

# **Preparing Exemplary Educators for Tomorrow's Schools**

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## **Introduction**

Education is a primary vehicle for economic development, social mobility, and personal well being. Both Kenya and the United States are in a period of intense attention to primary and secondary education, as well as higher education.

Teacher preparation has become a controversial issue all over the world. Questions regarding how much formal preparation is needed and how it should be delivered are the focus of much debate and experimentation. Our countries have seen waves of reform, with the understanding that teachers are critical to student success and educational effectiveness.

We are facing a global need to recruit, prepare, and retain millions of teachers. In addition, large numbers of practicing teachers need to be replaced or retrained. Thus, attention to teacher preparation and the preparation of school leaders could not be more timely for Schools of Education.

## **Current Demands and Challenges of Primary and Secondary Schools in the US and Kenya**

In order to prepare future educators, it is important to consider the current demands and challenges that teachers face in our public schools. Teacher morale is at an all time low in many places due to low pay, challenging working conditions (e.g., under resourced schools and classrooms, increasingly needy students), pressure to increase standardized test scores, and a decline in status and respect. These factors lead to teacher turnover and discontent, which negatively impacts student learning. Teachers are also under pressure to address issues that impact academic

success, including opportunity gaps due to the impact of poverty, racial, ethnic, and gender inequities, and health, social, and behavioral issues.

Observations in US and Kenyan classrooms provide evidence that the “Sage on the Stage” or “sit ‘n git” pedagogy is used prevalently. Student desks are typically lined up in rows (“graveyard classrooms”), and the discourse is heavily teacher centered. Students often demonstrate their knowledge and skills through paper-pencil tasks and assessments rely heavily on short answer, multiple choice, one-shot tests.

### **Schools of Education under Scrutiny**

Schools of Education are being criticized as too theoretical and disconnected from the realities of teaching, lacking rigor, and ineffective in preparing exemplary teachers. Critics include those that believe teachers just need strong content knowledge. Others feel “Good teachers are born, not made,” so dispositions and personal characteristics are the defining and relevant factors when preparing successful teachers. Still others support alternative routes to teaching, with on the job training rather than preservice preparation. In reality, content expertise, pedagogical knowledge and skills, and key dispositions are all important elements of effective teaching.

### **Elements of Effective Teacher Preparation**

Schools of Education need to address the continuum of teacher learning, including preservice preparation, induction, and ongoing professional development. In addition, attention to the beliefs that candidates bring to their preparation program, based on their own experiences in school, can strongly influence how they ultimately teach. Each of these phases will be discussed.

**Pre-service Phase:** In most universities, teacher education programs are comprised of a collection of unrelated courses and field experiences. Coursework is heavily focused on lectures and seat-based learning. Effective preservice teacher preparation requires a comprehensive ‘backward planned’ program of study that starts with the end in mind. That is, core knowledge, skills, and dispositions are identified and backward mapped for each course and field experience. In addition, there must be alignment of course and field components and integration

of content expertise with pedagogy. Students should complete program requirements in sequence and should be engaged in significant clinical practice under the supervision of skilled mentor teachers and university supervisors. Pedagogical approaches should focus on student inquiry and project based learning that promotes relevance (i.e., solving real issues in ones community) and rigor. Formative assessments, including student demonstrations of required knowledge, skills, and dispositions, should be used throughout the program.

**Induction Phase:** This phase involves the first 1-3 years of teaching when beginning practicing teachers adapt to and learn about their roles as teachers. Induction support should include formal mentoring by designated master teachers and school administrators. New teachers need varied levels of support and benefit from sharing with other first year or novice teachers.

**Continuing Professional Development:** Fragmented, “one-shot” professional development, conducted by trainers with little knowledge of what is taking place in the school and classrooms, has proven to be ineffective. Teachers need to continue to hone their skills over time. Communities of Practice or Teacher Learning Communities (TLCs) have been used to promote collaboration and continuous improvement among teachers, rather than isolation and stagnation. Teachers and school leaders work together to observe, share, problem-solve, and develop and improve curriculum and instruction.

### **Future Directions in the Preparation of Exemplary Educators**

**Brain-Based Learning.** All students deserve access to a high quality education that prepares them for a satisfying and productive adult life. The importance of a rich, stimulating early childhood education, including good nutrition and health care, cannot be overstated. Our knowledge of brain development and brain-based learning continues to inform our practice as educators.

**University-School-Community Collaboration.** Addressing the ‘wicked problems’ of society that are reflected in our schools requires “community schools” where services for youth and families are co-located at the school and professionals work in partnership with families and the community.

