

## **Towards Improved Access to Secondary Education in Kenya: A Focus on In-School-Factors that Hinder Effective Transition from Primary Schools**

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*This study sought to investigate some in-school factors that influence learner access to secondary schools after completion of primary schooling in Narok North District and to suggest strategies that could improve the level of access. The study was conducted in public primary and secondary schools in Narok North District, Narok County using descriptive survey. Stratified sampling technique was used to select the schools from the three Divisions for equal representation. Individual schools and respondents to participate in the study were selected using simple random sampling. All the twenty four (24) primary school head teachers, four (4) secondary school principals and three (3) Quality Assurance and Standards Officers in the selected Divisions were purposively selected to participate. A total of 68 class eight pupils and 44 form one students were randomly chosen from the sampled schools. The study had a total of 143 participants. Data were collected using questionnaires and an interview schedule. A pilot test was done in one secondary and three primary schools. The study revealed forced repetition, little emphasis placed on co-curricular activities, inadequate facilities in schools, acute understaffing as major impediments to open access to secondary level of education in the area. The study recommends the need to build and improve infrastructure and facilities to existing schools, enhancement of strict curriculum supervision in the schools to ensure adherence to government policies and directives and proper reinforcement and monitoring of teacher preparation and content delivery to provide a learning environment that is child-centered, gender-sensitive and disability friendly.*

**Key words:** *Access, child labour, Disability-friendly environment, gender-sensitive, School-based factors, Transition.*

### **1.1 Background to the Study**

The world continues to experience rapid changes in the environment aimed at achieving goals in industrialization through increased technological advances. There is no doubt that an increased level of education will be a sure way to enable the world travel that long and tedious journey. The 2015 deadline for the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, a formulation of the Jomtien Protocols (1990) and the Accra Accord (2002), is slipping away fast after eminent failure to achieve Goal number two of the protocols, a catalyst for action towards achieving educational development. This situation has moved the world back to the drawing board to formulate new goals on a new timeline with massive expenditure in order to achieve the much anticipated education for all. The proposed Sustainable Development Goal 4 appears to bring with it a more ambitious and transformative education agenda including; enabling all young people to complete a basic education cycle including quality pre-primary education; acquiring knowledge, skills and competencies for

work, entrepreneurship and life and accessing educational opportunities based on equity, flexibility and adaptability (UNESCO (2014).

Kenya, as part of the international community has not been left out of the latest renewed effort and move towards achieving the goals of EFA. As noted earlier by Sifuna and Otiende (2006), the Country has continued to place considerable significance to the role of education in promoting economic and social development. This, in their view has resulted in the rapid expansion of the education system to provide qualified persons to manage its growing economic and administrative institutions expected of an independent state. The attainment of EFA and any other goals that the world may set will no doubt, as stated earlier by Lewin & Stuart (2003, as cited in Lewin 2007), depend on the adequate flow of qualified secondary graduates into primary teaching which will be hard to ensure where secondary enrolment rates are low. With the poor transition of learners to secondary schools, achieving educational goals would be difficult even with the increased enrolment in Kenya's primary and secondary levels of education due to Free Primary and Free Day Secondary Education systems respectively (Mathooko, 2009); not even with automatic promotion which enables children to reach the eighth grade without repetition (Sawamura & Sifuna, 2008).

In order to provide quality education and training to children, the government outlined targets in the Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2005 to improve the primary to secondary school transition which stood at 47% to increase to 70% (MoEST 2005). Many children, even with these efforts, still remain at risk of lacking access to education and joining child labour, whose best alternative is school (African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child abuse and Neglect [ANPPCAN, 2004]). In order to secure and strengthen the benefits of education it is important not only to focus on high enrolment but also on pupils' retention and eventual progression to secondary school. In his speech at the Council on Foreign Relations in Washington DC, the Minister for Education the late Hon. George Saitoti, while presenting a paper on 'Challenges and Policy Responses,' outlined low quality of some of the existing secondary schools and high cost of secondary education as challenges to the transition process in Kenya's education system (MoEST, 2004). A critical look at this ministerial statement creates an impression that there may be other underlying issues in the transition process hence it clearly defined the basis for conducting the current study.

