

Non-Schooling Gap in Primary Schools in Kenya: A Projection to 2030 in Turkana County, Kenya

By Joyce J. Kurgat; Kisilu M. Kitainge; Julius K. Maiyo and Zachariah K. Kosgei

Abstract

Non-schooling gap is one of the indices that track progress on the attainment of education goals. The study carried out a projection of the non-schooling gap in Turkana County, Kenya by 2030. The study was guided by three objectives which were to establish the enrolment and the population of boys and girls aged 6-13 from 2008 to 2015, to determine the non-schooling gap for boys and girls from 2008 to 2015 and to project the non-schooling gap for boys and girls to

2030. The research design adopted was mixed method and the instruments used in collecting data were document analysis and interview schedule. The findings of the study revealed that there are more boys than girls that are enrolled at the primary school level in Turkana County hence there is gender disparity which is projected to persist to the target year if effective planning is not carried out.

Introduction

Since the worldwide Education for All (EFA) process was initiated in Jomtien in 1990, the significant priority given to primary education in many countries has become evident. International donors, development lending institutions as well as national policies have tended to focus most heavily on primary education (World Bank, 2006; UNESCO, 2000; 2005; Riddell, 2003). Consequently most third world countries have subsidized primary education with the long term goal of achieving full enrolment of the primary school-age children (UNESCO, 2000; 2005; Riddell, 2003; Ogola, 2010; MOEST, 2014).

In Sub-Saharan Africa, there is a renewed attempt to resurrect education systems because the enrolment rates have been on the decline following the introduction of the cost sharing policy that was introduced in the eighties and early to mid nineties and which was promoted by international financial institutions such as the World Bank. Initially, there had been a growth in the enrolment levels following independence but a transfer of part of the direct and the indirect cost of education to the parents became an obstacle to attendance and additional enrolment in schools, with the girl child being the worst hit. This renewed attempt comes in the form of introduction of free primary education in many countries in the region (UNESCO, 2008; Nishimura, et al., 2009; Riddell, 2003; Orodho, 2014).

After independence, many countries made the provision of education a priority and it resulted in an increase in enrolment which was also the case following the introduction of FPE. When free primary education was introduced in Malawi in 1994, an increment of over 50 per cent in enrolment was recorded. The enrolment increased from 1.9 million in 1993/94 to about 3.2 million in 1994/95. Net enrolment for girls rose from 58 per cent to 73 per cent by 1996 while that of boys rose marginally from 58 per cent to 68 per cent over the same period. Gross enrolment rate increased from 67.9 per cent in 1990/91 to 158.1 per cent in 1999/2000 before sharply declining to 106 per cent in 2004. In Tanzania, the gross enrolment rate in 1999/2000, a year before the introduction of FPE was 63 per cent with a net enrolment rate of 46.7 per cent. In the first year of FPE, children between the ages of 7-10 were targeted, with a goal of 1.5 million. This was exceeded and the gross enrolment rose to 100.4 per cent with a net enrolment rate of 80.7 per cent. In Zambia, following the introduction of free primary education in 2002, a 7 per cent growth in enrolment was recorded. Following the re-introduction of FPE in Kenya, enrolment surged from 5.9 million in 2002 to 7.2 million in

2003 resulting in a gross enrolment rate of 104 per cent compared to 87.6 per cent in 2002 (UNESCO, 2008; Nishimura et al., 2009; Riddell, 2003; ROK, 2005; Orodho, 2014).

