

**Non-Governmental Organizations in  
Kenya's Education Sector**

by

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## **Non-Governmental Organizations in Kenya's Education Sector:**

### **Case Study of SNV Netherlands**

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In 2000, the United Nations presented the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to the world's leaders in a collective effort to promote poverty reducing initiatives including universal education. The goal of providing basic social programs such as education has been stressed in human rights initiatives and global development projects since 1948 and has been the focus Kenya's national development programs since its independence. During the Kenyatta and Moi regimes, collective *harambee* efforts between the local communities, the Kenyan government and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) were established to provide physical infrastructure and feeding programs in the public school sector. The Kenyan government was unable to instate a sufficient free primary education system until recently. In 2003, President Mwai Kibaki issued the Free Primary Education Act, abolishing all primary school fees for public schools in Kenya. Vision 2030 outlines the implementation and enhancement efforts proposed by the Kenya interim government in 2008 to secure the future success of the Free Primary Education (FPE) Act of 2003. The reality of this vision requires the involvement and guidance of supportive Non-Governmental Organizations in the area, especially in the aftermath of the 2008 post-election violence. This study was conducted in an effort to increase the data available on the relationships between the Ministry of Education, primary school educators, the community and NGOS in Kenya's education sector. Through interviews and focus groups with the Ministry of Education, teachers in private and public primary school systems and directors at

SNV Netherlands, a Dutch NGO operating in Kenya, it is concluded that the involvement of NGOs in Kenya's education sector is inevitable if the government is to succeed in its promises of providing Universal free primary education.

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

In 2000, the United Nations Organization (UN) adopted eight the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in an attempt to promote poverty reduction initiatives. The provision of universal education was identified as the second important MDG. The other MDGs include: eradication of extreme poverty and hunger; promotion of gender equality and empowerment for women; reduction in child mortality; improvement in maternal health; combating HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other diseases; ensuring environmental sustainability and; developing a global partnership for development. Since independence, the Kenyan Government identified poverty, illiteracy and disease as the three enemies of development. Kenya's Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965 (considered Kenya's development Bible) identified elimination of poverty, disease and ignorance as the major objectives of the country's development objectives. Subsequent development plans and policies by the Kenya Government have not deviated from these objectives and have targeted the same sectors. The government has also published a number of policy and strategy papers geared towards achieving the same goals. They include: the Poverty Reduction Strategic Paper (RPSP), the Economic Recovery Strategy (ERS), and the Strategy for Revitalizing Agriculture (SRA). More recently, the Government of Kenya launched Vision 2030, which underscored, among other things, the importance of providing universal education.

In line with the MDGs and in an attempt to fight Kenya's three enemies of development, the Kibaki campaign team, and his government when he became president, identified the provision of universal education and the eradication of corruption as goals that needed to be pursued vigorously to ensure the attainment of the eight MDGs. The goal of providing basic social programs such as education has gained universal acceptance globally. In Kenya, the provision of universal free primary education has been one of President Kibaki's major undertakings. More recently, the objective was emphasized in 2008 when Kenya published Vision 2030 which emphasized the need for the implementation and enhancement of the reintroduced Free Primary Education (FPE) Act of 2003. Vision 2030 requires the involvement and partnership of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and other donors if Vision 2030 in the provisions of universal free education is to succeed. The increased need for the involvement of NGOs and the donor supporting Kenya's education sector was brought to the fore by two recent developments. First was the 2007 post-election violence (PEV) that not only destroyed hundreds of schools and displaced thousands of teachers, but also drastically the government's ability to provide resources for the education sector. The second is that the high levels of official corruption in the country in general, and the education sector in particular, has in the recent past forced Kenya's development partners (especially the US and Britain) to stop funding schools through the Government of Kenya. Instead the millions of dollars in school assistance to Kenya is being channeled is to be channeled to the schools through NGOs.

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

While there have been many studies on the role and impact of NGOs both in Kenya and in post-conflict zones, there has been limited research and data on the role of NGO assistance to the development of the education system, Kenya in general and in Eldoret in particular. Eldoret suffered most from the post-election violence in 2007. In order to understand the role of the NGOs in this area in the years since the post-election violence, it is essential to understand the pre-existing conditions of the area, the progress made since, and the limitations the community still faces. Most of the research done on this topic has been in the form of field observations, annual reports and annual budgets produced by the NGOs themselves. ActionAid and SNV Netherlands Development Organization have both produced reports on their efforts in the area, but very few other organizations have produced equivalent findings and observations. There are many community based organizations (CBOs) and trans-national partnerships assisting the education sector in Kenya, but little information is available to the public on the role their continued presence has played on the education sector. While their role in peace building and restoration projects since the post-election violence is evident, the scope of the organizations' involvement in the education sector is not as evident. This study therefore seeks to examine the contribution NGOs in Eldoret have made in Kenya's education sector.

### **1.3 OBJECTIVES**

The objective of this study is to understand multiple stakeholders involved in the Kenyan education sector and examine how these multiple stakeholders have influenced education policies in Kenya as well as how they have been implemented. These stakeholders fall into four categories: international organizations, the national government, civil society organizations

including non-governmental organizations (NGO) and the community. The objective of the study is therefore to examine the extent to which NGOs have been involved in Kenya's education sector.

The specific objectives of the study are:

1. to establish the extent of NGO involved in the education sector in Eldoret;
2. to establish the specific roles they play (what they do);
3. to establish what the impact of their involvement in the education sector has been;
4. In view of the recent announcement by Kenya's key donors to the education sector (the US and the UK) that future assistance to the education sector will be channeled through NGOs, a further objective of his study is to assess the capability of the NGOs in Eldoret to absorb the millions of shillings that will be channeled to the education system through them.

#### **1.4 HYPOTHESIS**

This study will test the following hypothesis:

That the involvement of NGOs in Kenya's education sector is inevitable if the government is to succeed in its promises of providing Universal free (primary) education.

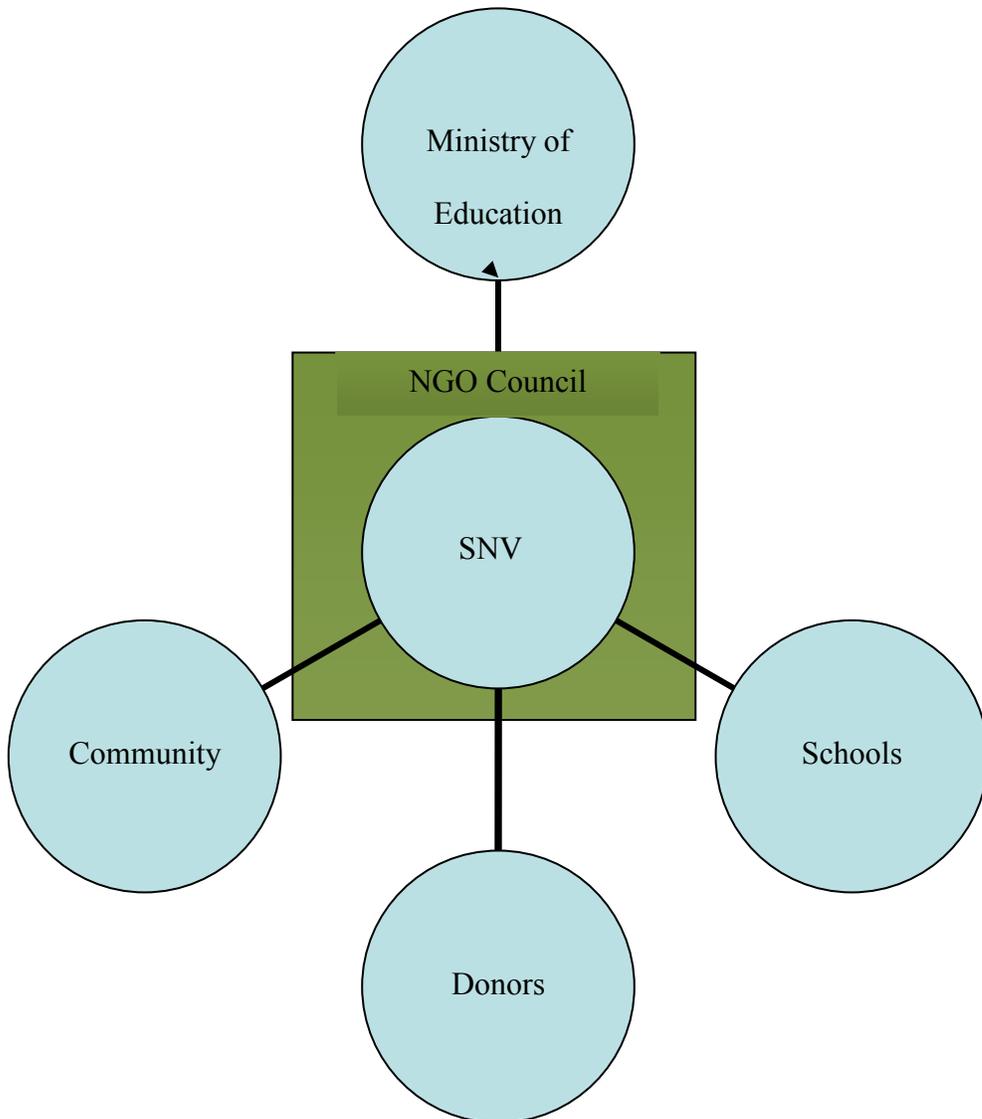
#### **1.5 JUSTIFICATION, LIMITATIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS**