## **1.2 The Problem Statement**

Although the government of Kenya has done much to improve her primary school education sector, access to secondary school remains a challenge with enrolment in this sector not matching that in primary schools (MoEST, 2005; Wango, 2011). There remains a challenge on how to expand access and improve the quality of education provided and improve the performance in national examinations. The semi arid lands in the region may have their own complexities in terms of education provision. This study was aimed at investigating some school-related factors that restrict access to secondary schooling in Narok County where retention rates in formal schooling are low (Kuria, 2006).

## **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the study were:

- i. To establish in-school factors that hinder access and participation in secondary education in Narok County, Kenya.

- ii. To suggest possible steps to improve access to secondary education in Narok County, Kenya.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Quality and Relevance of Education**

The ultimate purpose of schooling is to provide children with quality and relevant education that endows them with the skills to participate and contribute fully in their societies and economies. Serpel (1993, as cited in Chimombo, 2005) points out the need for curriculum which is more closely related to the daily lives of students and providing practical skills to them. Those who are unable to cope with academic oriented system see no need of moving to the next level after basic education in primary school as they see no benefits of schooling. Sawamura and Sifuna (2008) and Ohba (2009) note that poor quality education in the schools may make children from nearby school to look for other distant schools-due to lower returns from the schooling. The APHRC (2007b) adds that perceptions of curricula inadequacies have given rise to apathy, school disaffection; anti-social behaviour and poor quality of primary schools in urban slums and demand for extra tuition have influenced transition.

A good system of education should be inclusive and responsive to the diverse needs and circumstances of learners' abilities, skills and knowledge they bring to the teaching and learning process (UNESCO, 2004; Ngugi, 2002). The Strategic Public Relations and Research Limited (2005), decries the follies of having a rigid education system whose successes are based on nothing but good grades in examination meaning that those who fail to post impressive results are condemned as failures. Contributing to this debate, Kisirkoi and Kadenyi (2012) add that the aim of education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century should be to educate the 'whole child', the 'whole person' and not mere passing of the national examination. Eshiwani (1990), quotes sentiments by the then Minister for Education in 1978 who lamented:

Our education system has put more emphasis on the production of qualified manpower, but there is much contradiction in the objectives in this context. For instance while the endeavor to fulfill the nation's manpower requirements continues, the very system employed to do so spills thousands into the cold, making them redundant and superfluous in the production system (p. 36).

The perception of efficiency in Kenya's education system through an examination index has had structural and financial impact on schools, teachers, pupils and parents. This, according to Abagi and Odipo (1997) has led to school management committees devising ways of making sure that the right candidates are registered for KCPE. The end result is that the learners are academically overworked and left with very little time for play. Kisirkoi and Kadenyi (2012) quote Jensen, (1998) who discovered that the human brain cannot operate effectively when threatened. Teachers who are under threat and pressure to produce excellent examination results will not facilitate learners to discover and exploit their full potential but to pass examination by memorizing of facts.

### **2.2 Hidden Costs of Education**

According to Abagi and Odipo (1997) the cost of school based instruction itself is a major contributing factor to low completion. This is because the schools require pupils to be in uniforms, buy textbooks and stationery and pay tuition and activity fees. Although the Kenyan education system offers Free Primary Education and Free Day Secondary Education Policies, household educational expenditure is still heavy. Other costs for admission and registration, school building

fund, examinations, boarding, parent teacher association (PTA), book rental, the cost of uniforms, the provision of furniture, extra tuition and transport all add up to two or three times the cost of tuition (Kuria, 2006). The Global Monitoring Report estimates the charges at one-third of household income (UNESCO, 2008). In neighboring Tanzania, a study conducted by Rajani (2001, as cited in Wedgwood, 2005) reported that some teachers deliberately under-teach in order to coerce pupils into attending their private tuition classes.

