

Challenges and Effects of Financing University Education in Kenya

*Gilbert Nyakundi Okebiro and Morara Vincent
Gesora, Mt.Kenya University – Lodwar campus,
School of Education and social
sciences, Email;okebirog@gmail.com,*

Abstract

Financing education means meeting costs of education in all levels, capital expenditure and recurrent expenditure. Challenges and effects financing university education has taken three phases of evolutionary, revolutionally and Prorevolutionary. Evolutionary since colonial through independence up to late 1980s, marked by the president being the chancellor of all public universities and no private university existed and university education was financed by central government ‘qualified’ students and once admitted were paid a “boom”. Graduates were assured employment in either public or private sector. The effect students were no longer burdens to the parents, although dependent on central government and thought that free university education was a basic right. Second phase revolutionary since late 1980s through the early 2002, where financing university education was changed from the central government to ‘cost sharing’, parents and Higher Education Loan Board[HELB] was introduced, marked by giving charter to some private universities and later public universities introduced parallel programs. The effect was students admitted to any course so long as they had minimal entry requirement and could finance their education. The third phase is Prorevolutionary, since late 2002 through to the present, marked by some Teacher Training Colleges and constituent colleges of public and private universities given charters to be autonomous have their own chancellors, and graduation would be twice year

and graduates would have many first class honors. The problem is nowadays public universities are admitting students into courses, which they did not meet the entry ‘cut off’ points and diluting or compromising the standards of the courses, if they finance their education. The objective is to study challenges and effects of financing university education and impact on the quality and standards of courses. The research will adapt diagnostic research design of the empirical data. The findings and recommendations will be vital to all stakeholders in educational sector.

Keywords: *Challenges; Effects; Evolutionary; Revolutionary; Prorevo-lutionary*

Introduction

Financing education means meeting costs of education in all levels, capital expenditure and recurrent expenditure. Challenges and effects financing university education has taken three phases of evolutionary, revolutionally and Prorevolutionary. Like most African universities, higher education in Kenya was historically free, with the public purse covering both tuition and living expenses [Weidman, 1995].

According to Webster’s New Twentieth Century Dictionary, a university is an educational institution of the highest level, typically with one or more undergraduate schools or colleges, together a program of graduate studies and a number of professional schools and authorized to confer various degrees as bachelor’s, master’s and doctor’s. In this period the university was financed by the colonial government and because few people needed it, colonial government afforded financing for the few but in a hard way. The reasons which facilitated by first, university education in the colonial era was not imparted to Africans, as colonizers taught the Africans had no brains to learn the skills and knowledge in university level. A perception which was wrong and undignified Africans for enforced ways to undermine the Africans in order for the colonial masters to have a leeway of administering and having opportunities for taking resources to their home countries. Second, there was no university education in the region until 1949 when Makerere College in Uganda was elevated to the status of the university college of east Africa [Bogonko,

1992]. This means those who were able financially and favored by the colonial government, their children were allowed to go and receive university education financed by the colonial government, either their parents collaborated with the colonial government or supportive in one way or the other to colonial system. Third, because of few people were qualified to receive it and it could not allow, Africans feared to go for primary and intermediate education to qualify for university education.

The statement of the problem

The system of admission into universities both public and private, changed in the recent past [2002 through to the present] a phase known as pro-revolutionary and universities allowed day scholars and slowly introduced parallel programs for “unqualified” students in certain courses, because of having money and hailing from able backgrounds [wealthy], are admitted and study with those who “qualified” mostly from humble backgrounds [poor] who met the entry “cut-off” points.

The problem is nowadays public universities are admitting students into courses [such as medicine, pharmacy, surgery, law, architecture, engineering and teaching], which they did not meet the entry ‘cut off’ points and diluting or compromising the standards of the courses, if they finance their education.

The objectives of the study

First, is to study challenges and effects of financing university education and impact on the quality and standards of courses, of noble courses or professions.

Second, study the challenges of financing of university leading to competition among public and private universities as a consequence of introducing courses which were “units” in subjects/disciplines taught in the “evolutionary” phase, to become independent courses of study in postgraduate courses, in the “pro-revolutionary” phase.