My interest in the international relations of Kenya was birthed in the wake of the 2008 Post-Election Violence in Kenya. The unfortunate events and the social upheaval urged me to change my role as a passive scholar reading history books into a committed humanitarian activist eager

to truly learn about and experience Kenya. Since 2008, this study has been evolved into an examination of the roles non-governmental organizations play in the education sector in Eldoret.

Given time and financial constraints, I was unable to conduct a comprehensive study of all NGOs operating in Kenya; therefore, my study was limited to one geographic area, Eldoret, and one case study, SNV Netherlands. As a student at the University of Pittsburgh in the United States, my stay in Kenya was limited to two months in Kenya, which also limited the capacity of my research and interviews.

## 1.6 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



**Figure 1: Accountability Framework for the education sector in Kenya**

The accountability framework adapted for this study defines the relationship between NGOs and the five main stakeholders they are accountable to in Kenya's education sector: the community in which they operate, the donors sponsoring their projects, and the schools they interact with, the Ministry of Education in Kenya and the NGO council. For this case study, SNV Netherlands is

the center of the accountability framework to show the institutions that NGOs account to on educational issues.

The NGO account to the Ministry of Education to ensure the projects and the NGO's involvement adheres to national policies and ethical guidelines. To the government, NGOs also submit reports on their operations, projects and financial probity. Donors generally require the submission of objectives, progress made on projects and financial statements. The schools and community in general expect NGOs to conduct themselves in an ethical manner and generally assist in the community's development.

## **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

Understanding the historical evolution of the Kenyan education system is essential to formulate an argument on the current state of the system and the role that NGOs play in the implementation of education policy. The following section details the history of formalized education in Kenya from early missionaries to the era of colonial infringement and finally the post-independence period beginning in 1963. Additionally, this section provides a review of the Millennium Development Goals adopted by the United Nations and the international community and Kenya's attempt to plan to reach all benchmarks by 2015.

### **2.2 HISTORY OF FORMALIZED EDUCATION IN KENYA**

The evolution of the current Kenyan education system is marked by three phases – missionary, colonial and post-colonial which in itself can be divided into two sub-phases: the inherited-independence system of 7-4-2-3<sup>1</sup> and the new system of education of 8-4-4<sup>2</sup> introduced in 1985

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<sup>1</sup>See 7 years primary school; four (4) years of High School, two (2) years of advanced level and three (3) years of university education.

by President Moi. This is not to say that the Swahili people residing in East Africa did not transfer knowledge or have learning systems before the arrival of Christian missionaries. The foundation for the modern education system controlled by the government of Kenya is derived from the institutions established in 1557 by Portuguese Roman Catholic missionaries.

### **2.2.1 BRITISH COLONIAL REGIME**

In 1909, Professor Frazier arrived in present-day Nairobi and agreed with the colonial government's Legislative Council's proposal to have three separate spheres of education for the different dominant racial groups coexisting in Kenya at the time: the white Europeans, the Asian and Indian immigrant workers and the indigenous African communities. Africans were designated to attend technical schools to service the demands of the European elite. Prior to British colonial education, the missionaries used school to teach the Bible and avoided the introduction of other classroom objectives (such as science, philosophy, linguistics and mathematics above basic levels of comprehension (Urch, 1971). In 1911, the first Department of Education was established in Kenya by the British colonial government which gave funding to cooperative mission-led schools and also opened up separate schools for Europeans and Indians in main trading towns: Nairobi, Mombasa, Nakuru, Kisumu, and Eldoret (Achola and Pillai, 2000)

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<sup>2</sup> The new system established in 1985 by President Moi which was eight (8) years of primary education, four (4) years of high school, and four (4) years of university education.

The only schools available for African students to attend were primary and technical schools, neither of which operated at the same standards as the European or Indian schools. Professor Frazier, to avoid complaints of African elders, urged the colonial education leaders to propose the idea that exposing the African people to civilized societies in Europe would “elevate the African to a better standard of living” (Urch, 1971, p. 253). Additionally, the growing European population was depending on the compliance of the African population to serve the white population.

The first recorded contention from the African community regarding the unequal standards of education and exploitation of the African labor force came from the World War I Kenyan veterans who insisted on the opportunity for Africans to hold white-collar jobs in their own country. To subdue the demands of the African veterans, the colonial government established the Local Native Councils (LNCs) which allowed Africans to be represented in the Advisory Committee on Education within the colonial Department of Education. The LNC would collect funds from locals to establish secondary schools outside of missionary control. From 1925 to 1939, only four secondary schools were built to serve the four major ethnic groups: Kikuyu, Luo, Luhya, and Kamba. However, when World War II began, all initiatives to increase secondary schooling for Africans ceased almost entirely.

### **2.2.2 THE INDEPENDENCE PERIOD**

At independence, Kenya adapted the colonially inherited system of education, the 7-4-2-3, which consisted of 7 years of primary education, 4 years of secondary education (high school), 2 years of advanced level and 3–5 years of university education. Under the system, which was similar to the British system of education, children began their elementary (primary) education at the age

of 7 and completed at the age of 13 after sitting for the Certificate of Primary Education (CPE). At the independence, Uganda and Tanzania adopted a similar system of education, which they coordinated and which until 1977 ran jointly. The three East African (EA) countries ran a regional examination known as the East African Certificate of Primary Education (EACPE). After primary education, those who passed with proficient scores proceeded to secondary school which ended four years later with the written East African Certificate of Education examination (EACE). The highest level of education that qualified one to attend university was attained after two years of high school, which was at that time, distinct from secondary school. High school students then sat for the East African Advanced Certificate of Education – EAACE which enabled them to apply to university.

When the East African Community collapsed in 1977, Kenya continued with the same system of education but changed the examination names from their regional identity to a national identity. The East African Certificate of Primary Education became the Certificate of Primary education –(CPE), the East African Certificate of Education became the Kenya Certificate of Education (KCE) and the East African Advanced Certificate of Education became the Kenya Advanced Certificate of Education (KACE) (Eswani, 1993, p. 49).

### **2.2.3 THE NEW 8-4-4 EDUCATION SYSTEM**

President Moi came to power in 1978, and having been a teacher, sought to change the inherited education system (7-4-2-3) as it was not relevant to the needs of Kenyans. It had been observed that the inherited colonial system of education had been geared towards the workplace and therefore students who left school could not gain immediate employment nor did they not have

adequate skills to be self-employed. A new system of education, which would be more technical oriented and practical, was considered more appropriate for Kenya's development needs.

The Moi government therefore decided to restructure the education and training systems with the aim of making the systems more practical and technically oriented, to achieve the policy of education for self-reliance. The 8-4-4 system of education was implemented with the hope that all students completing every educational stage would be able to utilize the skills and knowledge required to create self-employment. In other words, it was to develop the right attitude in students towards work and self-sufficiency. (Eshiwani, 1993, p. 39).