### **2.3 Institutional Processes and Teacher Attitudes**

Quality teaching is worth investing in. While expressing agreement with Schulman's Pedagogic Content Knowledge (CPK), (Schulman, 1986), Kisirkoi and Kadenyi (2012) noted that a teacher should acquire deep content knowledge and skills to break down the content in a form that students best understand it. Abagi and Odipo (1997) note that few classroom observations in Kenya indicate that there are cases where teachers' negative attitudes 'push' pupils out of school. They state that the pupils are sometimes neglected, abused, mis-handled and sent out of class during teaching-learning periods. Compounding this is the fact that sexual harassment and pregnancies are common in schools. A survey conducted by Ruto (2009) in 70 schools on sexual harassment and unwanted sex revealed that 58 of every 100 children had been sexually harassed while 29% boys and 24% girls reported to have been forced into unwanted sex. Abagi and Odipo (1997) note the fact that some male and female teachers have been identified as the main culprits in this vice.

Findings by Plan International noted that 80% of children in schools are forced by the teachers to kneel; others are hit about the head, punched, slapped and hit with a stick while some are whipped with electric cables (Muindi, 2010 p.27). These disciplinary measures reduce learner participation, eventually leading to drop out and failure to proceed with education. Kipkemboi (2009) saw it differently. His attempt to examine the perception of teachers and students on the challenges to moral education revealed that teachers prefer verbal correction of students to other mechanisms like scolding and corporal punishment.

### **2.4 Forced Repetition**

Studies have indicated that in a number of cases pupils are forced to repeat classes in order to score good grades. Those who have repeated many times give up and leave school thus shuttering any hopes of proceeding to secondary school. Similarly the Education Minister Prof. Ongeru linked poor performance in the year 2011 KCPE by older candidates to repetition which is common in Kenyan schools (Orido, 2011 p.11). In some schools pupils are forced to repeat upper classes several times or sit for KCPE as many as two or three times in order to obtain higher grades (Abagi & Odipo, 1997); (Muindi, 2010 p1). Similar reports by Patrinos and Psacharopoulos (1992); Otieno and Colclough (2009), agree that repetition of grades is severe among the most deprived, that is, those whose parents have the lowest levels of education and income. Nyabanyaba (2009) cites a World Bank Report of 2005 which confirms that orphans in Lesotho were more disadvantaged in repetition and dropout measures than non-orphans. Repetition, as revealed in the above findings, is a factor in school participation and was, in this study considered to establish whether it influences pupils' access to secondary education.

### **2.5 Accessibility to Schools**

As noted by Psacharopoulos and Woodhall (1997), in rural areas where many of the poorest families live, communication is likely to be difficult and there may be no access to a local school.

The long distance from such schools hinder some children from accessing secondary education especially in rural areas where population density is low and households are widely scattered (Ohba, 2009). Distance is seen to have more negative implication on the safety and security of girls, a key factor in school attendance and academic achievement (Kipserem et al, 2009). A related study by Okumu, Nakajjo and Isoke (2008) to establish the socio-economic factors that influence dropouts among pupils in selected districts in Uganda however noted the insignificance of distance to school in influencing dropouts and the learners' ability to progress in school. This finding clearly appears contrary to most of the earlier cited literature hence created a gap that called for such a study.

### **3. Methodology**

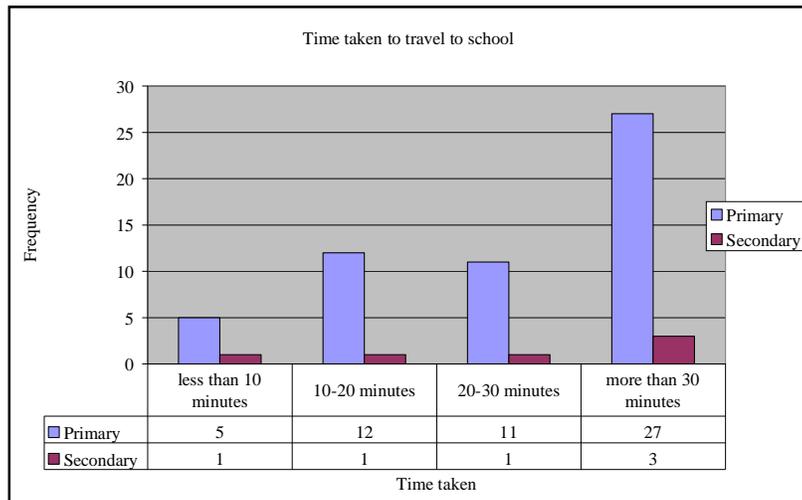
The study employed a cross-sectional descriptive survey design. Gay, Mills and Airasian (2009) state that survey research require the collection of standardized quantifiable information from all members of a population or a sample. The study targeted primary school head teachers, class eight pupils, the secondary school principals, form one students and the Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (QASOs). Stratified random sampling was used to select 24 primary schools in the three Divisions. Simple random sampling was used to select the individual schools and the respondents for the study. Ten percent (10%) of the entire standard eight pupils and form one students population in the schools for each group was selected. According to Gay et al. (2009:133) for a survey study, a sample of 10% or more of the population is acceptable as a representation of the population. The total sample therefore comprised twenty four (24) primary schools, four (4) secondary schools, twenty four (24) primary school head teachers, four (4) secondary school principals, sixty eight (68) class eight pupils, forty four (44) form one students and three (3) QASO officers. This made a total of one hundred and forty (143) respondents.