Methodology

The research adopted diagnostic design of analyzing the empirical data. Diagnostic design method is a problem-solving research method

conducted to answer 'how and why' a phenomenon happen and consist of the study of the emergence of the problem; a diagnosis of its causes; formulating remedial measures and suggestions for solution. Data is collected through observations and analyzing empirical or secondary data available in textbooks, journals and newspapers.

Literature review: Financing University of university education to 1949 in Kenya

There was no university education locally the whole of East Africa until 1949, when Makerere College was elevated to become the University of East Africa. Therefore, all university education was obtained in other foreign land. The three colleges of Makerere, Royal college and university college Dar es Salaam, formed the Federal university of east Africa in 1964 [Bogonko, 1994]. It is important to note that developments in university education in Kenya are examined in contextual of east Africa because it was an inter territorial affair and cannot be examined in isolation.

In this period university education was totally financed by the colonial government. Therefore, the Kenyan students in Makerere and those who went overseas for further education were given bursaries, scholarships provided by colonial Development and Welfare Fund and loans which were supposedly open to all races in Kenya, but such schemes were not open to African until 1945. The Kenyans were accorded little, lowest or none consideration as compared to what European and Asian students received. For example in 1949, the 20 new government bursaries given to Kenyan students to study abroad, African received 2, Europeans 9, and Asian 9. In 1950, the figures were 2, 14 and 14 in Africans, Asians and Europeans respectively. In 1951, there were 13 Europeans recipients, 2 Africans, 21 Asians and 1 Arab. In 1952, four Africans, one Arab, 15 Asians and 9 Europeans received new awards [Bogonko, 1994] as shown in table 1.

Table 1: Number of bursaries/scholarships, 1949-52

	1949	1950	1951	1952
Africans	10	11	12	13
Arab	2	3	4	5
Asian	43	44	57	57
European	26	33	43	30
Totals	81	91	116	105

Source: colony and protectorate of Kenya, Education Department Annual Reports 1949-52.

The table 1 shows Africans who constituted 96 percent of the total population of Kenya, held an annual average of 11.3 percent, of the government scholarships and bursaries as compared to alien or foreigners races comprised of 4 percent of the population, were allocated a massive 88.7 percent of the government studying opportunities abroad or overseas[Bogonko,1994]. The Africans [Kenyan] had no such special scholarships aids compared to Asians and Europeans, even in requesting loans for university education overseas; the aliens were favored as compared to Kenyans.

Financing university education 1953-1963

Makerere university being the only in east Africa, grew rapidly, because it received finance from many sources. It had received 3 million pounds from the British colonial welfare and development fund and 3.8 million pound from the governments of East Africa [Kenya, Tanganyika, Uganda and Zanzibar].Also donations were received from Nuffield, Gulbenkian, Ford, Carnegie and Rockefeller foundations [Bogonko,1994].This implies that with all these resources was able to construct impressive buildings and infrastructure befitting a university to fulfill the constituent college of the University of East Africa. In 1963 and had attributes of the title deserved as full university in 1970.Kenya and Tanganyika as countries, were always suspicious that financial contributions to Makerere college were not properly used and needed to have their own universities were

they could finance capital to. Makerere gaining a University college status, Kenya and Tanganyika, advanced in university education, leading to emergence of University of Nairobi and University of Dar es salaam in Kenya and Tanganyika respectively.

Table 2 shows how Africans compared to Europeans and Asians gained very little from scholarships/bursaries given by the government of Kenya between 1954 and 1962.

Table 2: Kenyan Bursaries for Overseas Education 1954-62

	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962
African	12	13	17	18	32	28	28	34	40
Arab	5	7	7	8	10	7	7	4	4
Asian	50	62	58	62	184	64	62	75	80
European	30	41	47	50	57	44	53	56	53
Totals	97	123	129	138	283	143	150	169	177

Source: colony and protectorate of Kenya, Education Department Annual Reports 1954-62.

It is interpreted that although the amount of bursary money spent on Africans was much lower than that spent on Asian or European, what worried Africans was the number of their lot who went abroad to seek education.

It was also awkward for the colonial government to insist on tangible security [title deeds] before giving loans to Africans when they knew they had not demarcated most African land [Bogonko, 1994]. As a consequence the loans and bursaries given to large numbers of Europeans and Asians meant that more people from these races received university education than Africans.