The Kenyan government established the Ominde Commission, as early as 1964, to chart the course of the development of the education sector. The Commission emphasized Kenya's need for universal primary education (ROK, 1964). Partial implementation of this recommendation started in 1974 and covered standards 1-4; it was extended to standards 5-7 in 1978. The initiative resulted in massive enrollments in primary schools; the gross enrollment rate (GER) level increased from 50 percent in 1963 to a peak of 105.4 percent in 1989. However, the high enrollments were negatively affected by the cost sharing policy introduced in 1989 as part of the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) following the stagnation of the economy in the 1980's. Parents were charged with the responsibility of meeting the cost of textbooks, school activities, additional tuition and examination fees. The policy hindered many children, especially those from economically marginalized groups, from accessing primary education (GOK, 2012; ROK, 1988; Nishimura et al., 2009; Riddell, 2003). Education therefore became the preserve of the well-to-do members of Kenyan society. By December 2002, GER had fallen to 88.2 percent, compared with the 1989 level of 105 percent. Declining enrolment heightened concern among leaders; thus, the provision of free education became the main agenda during the general election of December 2002 (UNESCO, 2008; 2005; MOE, 2008; MOEST, 2014).

The constitution of Kenya (2010) has provisions for children's right to free and compulsory basic education. In addition, every child has the right to be protected from harmful cultural practices, abuse, neglect, exploitative labour and all forms of violence, inhuman treatment and punishment. There should be adequate participation and representation of minorities and marginalized groups in all spheres of life (ROK, 2012; Children Act 2001, 2012; The Children Act No. 8 of 2001, 2016; Right to Education Project, 2014).

The social pillar in Kenya vision 2030 intends to create an equitable, comprehensive and just society based on democratic ideas. Education and training fall under the social Pillar and it plays a critical role in the realization of vision 2030. The sector came up with medium Term Plan (MTP) 1: 2008-2012 whose aim was the provision of Free Primary Education (FPE), Free day secondary Education (FDSE) and implementation of policies as outlined in sessional paper No. 1 of 2005 on Policy Framework for Education, Training and Research. The first MTP led to an increase in enrolment in Early Childhood Development and Education (ECDE) centers from a GER of 59.8 percent in 2008 to 66.3 percent in 2012 (ROK, 2012; 2005; MoSPNDV, 2012).

Enrolment is a partial measure of whether or not UPE has been attained because success should be judged with respect to whether the children who enroll will successfully complete the cycle of education, thus the measure should be the expected cohort completion rate. The drawback to this measure being the lack of data therefore no trend can be established to monitor progress so as to be able to make reliable projections. Progression is a greater challenge in most countries; at least one-fifth of the children who enroll in school in the Sub-Saharan Africa are not expected to reach the last grade. In Uganda, for example, one in every three children enrolled is expected to reach the last grade (Riddell, 2003; Nishimura et al., 2009; Gakuu, 2012; UNESCO, 2013; UNICEF, 2012). Among the strong determinants of whether a child in Kenya will enroll or fail to enroll in school includes the place of residents, family income and gender. Children from rural households, also children from poor families are much more likely to be out of school than children from rich families (Gakuu, 2012; Ogola, 2010; Mwanik & Orodho, 2016; Migosi et al., 2012; Dzombo, 2015; Rasto, 2015; Wangui, 2012).

The ASAL area in Kenya has lagged behind in education because the nomadic communities who are inhabitants of these regions resisted education since they deemed it antagonistic to their cultural, social and economic way of life. This lack of interest and motivation results in low enrolment figures and high drop-out rates (GOK 2012; Ngome, 2005; Munene & Ruto, 2015; Dzombo, 2015). Access to education in ASAL remain low because of challenges faced by the children like vast distance to and fro schools, lack of role models, low literate communities, lower valuation of girl child education and limitations of basic education resources. ASAL areas record low enrolment rate, low retention and survival rates, low completion rates, poor pupil-teacher ratio, low performance in national examinations, low transition to university (UNESCO, 2009; Migosi et al., 2012; Mwanik & Orodho, 2016; Munene & Ruto, 2015; Dzombo, 2015).