The study used questionnaires and interview schedules to collect data. Face validity of the instruments was measured by consulting experts in quality assurance at the university to enhance clarity and relevance. The reliability was established through a pilot study using 23 questionnaires. The internal consistency method was employed in pre-testing the instruments using the Cronbach alpha coefficient. Reliability of 0.7 and above yielded by the instruments was accepted to prove them reliable as recommended by Nachmias and Nachmias (1976:467). Qualitative data were analyzed inductively through content analysis while quantitative data were analyzed by the help of Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS, v 16. Results were presented in form of tables, figures and percentages indicated in brackets below the tables.

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1: Distance from Home to School

The study sought to establish the distance travelled by learners to school to find out the duration of time spent by learners in day schools while travelling from home to school. Figure 1 presented the response.



**Figure 1: Time taken by the learners to reach school.**

The results presented in figure 1 indicate that most of the pupils in primary school 27(44.3%) walked for more than 30 minutes from home to school, while for secondary they were 3(4.9%). This was followed by 12(19.7 %) of primary school pupils who indicated that they walked between 10-20 minutes to reach their schools against 1(1.6%) who were in secondary school. A total of 24(24.2%) learners indicated that they walked between 10-20 minutes. It was also noted that 11(18.0%) of primary pupils and 1(1.6%) in secondary schools walked for between 20-30 minutes. Only 5(8.2%) of the pupils in primary schools indicated that they walked for less than 10 minutes. This shows that majority of the pupils and the students in the Division walked long distances to get to school. This was supported by the QASO officials who agreed that some schools were inaccessible since the pupils were forced to walk long distances to and from schools; this affected not only the regular attendance of the pupils but also the level of learner concentration in class especially in those areas inhabited with wild animals. The human wildlife conflict which follows, affects education by reducing contact hours between teachers and pupils in the teaching/ learning process and could lower performance of the pupils in examinations.

## 4.2 Level of Staffing in Primary and Secondary Schools

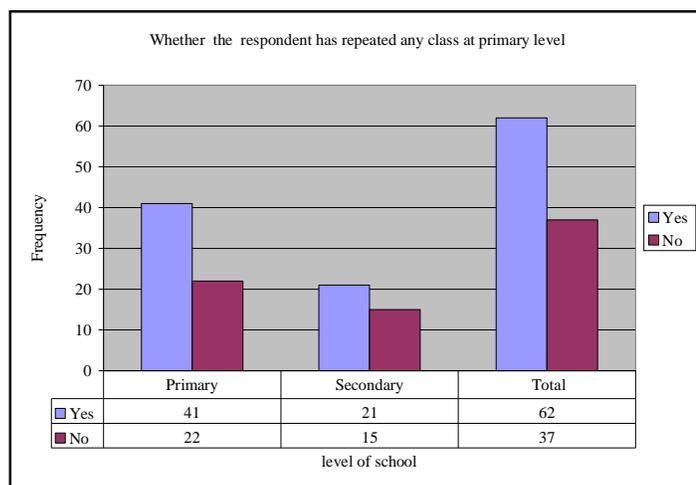
**Table 1: Pupils' and Students' Responses on the number of Teachers in their Schools**

Number of Teachers	Frequency	Percent
5-15	50	50.5
16-25	33	33.3
26-35	8	8.1
36-45	8	8.1
Total	99	100.0

The results in table 1 show that majority of the schools had between 5 to 25 teachers. Those having between 5-15 teachers had the majority response of 50(50.5%) followed by 16-25 teachers, 33(33.3 %) and the rest 8(8.1%) of the respondents who consisted of the students from the secondary schools indicated that their schools had teachers ranging between 26-35 and 36-45 teachers. This is an indication of understaffing in the schools. An interview with the QASO officials revealed that the district had a shortage of 506 teachers in primary school alone hence a teacher pupil ratio of 1:70. This case forced some schools to employ secondary school leavers who are not professionally trained as teachers thus compromising education standards and could lower performance in examinations.