Evolutionary phase of financing university education 1963-1970 to 1980s

To finance education means to meet costs of education that is capital expenditure and recurrent expenditures. Therefore, capital expenditure

refers to expenditure on such permanent features as new buildings and infrastructure in the university and recurrent expenditure refers to what is needed periodically for example salaries of lecturers and other workers and running or operation expenses and equipment to sustain education in the university.

In the general understanding university education is provided through public and private universities. 'Public university' means a university maintained and assisted out of public funds. Public universities therefore, are those institutions owned and administered by public agencies such as central government and local authorities or county governments.

'Private university means a university established with funds other than public funds. Private universities thus, are those universities established for the purpose of profit-making which are entirely owned and managed by private bodies and individuals, but they are allowed to operate by the ministry of education through the independent commission of higher education of Kenya, to ensure education is being provided adequately and meeting the requirements, the list of public and private is given in the appendix 1. private universities are classified into three categories as; Chartered universities-are the private universities fully accredited by the Commission of Higher Education [CHE] and offer their own degrees, diplomas and certificates recognized internationally; Registered universities-are universities which offer degrees on behalf of mother institutions. These universities were offering degrees before the establishment of the CHE and were given certificate of registration after meeting requirements as stipulated in the university Act; interim-these are universities which have applied for accreditation and waiting approval. "Accreditation" means public acceptance and confirmation evidenced by grant of charter under section 12 of the Act that a university meets and continues to meet the standards of academic excellence set by the commission for higher education.

The era was referred to as "Evolutionary phase "because there was no university and they started establishing university education which took a slow base, because a lot of capital was needed to be used in the construction of infrastructure and buildings in the new created universities in Kenya. University education was historically free, with public purse covering both tuition and living expenses [Weidman, 1995].

The University of East Africa was established in 1963 and the university of east Africa Act, was passed in 1962, inaugurated on 27th June 1963, and President Julius Kambarage Nyerere of Tanganyika became its first chancellor.

Viable common faculties were identified for all colleges and professional faculties earmarked for each unit, purposely to maintain standards and quality of university education, Makerere was allocated medicine and agriculture Dar es salaam and Nairobi, engineering, veterinary science and architecture for the years 1963-1967. In 1967-1970, each college was steering its own course, ignoring the policy of common courses and allocated professional faculties. The University Development Committee [UDC] had virtually stopped directing their planning. Duplication now went on unabated. National aspirations had overtaken regional planning [Bogonko, 1992]. This was the effect of development because each college was striving for more faculties and courses to qualify for full fledged university. The working Party on Higher Education in East Africa of 1968, recommended the promotion of each college to full university status in 1970.

However, during 1964-1970 periods, the three countries contributed capital for the building of Makerere University, there were more growth rate of students in Dar es Salaam and Nairobi compared to Makerere, as a Federal University of East Africa. More money was spent on both Dar es Salaam and Nairobi than Makerere. For example in regard to capital expenditure between 1964 and 1970, Makerere received 1,489,000 pounds; Nairobi received 2,266,000 pounds and Dar es Salaam received 4,343,000 pounds. Foreign aid of US dollars 25,371,000 was received by university in June 1967 was also allocated as follows; US\$ 4,685,000 for Makerere; US\$ 6,359,000 for Nairobi and US\$ 10,986,000 for Dar es Salaam [Bogonko, 1992].

The dissolution of University of East Africa, climaxed the beginning of development of university education in East Africa because each country was now given a leeway to finance their universities as they could and develop as quickly as possible to meet the requirements and demands of the people. The University Nairobi in 1970, started expanding the existing faculties and setting up new one such as law, education, agriculture, journalism and institute of African studies. All this needed money or capital expenditure which was financed by the central government.

The central government financed Moi University at Eldoret and was established in 1984 and became the second public university in the republic of Kenya. It specifically meant to offer courses in technology and related sciences, cultural and development studies. In 1987/88, only the faculties of forest resources and wildlife management, science, technology, culture and development studies and education had been established.

Kenyatta university college, became the third public university in 1985 and added the faculties of Arts and science to the existing faculty of education and boosted enrolment of students from 2,371 in 1985 to 5,055 in 1986/87[Kenyatta university,1987,2].

Egerton was the fourth university to become a full fledged public university in Kenya in 1987/88 and its student population both degree and diploma was 1400 in 1985.