In 1985, President Daniel arap Moi, introduced the 8-4-4 system of education, which adopted eight years of primary education, 4 years of secondary education and 4 years of university education. With the introduction of the 8-4-4 system CPE became Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (**KCPE**) while KCE became the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (**KCSE**). The change from the old to the new system occurred in January 1985 when standard VII pupils of 1984 proceeded to standard VIII without sitting the certificate of primary education examination. Since 1985, public education in Kenya has been based on an 8-4-4 system. Some private schools however, offer a system of education similar to the British system of education with ordinary level exams, "O-levels" taken at the end of 4 years of secondary school and advanced levels "A-levels", taken after two years of high school. Out of all children in Kenya about 85 percent attend primary school. 75 percent of those who complete primary education proceed to secondary schools and 60 percent of those who complete secondary school proceed to higher institutions of education which include business and vocational institutions, national polytechnics, public and private universities within the country. Over 950,000 Kenyans have

furthered their education abroad with a majority of graduates from India, UK, Canada, the US, Russia and Uganda. (Sifuna, 2002).

#### **2.2.4 PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR**

Since independence, the provision of education in Kenya has been a partnership among the government (the dominant partner), the private sector, and religious denominations. The majority of schools in Kenya are predominantly government-aided (where the government provided the structures—school building, and the infrastructure such as teachers, books, and other requirements). Between 1964 and 1985, communities and church denominations were allowed to run schools separate from the government sponsored schools. Communities were allowed to construct schools, which they constructed and ran on Harambee<sup>3</sup> basis. However, with time, the government posted teachers in these community schools. Churches were also allowed to run their separate schools. On few occasions, private individuals were also licensed to run schools but this was the exception (Onsomu, 2004).

The shift in 1985 into the new education system had a drastic change of the administrative structure of schools. The majority of community schools were abolished and remaining ones were taken over by the government; this included church-run schools. From 1985, only public and private schools were allowed to exist. With the introduction of free primary education, there was a great shift from private to public schools which saw a number of

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<sup>3</sup> Communities would pull resources together (harambee) and construct a school within the community. Once the school was constructed the community would petition the government to provide the school with teachers and other necessary provisions, which the government normally did.

private primary schools close down. With the complications associated with the new Free Primary Education Act, the trend has slowed down and the private sector is a growing sector.

### **2.2.5 PRIVATE SCHOOL OPERATION**

Private institutions in Kenya are considered the same as private businesses which do not follow the same policies as government funded institutions. Firstly, the Ministry of Education does not have an exact number of private schools operating within the municipality of Eldoret, Kenya. In 2005 they estimated that there were 50 schools providing educational opportunities, but a study completed by SNV, a Netherlands-based NGO, recorded at least 125 schools in the region.

The Kenya Private School Association (KPSA) was set up by established private school owners in Nairobi to facilitate communication between the few private schools in the area. Today it has the largest membership count in the country serving 19 constituencies Kirinyaga, Nyeri, Nyandarua/Laikipia, Embu/Mbeere, Nairobi, Mombasa Meru North/Central, Meru South/Tharaka, Nyeri, Eldoret, Nakuru, Murang'a/Maragua, Machakos/Kajiado, Nyandarua/Laikipia, Gusii, Kericho, Malindi, Kiambu East/West. There are currently 523 private schools registered, but the government of Kenya does not require private schools to be registered with KPSA. KPSA does have ambitious goals; they aim to facilitate national private school athletic competitions, reduced cost school materials, seminars and conferences for both administrators and teachers to communicate and plan with educators from private institutions throughout the country, and establishing common exams that private schools can use in their schools that are the same across the boards to ensure conformity and lower printing costs for individual schools. KPSA does act as a liaison between the Ministry of education and the private school districts, but the active involvement is rather limited.

### **2.3 KENYA'S EDUCATION SECTOR IN NEED OF REFORM**

According to the Institute of Policy Analysis & Research, the Kenyan education system has been experiencing a crisis (IPAR, 2008). IPAR explains though that this crisis is not a result of a lack of spending on education. In 2008, 73 percent of the government's social sector spending – and 40 percent of the national recurrent expenditure – went to education. Instead, IPAR charges the inefficient and inadequate measurement, monitoring and evaluating of spending and institutional changes as the source to the education crisis. The “Radical Reform for Kenya's Education Sector” policy view in 2008 credited a number of commissions and “Ministerial Task Forces” meticulous reviews of education sector policies, but the initiatives and suggestions posed by the commissioners have either been ignored completely or have not been efficiently implemented. Turning a blind eye to major issues such as the poor learning environment, the lack of appropriate counseling and career programs in schools, the ineffective management of Kenya's centralized education system and the poor school management practices will only perpetuate the crisis.

IPAR suggests a review of the findings on education sector by dedicated policy analysts such as Simon Ominde, Peter Gachathi, C.B. Mackay, James Kamunge and Davy Koech. Their findings have led professionals in the field of education to question the efficiency of the Kenyan institutional framework and such questions arise; should the government channel resources

through security agents such as the NSIS<sup>4</sup> to find, and fight, the root causes of Kenya's education crisis, and with what consequences? Also, is there credence to the view that school strikes are politically motivated, given that the post-election violence may have had adverse impacts on Kenyan youth and the growth of the education sector? Only through committed research and case study analysis can the Government of Kenya's Ministry of Education address these crucial questions.

## **2.4 MDGS AND KENYA'S EDUCATION SECTOR**

The Millennium Development Goals were signed into effect September 2000 by 191 United Nation member countries in an effort to promote peace, security and socio-economic development throughout the world. Standards, terms and conditions were outlined in the Millennium document by the World Bank, the OECD countries and the IMF. MDGs urged signatory countries to increase gender equity and provide universal primary education with the assistance of global partnerships including Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), lending programs such as the World Bank, the IMF and OECD member states, international organizations, regional alliances and the civil society (UN-Kenya). The other terms of the MDGs include: halving poverty and hunger, reducing under-five mortality by two-thirds, reducing maternal mortality by three quarters, reversing the spread of HIV-AIDs, malaria and TB and ensuring environmental sustainability.

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<sup>4</sup> NSIS is Kenya's National Security Intelligence Service.

The goal date to achieve the MDGs is 2015, approximately 4 years after the publication of this report. When the MDGs were first signed into effect, the Government of Kenya led by the former President Daniel Arap Moi, did not offer free primary education to its citizens. In an effort to provide universal primary education, the Government of Kenya readopted its former policy of Free Primary Education (FPE) after a 26 year hiatus. Schools fees were eliminated for students attending public schools and enrollment increased with 1.5 million more students in primary schools.

The Kenya Education Sector Support Program 2005-2010 (Republic of Kenya, 2005) and the Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MOEST) identified the Sector Wide Approach (SWAp) as the most efficient way of delivering quality, equitable education and training for all Kenyans. This is because SWAp would ensure the delivery of educational services to learners in the most effective and efficient manner. For this reason, since June 2004, the MOEST has been working closely with a wide range of stakeholders in the education sector in the development of a SWAp for the development of the education sector in Kenya for the next five years.

The overall aim of MOEST's SWAp is to develop and secure funding for the Kenya Education Sector Support Program (KESSP), which will be the basis upon which the Government, individuals, communities, the private sector, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and development partners, will jointly support the education sector during the period 2005/06 to 2009/10. Through SWAp, duplication and inefficient use of resources, (which often occur when projects and programs are implemented without a clear long-term and sector-wide development strategy), will be significantly reduced. This will ensure that the scarce resources

are invested in programs that will deliver equitable and quality education and training to all Kenyans. (Republic of Kenya, 2005, p. iii).

## **2.5 VISION 2030 AND KENYA'S EDUCATION SECTOR**

The Grand Coalition Government of Kenya developed Vision 2030 after the successful implementation of the Economic Recovery Strategy for Wealth and Employment Creation. Vision 2030 is the comprehensive planning document which dictates the proposed policies, reform projects, programs and partnerships which will ensure the completion of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), personalized to meet the current demands of the Kenyan society. Specific short term goals were set to be reached at each five year Medium Term. Goals included: better accommodations and advertisement to increase tourism, increase GDP growth rates from 2% in 2008 up to 10% in 2012, preservation of disease free zones, increase manufacturing wholesale and trade from 5% in 2007 to 10-12% in 2012 by establishing manufacturing zones in Kisumu and Mombasa, job creation in digital villages and BPO parks as a result of increased technological training, increase job market by 3.5 million jobs by 2012 and increase annual incomes from USD 650 (in 2007) to USD 950.