## 4.3 Repetition of classes

The students and the pupils were asked to indicate whether they had ever repeated a class or not. The results were presented on figure 2.



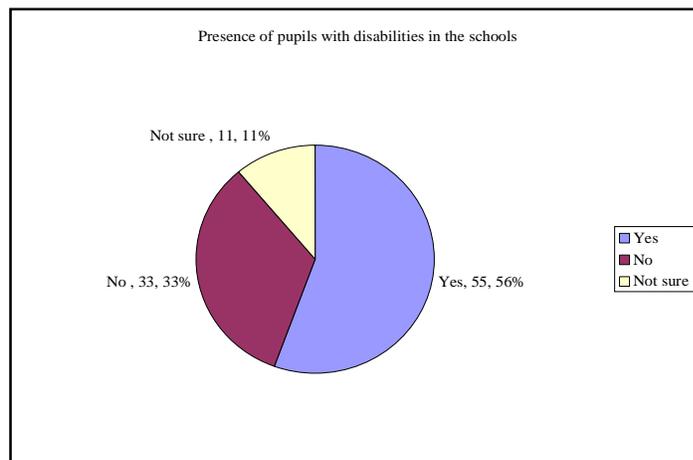
**Figure 2: Record of pupils' and students' repetition.**

It was noted that majority of the respondents 62(62.6%) of whom 41(41.4%) were in primary and 21(21.2%) in secondary school had repeated a class in primary school, while only 37(37.4%) of the respondents of whom 22(22.2%) were in primary school and 15(15.2%) in secondary school said they had not repeated a class. This was an indication that repetition of classes is rampant in schools

probably as a result of desire for better grades in examinations. The study also established that the teachers and parents were the ones who recommended the pupils to repeat the classes with a response rate of 42(42.4%) and thirty one 31(31.3%) respectively. A similar response was obtained from the interview with the QASO officials, who noted that the schools forced pupils and students to repeat because of their need for better grades.

#### 4.4 Cases of Disability among Students

The study also sought to establish whether there were students with disability in both the primary and secondary schools. This was aimed at establishing the level of inclusion in those institutions and whether some pupils failed to proceed with their education beyond primary school due to their disability. The result is shown in figure 3.



**Figure 3: Presence of pupils with disabilities in the schools.**

It was established that 55(56%) of the respondents agreed that there were pupils with disabilities in their schools. Some 33(33%) of the learners said they were not there while the rest indicated that they were not sure of the existence of such learners. Although this creates an impression of existence of inclusive education in the District, there is a possibility that some learners do not understand the concept. It could however be assumed that most of the schools in the Division were inclusive.

#### 4.5 Views of the Pupils and Students on Other School-Related Factors Influencing Transition to Secondary School.

The respondent class eight pupils and the form one students were also asked to respond to statements on other school related factors such as teacher's support for the pupils, kind of relationship between teachers and pupils and performance of the schools in national examinations. A question on conduciveness of school environments towards supporting learners with disability was included. Their responses were provided for in table 2.

**Table 2: Pupils and Students Responses on School Related Factors Influencing Transition to Secondary School**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Existence of remedial support by teachers	78(78.8 )	20(20.2)
Good relationship between teachers and pupils	81( 81.8 )	18(18.2)
Satisfaction with school examination performance	52(52.5)	47(47.5)
School environment is conducive to support the disable	40(40.4)	58(58.6)
Curriculum provision for co-curricular activities	32( 32.3)	67(67.7)
Pupils drop out when told to repeat classes	60(60.6)	39(39.4)
Teachers have a bad attitude towards slow learners	60(60.6)	37(37.4)

