

Influence of School Feeding Program on Learner's Enrolment for Primary School Education in Mogotio Sub County of Baringo County

Kokwee Zachary Kiprotich*

Kenyatta University, Kenya

*Corresponding author

Kokwee Zachary Kiprotich

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Abstract: The purpose of the study was to investigate the extent to which school feeding program affect enrolment of learners in primary school education. The study adopted an exploratory approach using a descriptive survey design to obtain information that will be used to describe the existing phenomena. The study was done in 10 primary schools in Mogotio Division. The unit of analysis constituted of 70 respondents (Head teacher/ Heads of school feeding program, Teachers, parent representatives and pupils). Purposive random sampling was used in this case whereby all the 70 respondents were picked to fill the questionnaire. A research questionnaire was used. The study concludes feeding programs enhance attendance levels in the centres to a very great extent that there were cases of children who miss school because of the feeding program in place and that children miss school because of sickness, family affairs, lack of school uniform and food at home, poor performances which make them shy away, lack of parental support and guidance as well as poor characteristics developed by students. The findings of this study may be of use to the various primary schools for it would assist them understand better the issues related to school feeding programmes. The study would also go a long way to helping the government in making relevant policy to safeguard the wellbeing of primary school learners by providing well balanced feeding programs to these centres as well as budgetary allocation to the same.

Keywords: School Feeding Program, Learner's Enrolment.

INTRODUCTION

In the developing world, 200 million children under five years of age are malnourished [1]. Most of these children live in abject poverty, have not had enough to eat since birth and will never complete primary school. Consequently, their future will undoubtedly be as bleak as their past leading to intergenerational transmission of poverty. National economies of such countries will develop very slowly and in difficulty. In Kenya, approximately 3.3 million people including schoolchildren are currently starving, and this has qualified as a national disaster [2]. Mogotio District has a poverty incidence of 68% and a Poverty Gap of 17% according to [3]. According to him, poverty incidence is the share of total population whose consumption is below the poverty line. The Poverty Gap is a measure of how much poorer people are in relation to the poverty line. The editor further defines poverty line as the cost of a basket of food that allows minimum nutritional requirements to be met, set at 2,250 cal/ adult equivalent/day, in addition to the cost of meeting basic non-food needs. In Kenya, poverty line is Ksh. 1,239 for rural settings and Ksh. 2,648 for urban settings. This situation is aptly Brown's [4] cited in MoEST Annual report [5] scenario and thus requires immediate intervention, particularly for the education of children. The level of participation in the primary schools in Mogotio District has not been standardized.

At the same time, in majority of the primary schools, parents still contribute maize and sugar which is used for the preparation of snack and morning porridge which is a prove that the school feeding program has not been effective in the region. Utmost, the school feeding program is organized within the school by parents but this is always dependent on whether there is a higher or lower participation of learners.

EMPIRICAL LITERATURE REVIEW

Influence of SFPs on Pupils' Enrolment

School feeding programs themselves contribute to enhanced enrolment. Several factors influence the enrollment of students in the primary grades. According to Ranivnder [6], the importance of the first (primary) years of school and that these years have the largest impact on success later in school and in life. Children in poor health start school later in life or not at all. A study in Nepal found that the probability of attending school was 5% for stunted children versus 27% for children of normal nutritional status [7]. In Ghana, malnourished children entered school at a later age and completed fewer years of school than better nourished children [8]. A recent evaluation of an on-going school feeding program in Burkina Faso found that school canteens were associated with increased school enrollment especially among girls.

A small pilot school feeding program in Malawi was evaluated for its effect on enrolment. Over a three month period there was a 5% increase in enrolment compared to control schools over the same period [9]. The same study found out that providing food as a take home ration can be an effective incentive for school attendance, but alternative programs, such as cash transfers, may be more cost-effective and simpler to administer. School feeding programs face challenges in reaching the poorest wherever enrolment is less than universal because enrolment rates are always lowest among the poorest [10]. In urban Botswana, for example, enrolment is effectively universal and the potential errors of exclusion resulting from children not being in school are hardly a concern [11]. In Bangladesh, IFPRI and the World Bank evaluated the impact of a Government FFE programme that covered over 2 million children in 2000. The enrolment in FFE programme schools was found to have increased by 35 percent over the two year period between the programme start and after its first year. This increase was driven by a remarkable 44 percent increase in girl's enrolment and by a 28 percent increase for boys. In non-programme school's enrolment increased by 2.5 percent (5.4 for girls and 0.1 for boys) during the same period.

The School Feeding Program in Kenya

The MOEST existing school feeding programme structure is responsible for the implementation and coordination of the programme at all levels. The overall management of this programme at district level is the responsibility of the DEOs. For the successful implementation of this programme, the DEO's will work closely with the school feeding programme section at MOEST headquarters and communities at local level. This increased the number of new students by 1.3 million and brought Kenya closer to the Millennium Development Goal of complete primary education for all children and achievement of gender parity. School feeding enhances free primary education by providing a meal at school. Children from food insecure households do not have to miss school to search for food. There is also evidence that school feeding programs attract underprivileged girls to attend school; but still gender ratios remain below parity in all schools. Although progress is being made, there continues to be significant regional

disparities in access to education and school enrolment [12].