Additionally, Vision 2030 aims to decrease wealth disparity in the country by lowering the GINI coefficient from 0.38 to 0.34 in rural areas and 0.447 to 0.407 in urban centers by 2012, increased community healthcare facilities with a decrease in infant mortality rates to 33/1000 in 2012 (from 120/1000 in 2003), increase the proportion of immunized Kenyan children from 71% (2003) to 95% (in 2012), halving the number of TB cases, and reducing HIV prevalence from 6.7% (2003) to 3% (2012) , increase in safe water supply which only 57% of Kenyan households

possess, offer energy – electric to 1 million homes in Kenya by 2012, secondary mortgage will enable the private sector to construct housing to meet the demand; Kenya has a shortage of 150,000 houses, primarily those in low income areas (slums) in urban centers. Vision 2030 plans to create 64,500km of accessible and well maintained roads through the National Spatial Plan and PPP with a large emphasis on toll roads built by the private sector to connect Kenyan cities such as Kimumu, Kisumu, Eldoret, and the coastal cities of Mombasa and Malindi with Lamu, Ethiopia, Southern Sudan and Somalia. In response to the post-election violence, a new security force will be setup, the police force will run under a new infrastructure, and an Independent Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission (TJRC) will be established to deal with the political and ethnic strife of late 2007. The two factors concentrated in this project will be the mainstreaming of gender within all aspects of Kenyan society, including education, the job industry and the Women's Enterprise Fund as well as Vulnerable Groups (including those internally displaced) and youths.

In regards to education, the GOK intends to build 560 new secondary schools, ensure that at least one boarding school exists in each of the Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASAL), which comprises 80% of Kenya's landmass, recruit 28,000 teachers, the promotion of Early Childhood Development and Education Programs and Special Needs Education into basic education facilities (mental, physical and emotional) (Republic of Kenya and UNDP, 2008). ITC educational resources will be introduced in classrooms and strongly endorsed both financially and logistically. Lesson plans and curriculum will be reviewed and revised to accommodate the individual classroom while meeting national standards. As Free Primary Education was implemented in 2003, primary education enrollment rates skyrocketed to 76% between 2003-2008 (UNICEF, 2010) but now the emphasis, in addition to enhancing primary education, is to

have transition rates from primary to secondary to move up to 75% and secondary to university level up to 15% by 2012 (Republic of Kenya, 2008).

Vision 2030 was created in the wake of the post-election violence in December 2007. As such, there is a significant emphasis on equity and national cohesiveness. The policies and projects aim to assist in the unification process by increasing inter-ethnic group participation in socio-economic development projects in regions throughout the country. The main concerns of the first five year Medium Term Plan 2008-2012 is to resettle the 650,000 Kenyans internally displaced in the aftermath of the December 2007 national elections (Republic of Kenya, 2008).

To increase the efficiency of Foreign Direct Investment and Private investment used to execute the goals of the Vision 2030, the Grand Coalition Government of Kenya included the adjustments instated for Public Private Partnerships (PPPs).

## **2.6 KENYA EDUCATION SUPPORT SECTOR PROGRAM (KESSP)**

The Ministry of Education produces five year planning strategies for development and growth with an aim to make the donor participation and fund distribution to be efficient and legitimate. In the 2005-2010 Strategic Plan, the Kenyan government and planning partners created the Kenya Education Sector Support Program (KESSP), a program intended to engage all stakeholders “in order to attain national ownership, alignment of objectives, harmonization of procedure, approaches and a coherent financing agreement” (KESSP 2005-2010). Planning partners realized the complex system of transactions between donors, government officials, NGOs, beneficiaries and the community and as a result, created a mezzo-level intermediary sector to facilitate interactions and transactions. The ultimate goal of the KESSP is to ensure that

national and international stakeholders can “operationalize the budget” for prioritized activities and meet the objectives of these projects and activities.. The Kenya Education Sector Support Program (KESSP) represents a strategic compromise between external and internal development priorities in Kenya.

The Ministry of Education officials detailed the 23 investment divisions of KESSP. In the Basic Education Division; Primary School Infrastructure Management Unit; Early Childhood Development and Education (ECDE) Management Unit, Non-formal Education (NFE) and Non-Formal Schools Management Unit; Special Needs Education Management Unit; Adult and Basic Education Management Unit; School Health and Feeding Management Unit; Primary School Instructional Materials Management Unit; In-service Primary Teacher Training Management and Pre-service Primary Teacher Training Management Unit. The Policy and Planning Division; Central Planning Unit; HIV/AIDS Management Unit; Education Capacity Building Coordination Unit; Education Management Information Systems Management Unit; ICT and Education Management Unit; KESSP Reform Secretariat, including Monitoring and Evaluation. The Quality Assurance and Standards Division includes School Performance and Standards Monitoring Unit; Learning Achievement Monitoring Unit; Alternative curriculum delivery Approaches Management Unit. The Higher Education Division comprised of Secondary School Bursary and Grants Management Unit; Secondary School Infrastructure Management Unit; In-service Secondary Teacher Training Management; Pre-service Secondary Teacher Training Management Unit; University Education Management Unit. Within the TIVET Division is the TIVET Education Management Unit.

The formation of one program to act as a mediator helps ensure accountability for all stakeholders. The division of the program into the 23 divisions will help ensure efficiency as

each department within KESSP has specified roles and objectives. Accountability is a huge objective within KESSP's framework as they strive to maintain open communication to generate honesty among all stakeholders. Communication and sensitivity to the requests and suggestions of teachers' unions, as suggested by KESSP, are the first steps to promote accountability.

## **2.7 KENYA'S STATUS OF MDG IMPLEMENTATION**

According to the MDG Status Report for Kenya (Republic of Kenya, July 2008), Kenya is close to meeting their goal of Universal Primary Education. Enrollment of pupils in primary schools has steadily increased since the introduction of the Free Primary Education Act of 2003. Total pupil enrollment in Standard 1 to 8 increased from 6.06 million in 2002 to 7.4 million in 2004 and further to 7.6 million in 2006 and 8.2 million in 2007. The Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) at primary level increased from 93% in 2002 to 107.6% in 2007 (Republic of Kenya, July 2008, p. 11).

Access at primary school level has reached almost gender parity at the national level. In 2002, the proportion of girls was 49.3%, 48.9% in 2003, and 49% in 2006. In 2007, about 8,211,269 pupils (comprising of 4,012,176 girls and 4,199,093 boys) were enrolled. Enrollment at primary level, however, continues to experience sharp regional disparities, with particularly low rates among girls in arid and semi-arid regions (Republic of Kenya, July 2008, p. 11).

Total enrollment in public Technical, Industrial, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training (TIVET) institutions increased from 52,254 in 2002 to 70,516 in 2007, with female enrollment constituting 49% of the total. Due to the limited places available in TIVET institutions, only a small proportion of eligible school leavers are absorbed. In addition, there

exist serious gender disparities in terms of overall enrollment in science and technology-related professions (Republic of Kenya, July 2008: p.12).

Enrollment in universities increased from 82,257 students in 2003/04 to 118,239 students (47,464 females and 70,775 males) in 2007/08 out of which 21,132 (10,861 females and 10,271 males) are in private universities. However, despite the rise in university enrollment, the transition rate from secondary level to public universities still remains low, at only 3.8%. The teacher-training sub-sector has also grown with an enrollment of 29,212 students (15,017 females and 14,195 males) in the 29 teacher training colleges (Republic of Kenya, July 2008: 12).

## **2.8 CHALLENGES FACED BY KENYAN SCHOOLS**

Though there have been remarkable achievements in the education sector, a number of challenges still remain. The MDG Status Report for Kenya identified 12 major challenges facing the education sub-sector. The report identified: shortage of teachers resulting in high pupil/teacher ratios in some schools; overcrowding in schools especially those in urban slums, ASAL areas, areas with high levels of poverty, and densely populated areas; inadequate and poor infrastructure, including water and sanitation, in some of the schools, especially in rural areas and urban slums. This is compounded by inadequate equipment and teachers for children with special needs, and the long distances between schools particularly in ASAL areas; impact of HIV/AIDS on teachers and children resulting in high number of orphans and vulnerable children; low quality of education offered in the non-formal education system (inadequate teaching and

learning resources, poor physical facilities) and lack of linkage with the formal education system (Republic of Kenya, 2008: 13).