Cross-disciplinary Collaboration. Schools of Education need to blur the lines of our silo'd programs to prepare educators. After all, school leaders, teachers, school counselors, school psychologists and other therapists must all work together on behalf of our youth once they leave our programs.

Access to Technology. Technology enhanced teaching can open the door to learning for students throughout the world. Generation X and Y students are increasingly adept at using technology, but our teachers lag behind in the use of technology.

Culturally Relevant and Responsive Curriculum & Instruction. Not only do we need teachers who understand their multicultural learners and who can offer a culturally relevant curriculum, but we also need to prepare teachers who can address social justice issues that stem from racism, sexism, ableism, and other inequities that are prevalent in schools and society.

Accountability for our Graduates. Schools of Education will be held accountable for the teachers we prepare. Soon, we will be evaluated by the impact that our graduates have on their students and other outcome measures.

## **Summary**

Although we lack a consensus regarding how best to prepare exemplary educators, we have evidence of effective practices from around the world, as well as approaches that have not been successful. The quality of our educational system and student outcomes depend on the quality of the teachers we prepare. Thus, Schools of Education must be continuously improve as we retrain current teachers and endeavor to meet the high demand for new teachers.

## **Challenges in the Allocation of Constituency Bursary Funds and their Effect on Access and Retention of Students in Public Secondary School in Nairobi County, Kenya**

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to establish the challenges in the allocation of constituency bursary fund. The study was anchored on the theory of distributive justice propounded by Rawls. The study employed mixed methods leaning towards quantitative design. The study population consisted of 291 bursary beneficiaries; 48 secondary school principals, 129 class teachers, and 24 Constituency Bursary Committee members. The respondents were selected using sample size determination table, proportionate and simple random sampling techniques. The instruments for data collection were sets of questionnaire and in-depth interview schedules. Document analysis was also used for data collection. A pilot study in Nairobi County on a small sample of respondents was conducted to validate the instruments. Qualitative data was analyzed by use of qualitative techniques namely; mean and standard deviation and frequencies of occurrence while quantitative data was analyzed using ANOVA, t-test and regression analysis. The study findings indicated that the guidelines stipulated by the government on the award of bursaries are not fully followed. Although CBF has enhanced enrolment in secondary schools, it remains inefficient in achieving the intended objective of enhancing access & retention of the vulnerable group of students as it was attested by inconsistency of support to beneficiaries throughout the four year period of

**study. In order to overcome the challenges and enhance the efficiency of CBF, the researcher suggests that there is need to; increase the amount of bursary allocations to each constituency, enhance consistency of support, and offer Constituency Bursary Fund committee (CBFC) infrastructural development so as to target needy and deserving cases. The study therefore, amplifies that policy makers need to streamline the CBF policy in view of expectations of the Kenyan public and the government in line with the stipulated guidelines so as to enhance access and retention of students in secondary schools.**

**Keywords:** *Challenges, Constituency Bursary Fund, Access and Retention*

## **Introduction**

### **Background to the Study**

The provision of quality education in Kenyan has been a central policy issue since we attained independence. This has been due to governments' commitment to provision of quality education and training as a basic human right for all Kenyans in accordance with the new constitution and the international conventions. Secondary education policies have evolved over time with the Government addressing challenges facing education sector through several commissions, committees and task forces. Immediately after independence, the first commission chaired by Ominde, in 1964 sought to reform the education system inherited from the colonial government to make it more responsive to the needs of the country. The Report of The presidential Working Party on the Second University chaired by Mackey, led to the replacement of A- Level secondary education with the current 8-4-4 education system (GOK, 2005 and IPAR, 2008).

The secondary schools bursary scheme was introduced by the government in the 1993/94 financial year to enhance access, ensure retention and reduce disparities and inequalities in the provision of secondary school education. In particular the bursaries are targeted at students from poor families, those in slum areas, those living under difficult conditions, those from pockets of poverty in high potential areas, districts in arid and semi-

arid lands (ASAL), orphans and girl-child (GOK, 2003). At inception of the fund, funds were disbursed directly to secondary schools from the ministry of education headquarters. Due to lack of clear guidelines to schools on how to identify needy students for bursary awards, beneficiaries were identified through different ways. However, in most cases the head teachers ultimately decided on who was to be awarded the bursary and the amounts to be allocated. In 2003, the fund was modified in line with government policy on decentralization and to respond to complaints of mismanagement and lack of impact. The bursaries also known as constituency bursary funds (CBF) are channeled to various schools through constituencies. The disbursement is done by the constituency Bursary committees (CBCs) guided by the 2005 guidelines of the ministry of education science and technology (GOK, 2005).

