

Kenya's Constituency Development Fund, Free Secondary Education Policy, and Access to Secondary Education

Nzuki, Charles Kyalo

Abstract

The effects of the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) and the Free Secondary Education Policy (FSEP) on access to secondary school education in Kenya's Yatta subcounty have not been adequately explored in available public policy literature. Hence, this qualitative multiple-case study was designed to understand the effects of the 2 policies on both enrollment and dropout among secondary school age children. The study was conducted in 1 mixed-boarding secondary school and 1 secondary day school in Yatta. The study was built on an adapted Huisman and Smits' theoretical model on dropout among students in developing countries. The data were gathered through semistructured interviews with 14 purposefully selected participants: 2 principals, 2 deputy principals, and 10 parents whose children had benefited from the CDF bursary scheme. Interview data were inductively coded and then subjected to Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis procedure, which aided in identification, analysis, and reporting of patterns (themes) in the data. Results showed that the CDF had contributed significantly to the improvement of enrollment with the establishment of new day schools that are more affordable, hence making secondary school education less costly and thus more available to low income families. The study's findings also showed that student dropout had declined with both the CDF and FSEP. The positive social change implications of this study are that it provides evidence for advocacy among policy makers for increased allocation of resources to the education sector through the CDF and FSEP. Increased allocations will contribute to Kenya's progress toward universal access to secondary education.

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