## **2.9 ATTEMPTS TOWARD FREE PRIMARY EDUCATION**

Since independence in 1963, Kenya's presidents have committed to fighting the three enemies preventing growth and development: illiteracy, malnutrition and poverty. The institution of colonization fueled the three enemies. By limiting social development, the British colonial regime was limiting the opportunity for Kenyans' to obtain political and economic independence and self-sustainability. In 1963, Jomo Kenyatta attempted to open up the school doors to all primary age students. The Kenya African National Union's (KANU) initial doctrine (after the first national elections in Kenya) emphasized KANU's aim to provide universal free primary education to all Kenyan citizens. Again in the 1969 election manifesto, KANU reiterated its goal to provide a primary education to all Kenyans in "areas which were neglected during the colonial rule so that every Kenyan could share fully both in the process of nation building and in enjoying the fruits of government labor" (Katumanga, 1997). In the manifesto, KANU additionally committed to enhancing the physical educational infrastructure, especially in areas with limited or no school facilities.

In 1971, President Jomo Kenyatta eliminated primary school fees for areas with "unfavorable geographical" conditions which, according KANU, was a characteristic directly linked to poorer communities. Two years later in 1973, it was decreed that primary school fees would be abolished for all standard I-standard IV students. Students were required to purchase a school uniform annually at the cost of 60ksh. Primary enrollment rates grew at a rate of 8.2%

between 1972 and 1982 (Abagi, 1997). Before Kenyatta's fee abolition, 1.8 students were enrolled in standards 1-6. By 1974, Kenyan schools swell with an increase of 1 million new students (UNDP, 2001).

Despite the alleviated financial burden on families due to the eradication of school fees in 1973, schools had no incoming revenue to replace the lost income and had to resort to alternative solutions. Additionally, more teachers needed to be hired and more classrooms and schools had to be constructed to accommodate the influx of students in the school systems. One of the most popular revenue revival tactics was the "building levy" required of each student. Most times these fees were more expensive than the school fees prior to the 1973 fee abolition.

Despite the income generated from the building levies, other sectors, such as teachers' salaries and school supplies, lacked adequate funding. Teaching aids, books, school supplies and classroom amenities such as desks and blackboards were dispersed by Kenya Equipment Scheme, but the influx of students and the lack of funds made it impossible for the Kenyan government to enhance the classrooms to meet the schools' need. The lack of funding was coupled with the economic crisis of the 1970's and the worldwide recession.

An issue that still plagues schools today is the shortage of qualified teachers within the schools. When the Free Primary Education act was set in place in 1973 only 12,600 of the 56,000 employed teachers in Kenya were qualified to teach. With the influx of students, the demand for teachers increased and nationally, there was a shortage of 25,000 teachers. Out of the 90,000 employed teachers, less than half (40,000) were qualified to teach. Even with unqualified teachers in the classrooms, classes were overpopulated with students, approximately 32:1.

According to research presented by the University of London's Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transitions and Equity (CREATE), the second wave of post-colonial

education reform was formulated by President Jomo Kenyatta's successor, Daniel Arap Moi. The Fourth National Development Plan (1979-83) was released under Daniel Arap Moi who continued in the steps of his predecessor under the KANU banner of *Fuata Nyayo* (follow the steps). Nyayo continued to focus on the struggle against the three enemies of development: illiteracy, malnutrition and poverty. Moi maintained the objective of providing universal primary education. Although UPE had not been achieved, enrollment had grown from less than 50 percent in 1963 to over 85 percent by 1978 (Republic of Kenya, 1979:152). The language, however, had shifted from that of emphasizing secondary education to that of recognizing primary education as the foundation of economic and national development. The following statement illustrates this: "the primary stage of education is the most important for any child since it is here that basic knowledge is given to the child and foundations for an economically productive and satisfying life are laid" (Republic of Kenya, 1979:154).

The Plan brought forward what had been steady UPE progress by stating the Government's objective to provide universal primary education for seven years, free of charge to all children of primary-school age. The government also aimed to abolish building and other school funds in primary schools and to provide free milk to primary school children throughout the country. This policy shift during Moi's first year as the President of Kenya effectively completed a seven year universal free primary education policy that was "truly" free by ensuring that loopholes such as charging of "building levy" where fees were abolished could not rise again.

## **3.0 METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this section, the methods which were used to obtain data, select participants and analyze that data will be explained. Using grounded theory, I chose to take advantage of my proximity to Ministry of Education officials, prominent NGOs and schools in Kenya and formed focus groups to receive input regarding the Kenya Education Support Sector Program (KESSP), the role and accessibility of NGOs in education policy and post-conflict peace recovery and the current state of the Kenyan education system. This section covers the logistics involved with the preparation of these focus groups and the application of the accountability frameworks utilized to evaluate the relationships between stakeholders. Additionally, the research questions asked during these focus groups were the basis for the case study literature. The questionnaire used to guide the focus groups can be found in Appendix A.

### **3.2 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION**

This study utilized three methods of data collection. First, expert panels (approximately 15) drawn from the following institutions: administrators within the Ministry of Education, graduate

students and university professors at Moi University and education specialists at SNV Netherlands.

The second method of data collection included desk research in which books, documentaries, published conference papers and other unpublished research papers on Kenya were reviewed. Policy papers from Kenya's main policy institutions such as the Institute of Public Analysis Research (IPAR), the Kenya Institute of Public Policy Research Analysis (KIPPRA), and the University of Nairobi's Institute for Development Studies (IDS) were also reviewed. Government of Kenya documents and reports such as the Kenya Education Support Sector Program (KESSP), Vision 2030, MDGs Status Report for Kenya 2007 and other Ministry of Education reports were reviewed.

The third method consisted of focus group discussions with three groups. The focus group discussions lasted between 60 to 75 minutes and were arranged by a doctoral student working with the Institute for Gender Equity Research and Development (IGERD) at Moi University. The groups interviewed were organized by IGERD and it was through IGERD that I was able to contact the officers. As a major research institution in Kenya, IGERD is well known throughout the Eldoret community and is a creditable organization among the community leaders. Each focus group discussion was conducted in English but with a native Kenyan present assisting me to understand the cultural differences.

The Ministry of Education focus group was comprised of 12 MOE officers organized by the graduate students working at the Institute for Gender Equity Research and Development (IGERD). All the Ministry of Education staff members were former teachers. The teachers at Moi Primary School who shared their experiences and assessments were extremely insightful, offering genuine observations. Each teacher and MOE officer explained that they chose to

participate in the focus group in order to increase awareness of the conditions within Kenyan schools and attract prospective donors committed to providing quality to all children.

After contacting SNV Netherlands, the education specialist director organized a second focus group discussion with specialists working in Eldoret. Three of the four education development officers for the Eldoret office of SNV Kenya participated in the focus group discussion. During this discussion the education officers revealed the program collaborations they were devising within the community and with international donors. They also elaborated on their role in the post-election emergency response and peace building tactics which was publicized online and acknowledged by the community.

The third focus group discussion was facilitated by the head of the Moi Primary School who was known to my research assistant at IGERD. Through the head of the school, we were able to organize a focus group discussion of five teachers. Additionally, we were invited to meet with the Moi Primary School to observe a closing ceremony at a government funded primary school. Moi Primary School is partially funded by the government by the Free Primary Education Act of 2003 and also receives funding from Moi University. Five teachers were interviewed regarding their perceptions of the Ministry of Education's ability to provide what schools need, their response rate and their feelings toward the Ministry of Education.

The questionnaire used for all focus groups can be found in the appendix A. The responses were recorded and filed confidentially. The focus groups were presented with the open-ended response questions and the educators and staff members could elaborate on their answers. As it was an open forum, the conversation was led by the focus group but was monitored by myself and my graduate assistant to ensure that all questions were covered.

While working at IGERD, I was able to access the previous studies published by students at the Moi University School of Education on gender equity and education reform. These studies provided me with statistics that were found by the researchers themselves regarding enrollment trends in specific communities.