Every person should have equal opportunity to obtain quality education, such opportunity does not discriminate people by sex, social economic status, religion and geographical location (Natin, 2006; Rhynie, 1999; Wango, Musomi & Akinyi, 2012; Subrahmanian, 2006; UNESCO, 2007). The Kenya government is a signatory to major international conventions and agreement on human rights and gender equality and is therefore committed to pursue gender equality in all spheres of development and to redress the existing inequalities (ROK, 2007; Kibui, Athiemoolan & Mwaniki, 2014). World Bank (2006) established that one additional year of primary education beyond the mean boosts the wage rate on average by between 5 and 15 percent, with generally higher returns for girls than for boys. Similarly, one additional year beyond the mean in secondary education boosts the average wage rate by between 15 to 25 percent. Therefore educating girls and women spurs economic development. The social development of a nation can be enhanced through the provision of education to girls and women. More educated women tend to be healthier, desire to have fewer children and provide them with better health care and education and are likely to take care of their families (Bashuna, 2013; Onsomu, Kosimbei & Ngware, 2005; Collymore, 2005; World Bank, 2001).

The role of education in sustainable social and economic development is universally recognized and it is fair and equitable that such benefits should be enjoyed by both men and women. Educated women are at a better position to take part in political process like civil participation, attending political meeting and securing political benefits for themselves and others (World Bank, 2001; Onsomu, Kosimbei & Ngware, 2005). The education of women is important particularly given their reproductive role and as care-givers of children as well as being homemakers (Rhynie, 1999).

Bellew & King (1993) observed that:

Educated women have smaller families, fewer of their children die in infancy and the children who survive are healthier and better educated. Moreover, educated women are better prepared to enter the paid labor force, which is critical to the welfare of the many female-headed households in developing countries (p. 285).

Education of girls and women is an important investment which has multiplier effects, given the role of women in socializing the next generation as well as contributing to economic, social and political aspects of national development. However, there exist considerable gender inequalities in the education sector (Rhynie, 1999; MOE, 2008; Onsomu et al., 2005; Collymore, 2005; Bellew & King, 1993; KNBS, 2013; Subrahmanian, 2006; UNESCO, 2009; Kibui et al., 2014).

The 1995 commonwealth plan of action on Gender and Development identified areas in which gender discrimination exist as: girls domestic responsibilities that reduces the time they get for education; early marriages and pregnancies; customary attitudes; sexual harassment and lack of gender awareness on the part of educators. There is also

discrimination in educational resources (Rhynie, 1999; Abdulahi, 2012; Kipkulei, Chepcheng, Chepcheng & Boitt, 2012; Creighton, Yieke, Okely, Mareri, Wafula & Smith, 2006; Ndari, 2014). Imbalances do exist in the provision and access to education in Kenya. Economic Survey of 2002 notes that, “Enrolment in various levels is characterized by gender, region and income disparities. In 2000, the National Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) in primary education was 87.6% but was only 17.8% in North Eastern Province as compared to 106% in central province” (ROK, 2002, p. 54).

The report further identifies the measures of efficiency parameters and notes that the high wastage rates that are associated with dropout in schools, the low transition between sub-sectors, over-centralized school curriculum development and unduly lengthy completion periods in higher education, render the education system inefficient (Abdulahi, 2012; Bashuna, 2013; Bellew & King, 1993; Dube & Orodho, 2014; Kipkulei et al., 2012). This argument is supported by Eshiwani (1993) who notes that there are gender differences in enrolment and wastage. The report noted that increasing poverty and HIV/AIDS pandemic have also exacerbated the dropout and non completion rates.

Gender imbalances place female at a disadvantaged position than their male counterparts because of the cultural history of the two sexes. However, the government notes with a lot of concern the important role women play in a country. Economic Survey of 2001 asserts that: “having signed the Beijing declaration and platform for action (1995), the Kenyan government does recognize the importance and contribution of women to development” (ROK, 2001, p. 44).

World Bank (2006) emphasized these gender disparities and noted that the difference between male and female enrolment rates is relatively unaffected by increases in household expenditure. This relationship implies that more than just an increase in household income levels will be needed to improve female enrolment in relation to male enrolment.

