make meaningful contribution. A number of pre-school have poor infrastructure, inadequate and unqualified teaching staff. With the increasing number of children, funding becomes critical to facilitate preschool learning. All these are informed by the mandate of the county government in the ECE Act 2014. Therefore, this study critically evaluated the impact of the county government financing in accessing the preschool education in Baringo central sub-county. However, despite the government intervention of making ECDE affordable in order to increase access to ECDE education, the cost of it is still high since ECDE centres levy fees for pupils' lunch, school buildings alongside other non-discretionary items such as school uniforms and stationary.

2. Statement of the problem

Despite elaborated legal framework for both level of government, funding of ECDE is minimal. The Constitution of Kenya (2010) delegated the responsibility of pre-school education to the County government. However, this has not become operational since the basic facilities lacks funding from an organized government scheme. Illiteracy and high levels of poverty have adversely affected the access of pre-schooling in Baringo Central sub-county, Baringo County. Despite increasing ECDE enrolment in various centres in Baringo central, provision of learning services is still underfunded. According to Baringo Central Sub-county EducationOffice(2018) it is only 42% of pre-school age children that are accessing pre schooling, hence, leaving 58% of the eligible population out of the program. Therefore, this study focused on the impact county government financing on the access of pre-school education in Baringo Central sub-county, Baringo County.

3. Objective of the paper

To establish the extent to which the county government financing of physical facilities on access to pre-primary education in Baringo Central sub-county

4. Literature Review

The physical environment comprises the renovation and construction of school buildings, the outdoor area, objects, furniture and materials in the classroom which should be child-sized. This included desks, sinks, tables, chairs and shelves. Similarly, all equipment and apparatus in ECDE should be of a suitable size and weight for children, and should be moveable.

Furniture can be kept to a minimum, and arranged in such a way that there is plenty of open spaces, free movement, exploration and spontaneous activity both indoor and outdoor. Infrastructure is important in ensuring conducive learning environment for pupils National Pre-primary Education Policy, (2017).

The availability of adequate classrooms to cater for all the students, libraries with relevant reading materials and safe recreational facilities among others, all have a direct impact on the performance of the pupils. County governments budgeted to spend Ksh395.9 billion in 2017/18 on ECDE physical facilities against the total expected receipts amounting to Ksh401.6 billion. In terms of enrolment in 2017 total enrolment in pre-primary schools rose by 2.9 per cent to 3,293.8 thousand.

County government's revenue is estimated at Ksh401.6 billion in 2017/18 a growth of 20 per cent from actual receipt of Ksh334.7 billion in 2016/17. The allocations to county government are contained in County Allocation Revenue Act of 2017 and its subsequent amendment in 2017. Overall, the number of educational institutional increased by 5 per cent to 90,587 in 2017. During this period, pre-primary schools went up by 1.3 per cent to 41,779 (Economic Survey, 2018)

5. Methodology

In Baringo Central Sub-county, out of 154 ECDE centres, 124 are public ECDE centres, hence beneficiaries of county government financing. The centres were first clustered and 63 randomly sampled. The rationale of clustering these centres was obtained according to the geographical areas of the school (at least three in every location). The head teachers, teachers and Parent Association (PA) representatives in the 63 Pre-school Centres was automatically sampled and participated in the study. The study used purposive random sampling, hence, 1 Sub-County Education Officer and 1 Sub-County Co-ordinator Officer was purposively sampled. The study employed a descriptive survey design where a total of 248 ECDE teachers, 124 PA representatives, 1 sub-county ECDE coordinator and 1 DEO were targeted. A sample size of 191 of the population was sampled. The sample size consisted of 126 ECDE teachers, 63 PA representatives from selected schools, sub-county coordinator and a Sub-County Education Officer. Teachers and PA representatives who participated in the study were selected using simple random sampling. The data was analyzed using Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) and presented as tables and textual form.

To validate the research instruments, the questionnaires were tested in seven (7) pilot pre-schools that were involved in the study. The questionnaires were scrutinized and approved by the two supervisors of the project so as to determine that the items in the questionnaire are in line with what to expect. The correlation coefficient of the study was found to be 0.8. This implied that the reliability of the research instrument was reliable enough for this study.