For instance, in Nairobi's slums, more than 70% of school age children are not enrolled in school, as compared to the national average of 8%. In addition to promoting universal primary education, Kenya's SFP seeks to target 23 socio-economically disadvantaged and nutritionally vulnerable children in pre-primary and primary schools in select districts. Specific objectives and expected benefits also include improving the attention span and learning capabilities of children, improving school facilities, supporting school-based micro-enterprises, and providing a significant contribution to the nutrient intakes of schoolchildren. However, these goals will not be met without adequate facilities, food access, resources, and training [13].

The WFP and the Kenyan Ministry of Education (Government of Kenya) have targeted 1.2 million children in roughly 4,000 schools (approximately 1/6th of children enrolled in primary school) and have expanded school feeding activities in food-insecure areas. According to Suchman, [14], a national school feeding program has not been fully implemented in Kenya, although it was approved by Parliament. The policy highlights the need for school meals, calls for the expansion of the program, and encourages communities to provide mid-day meals to needy children [15].

According to the Economic Survey of 2009, the Government of the Republic of Kenya (GOK) recognizes the importance in FPE as one of the most important levers for accelerating the attainment of Education for All and the Millennium Development Goals. This is to enhance access, equity and quality of services for children aged 4-5 years, especially those from arid and semi-arid areas and poor households. According to the survey, enrolment in primary schools has increased significantly over the past decade; whereas there were 1.59 million children enrolled in primary schools in 2003, the number rose to 1.72 million in 2008. Although the number of children enrolled in primary schools has been increasing, on average they represent only 50.1 percent of the eligible population. This progressive data is shown on the table 1:

Table-1: Pupil Enrolment in primary schools, 2003-08

Year	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Children						
GIRLS	785,655	804,304	812,347	805,891	814,930	834,925
BOYS	816,577	823,417	830,828	866,445	876,163	885,320

(Source: Economic Survey, 2009)

SFP in the country targeted primary schools in ASAL areas. The partnership between WFP and GoK

set a target to feed an annual average of 270,000 pupils in the arid zones. A mid-day meal is given to the pupils

under this programme. Currently nine districts (Turkana, Marsabit, Mandera, Garisa, Wajir, Tana River, Samburu, Moyale and Isiolo) are covered up to 100%. A total of 11 districts in semi-arid zones (Baringo, Koibatek, Laikipia, Mbere, Narok, Pokot, Kilifi, Kwale, Mwingi and Lamu) are covered in pockets, through the homegrown SFP. The estimated beneficiaries are 346,394 pupils [16].

STUDY FINDINGS

Influence of School Feeding Program on Pupil’s Enrolment

The conceptualization of the study as far as enrolment is concerned was that the SFP would attract new pupils and help to retain in school those who were already enrolled. According to the MoEST, enrolment is the total number of pupils in class lists at the end of every month. The scope time-wise was the period from 3rd May 2003 to 30th September 2008. Table 2 gives the

average enrolment figures for both primary and pre-primary sections of the sampled schools during the study period.

From Table 2, it's evident that enrolment numbers had been increasing. In 2003 when the SFP was introduced, the only four schools, which managed to give details, had an average pupil enrolment of 1161. This kept increasing every year until the end of the year under study, in 2004 they were 1520, in 2005 they were 1542, and in 2006 they were 1590. In 2007 and 2008, the average enrolments were 1599 and 1701 respectively. This represented an increase of 3.092 % between 2003 (before SFP) and 2004 (2nd year into the SFP). The notable percentage increase 46.5% between the year before SFP introduction and the last year after SFP introduction. This suggests that the introduction of the SFP attracted most the children who were out of school.

Table-2: Sample Average Pupil Enrolments; by Year and School

Year \ School	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Mogotio	322	399	404	445	443	472
St. Mary’s	392	468	480	489	490	505
Emining	212	294	303	294	287	321
Kisanana	235	359	355	362	379	403
TOTALS	1161	1520	1542	1590	1599	1701

(Source: Research Data, 2014)

Table-3: Enrolment of Children in Every Class

	Frequency	Percentage
1-10 pupils	8	13.1
11-20	11	18.0
21-30	23	37.7
More than 30 Pupils	19	31.1
Total	N=61	100.0

The study sought to establish the enrolment levels of children in the class. According to the study findings as presented in the table above, majority of the respondents indicated that their classrooms had an

enrolment of between 21- 30 pupils presented by 38%, more than 30 pupils (31%), 11-20 years (18%) and 1-10 years as shown by 13% respectively. This information is also as presented below.