Todaro, (1998) noted that the estimated high returns to female education, not to mention the effect of female education on fertility, points up the need to find the causes of low female enrolment. One obvious cause is simply discrimination against girls which exist for groups of households with the same average expenditure. World Bank (1999) gave evidence of bias against educating female at all income levels. For example, in Zambia, it is at its most extreme among lower income groups while in Gambia, the literacy rate for women employed in both large and small export farming enterprises is 79%, whereas for men the rates are 46% in large export farming and 42% in small export farming. In Guinea, cash crop and subsistence farmers enroll significantly fewer children in school; girls in particular have only a one in ten chance, on average, of attending primary school.

Gachathi Report of 1976 supported the above argument and adds that similar and often serious imbalances do exist at location, divisional and district levels within the same provinces. The factors determining these imbalances need also to be carefully analyzed province by province if success is to be achieved in creation and use of increased educational opportunities. The report further take issue with pregnancy as one of the causes of girl drop-out and recommends for a responsibility worked out programme of education on family life and responsible parenthood. The report however doesn't exhaust all the other causes of imbalances (ROK, 1976).

Education of girls and women is an important investment which has multiplier effects, given the role of women in socializing the next generation as well as contributing to economic, social and political aspects of national development. However, there exist considerable gender inequalities in the education sector (Rhynie, 1999; MOE, 2008; Onsomu et al., 2005; Collymore, 2005; Bellew & King, 1993; KNBS, 2013; Subrahmanian, 2006; UNESCO, 2009; Kibui et al., 2014).

The ASAL has a higher number of people who have not enrolled in school compared to other regions in the country; still there are greater gender gaps. An analysis indicated only 32.3% of people in ASAL have enrolled in school against a national average of 76.8% with only 0.5% of women in ASAL areas having attended secondary school. In Turkana there exists a huge gender gap where the percentage of women who have enrolled in school stands at 6 percent against a male percentage of 26.6 (UNESCO, 2009; Migosi et al., 2012).

There is need for immediate and effective ways of addressing these inequalities. UNESCO (2009) indicate that there are a number of interventions to address school participation in ASAL areas, these include low cost boarding schools, mobile schools, school feeding programs and open and distance learning program (Kibui, 2014; Wango et al., 2012).

Objectives

1. To establish the enrolment and the population of boys and girls aged 6-13 from 2008 to 2015
2. To determine the non-schooling gap for boys and girls from 2008 to 2015
3. To project the non-schooling gap for boys and girls to 2030

Methodology

The research design adopted for this study is mixed method research which involves the combination of both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. The design is more than just a collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data, it involves using the two approaches in tandem resulting in an overall strength of the study (Creswell, 2009; Zohrabi, 2013; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Quantitative method involves numerical values and measurement which help in the description, prediction, explanation and determination of social patterns whereas qualitative method aids in interpretation and exploration which lead to understanding and changing of social phenomena. Mixed method research design, therefore has both precision and depth (Zandvianian et al., 2013). The research philosophy subscribed to in this study is pragmatism. Pragmatism is action-oriented in nature as it aims at solving problems in a practical and sensible way rather than by having fixed ideas or theories. From the pragmatists' point of view, knowledge comes from taking action and learning from the experiences and outcomes of these actions (Morgan, 2007).

According to Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2006), pragmatism is outcome oriented and is interested in determining the meaning of things. Biesta (2010) points out that pragmatism as a paradigm focuses on the product of the research. It places primary importance on the research question (Tshakkori & Teddlie, 2003). It is based on the belief that theories can be both contextual and generalizable by analyzing them for transferability to another situation. Pragmatic research is able to maintain both subjectivity in its own reflections on research and objectivity in data collection and analysis. The study employed document analysis and interview schedules to collect data. Quantitative data was collected by way of analyzing documents obtained from officers in charge of statistics at the sub-county education offices and also from Kenya National Bureau of statistics officers at the County level. Qualitative data was collected using interview schedules which were administered to Sub County Education Officers.

Findings

The findings revealed that there was an annual increase in the enrolment and the population of boys and girls between the age of 6 -13 in Turkana county. Table 1 presents data on the total population, enrolment and non-schooling gap for boys in the county from 2008 to 2015.