Challenges of financing university education and effects in evolutionary phase

1. There was no university education until 1949, when Makerere was elevated into University College.

The effect was those who needed university education acquired it in the foreign land and it was financed by colonial government which restricted the number of scholarships to be given to Africans.

2. The university education was financed by colonial government till 1963 and the effect was scholarships and bursaries given to Kenyans were accorded little, lowest or non consideration as compared to what Europeans and Asian students received. This paralyzed the academic endeavors of the African students in university education.

3. As university education was financed by loans, African parents who applied for loans were required to give tangible security [title deed].

The effect was barring Africans from loans, they knew some African land had not been demarcated. This was an indication of colonial government slow down the developments in university education in Kenya.

4. The loans given to those who qualified were not given to Africans to go for further studies. The effect is loans given to large numbers to

Europeans and Asians meant that they received university education than Africans and as a consequence contributed to underdevelopments of human resource.

5. The Federal University of East Africa established in 1963 and the three countries contributed capital for its operations. The effect was that they financed the university and forgot to make developments of university education in their own countries. It also shows how three countries were united regardless of regional disparities; there was a sense of unity and cooperation before and after independence.

6. Duplication of courses in the three colleges of East Africa was unabated. The effect was academic developments because each college was striving for more faculties and courses to qualify for a full-fledged university.

7. Few private universities were in operation through the letters of interim from the Commission of Higher Education. This included the University of Eastern Africa, Barotseland and Daystar University.

The effect was that the few private universities ensured quality university education was given and university standards were maintained.

Also the private universities were allowed to establish a few faculties and offered a few courses of theology-oriented.

8. The developments in the four universities into full public universities was seen as a blessing because it cut-down the number of Kenyans going to overseas for university education under government scholarship or finance.

The effect it saved the government foreign exchange which was in economic growth and expansion of facilities in the public universities.

9. Since the students who qualified into public universities were financed by the government, the enrolments were matched with the number of available facilities in the universities especially accommodation and lecture halls.

It should be noted that no extra students were allowed in the university without qualification. The sons and daughters of the ministers and executive persons in government could not be allowed because of the status of their parents whatsoever.

The effect is that the students got quality education and in standardized environment for university education studies and were not a burden to their parents because those who qualified were ensured after admission and registration payment of money for their up-keep popularly known as 'boom'.

10. All university student 'qualifiers' were compulsory boarders and boarding facilities were excellent. Some apartment or hostels were having single bed room and others were designed for two beds and no double Decker was allowed.

The effect was students enjoyed university environment and could not struggle in learning, something which made many students high schools struggled to attain minimal points to entry to university.

11. The central government financed meals in the maze for only admitted students. The effect was students had enough time for academic and research work which ensured quality and standard education in universities.

12. In 1970 -1980s was marked by student unrest or strikes in public universities and because of demonstrations all over towns, they caused a lot of havoc, rooting shops, putting a braze vehicles of innocent people, and destroying properties.

The effects were as follows; [i]closure of universities indefinitely or long time.[ii]expulsion of students[iii]jailing students[iv]fining students[v] other students died in the course of demonstrations[vi]damage of properties[vii]loss of national resources through lost man-hours as[viii] unutilized university facilities.

Second phase of financing university education: Revolutionary phase [1985-2002]

This phase was marked by financing of university education changed from central government to 'cost sharing'. Cost sharing in Kenya in higher education was introduced in 1991 as a response to ever-declining state budget, which did not keep pace with student intake when the first cohort of the 8-4-4 of students entered the university [Sanyal and Martin, 1998]. A student loan program was established to enable the needy and poor students to access university education, at its inception, therefore,

admission to public university was enough to ascertain eligibility for a loan. This led to establishment of Higher Education Loan Board [HELB] in 1995. Only students from public universities were eligible for applying for university loan and private university were not eligible. In this phase was marked by 'double intake' into public universities because of 8.4.4 system.

1. Research was key in universities and foreign donors financed research for example Ford Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation and UNESCO were giving grants to university researchers.

The effect was foreign donors could not satisfy every individual, department, faculty, institute or school of a university. The other effect was biasness in allocating research grants and some lecturers took an initiative of self sponsorship to foreign countries for research and others took a back bench in research, because of scarcity of research money.