Despite the decentralization of the CBF, it has been transformed into a political instrument thus compromising its effectiveness (Wachiye and Nasongo, 2010). In their study, Njeru and Orodho (2003) accused the system of allocating funds to politically correct persons as gift of loyalty at the expense of the needy. Onyango and Njue (2004) observe that the fund is not serving its purpose for it is under direct control of members of parliament who give bursaries to cronies and political supporters who are not necessarily needy. In addition, there are variations in the amount of allocated. Furthermore, the amount is split into portions that do not constitute support.

Odallo (2000) notes that bursary allocation is severely faulted for there are unfairness of awarding undeserving students. Odebero *et al.*, (2007) study confirms these sentiments by asserting that bursary allocation is not equitably distributed among the recipients. Mwangi (2006) posits that the process of sending money from central government to constituencies then to schools take a long time. By the time recipients get the money, many would have been sent away from school. This affects students' retention at secondary school.

A study by Wachiye and Nasongo (2010) in Kanduyi constituency established that there were incidences whereby local Member of Parliament allocated bursaries to supporters and relatives though they did not deserve it. They also observed that there was delay in disbursement of funds. In two constituencies of Nairobi County, the area members

of parliament are said to have taken control of the fund deciding who gets the bursaries and they keep the records as well (IPAR, 2008). These practices have a negative effect on students' access and retention in public secondary schools. It is against this background that the researchers investigated the challenges in the allocation process of bursary funds and propose interventions to policy makers so as to strengthen the bursary fund.

### **Statement of the Problem**

From the background of the study, it is apparent that the government has stated in its policy documents (GOK, 2003; 2005) that CBF was introduced so as to enhance access, equity and retention at secondary school level among the poor and other vulnerable groups. In most developing countries and in particular sub-Saharan Africa, the system of awarding bursaries has made it difficult for the poorest to access education (World Bank, 2009; Lewin, 2009; UNESCO, 2010; Nyabanyaba, 2009 & Kanungo, 2004). In Kenya, there has been concern that bursary is not equitably distributed to recipients. Students from poor families are still unable to access secondary school education despite its availability. The Gross Enrolment Rate for secondary education in Kenya is 29.8 % (GOK, 2006; Odebero *et al.*, 2007; IPAR, 2010 & Wachiye and Nasongo, 2010). Major concerns with CBF revolve around weak administrative systems and questionable allocation criteria where cases of political interference are rampant. As a result of this, most secondary school going children are unable to participate fully in this intermediate education as reflected by increasing (7.1 %) dropout rates (GOK, 2003; Onyango & Njue, 2004).

The bursary fund level is too low to cover the entire tuition fee for the poor (Mwangi, 2006). In the 2007/08 financial year for instance, 84.2 % of the beneficiaries in Nairobi County received minimum allocation or less. This exposes serious inconsistencies and limitations in awarding bursaries in low-income areas of Nairobi particularly slums (IPAR, 2008). A number of studies have investigated the effectiveness of CBF in relationship with access and retention in Kenya. However, a few have zeroed in on its impact on access and retention. This study investigated the challenges in the allocation of Constituency Bursary Funds and their effect on access and retention of students in public secondary school in Nairobi County.



## Literature Review

### **Distribution of bursary to secondary school students**

Odebero *et al.*, (2007) conducted a study on Equity in the distribution of bursary to secondary school students in Busia District. The study established that bursary allocation in Busia District was not equitably distributed among the recipients since Gini Coefficients revealed concentration levels of over 0.5 for all the years studied. The study noted that the criteria set by the Ministry of Education to be used by school administrator to allocate bursary in the district bore some encumbrances that made it difficult for bursary to accurately target support to the really needy students. The criteria according to school heads left room for a lot of discretion which could be subjective. The study further asserted that some of the needy students ended up missing bursary support unfairly through the criteria of poor performance. The next was orphaned and level of need where a resonate proportion of head teachers felt that they were used to deny needy students access to bursary. The study therefore concluded that the criteria was cumbersome and could not be effectively be used by the head teachers to identify the levels of need for differentiated bursary allocation.

In addition to the decentralization of secondary education bursary fund to the constituency level, and gradual increase in allocation and setting of higher minimum allocation per beneficially, Odebero *et al.*, (2007) study opines that it is apparent that the current bursary provisions and cash transfers should be enhanced to sustain deserving students within the system. According to the Welfare Monitoring Survey (WMS) III of 1997, 30 % of the population lived under the core poverty line while 56 % of the population lived below the absolute poverty level. In 2005, about 46 % of the population lived below the poverty line. The bursary allocation should be improved to target deserving students leaving standard 8 (or eighth grade). Under the current system, identification of deserving cases covers only those students already admitted within the secondary education level.