## **4.0 DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS**

### **4.1 ROLE OF NGOS IN KENYA**

The data analyzed in this section from the focus group discussions and individual interviews with experts in the Kenyan education system increases the understanding of the role of NGOs in the Kenyan education system by providing insight on the perceived role of NGOs in Kenya. A second component of the data analysis is the singular focus on the Dutch NGO, SNV Netherlands, in a case study. The case study includes both primary data and secondary data obtained from the organization's publications. The perceptions and explanations given by the focus groups and interviewees supplement the historical analyses of NGO participation in Kenya.

This chapter explores the current role of NGOs in the provision of physical infrastructure within Kenya's education sector. Additionally, this section presents the responses from the focus group discussions with the Ministry of Education, Moi Primary School teachers and education development officers at SNV Netherlands.

#### **4.1.1 PROVIDING PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE: SCHOOLS AND BOOKS**

In 2003, enrollment trends increased drastically from 73% before the FPE Act to 149% after the act was instated (Oketch, 2007, p.36). The government, private sector and NGOs responded to

the increased need for school buildings to accommodate the newly enrolled students by building new schools. Similar to the concept of *Harambee* in the 1960's and 1970's to satisfy the demands of schools, international NGOs joined the local communities to alleviate the strain on the government to lodge the new 1.5 million students. Classroom sizes swelled with pupil:teacher ratios reaching as high as 120:1 in some regions of Kenya. These ratios, alarming as they are, were one of the multiple problems with providing the physical infrastructure including schools, books, desks, notebooks, pens, pencils and internet access.

One of the well-known NGOs in Kenya and Southeast Africa is the SOS Children's Villages. SOS has operated in Kenya since 1975 and provides homes, care, education and skills training for orphans in Meru, Nairobi, Mombasa and Eldoret. The Eldoret SOS Children's Village opened in 1990 and has 12 houses for 120 children who are cared for by SOS Aunts and Mothers. The Ministry of Education focus group members spoke highly of the SOS village; the original SOS team members created sustainable systems which are conducive to (minimal) staff turnover. Like SNV, SOS aunts and mothers are generally hired within the community. Every prospective SOS mother completes two years of basic training. During this time, SOS mothers-in-training have three to six months of theoretical training which focuses on a wide variety of subjects that an SOS mother must address with her children: education and psychotherapy for trauma, housekeeping, nutritional science, child development etc. SOS schools are not limited to orphaned students; Eldoret has a nursery school with 90 community students and 30 SOS children. The Eldoret SOS Primary School educates 500 students and there are 100 secondary students enrolled at the SOS Secondary School. Reports from SOS show that examination results at the school are generally high, with most classes achieving their target pass marks. Recently, greater effort to provide children whose performance is below average, with extra holiday

classes. SOS schools also offer extra-curricular activities such as football, drama, music, art and science.

Organizations such as ActionAid Kenya committed to building 17 boarding schools for girls in the North Rift Valley. Supported by a 5-year grant from the UK's Big Lottery Fund, the project is being carried out simultaneously in Ghana, Kenya and Mozambique (ActionAid, 2009). Although enrollment rates are equal for boys and girls in primary schools (in Kenya), there is still a large disparity between boys and girls attending secondary schools. During the focus group discussions, the Ministry of Education officers explained that although secondary school fees detract from the enrollment trends for girls, other obstacles prevent girls from attending secondary school. The Division Youth Officer for Wareng explained that many of the families in the area are satisfied with their daughters only receiving primary education. This mentality resurfaced in SNV's report on pro-poor education. The attitude of parents in the slum areas also played a significant role: they did not see the value of education for their children. As one mother explained, "all I need is for my child to know how to bake a mandazi". In some cases, children had to work at home so their parents could attend to the more urgent issues of family survival. The Youth Officer explained that many of the girls involved with the youth programs are promised to be married at a young age. Once married, the husbands and families do not view education as a priority.

ActionAid Kenya is building the 17 schools to provide safe access to secondary schools for girls. Child prostitution became a huge issue in the IDP camps in 2008. According to the youth officer, girls traveling back and forth from school to home or the IDP camp in Burnt Forest were being raped by truck drivers and men. There were four girls in the youth center who had been molested and were afraid to travel back and forth to school. The youth officer explained

that boarding schools provide the safest options for girls, especially those who travel down the main highways. Unfortunately, there are not many boarding schools in existence. Also, boarding schools take much more money and human capital to run. The ActionAid project is one of a very few which are financing and recruiting for boarding schools, but as discussed in the focus groups, it will be up to the community to make sure the school runs smoothly, with reliable teachers and house mothers, and an adequate amount of provisions – meals, laundry, feminine products, etc. One suggestion of the Ministry of Education was to start sex education lessons in Standards 1 and 2. By discussing sex education and equal rights at an earlier age, girls would be empowered at a younger age and would be more focused and prepared for the challenges they will encounter.

#### **4.2 CASE STUDY: SNV AND ITS ROLE IN EDUCATION POLICY IMPLEMENTATION**

One of the focus groups I was able to coordinate was with a prominent Dutch NGO operating in Kenya, SNV Netherlands. SNV is a non-profit international development organization currently working with 30 southern countries to eradicate poverty and improve local governance. In Kenya, SNV has three Portfolio offices based in Nairobi, Eldoret and Nanyuki with 33 development officers. These three offices work directly in 15 districts. While in Eldoret, I had the opportunity to meet with a cohort of education officers to discuss their role in the community.

SNV has committed to assist with the implementation and success of the Free Primary Education Act of 2003 in Eldoret and Nairobi. In 2006, SNV paired with the Eldoret Municipal Education Officer (MEO) to conduct an inquiry of the current conditions of the schools in Eldoret. The inquiry sought to unveil the shortcomings of the FPE Act on schools in Eldoret's major slum area, Langas. By gaining a better understanding of the needs of the community, projects can now be designed to address and alleviate the unanticipated negative implications of FPE by filling the void left by schools and teachers.

The overstretching of physical infrastructure and human capital (ie teachers and administrators) in public schools results in absurd pupil:teacher ratios. One school in Langas reported a classroom of 120 pupils being taught by one teacher in 2003 (SNV, 2008). The Municipal Education Officer estimated that approximately 15,000 primary age students in the region were exploring alternative sources of education. Unfortunately, a large percentage of the 15,000 primary age students have dropped out completely, but many have turned to the private school sector in hopes of receiving

#### **4.2.1 SNV Partnering with the Kenya Private Schools Association (KSPA)**

The increase in private school openings and enrollment rates has the potential to fill the void that is present in the supply and demand equation between the Government of Kenya (GOK) and the communities, yet this is not the case. SNV embarked on a mission to understand the relationship between the Ministry of Education and private school owners and address the discrepancies. After meeting with the Kenya Private Schools Association, SNV realized that like the private school sector, KPSA could validate and support private schools if they were professionally

organized. The following notes were published on the initial meeting between the KPSA Eldoret branch and the SNV Eldoret branch in 2006:

A visit by SNV representatives to the Eldoret branch of KPSA revealed a network organization that was almost totally dysfunctional. It was without an office and even basic data about its membership. Its decreasing membership was predominantly inactive. In a cut-throat competition, the private schools were poaching teachers and students from each other. They had not realized that they needed to collaborate with each other and attract children from outside their catchment areas. Furthermore, there was a tenuous relationship with the national office of KPSA: only a few registered schools attended AGM meetings. Many schools were not even aware that there was such an association. (SNV, 2008)

As there is no jurisdiction within the private school sector, it is easy for parents defaulting on school fee payments within one private school to transfer their children to nearby private schools. School records rarely transfer between schools. Fortunately in 2007, SNV decided to pair up with KPSA to reorganize and validate the organization's validity. Through a year of partnership, KPSA has seen the following results:

- Today, the KPSA Eldoret branch has more than 20 registered members and more than 100 schools regularly attend its meetings.
- KPSA has engaged professional staff, has an office, has set up a desk to liaise with educational stakeholders, and has signed a deal with Equity Bank to secure subsidized loans for its member schools to expand.
- KPSA has established a set of thematic committees, each to settle matters such as examinations, procurement, education ethics, etc.
- KPSA Eldoret now has functional links with the head office, regularly attending meetings and tapping into the national office initiatives.
- It has formally started working to address policy issues with respect to standards and securing secondary school places for their graduates.