Table 5.1: Sample Framework

Population Category	Total Population	Sampling Procedure	Sample Size
Head Teachers	124	Simple random	63
Teachers	124	Simple random	63
PA Representative	124	Simple random	63
Sub-County Education Officer	1	Purposive	1
ECDE Co-ordinator	1	Purposive	1
Total	374		191

Source: Baringo Central District Education Office 2019

6. Presentation of Data Analysis, Research Findings and Interpretation of Results

The study sought to establish the influence of county government financing of physical facilities on access to pre-primary education. 4 The influence of County government financing of physical facilities on access to pre-primary education.

The availability of adequate classrooms to cater for all the students, libraries with relevant reading materials and safe recreational facilities among others, all have a direct impact on the performance of the pupils.

This study aimed at evaluating whether the county government financing of physical facilities such as classrooms, objects, furniture and materials in the classroom which should be child-sized. This included desks, sinks, tables, chairs and shelves which enhance access to pre-primary school education. This objective was accomplished through administering the respondents with questionnaires. Therefore, the dully filled questionnaires were sampled and data was analyzed presented in figure 6.1 below:

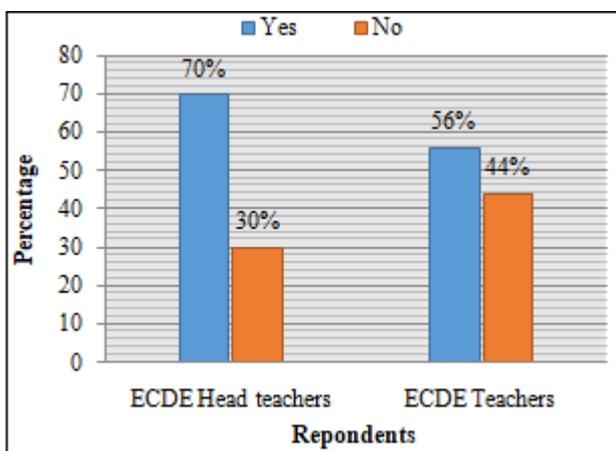


Figure 6.1: The influence of County government financing of physical facilities on access to pre-primary education

According to the findings in the Figure 6.1, it indicates head teachers and teachers' responses on where the county

government finances the physical facilities and it influence on access to preprimary education in Baringo central sub county. The results postulated that (70%) ECDE head teachers agreed with the statement that county government finances the physical facilities for ECDE educational centres which in return enhance positive accessibility of ECDE pre-primary education in Baringo central Sub County. However, (30%) of ECDE head teachers were on contrary views that county government do not funds ECDE centres with physical facilities hence negatively influences ECDE access in Baringo Central Sub County. On the other hand, (56%) of ECDE teachers on majority side agreed that county government financing of physical facilities enhanced access to pre-primary education. This shows clearly that county government financing on physical facilities did enhance access to per-school education in Baringo Central Sub County.

The study further was interested on obtaining opinions of the ECDE head teachers and teachers on what need to be done to enhance access on ECDE Pre -primary Baringo Central Sub County. The findings revealed that majority of head teachers and teachers further suggested that there is need for introduction of pre-school feeding program in remote areas to sustain pupils in classes and to enhance learning and teaching process. Most of the respondents indicated that construction of modern classrooms could enhance access doe ECDE education. Most of respondents also proposed the need for Baringo County government to provide piped water to enhance hygiene at the ECDE centers. Additionally, construction of roads leading to ECDE centers in order to enhance accessibility. This study concluded that theses aspects should be targeted in order to improve access and quality of pre-primary education in Baringo Central Sub County.

The findings further shows that if the county government financing of physical facilities in Baringo central sub-county is well utilized, the level of access will be greatly improved.