Table 1: Non-Schooling Gap for Boys from 2008 to 2015

Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Total Population(6-13 yrs)	117049	118983	121657	118571	125093	120268	123713	127070
Net Enrolment (6-13 Years)	36644	38189	43992	44142	47948	49282	62245	64300
Non-Schooling gap	80405	80794	77665	74429	77145	70986	61468	62770

From Table1, it is evident that the population of 6-13 year old boys was growing from 117,049 in 2008 to 127,070 in 2015 similarly; the enrolment of 6-13 year old boys at the primary school level in the county was also increasing. The net enrolment rose steadily from 36,644 in 2008 to 64,300 in 2015. Although both population and enrolment were rising, the rate of growth of enrolment was higher than that of the population resulting in a decrease in the non-schooling gap. The non-schooling gap for boys in the county was steadily declining from 80,405 in 2008 to 62,770 in 2015 indicating that there was a positive response towards the education of the boy child and was in line with the constitutional requirement that makes basic education compulsory for all irrespective of inherent economic, geographical and social factors. Generally, the findings presented a positive picture of the county though by 2015 the gap still existed contrary to the MDG number two which stated that by 2015 all children of primary school going age should have enrolled in school (MOEST, 2014; UNESCO, 2000; MOE, 2008). Table 2 presents data on the total population, enrolment and non-schooling gap for girls in the county from 2008 to 2015.

Table 2: Non-Schooling Gap for Girls from 2008 to 2015

Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Total Population (6-13 yrs)	103463	105839	97769	108694	113449	109606	113354	116086
Net Enrolment (6-13 Years)	17365	18793	22413	23722	24428	26317	30380	33468
Non-Schooling gap	86098	87046	75356	84972	89021	83289	82974	82618

The population of 6-13 year old girls in the county, according to Table 2, kept on increasing over the years such that it was 103,463 in 2008 and it rose to 116,086 in 2015. The net

enrolment recorded a steady increase over the study period from 17,365 in 2008 to 33,468 in 2015. The non-schooling gap for girls in Turkana County was erratic and unsteadily and this was attributable to high dropout rate among the girls due to early pregnancy, low priority given to girl child education, lack of role models in the society, mobile schooling that does not favor the girl child and long distance to and from school. Unlike the boy child in the county, the girl child education was threatened and all the intervention measures that were in place seemed not to reverse the trend effectively as such the MDG goal number three on promotion of gender equity and goal number two on achieving Universal Primary Education by 2015 had not been attained (UNESCO, 2014; ROK, 2012). Out of a population of 115,085 children 82,618 are not in school as at 2015 contrary to the expectations of the Dakar Framework for Action. Table 3 gives a presentation of the projections of the population, enrolments and the non-schooling gap from 2016 to 2030.

Table 3: Projected Non-schooling Gap for Boys and Girls from 2016 to 2030

Gender	2016	2018	2020	2022	2024	2026	2028	2030
Boys	60490	53291	45620	40784	33293	26964	20653	13866
Girls	83018	84500	81846	82567	82079	81487	81532	81007
Total	143508	137791	127466	123351	115372	108451	102185	94873

The projections as given in Table 3 above indicate that by 2030 the non-schooling gap will still be there in Turkana County though it was projected to reduce from 143,508 in 2016 to 94,873 in 2030. The projected non-schooling gap for boys is steadily declining from 60,490 in 2016 to 13,866 by 2030. The non-schooling gap for girls is projected to be at a high of 81,007 by 2030 after a slight drop from the projected 83,018 in 2016.

There seems to be a tremendous improvement in narrowing the gap for boys in Turkana County however for girls more efforts must be put in to bring down the gap and ultimately reach zero. Such efforts include government and non-governmental strategies and approaches that collectively impact positively on enrolment and hence the attainment of SDG number four and goal number five that demand quality education is provided in an inclusive and equitable manner and gender equality and empowerment for women and girls (UNDP, 2016; UN, 2015). It was reported in the interviews conducted that there was need to strengthen affirmative action and to sensitize the community further on the benefits of educating the girl-child in the society in an effort to boost the enrolment and retention of girls in school. In summary the non-schooling gap in Turkana County from 2008 to 2030 is presented in Figure 1.1 below.