Wachiye and Nasongo (2010) conducted a study on access to secondary school education through constituency Bursary Fund in Kanduyi Constituency. They observed that orphans and good performers were the majority of bursary recipients, leading to confirming that the Kanduyi Constituency bursary fund Committee determined the recipients based

on their parentage and academic performance. The Gini Coefficient Value 0.01 for the bursary allocations to the recipients implied that the allocations were done equitably in constituency. As a matter of fact 80 % of the recipients noted that the criteria used by the committee to identify the beneficiaries were fair enough. The equity in the allocation can be attributed to fairness demonstrated in the criteria for identifying the bursary recipients and uniformly in the bursary amounts. However, the findings of the study revealed that there were problems encountered by the bursary fund committee. These included; inadequate bursary by the government, political interferences and delays in bursary disbursements. The study recommended that there is need for the government to establish a special management structure devoid of political manipulation to run constituency bursary fund. KIPPR (2005) carried out a study on accountability and performance of constituency funds. Majority (84.3 %) of the respondents expressed high levels of distrust in the constituency bursary fund managers.

Macharia (2011) opines that a multiplicity of social and economic factors has locked out girls from the constituency bursary fund that is meant to enable poor students finance secondary education. This has in turn led to a high dropout rate of girls from secondary schools and puts them at an economic disadvantage in both current and future lives, a new report has said. A report released recently in Nairobi, however, showed that the constituency-based committees use skewed criteria in the selection of beneficiaries, a factor that had seen girls miss out on the kitty, regardless of their social economic background.

IPAR (2008) carried out a survey on, 'public expenditure tracking of secondary Education Bursary Fund,' in Nairobi province. Their findings established that the bursary scheme has limitations on governance, effectiveness and consistency. They observed that as a result of inconsistency in funding, the scheme has not achieved its main objective of retention .And due to low level of funding compared to demand, the survey posits that many stakeholders have negative perceptions about the operation of the scheme. This is because whereas the number of students applying for bursary funds has been on the increase, the amount being allocated to constituencies for bursary has remained static. As a proportion of the tuition fee requirements, the bursary fund hardly meets a quarter of the fee requirements for instance; it was revealed that an estimated

84 % of the bursary beneficiaries got Kshs.5000 as bursary. This is way below the government approved fee for day schools, boarding provincial secondary schools and national schools which is Ksh.10500, Kshs 22,900 and 28,900 respectively. Further much of the allocated to Nairobi province benefited majority of students outside of Nairobi province. The survey estimated that only 29 % of the funds allocated benefited students schooling in Nairobi province. From the number of applicants an estimated 57 %of the demand is not met. School records indicate that 62

% of bursary funds received by schools are from other bursary providers. Also it was established that the allocation to and disbursement of funds from constituencies is not consistent with the school programmes. The allocation of funds from the Ministry of Education to constituencies and from constituency to beneficiaries is not in tandem with school programmed. This makes beneficiaries to receive money in the middle of terms after they have missed classes as they go about looking for financers to supplement the allocations they receive from CBF.

### **Challenges in the allocation of constituency bursary funds**

IPAR (2003) conducted a study on ‘Education financing in Kenya: Secondary school bursary scheme implementation and challenges’. It was revealed that despite the rationale for the introduction of constituency bursary fund, there are increasing concerns regarding their ability and sensitivity in cushioning the income poor and vulnerable groups against adverse effects of the escalating costs of secondary education. Major concerns are in regard to the MOEST bursary scheme inadequate finances to meet the demand of the applicants. According to Mwai (2007), despite the increase over the years of secondary school bursary fund, the fund remains inadequate. The implication here is that for the objective of bursary to be achieved, the government is supposed to allocate enough funds for it to have an impact.

According to Kosgei *et al.*, (2006), there has been lack of monitoring mechanism; this has given room for systematic flaws that mitigate against smooth implementation of the fund. The prevailing situation has translated into the flaws of the right procedure of awarding bursary funds by bursary committees. Consequently this has led to needy and deserving cases to miss bursary funds. At the constituency level, the data collected by the survey established that area members of parliament have taken

control of the fund, deciding who gets the bursaries and they keep the records. The application procedures were also noted to be cumbersome and hence time wasting.

Following the changes in the allocation mechanism since 2003, claims of misallocation of bursary funds, double awards to “ghost” students, as well as excessive patronage by members of parliament who influenced skewed allocations have been prevalent (Daily Nation, December 4, 2006). This interference of allocation of bursary by politicians was made possible by the fact that they became patrons of the constituency bursary schemes. Most of the members of parliament use the bursary funds in his/ her constituency to gain some political mileage in the community. Other stakeholders are involved in the interferences of the allocation of bursaries in schools. These include Provincial Administration, where chiefs and their assistants are known to have some influence, religious leaders and the District Education Officials. While deliberating on the problems facing the education sector, head teachers observed that Secondary Education Bursary Fund was being abused. For example they observed that senior ministry officials force them to ward bursaries to undeserving students at the expense of the needy (Kariuki, 2008).