Table 2 indicates that majority of the pupils 78(78.8%) said that they received remedial support from their teachers after the normal hours of class. A total of 81(81.8%) indicated that they had a good relationship with the teachers. Fifty eight 58(58.6%) indicated that their schools were not conducive towards supporting learners with disabilities, 40(40.4%) indicated that their schools were disability friendly. Among the respondents 67(67.7%) stated that the school curriculum did not provide enough time for the pupils to engage in co-curriculum activities while 60(60.6%) of the pupils cited repetition of classes as a cause of dropping out of schools. It was also discovered that 60(60.6%) of the respondents said the attitude of the teachers towards slow learners was not good. The results above therefore could imply that there are school- related issues that need to be addressed to ensure smooth transition to higher levels of education.

#### **4.6: Performance of Primary Schools in National Examinations**

The study sought to examine how head teachers and principals perceived examination performance in their schools and whether this was related to learner transition. The data collected was summarized and presented in table 3.

**Table 3: Head teachers' and Principals' Responses on Performance of Schools in National Examinations**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Primary School H/teachers</b>	<b>Secondary School Principals</b>
Excellent	--	-
Very good	--	-
Good	10(41.7)	3(75)
Fair	12(50.0)	1(25)
Poor	2(8.3)	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>24(100.0)</b>	<b>4(100)</b>

Half of the Primary school head teachers rated examination performance in their schools as fair 12(50%) and good 10(41.7%). Majority of secondary school principals 3(75%) also indicated good performance. The fact that the performance is not rated as excellent or very good may imply that many learners do not perform well in the national examinations. The QASO officers revealed that most of the public schools score below average in the main examinations; hence the performance in the entire District could be rated as poor.

The study established that for the last five years majority of the primary schools 14(58.3%) had scored average mean scores of 150-250 marks, followed by 9(37.5%) which had average mean scores of between 251-300 marks. Only one school had had a mean score ranging from 300 to 350 while none of the sampled schools had scored an average score above 350, an indication that the performance in national examinations especially in primary schools was not encouraging and could have an influence on the level of transition from primary to secondary schools in the area.

#### **4.7: Average Percentage of Pupils who joined Secondary Schools in the Past Five Years**

This section provided the percentage response from the primary school head teachers and the principals on the average percentage of pupils from their schools who qualified to join secondary school and the average number of pupils admitted to form one in their schools respectively. Table 4 presents the results.

**Table 4: Average Percentage of Pupils Joining Secondary School**

<b>Percentage of pupils joining Secondary</b>	<b>Primary H/trs</b>	<b>Secondary School Principals</b>
1-20%	3(12.5)	---
21-40%	6(25.0)	---
41-60%	9(37.5)	2(50)
Above -60%	6(25.0)	2(50)
Total	24(100.0)	4(100)

The study established that among the primary school head teachers 9(37.5%) indicated that the transition rate was 41-60%. Six 6(25%) reported that the transition rate was 21- 40% and a similar number indicated that it was above 60%. Among the principals, a half (50%) indicated that the percentage of pupils joining secondary school was 41-60 % while the other half (50%) said it was above 60%. This could be attributed to the fact that the schools admit students from different areas including outside the county, which might be leading to the high transition rate. Results from the interview schedule for the QASO officials indicated that the rate of transition was almost half (50%).

#### **4.8: Primary School Head Teachers' and Secondary School Principals' Views on the School Related Factors Affecting Transition**

It was important to establish various factors related to the school that might have an effect on the transition of the pupils. In order to examine these factors, the head teachers and principals were asked to indicate whether the facilities available in the schools were adequate or not.

##### **4.8.1: Availability of Facilities in the Schools**

The response from the primary school head teachers and the secondary school principals was provided in table 5.

**Table 5: Availability of School Facilities**

Response	Primary school Head teachers	Secondary School Principals
Yes	6(25.0)	3(75))
No	18(75.0)	1(25)
Total	24(100.0)	4(100)

Table 5 shows that majority of the primary school head teachers indicated that the schools did not have enough facilities 18(75%) with only 6(25%) indicating that they were adequate. Among the principals, 3(75%) said their schools had adequate facilities against only 1(25%) who said their schools did not have enough facilities. This means that the primary schools had inadequate facilities. The QASO officials indicated that the schools lacked adequate facilities such as desks, classrooms, play grounds and libraries which are required to support learning.