- It has further set an achievable target to secure 5,000 additional school places by May 2008, a goal that all member schools are working together to meet.
- The MEO and KPSA have started to meet on a regular basis with the realization that private schools can help substantially to achieve the FPE target by relieving some of the pressure on public schools. The MEO has opened up a permanent desk to address the interests of private schools, and has engaged KPSA as a partner to meet the FPE target of 15,000 new enrollments.
- Moreover, the MEO is joining KPSA to present evidence to the central government regarding the adverse effect of blind enforcement of school standards. Prior to SNV's involvement, the two sides did not have a clear working arrangement. Now, there is a healthy engagement and a growing relationship based on shared goals.
- The membership of KPSA is spreading to all the areas of North Rift region and the KPSA national office has approached SNV for similar support for other branches country-wide.

These are definitely huge strides for an organization to make in a year's time, and during my meeting with SNV in July 2010, I learned that the partnership with KPSA is still strong. As the SNV coordinators and Ministry of Education revealed in the focus group discussions, SNV has expanded its objectives within the private school sector to include enrollment by gender, efforts to combat hunger and explore the possibilities of school feeding programs and methods of reporting and following up on absenteeism. Each of these aspects strengthens the infrastructure of the private school sector by formalizing its capacity to serve students.

When I asked the SNV education department what their main concern was when they began collaborations with KPSA, they explained that the inefficient routes of communication among private schools, between private schools and the government, and between private schools and neighboring public schools seemed like the biggest obstacle. The head education officer at SNV referenced the constant war between head teachers at private schools, in which

teachers are baited and bribed to leave their posts for better pay. By improving communication, the focus will return to the provision of ethical education rather than unhealthy competition. Additionally, school empowerment is reliant on the success of the school and its teachers, but the focus should be on building a high quality program by nurturing and training private school teachers rather than poaching for teachers in other primary schools. To instill this idea of a collective community of teachers rather than competition among the teachers and schools requires open dialogue and networking.

During the focus group discussions with all three groups, the common negative association of private schools as businesses and not education facilities continuously surfaced. To combat this stereotype, SNV partnered with SAYARE<sup>5</sup>, a local radio and TV station in November of 2007, to engage the MEO and public in a discussion regarding the agenda of the private schools in Eldoret. During the radio segments, MEO and private school educators appear in a series of panel discussion broadcasts around pro-poor education services, access of street children to schools. When questioned about the progress of the SAYARE radio panel during our focus groups, SNV coordinators explained that during the post-election violence there was a brief hiatus, but that outside financiers, many of which are international NGOs and university sponsored groups, have reestablished the talk show segments on pro-poor education and public/private school interaction.

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<sup>5</sup> SAYRE is an interdenominational Christian company offering Christian teaching programs, news, entertainment, health and educational matters. SAYRE currently has an audience of over 10 million viewers and listeners countrywide in such areas as Nairobi, Eldoret, Timboroa, Mombasa and Nakuru.

#### **4.2.2 SNV AS PEACEKEEPERS IN POST-ELECTION CHAOS**

In the wake of the Post-Election Violence (PEV) of 2007, over 90 schools were burnt throughout Kenya and enrollment rates dropped drastically. Teachers fled from areas of contention, especially if they were Kalenjin or Kikuyu. As mentioned before, the Rift Valley experienced the most severe attacks and disruption after the election results were released. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) joined forces with the Kenyan Red Cross, UNICEF and national militaries such as the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) to set up relief facilities. According to reports from the ICRC, 30,000 internally displaced persons from Rift Valley communities swarmed Eldoret, the hub for the temporary emergency center (Cuttat 2008). The immediate concern of the ICRC and the Kenya Red Cross Society was to provide medical assistance and aid kits to the emergency centers. Within a week of the influx of internally displaced persons into Eldoret, emergency tents were distributed and temporary IDP camps were organized by all participating emergency relief groups.

The Ministry of Education and SNV focus groups detailed the flow of international aid and support from December 2007 to January 2008. Within a week of the IDP camps in Eldoret, the SNV education team went into the camp and began recording communities present by speaking with the elders. They asked where groups originally resided, which community members were accounted for and those missing. Additionally, they organized a list of schools present in the communities and a register of which students and teachers were currently residing in the IDP camp. Within a week, SNV began orchestrating a makeshift school in the IDP camp. Utilizing the strategy of “double teaching shifts”, classes began to form. Double teaching shifts are prevalent in schools without proper classroom accommodations. For example, a standard 3

teacher will be facing her class teaching her class but facing the opposite direction, back to back, a standard 4 teacher is conducting class. SNV searched for school supplies to be used in the IDP camp school and coordinated with the Kenya Red Cross Society to provide daytime meals for the volunteers, teachers and students. By the end of the emergency phase of the post-election violence, SNV assisted 4,000 of the reported 6,000 children displaced with their families from their homes in Uasin Gishu District. In a collective response with KPSA, the Eldoret Municipal Education Office, the Muli Children's Family (a local NGO), UNICEF and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), SNV was able to help these students return to school safely.

The senior education officer explained that the main idea behind the school coordination project was to keep students engaged and distracted during the chaos. If the students were in school, following a regularized schedule, they would be less apt to participate in the ongoing disputes within the camps. The SNV education team expressed their satisfaction with the emergency response and the outcome of the makeshift IDP school.

As the community began to work through peace talks, the camp became less populated, but SNV continued with their efforts of maintaining stability and productivity in the classrooms. As recorded earlier, 90 schools were burnt throughout the region. SNV is currently working with the Burnt Forest community to rebuild schools. This joining of the community to raise and appropriate money for rebuilding schools is a crucial step in the recovery and peace building process. While in Kenya I was able to meet with the Chief of Chepkoiyo and he showed me the land set aside to rebuild a secondary school which was destroyed in the December 2007 clashes.

### **4.2.3 SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANS (SIP)**

The Ministry of Education in Wareng district (part of the Eldoret constituency) explained that in the public school sector alone, the 15 Ministry of Education (MOE) officers were responsible for meeting with, observing and evaluating over 900 schools. One of the main complaints of the MOE about their role in the community is their inability to know the situations in each of their schools on a personal level. The overstretching of the Ministry has a negative impact of the schools. During our focus group I was given the following explanation. If a school does not have enough desks in their classrooms, they appeal to their assigned Ministry of Education officer. The officer though has over 50 other schools he or she is responsible for, and the request may take a few weeks before it is even read. The schools and NGOs are well aware of the strain put on the Ministry of Education officials, but their realization does not subdue their frustration.

SNV created School Improvement Plans (SIP) within schools. The SIP approach emphasizes the role of the local stakeholders – parents, teachers, school heads and students. To establish a School Improvement Plan, communication between all stakeholders needs to be open and organized. The challenges faced in schools, such as inadequate resource distribution, can be addressed and reported. Additionally, to truly instill a multi-stakeholder approach, it is necessary to strengthen student-teacher relationships. If students speak out about their challenges in the classrooms, the heads of schools can address the issues. Schools will thrive in a supportive community and by localizing the objectives in schools to mirror the ambitions of the community, the quality of education will increase. SNV has initiated parent-teacher meetings in many public and private schools in Eldoret. Owners of the private schools and heads of the public schools are highly encouraged to attend SIP and parent-teacher meetings to hear the voiced concerns of parents, students and teachers alike.

When asked what demoralizes teachers most, the Moi Primary teachers explained that if they don't believe they are reaching their students and their voices aren't being heard, they question why they are working in such a struggling industry with little pay and even less job security. SNV hopes that through organized committees and meetings, the demoralization of teachers and the concerns of parents can be addressed and reversed. Ideas such as parent-teacher conferences have been the focus of KPSA annual meetings and community school meetings where teachers from private and public schools meet to discuss teaching practices, classroom complications and growth techniques. SNV has created an E-Learning program which they introduced at the 5<sup>th</sup> International Conference on ICT for Development, Education and Training in Lusaka, Zambia, in May 2010.