2. It was considered an academic anomie for universities to wholly rely on the government and donors for research money. Therefore, the universities were challenged to look and think other ways to generate finances for some research projects. The beneficiaries of university research were approached to fund research projects for example commerce [banks], industries and public agencies or companies. All these sources of research finances would be adequate research funds on a more sustainable basis [Kamunge Report, 1988; 74].

3. The other problem in this of accommodation, the quality of facilities and scarcity of learning space. The university education/student population increased without special planning where to learn [lecture rooms] eat [food] or sleep [accommodation]. Congestion was experienced in 1980s because such that a residential room originally meant for one student were catering for two or more students. And as a result double-decker beds were resorted to almost everywhere because; the universities were unable to construct the accommodation facilities to match the increasing population in the universities.

4. The effect is that as the public universities explored the possible ways of settling or resolving the problem of accommodation, by double decker beds, resorted to refining hostels forever increasing boarding requirements of its students. As the problem erupted, a new body

was established in 1983-University Students Accommodation Board [USAB] to solve the problem accommodation academic discipline matters of students in public universities.

The effect is USAB never solved any problem in 1978/88 academic year. For example Kenyatta University was forced to rent flats in risk ridden Githurai shopping centre.USAB was forced also to erect temporary structures with a view of absorbing every student on campus by October 1987 in double intake 1987/88, but it failed. As the grievances against USAB continued, it was dissolved in late 1989 and its functions devolved to the mainstream university administration [Bogonko, 1992].

- 5.As accommodation problems raised, university education pegging the actual intake of students to available beds at any university, this resulted into many qualified students were left out, leading to a big backlog of frustrated young people.

As a consequence of frustration, the situation was discouraging, for students, who all studied with a sole aim of joining university, as well as their parents and society in general.

This effect facilitated the qualified unselected students to local university went for further studies in India and USA and parents, and communities financed overseas university education through “Harambee” contributions.

- 6.Most students went for further studies in India and U.S.A replenished their food and fended them. As a consequence some of the existing training and research institutions are developed as university institutions offering degrees of Kenyan public universities, secondly, with proper control and guidance private and “Harambee” universities to be established in Kenya [Bogonko, 1994].Thirdly, universities should admit qualified-self-sponsored students and help solve qualified students not being frustrated because of “bed space in universities”.

Since accommodation barred many qualified students to university education, some were admitted to access the lecture theaters and library and operate as “day scholars” or staying off campus.

This was opposed by stakeholders because of the following reasons the students would be cut-off from [i]the proximity to lecture theatres;[ii]

library facilities [iv]consultations of an academic nature;[iv]this hampered students in academic progress in research.

Prorevolutionary phase of financing university education [2002-to the present]

This phase marked by some teacher education colleges and constituent colleges of the public universities given charters to become autonomous universities. Many private universities were given charter, some registered and others were given letters of interim. In Prorevolutionary phase, the private and public universities have their chancellors and graduation can be done any time of the year and could be twice a year.

According to sessional paper No.1 of 2005 on “A policy framework for education, training and research”, the government’s long-term policy is to provide a framework for a sustainable, competitive and autonomous national university system. And seek to ensure the development of a diversified financial base and enhancement of managerial independence, while at the same time paying attention to issues of relevance and responsiveness to the market and to national priorities. Despite the three decades of rapid expansion of university education, challenges of financing to access and equity remain a big challenge.

Conclusion

When a double intake of students would be declared to ease the admissions backlog, the universities will plan to absorb at least 40,000 extra students and a time-bomb that experts said could explode if the plan would not be accompanied by a commensurate rise in funding to enable institutions and hire extra lecturers.

Funding has trailed enrolment growth in public universities, compromising quality as infrastructure remained inadequate and a number of lecturers did not grow in tandem [University world News, 20th June 2010;No.56].

University students loan schemes [USLS], the initial loan program, had failed because of its inability to recover loans. But with the inception HELB,loan recovery has been increasing, as result of efficient record keeping, obligating employers through the use of the law to ensure repayment and also by cultivating a culture of repayment among loan

recipients [Otieno, 2004]. Also HELB works together with Kenya revenue authority [KRA] and National Health Insurance Fund [NHIF] to recover the loans by identifying loan recipients who are working in both private and public sector and mandating them to repay funds owed [Ngolovoi, 2006]. unemployment and emigration are some major obstacles to loan recovery. Students in private universities do not receive bursaries from HELB and instead apply to the ministry of education for funds [Ngolovoi, 2006].