#### 4.8.2 Facilities Available in the Schools

The study sought the opinion of the school administrators to establish the facilities available in the schools to find out their bearing on the performance of the schools and the transition rate to secondary schools. The results were presented in table 6.

**Table 6: Head Teachers and Principals' Responses on Facilities Available in the Schools**

Facilities in school	Very adequate		Adequate		Not adequate		Not Available	
	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
Desks	--	--	2(50)	4(16.7)	2(50)	20(83.3)	--	--
Playground	--	6(25)	3(75)	8(33.3)	1(25)	10(41.7)	--	--
Text books	--	--	2(50)	8(33.3)	2(50)	16(66.7)	--	--
Class rooms	--	--	1(25)	3(12.5)	3(75)	21(87.5)	--	--
Library	--	--	1(25)	1(4.2)	3(75)	16(66.7)	--	7(29.2)
Average	--	1( 5.0)	2(50)	5(20.0)	2(50)	17(69.2)	--	1(5.8)

**Note :** Figures in brackets represent the percentage response while figures outside brackets represent the number of respondents. Column one (1) represents Principals' responses while column two (2) represents Head teachers' responses.

The results shown in table 6 indicate that on average majority of the head teachers 17(69.2%) felt that the schools did not have adequate facilities in terms of desks, text books, class rooms and the library. The only available facility according to the head teachers was the play ground with a response of 14(58.3%) indicating that they were adequate. Only 4(16.7%) of the head teachers said that the desks were adequate, 3(12.5%) said that the classrooms were adequate while only 1(4.2%) said that the library was adequate. From the results it is shown that 7(29.2%) of the head teachers said that the library was not even available. The principals 2(50%) said that the desks, playground, the text books, classrooms and the library were adequate.

### 4.8.3 Primary School Head Teacher's Views on School-Related Factors

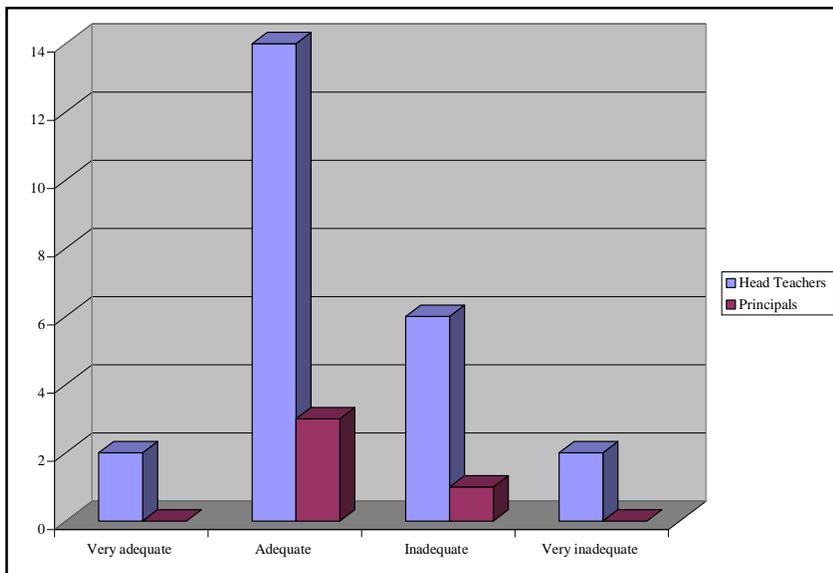
The response from the primary school head teachers views on school related factors and transition to secondary school was analyzed and presented in table 4.20.