IPAR (2003) reported that in other cases some District education officer and politicians are said to have put undue pressure on head teacher to allocate bursaries to their relatives, thereby denying the genuinely needy students, access to the facility. This implies that students who did not deserve receive funds at the expense of the needy students. Consequently, this leads to the needy students not accessing the bursary hence risk dropping out.

According to Soy (2007), many parents in Eastern province were dissatisfied with their constituency bursary fund committees. They accused politicians of awarding the fund to cronies. In one constituency, son of a Member of Parliament (MP) pursuing parallel degree at University of Nairobi was one of the beneficiaries. The report adds that in some constituencies, MPs must approve beneficiaries list and amount award. Therefore, unless the bursary kitty is streamlined, it was reported that poor students would not access secondary education. This corroborates the finding by the government survey (2009) that politicians meddled in the award of bursaries by recommending the beneficiaries, and are hurting the poor by delaying school cash (Siringi, 2009).

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Njeru and Orodho (2003) argue that other than concerns over limited finances to cater for all eligible and deserving needy students, administration weakness exist in the disbursement of bursary funds at district level. The same argument can be demonstrated by the fact that constituency committee has various administration weakness in disbursing the bursary funds. For instance, the funds are delayed until the needy students are chased home from school for lack of fees. The study recommended that committee should consider the purpose of bursary fund which is to enable a student to continue with education without interruptions.

The delay in the disbursement of bursary funds contravenes the good essential purpose of decentralizing of bursary funds to constituency level. According to a report from the Ministry of Education Science and Technology (2005), bursaries were decentralized to constituency level to enhance effectiveness and efficiency in bursary allocation and disbursement. Also according to economic survey (GOK, 2004); the decentralization of the scheme to the constituency level was aimed at streamlining disbursement to only those who qualify. However, all these reports indicate that there is lack of proper scrutiny of application forms and bearing some interest in the exercise of bursary disbursement.

In agreement with the above assertions, Mugambi (2002) opines that those concerned with awarding bursaries use their positions to assist their undeserving relatives acquire the awards. This results to the needy and deserving not getting the bursary. There is also allegation that members of parliament influence the composition of the committees by nominating their supporters. This is why most of the leaders associate themselves with bursary schemes. Bursary should in this case not be used for personal aggrandizement and selfish ends.

Mwembi, (2012) conducted a study on Challenges on the disbursement of Constituency Bursary Fund (CBF) to public secondary school students in Bobasi constituency Kenya. The main objective of the study was to find out the extent to which the official criteria was followed in allocating the bursaries to students, problems of adequacy, disbursement and equity considerations, leakages and if any, whether there were mechanisms in place to address complaints and issues raised in allocating the bursary fund. The study was guided by the Classical Liberal Theory. Where, it emphasizes on social mobility being promoted by equal opportunity

on education. Mwembi's, (2012) study concluded that the criteria of determining the genuinely needy students had limitations both on governance, efficiency, effectiveness and consistence in support. The fund was also established not equitably awarded among boys and girls and among schools. Further, the fund was found to experience the following impediments: Low and inadequate funding from the government that could not meet the demands of the high number of the needy applicants, Political interference by the local politicians, Delays by the government to disburse these funds which inconvenienced many needy students and Mechanisms of addressing bursary related complaints which were somewhat ineffective. The study recommended that the government should increase through treasury, the Constituency Bursary Fund for it to have any impact on the applicants who expect to be served effectively; it should have a reform mechanism devoid of political manipulation to run the fund. And lastly, the study recommended that policy makers should ensure that bursary awarding process should emphasize on the school teachers' assessment of continuing students' need for financial support/ assistance.

## **Methodology**

### **Research Design**

Research design is a plan and the procedure for research that span the decisions from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection and analysis (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2006). The research design adopted for this study was mixed methods leaning towards quantitative design. The study was mixed methods in a single research which allows for pragmatism. The blending of qualitative and quantitative methods in this study neutralized bias, sought convergence of results and produced final product which highlighted the significant contribution of both approaches, where both, therefore used numeric and word data easily .Further, the researcher adopted a mixed methods design for it was useful in helping study meet the criteria for evaluating the "goodness" of the answers better than do the single approach designs. Indeed mixed methods provide the opportunity for presenting a greater diversity of divergent views (Creswell, 2009).