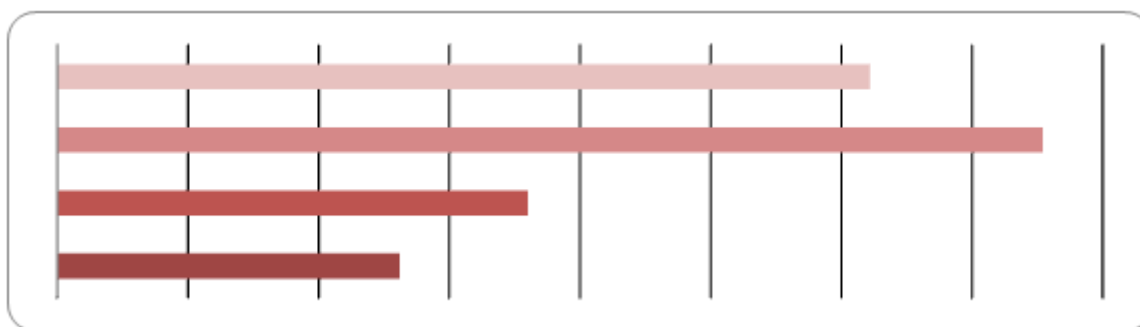


Fig-1: Enrolment of Children in Every Class

Table-4: Extent the Feeding Programme in the Centre Enhance Enrolment

	Frequency	Percentage
Very great extent	28	45.9
Great extent	10	16.4
Moderate	14	23.0
Little Extent	9	14.8
Total	N=61	100.0

Respondents were required by the study to indicate the extent the feeding programme in the center enhance enrolment. On this question, majority of the respondents said that feeding programme in the center

enhance enrolment to a very great extent as shown by 46%, moderate extent (23%), great extent (16%) and little extent respectively.

Table-5: Time when Enrollment Takes Place in the Centre

	Frequency	Percentage
Early every year	25	41.0
Late every year	24	39.3
Midyear	3	4.9
Always	9	14.8
Total	N=61	100.0

On the question on when enrolment is carried out, the study established that enrolment of most schools is done early every year as shown by 41%, late

every year as shown by 39%, always (15%) and mid-year as shown by 5% respectively. This information is also as presented in the figure below;

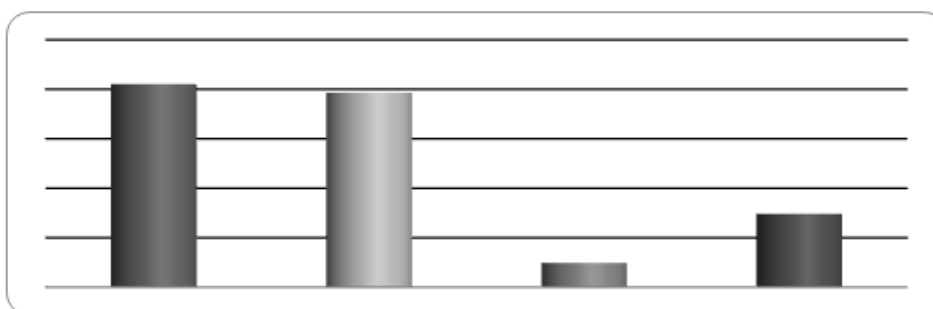


Fig-2: Time when Enrollment Takes Place in the Centre

Table-6: Extent of agreement with the statements on feeding program effect on school enrolment

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Most of the parents enquire about the meals provided to make a decision of whether to enroll the children in the center	2.63	.89508
There has no change on enrolment levels despite the presence of feeding programme	2.79	1.18223
I find my pupils in class every time they take a meal in the school	1.89	1.14962
Most of the parents are always willing to bring their children in the center where dietary meal are provided	1.84	.958

The study also sought to establish the extent of agreement with the statements on feeding program effect on school enrolment. According to the study findings, majority of the respondents indicated that most of the parents are always willing to bring their children in the center where dietary meal are provided and that teachers always find pupils in class every time they take a meal in the school as shown by the mean scores of 1.84 and 1.89 respectively. Other respondents

fairly agreed that Most of the parents enquire about the meals provided to make a decision of whether to enroll the children in the center and that there has no change on enrolment levels despite the presence of feeding programme as shown by the mean scores of 2.63 and 2.79 respectively.

CONCLUSION

The study found out that majority of the respondents indicated that their classrooms had an enrollment of between 21- 30 pupils as presented by 38% and more than 30 pupils (31%) and that majority of the respondents said that feeding programme in the center enhance enrolment to a very great extent as shown by 46%. The study also found out that enrollment of most schools is done early every year. Finally, as regards to enrollment, majority of the respondents indicated that most of the parents are always willing to bring their children in the center where dietary meal are provided and that teachers always find pupils in class every time they take a meal in the school as shown by the mean scores of 1.84 and 1.89 respectively.

Other respondents fairly agreed that most of the parents enquire about the meals provided to make a decision about whether to enroll the children in the center and that there has been no change on enrolment levels despite the presence of feeding programme as shown by the mean scores of 2.63 and 2.79 respectively. The study concludes that feeding programme in the centre enhance enrolment largely. The study further concludes that the primary schools sampled had enrolment of between 21- 30 pupils and over 30 pupils per school and that enrolment of most schools is done early every year. The study also concludes that most of the parents are always willing to bring their children in the centre where dietary meal are provided and that teachers always find pupils in class every time they take a meal in the school.

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