**Table 7: Primary School Head Teachers Views on School-related Factors**

Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
a) Teachers' attitudes towards students	8(33.3)	11(45.8)	2(8.3)	2(8.3)	1(4.2)
b) Poor KCPE performance	--	7(29.2)	2(8.3)	8(33.3)	5 (20.8)
c) Forced repetition	3(12.5)	7(29.2)	--	8(33.3)	3(12.5)
d) Pupils' absenteeism	8(33.3)	11(45.8)	2(8.3)	2(8.3)	1(4.2)
e) Corporal punishment	9(37.5)	8(33.3)	6(25.0)	1(4.2)	--
f) Distance to school	2(8.3)	13 ( 54.2)	--	6(25.0)	3(12.5)

Majority of the head teachers 19(79.1%) agreed that teachers' attitudes towards the pupils was a factor that affected performance which may result in the low transition process to secondary school. They however disagreed that the performance of their schools in KCPE affected the rate of transition with a total of 13(54.1%). Two head teachers did not indicate their response to that item. Pupil's absenteeism from school was also cited as a major factor affecting the transition of the pupils with a total of 19(79.1%) agreeing to the factor. Other 11(45.8%) head teachers disagreed that forced repetition was a factor affecting pupils' transition rate against 10(41.7%) who agreed. The distance travelled by the pupils to school was a key factor in the transition process as most head teachers 15(62.5%) indicated.

### 4.8.4: Views of Head teachers and Principals on Adequacy of Teachers in their Schools



**Figure 4: Adequacy of teachers in the schools.**

On the issue of the adequacy of teachers, it was established that 16(66.6%) of the respondent head teachers said their schools had adequate teachers while 8(33.3%) indicated that the teachers were inadequate. A similar response was obtained from the principals of the secondary schools who indicated that the teachers were adequate, 3(75 %) while only one 1(25%) secondary school principal indicated that the teachers were not adequate. This indicated a difference existing between the teachers' adequacy at primary school level and at the secondary school level.

The QASO officials indicated that there were various factors which included distance between home and school, repetition of a class, lack of teacher support to the slow learners and poor teaching methods which encouraged cramming at the expense of proper content mastery. They also listed rigid disciplinary procedures such as corporal punishment that created fear among the pupils and scared them away from school.

## **5. Conclusion**

The findings of the study revealed that the factors with the highest effect on the transition rates from primary to secondary school in this category were lack of teachers support for slow learners, bad relationship between the teachers and pupils, poor KCPE performance and the curriculum which does not provide enough emphasis on co-curriculum activities. Forced repetition of grades in order to score higher marks and increase the school mean score also limits learner access to secondary schools in the area. Most of the pupils and students 42(68.9%) out of the total 61 in day schools indicated that they had to walk for between 20-30 minutes from home to school along thickets inhabited by wild animals, a case which affected their school attendance. It was also noted that both parents and teachers forced learners to repeat classes although the pressure mainly came from the teachers who demanded higher grades for the pupils to proceed on, in the process the pupils decide to drop out of school.

The study also revealed that there was little emphasis placed on the development of co-curriculum activities in the District. Sixty seven (67.7%) of the pupils indicated that they rarely participated in activities like Drama, Physical Education (P.E), Music and Athletics. This is a case that could obviously lead to drop out of learners who feel that school life is too academic-oriented. It was also noted that some schools do not provide conducive learning environment to learners with disabilities probably due to ignorance or negative attitude among teachers and community members towards disability. It was noted that for the last five years majority of the public schools in the District had scored average mean scores of 150-250 marks, an indication of poor performance. The response from the QASO officials also confirmed that there were many cases of over age pupils (17-23 years) in the schools who did not respect the school rules especially after their initiation into adulthood through circumcision, a situation that lowered the level of access to secondary school. It can be concluded that the school related factors have a direct effect on the transition rate to high school as they are related directly to the performance hence if the schools improve on their state they will improve their performance which would finally improve the rate at which learners access high school.

## **6: Recommendations**

The curriculum in the country's education system should be regularly reviewed to make it inclusive and responsive to the needs of the learner in a modern economy by putting emphasis on co-curricular activities to cater for diverse needs of learners. Since the cost of secondary education in

form of hidden charges is one big impediment to form one access, strategies to improve access should address factors that make the level of education unaffordable.

It is crucial that adequate number of teachers and sufficient learning resources be supplied to schools in order to improve on the performance of the schools in national examinations to improve access to secondary school education. The examination-oriented attitude in curriculum delivery should in turn be changed by introducing continuous school-based evaluation strategies to create meaning in the evaluation process. Besides, there is need to build and improve infrastructure and facilities to existing schools and where possible more boarding schools be constructed to enable the pupils concentrate on their studies. This will not only reduce the distance that learners travel in order to reach the schools but will also reduce risks that some could be exposed to while travelling to school.

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