### **Target Population**

The target population for this study comprised of 1200 students in the 2011 form three cohort who benefited from the constituency bursary fund. In addition, the study targeted 192 class teachers and 48 school principals of the bursary beneficiaries and 120 CBFC members from the eight constituencies of Nairobi County.

### **Sample and Sampling Procedure**

The sample size for this study was determined using sample size determination formula advanced by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) as cited by Kasomo (2001). The formula is given as:

$$n = \frac{X^2 * N * P(1 - P)}{(ME^2 * (N - 1)) + (X^2 * P * (1 - P))}$$

Where:

n= Sample size

$X_2$  = Chi-square for the specified confidence level at 1 degree of freedom

N= population size

P = population proportion

ME = Desired Margin of Error (expressed as a proportion)

Using the formula, the sample size for a target of 1200 respondents at confidence level of 95 % was 291. The researcher then stratified respondents into constituencies and employed Proportionate random sampling technique to select beneficiaries for each constituency. Thereafter, simple random sampling was used to select samples for the study from each constituency. Class teachers of the bursary beneficiaries as well as their school principals were also selected for the study. Three CBFC members (the chairman, secretary and treasurer) from each constituency were also sampled. These were the committee members who possessed records of applicants and beneficiaries of CBF as well as other information with respect to the modalities of CBF. According to Creswell (2009) randomly selected samples yield research data that can be generalized to a larger population within margins or error that can be

determined by statistical formula. Random sampling also involves a pure chance selection and assignment of subject hence eliminating systematic bias and minimizing the effects of extraneous variable.

### **Sample Size**

The sample size for this study therefore comprised 291 Form three bursary beneficiaries, 129 class teachers 48 school principals and 24 constituency committee members from eight constituencies of Nairobi County. The total sample size was therefore 492 respondents.

### **Research Instruments**

The main data collection instruments included questionnaire and in-depth interview schedules. Document analysis was also used.

### **Validity and Reliability of the Research Instruments**

Validity refers to the accuracy, correctness, meaningfulness of inferences and soundness of results of conclusion, which are based on the research findings (Kothari, 2008). The researcher sought expert opinion on content and construct validity. Comments solicited from them were used to improve the research instrument before commencing data collection. To determine the reliability of the instrument, student questionnaire was piloted on a small sample of bursary beneficiaries in one of the constituencies of Nairobi County who were not part of this research study. Cronbach Alpha Coefficient was used to test on the reliability of the instruments. A correlation coefficient of 0.77 was obtained indicating that the instrument was reliable and acceptable.

### **Data Analysis Procedures**

The raw data was appropriately coded and tabulated in readiness for analysis. The SPSS computer package was used as a 'toolbox' to analyze data related to objectives. Qualitative data was analyzed by use of mean standard deviation and the ranges, percentages, pie charts, bar graphs, and frequencies of occurrences. Descriptive statistics give general opinion with regard to the challenges of constituency bursary fund and its effect on access and retention.



## **Results and Discussions**

### **Delays in Disbursements of CBF**

Research findings revealed that the flow of the funds between the Ministry of Education and the constituencies was extremely slow. Cheques were released to schools months after the funds have been deposited in the CBFC accounts. CBFC indicated that after identifying beneficiaries, memos are written to schools requesting them to keep students as they await the cheques to be signed by the signatories. School principals however, reported that this situation confronted their schools with serious financial strains as they had to keep most prospective beneficiaries in school while they await arrival of cheques. Evidence to back this is drawn from views put forth by IPAR (2008) that when uncertain of beneficiaries' prospects, some principals simply sent the ones with arrears home. This forced students to miss classes as they went about looking for financiers to supplement the allocations they would have received from the CBF.

### **Inadequate Administrative cost**

According to revised guidelines of 2005 for disbursement of CBF, the CBFCs are authorized to utilize up to Ksh.25, 000 in each tranche. This amount is meant for administrative cost such as purchase of stationary, tea, postage and travelling expenses. Interviewees complained that the amount is too little. Many at times, chairpersons of the respective constituencies reported to have been forced to spend extra money from the kitty which could have benefited more applicants or even use money from their pockets. Since there are no sitting allowances, it was reported that some committee members are de-motivated and rarely attend the vetting process hence, affect their efficiency in evaluation and disbursement of the fund since few of them are left with many application forms to go through. This concurs with Siringi's (2009) sentiments that inefficiency in disbursement of CBF is hurting the poor by delaying school cash.

### **Lack of Administrative Offices and Computers**

The committee members are required to keep proper records of their accounts to ease monitoring and audit. However, findings from the study revealed that all the CBFC lacked administrative offices to keep such records. Dagoreti and Starehe CBFC members were lucky to be housed in their CDF offices. All other committee members operate from either

their houses or borrow some space from schools within their constituency during the vetting exercise.