Students in both and public universities can also apply for grants or bursaries from constituency development fund [CDF]. CDF was created through the Act of parliament in 2003 to finance community based with overall goal of poverty alleviation [GoK

Dual track policy was introduced in 1998 via the self sponsored, or module II, programs. dual-track policies are characterized by highly restricted, “merit-based” entry to free or, as in case of Kenya, very low cost university education, with other applicants not so admitted permitted entry on free paying basis.

In Kenya in principle, KSCE holders with C+ and above qualify for public admission; however, this cut-off point depends on total public university student capacity. Therefore, joint admission board [JAB] sets entry cut off for government-sponsored students every year. If a greater proportion of students have high passes in a particular year, the cut off will be higher and vice-versa [Ngolovoi, 2006].

Module II students gain entry to universities on the basis of different criteria that vary from university to university. At the initial stages candidates had to be form four school leavers who met the minimum entry requirement of C+ but could not meet the entry cut off point for government sponsorship. In attempt to increase the number of self sponsored students, various institutions made admission conditions more flexible and accepted students from different academic backgrounds including holders of A level certificates [KACE] from the old 7-4-2-3 system, P1 holders, diploma holders, and certificate holders from other governmentally-recognized institutions [Otieno, 2004].

With the exception of some institutions, such as United States international university [USIU], most private universities in Kenya are religious. The curriculums of these universities are also geared towards arts and

commercial courses. The private universities depend on their revenue on tuition fees they generate from their students; this makes them expensive and unaffordable for most Kenyans. Some private universities have allocated funds for work study programs and scholarships with the aim of increasing access, only a limited number of needy students benefit from institutional financial aid.

Another new measure is the introduction of pay-as-you-eat or earn [PAYE] programme. The government is also planning do away with student loan schemes, de-link admission from residential provision, increase university fees, and encourage universities to engage in income-generating activities [GOK,1988;1993;1994;Wandiga,1993].

Public universities operate as private firms becoming more commercial-profit-oriented and responding to labour market [Abagi, 1995].

Recommendations

Increase government contribution and improve existing university loans system to ensure availability of financial support to poor students.

Empower HELB to mobilize resources from private sector to enable it give loans to all categories of students.

Create incentives for improvement of infrastructure in all local universities.

Provide more support for scholarships and research at university level.

Admission for professional courses such as medicine, chemical engineering, architecture and others should A- and above, in parallel programmes in both private and public, in order to maintain standards and quality.

Establish public universities centres of excellence in specialized courses, for example agriculture, architecture, engineering, arts, science, veterinary, commerce, education, law and medicine, to minimize unnecessarily competitions among over courses offered.

References

- Abagi.J.O.[1995] “Revitalising university Education in Africa:Addressing what is and what is not the issue”
- Bogonko S.N.[1992],Reflections on education in East Africa,oxford university press,Nairobi.
- Bogonko S.N.[1994],a history of modern education in Kenya[1895-1991],Evans Brothers[Kenya]Ltd.
- Buchere.D.[2009],Kenya: Entry points lowered to boost Access. University World News.Africa Edition.
- Cutter [2001], Africa 2001: The world today series,Harpers Ferry:Stryker-post publications.
- Government of Kenya constituency Development Fund. Retrieved on October,2000 from <http://www.edf.go.ke/index.htm>.
- HELB.Student Loans in Kenya, Retrieved January 20,2006 from <http://www.heb.co.ke/index.jsp>.
- Nganga G. [2010, June].Kenya: Funding boost Public universities, University World News. Africa Edition.
- Ngolovoi. M.[2006].Means testing of student loans in Kenya.presented at the comparative and International higher education policy; issues and analysis workshop; university at Albany.
- Otieno.W.[2004],Students loans in Kenya; Past Experiences, Current Hurdles, and Opportunities for the future. Journal of higher education in Africa.[2],75-99.
- Sanyal,B.,Martin M.[1998],management of Higher education with special reference to financial management in African country. Paris:HEP.
-
- Weidman.J.[1995]diversifying finance of higher education systems in 3rd world:The case of Kenya and Mongolia.