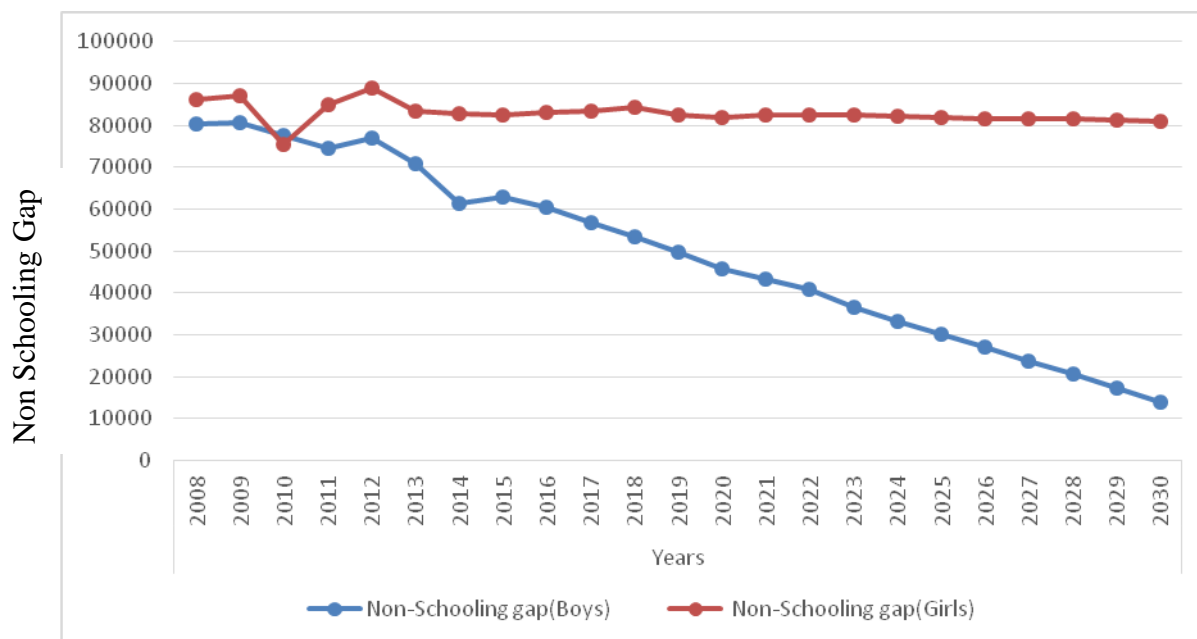


Figure 1.1 Graphical trend analysis for the non-schooling gaps for both boys and girls in Turkana County

Figure 1.1 shows that the non-schooling gap is projected to decline gradually over the years however, by 2030 the gap will not have been bridged. The non-schooling gap for boys by 2030 is projected at 13,866 while that of girls is 81,007 giving a divergence of 67,141 implying that gender disparity is projected to persist to the target year. This imply that the attainment of the Kenya Vision 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goal number four, on quality education, and five, on gender equality, will remain a mirage if effective planning is not carried out so that the non-schooling gap is closed.

Conclusion

The non-schooling gap for both boys and girls is narrowing as we move to the target year however; it will not have closed by 2030 although the gap for girls is minimally narrowing compared to that of boys. Therefore more boys than girls are getting enrolled in the county. To address the apparent gender gap between boys and girls, the national government through the ministry of education and the respective county governments to mount vigorous sensitization programmes geared towards raising the school enrolment and narrowing the gender gap. Specifically, the county government should put in place appropriate mechanisms that involve door to door campaign for children to enroll so as to reverse the existing trend of a non-schooling gap.

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