The researcher also established that entire CBF process lacked computers or any systematic automation for purposes of data and information management. This was attested by the fact the researcher had a very rough time in assembling the required data due to poor record keeping. In addition, the data collection, storage, and transfer between the CBFCs and PDE's office remained largely manual. In fact, CBFC reported that the use of software during vetting and evaluation process could significantly eliminate the problem of undue influence in the selection of the beneficiaries. As a result of the lack of computers, it was particularly reported that there was difficult in identifying and targeting previous needy cases and those applicants whose economic status have since changed for the worse since the last application date The findings in this study agrees with Kosgei *et al.*, (2006) assertions that there has been lack of monitoring mechanisms which have given room for systematic flaws of right procedure of awarding CBF by committees.

### **Poor Record Keeping**

The researcher established that there was poor record keeping in all the constituencies of Nairobi County. Records were inadequate or missing in some constituencies like Langata, Embakasi, Dagoretti and Kamukunji. In terms of reporting and filling of returns, records in PDE's registry office revealed that there were no organized tools to be used by CBFCs to file their returns. Each CBFC therefore filed their returns in whichever format they chose as observed by IPAR, (2003). This challenge explains, in part, why the CBFCs and PDE's office lacked complete data on the disbursement of the fund. In the nonexistence of accurate, consistent and credible data, contribution of CBF to access and retention become difficult to ascertain.

### **Inadequacy of Constituency Bursary Fund**

It was overwhelmingly reported that the main reason why CBFC didn't adhere to stipulated rules of bursary disbursement was insufficiency of the fund. The applicants were too many and the money was too little. This finding is not different from the observation by Odundo & Rambo (2006), Mwembi (2012), IPAR (2008), YIKE (2011), Wachiye & Nasongo (2010).

All these findings unanimously established that allocations of bursary funds are inadequate compared to demand of the applicants.

This study finding indicated that in all the eight constituencies, the fund was facing an overwhelming demand gap. The number of applicants by far outstripped the amount of funds allocated to each of the constituencies. For example available data for Kasarani constituency showed that the demand for funding was quite overwhelming. By base year, the 2008/09 financial year, total applications were 3478 with 2,087 boys (60.6 %) and 1,391 girls (39.4 %). The data however show that 504 students benefited for the bursary award. This indicates that only 14.5 % of the applicants benefited from the allocation. In 2009/2010 financial year only 330 beneficiaries received bursaries out of a total of 2306 applicants with 1300 (57.1 %) boys and 1006 (42.9 %) girls representing 14.3 % of the total applicants. In 2010/2011 financial year 466 out of 3001 (2000- boys, 1001-girls) applicants were awarded the bursaries representing 15.5 % of the total applicants. In 2011/2012 financial year, there were 343 bursary beneficiaries against 3450 applicants representing 9.9 % of the applicants.

On average, less than 40% of the applicants in each year benefited from the fund in each of the eight constituencies in Nairobi County. The proportion of those benefiting from the bursary fund rose from 29.34% in year 2008/09 to 36.32% in the financial year 2009/10 before declining to 31.30% in 2010/11 financial year. There was a further decline to 13.24% in the subsequent financial year. On interviewing the Constituency Bursary Fund Committee and school principals, findings revealed that students are not guaranteed of continuous funding in all the four years of study.

It was also pointed out that the patrons of the constituency bursary fund who are the area MPs through their cronies insist that new list of beneficiaries should be considered in each tranche. This would ensure that the fund benefit as many of their supports as possible. This implies that, the fact that a student has been evaluated as poor and needy in one tranche, does not guarantee them subsequent funding. Further, level of award to each beneficiary was based on the decisions of CBFCs depending on the amounts allocated to each constituency. This was blamed on the number of applicants who were reported to be too many and the money allocated to each constituency was too little to cater for all the demand.

Overall, an estimated 24.2 % of the applicants benefited from the bursary fund over the four year period of study indicating that 75.8 % of the demand is not met. In support of this, more than half of the school principals indicated that above 40 % of student population in their respective schools deserved CBF yet they didn't benefit. This implies that the major challenge of constituency bursary fund allocation in Nairobi County is inadequate funds against the overwhelming demand of CBF. This corresponds to observation by IPAR (2008) that from the number of applicants, 57 % of the demand was not met.