Further data analysis on inferential statistics for ECDE head teachers and teachers was carried out to establish the relationship between the county government financing physical facilities and access to pre-primary education in Baringo Central Sub County. The researcher was then prompted to use Chi-Square tests using SPSS software in order to achieve this objective. The collected data was analyzed and presented in Table 6.2

Table 6.2: Chi-square tests on relationship between County government financing physical facilities and access on pre-primary education

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	30.884	45	.000
Likelihood Ratio	29.456	45	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	14.158	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	124		

The findings in Table 6.2 demonstrates that there is a statistically significant relationship the county government financing physical facilities and access to preprimary education as illustrated by ($P < 0.05$). These findings are in agreement with descriptive statistics that showed the County

government financing physical facilities affects access to preprimary education in Baringo Central Sub County. This meant that majority of participants agreed that the county government finances physical facilities that positively enhances access to preprimary education in Baringo central Sub County.

On the other hand, results showed that lack of physical facilities influences access to pre-primary education negatively on minority side. Therefore, adequate physical facilities lead to high access to pre-primary education in Baringo central Sub County. This implied that most of respondents agreed that the pre-primary education was facing inadequate physical facilities such as classrooms, objects, furniture and materials in the classroom which should be child-sized. This included desks, sinks, tables, chairs and shelves. Similarly, all equipment and apparatus in ECDE enhance these influence pupils to access on pre-primary education in Baringo Central Sub County.

Therefore, the findings of this study concur to (Seleti, 2009) that ECD in South Africa is a political priority and one of the major areas for government intervention. Despite government support, ECD financing is still facing inadequate and tracking dispatched finances is yet to be in place.

The study discovered that (70%) ECDE head teachers agreed with the statement that county government finances the physical facilities for ECDE educational centres which in return enhance positive accessibility of ECDE pre-primary education in Baringo central Sub County. However, (30%) of ECDE head teachers were on contrary views that county government do not funds ECDE centres with physical facilities hence negatively influences ECDE access in Baringo Central Sub County. On the other hand, (56%) of ECDE teachers on majority side agreed that county government financing of physical facilities enhanced access to pre-primary education. This shows clearly that county government financing on physical facilities did enhance access to per-school education in Baringo Central Sub County.

7. Summary and Conclusions

The purpose of the study was to investigate the influence of county government financing of physical facilities on access to pre-primary education in Baringo central sub-county, Baringo County, Kenya. The study adopted descriptive survey design where the target population included One hundred and twenty four (124) head teachers, One hundred and twenty four (124) ECDE teachers, One hundred and twenty four (124) PA representatives, One (1) ECDE Sub county Coordinator Officer and One Sub-County Education Officer in Baringo Central Sub-county, Kenya. The teachers and PA representatives who participated in the study were selected using simple random sampling. The data analysis for descriptive statistics and inferential statistics was computed using Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS). The main findings and results of the study shows that there is a statistically significant relationship between the physical facilities influence on access to pre-primary education in Baringo central Sub County, ($P < 0.05$). The

study concludes that county government financing of physical facilities has generally enhanced the access to pre-primary education in Baringo central sub-county Baringo County

8. Recommendation and Further Research

From the research the following recommendations were made;

- The study also recommends that the amount of money disbursed by county government to build physical facilities is not enough. In order to minimize the burden of county government and parents supporting most activities in pre-primary schools, schools should have various incomes generating activities. This will generate more funds to support the county government educational subsidies.
- The study further recommends that most ECDE centers were inaccessible and lacked basic physical facilities like classrooms. This was evident since in some ECDE centers, pupils were studying under trees and teachers didn't have writing materials like blackboards. It is therefore recommended that amount allocated to ECDE should be increased to enable the management to construct modern classrooms, construction of roads leading to ECDE centers in order to enhance accessibility and even to enable introduction of pre-school feeding programs in remote areas. This would increase pupils' enrolment in ECDE centers.

Other issues that emanated from the study which requires further investigation include;

- 1) The researcher suggests that there is need to conduct a study of this nature in wider areas for instance covering the whole of the Baringo County or other Counties.
- 2) The study suggests a similar study to be carried out in public day secondary schools in Baringo Central Sub County to establish influence of County governance financing on access to public day secondary education.

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