The proportion of the total amount received by schools from other bursary providers over the period 2008-2011 was 60.6 % compared to 39.4 % from the CBF. This other bursary providers included; Co-operative bank, The Jomo Kenyatta foundation, UNICEF, Equity group, Madam Ida Odinga Foundation, Methodist church, Youth education support, Kenya voluntary women rehabilitation Centre, The palm house foundation, The giraffe project children's charity, USAID, CDF bursary kitty, Churches, FAWE and LATF. Out of these bursary providers, The Jomo Kenyatta Foundation is the major provider and the only one that guarantees beneficiaries consistency of support where, in the first term, 50 % of the total fee is paid, 30 % in 2<sup>nd</sup> term and the remaining 20 % in 3<sup>rd</sup> term. Unlike The Jomo Kenyatta Foundation, participants of the study observed that CBF hardly meet 30 % of the fee requirement of the beneficiaries and there is no guarantee of continued support.

### **Political Interference**

Being a political fund, it was observed that patrons of CBF in all the constituencies of Nairobi County are area MPs who have followers/supporters. It was reported that they make sure that CBC members are politically inclined to their side. The study findings established politicians use the fund to gain political mileage. Dagoretti Member of Parliament for instance, was blamed to delay the disbursement of the fund in her constituency where she insists on being present during the issuing of cheques to beneficiaries. It was also reported that one of the MP is a signatory of the cheques in her constituency contrary to the stipulated guidelines by the MoE where the chairperson, treasurer, secretary and PDE should be the only signatories. It was further indicated that because Nairobi is a cosmopolitan area, political rivalry between different ethnic groups was reflected in the allocation of CBF. Senior education officer

in charge of bursaries in PDE's office observed that, majority of the beneficiaries from each constituency belonged to the tribe of the sitting MP. This negates the noble objective of the fund where it is supposed to enhance access and retention of all vulnerable groups of students regardless of their tribe or political affiliation. This confirms the concern fronted by Soy (2007) that in some constituencies, MPs must approve the list of beneficiaries and amount awarded.

### **Corruption and Issuing of Fake Documents**

Interviewees cited instances of corruption in the disbursement channel between the CBFCs and schools where the combined cheque and list of beneficiaries was abused by those who handle the cheques at schools. In some cases, the lists containing the names of real beneficiaries were reported to be replaced by other names favoured by the school bursars and principals. The following observation lends credence to the existence of this challenge:

“Most school bursars are dishonest because they don't release the names of beneficiaries to the responsible persons. They either withdraw the money themselves or allocate it to children of their friends.”

CBFC chairman, Makadara Constituency

“In Kamukunji constituency CBC members are given two slots each. There are also a number of slots reserved for the area MP and the PDE's office.”

*Secretary CBFC, Kamukunji*

“It was alleged that the old CBFC had sat and distributed the money without vetting the applicants or even informing the DEOs office who play an oversight role. Members agreed that new committee to sit and allocate funds afresh since it was not done in a transparent manner.”

*CBFC Chairperson, Embakasi Constituency*

The researcher also established that in desperation to secure the bursary, some parents and guardians forged documents that are used to vet applicants. These include death certificates; report forms as well as principals signatures. This was reported to interfere with the process of identifying needy and deserving cases. Upon identifying these challenges, the researcher went further to seek opinion from respondents on some of the intervention measures that policy makers at Ministry of Education

could employ so as to strengthen CBF meet its intended objective. **Intervention Strategies that Strengthens CBF**

All the class teachers in Nairobi County were of the opinion that the current bursary levels should be increased to reasonable amounts to meet the fees requirements of the beneficiaries. 97(78.2%) teachers were of the opinion that there was need to limit political interference. While majority of the respondents are of the opinion that the current bursary funding allocations to constituencies and later to students are not sufficient and therefore the government should increase on the amounts allocated to each constituency and ultimately to each beneficiary in order to support access and retention of pupils in secondary education.

Further 82(66.1%) respondents strongly agreed that there is need to improve the process of targeting and identifying the needy cases. This indicates that all the class teachers in Nairobi County secondary schools are of the opinion that the process of targeting and identifying needy cases should be improved to allow only the needy student to benefit from the Bursary scheme.

## **Conclusions**

Revealed from the findings, it can be concluded that the guidelines stipulated by the government on the award of bursaries are not fully followed. Although CBF has enhanced enrolment in secondary schools, it remains inefficient in achieving the intended objective of enhancing access & retention of the vulnerable group of students as it was attested by inconsistency of support to beneficiaries throughout the four year period of study. The Ministry of education should therefore, improve on its publicity and awareness strategy especially on the dates bursaries are received at the constituency levels and the time of disbursement to students. This will ensure that all the students in the County receive information on CBF bursaries on time and can apply within the stipulated period. 86(69.4%) teachers strongly agreed with the statement that there is need for consistency in funding. Further majority of the respondents indicated that there was need for transparency and accountability mechanisms of the scheme to be enhanced so as to ensure that only needy and deserving students receive the CBF bursaries on time.

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