#### **4.2.4 E-LEARNING AND THINKQUEST**

Access to resources plagues almost every school in Kenya. The increase in attendance rates has increased the demand for books and school supplies. E-Learning and E-Books have the capacity to provide sufficient materials to more students if they are accessible at low costs to teachers and school heads. At the 5<sup>th</sup> International Conference on ICT for Development, Education and Training, Ministers of Education, SNV coordinators, teachers and ICT experts participated in the "think-tank" established at the conference to explore the realistic possibility of implementing E-learning throughout East and Southern Africa. SNV director Joseph Kipkoech Langat presented "*E-Learning Transforms Lives of Street Children in Eldoret Kenya*", a paper detailing SNV's strategy to improve access to educational resources in Kenya's North Rift Valley. Microsoft pledged to assist in the distribution of the E-Learning and ThinkQuest software to schools working with SNV. It was undisputed that one teacher can reach more students with access to

technology, but the teacher must be educated how to efficiently utilize the electronic resources. SNV has organized E-Learning training sessions for teachers in Eldoret since the ITC conference in Zambia in May 2010.

Participation at the E-Learning training sessions in Eldoret has exponentially grown, reflecting the progress of the project implementation. Basic school supplies such as books, chalkboards and pencils are still essential for classroom use, but curriculum development can be facilitated with E-learning resources. SNV is aiming to incorporate a committee of teachers willing to incorporate community oriented objectives into the curriculum. As SNV Kenya hires their staff from within their host country, in this case Kenya, there is a huge emphasis on localization of initiatives and sustainable programs organized and ran by the community rather than outside stakeholders.

Financial support from corporations like Microsoft on projects such as E-Learning is fundamental in the beginning phases of program implementation. SNV is also involved with the “One Laptop Per Child” nonprofit campaign created by Nicholas Negroponte, director of the MIT Media Library. The aim of One Laptop Per Child (OLPC) is to provide educational opportunities to children in developing countries. The XO computer is a low power, low cost computer with internet connection designed to withstand rugged conditions and the limitation of remote areas. The OPLC campaign guarantees five core principals to computer distribution: each student in the classroom will receive their own laptop to keep – no one will be left out, laptops are to be used at school and home, the focus group includes early education which include primary school aged students, internet connection is essential for growth and sharing of ideas and lessons and finally, the computers must have the capacity to adapt to new software (Stahl, 2007). As a result, MIT and Amazon created the XO computer and NGO such as SNV have proposed

the concept to their home office in Amsterdam as well as at the International Conference on ICT for Development, Education and Training in hopes of attracting donors to the cause.

#### **4.2.5 ROLE OF SNV AS MICRO IMPLEMENTATION OFFICERS**

SNV is an example of a dedicated, Kenyan based NGO diligently working to support the local community and build sustainable programs. In each of the three focus groups, I received positive feedback about their progress in the community, not just in the education sector but also for their efforts in eco-tourism, horticulture, livestock, water, sanitation and hygiene and renewable energy. The department of education aligns their projects with the goals stated in the MDGs, Vision 2030 and the Economic Recovery Strategy. It is through successful NGOs like SNV that donor countries will entrust the allocation of education funding.

#### **4.3 RECENT DEVELOPMENTS: SCHOOL FUNDING CHanneled THROUGH NGOS**

In December 2010, Ministry of Education audit reports revealed that Sh100 million (100 million Kenyan Shillings)<sup>6</sup> from international education aid. The United States and the UK, two of the largest education donors along with the UN, froze funding in early 2011 until a solution to the corruption or an alternative method could be determined. In March 2011, the UK announced that

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<sup>6</sup> 100 million Kenyan shillings is approximately \$ 1,192,141.13 USD or £731,737.00 British Pound Sterling.

it would vet all funding for education through trusted NGOs, bypassing the Kenyan government all together. The UK also announced that Kenya will now get Sh9 billion (£70 million) instead of Sh11.2 billion (£87 million) as earlier planned. This opens up a whole new realm of opportunity for NGOs working in Kenya's education sector. The UK Department for International Development (DfID) Communication Officer Amanda Lawrence-Brown was quoted in the Daily Nation that the funding transition would be put into effect in April of 2011. The DfID was focusing its attention on accountability and transparency evaluations of top NGOs to ensure that the money was going directly to the schools and the children. The DfID explained that there are three avenues that the United Kingdom would siphon funds through.

- 1.) A program of school grants paid through an independent managing agent but aligned with the Kenya Education Sector Support Program system. This mechanism would provide funds directly to schools with appropriate financial safeguards and avoid the risks of disbursement through the Ministry of Education. The criteria for the selection of schools are being worked on by the DFID education team.
  
- 2.) A challenge fund aimed at strengthening transparency and accountability in the education sector, helping local people hold to account head teachers who steal funds or indulge in corrupt procurement, absentee teachers, and District Education Officers responsible for monitoring expenditure etc. A variety of organizations will be eligible to put forward proposals including civil society organizations, NGOs, the media, and private sector foundations
  
- 3.) Support for strengthening Government systems to build the Ministry of

Education's capacity to make essential improvements in financial management, and support to innovative projects that will improve the quality and equity of education provided in Kenyan schools, particularly the targeting of resources to the neediest children. e.g. using ICT in schools.

The recent shift in donor preference for NGOs to receive and allocate the international aid for the Kenyan education sector as opposed to investing directly into the Kenya government is the most recent attempt to evade the siphoning power of corruption. However, this method of utilizing northern NGOs to funnel funds directly into schools has been attempted during President Moi's dictatorship. Moi, concerned with the divergent nature of NGO-funded and ran education programs, announced that future NGO funding would have to be channeled through the government and all NGOs must be registered through a directorate in the GOK (Amutabi 2006, p. 31). By establishing a directorate within the Kenyan government, the Government of Kenya could monitor all program and projects launched in Kenya as well as the funds distributed for such tasks. Despite the attempts by Moi to center school projects through the state, the trend of funding NGOs directly as agents of development projects had spread among donors. The presence of northern NGOs in the country in fact enabled northern donor countries the ability to apply pressure (through NGO persistence) to the government of Kenya to enact multi-party elections and democratic ideals.

This new wave of aid distribution will drastically impact the relationships between NGOs and the donor countries and organizations, NGOs and the Kenyan government and NGOs and schools. New donors will test the waters with this method, which was tried during President

Moi's administration, and accountability relationships between all involved parties must be strengthened as a result.

## **5.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND AREAS OF FUTURE RESEARCH**

### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the research results obtained from my three data collection techniques: focus group discussions, interviews and desk research. After analyzing the data collected, I conclude that my hypothesis is true; involvement of NGOs in Kenya's education sector is inevitable if the government is to succeed in its promises of providing Universal free (primary) education. As this study is a basis for my future research on NGO participation in East Africa and education policy, I conclude with suggestions for future studies associated with my research topic.

The basis of this study is to determine the role of NGOs in the education sector in Kenya. The objectives of the study were to understand the relationships between the multiple stakeholders in Kenya's education sector.

The specific objectives of this study were:

1. to establish the extent of NGO involved in the education sector in Eldoret;
2. to establish the specific roles they play (what they do);
3. to establish what the impact of their involvement in the education sector has been;
4. In view of the recent announcement by Kenya's key donors to the education sector (the US and the UK) that future assistance to the education sector will be channeled through NGOs, a further objective of his study is to assess the capability of the NGOs in Eldoret

to absorb the millions of shillings that will be channeled to the education system through them.

I hypothesized that the involvement of NGOs in Kenya's education sector is inevitable if the government is to succeed in its promises of providing Universal free primary education. With the recent influx of 1.5 million primary students in school, the detrimental impact of the post-election violence on recent strides in education and the withdrawal of foreign aid to the Government of Kenya for education, the responsibility and role of NGOs have increased significantly.

This qualitative study utilized three methods of data collection. While in Kenya, I was able to organize three focus group discussions with the Ministry of Education of Wareng District, a cohort of Moi Primary School teachers and the education department at SNV Netherlands, a Dutch NGO based in Kenya. Interviews with graduate students, teachers, professors, primary and secondary students were also conducted to gain a deeper understanding of the education system in Kenya. The third method of data collection was a desk research where books, documentaries, published conference papers and other unpublished research papers on Kenya were reviewed. In addition, policy papers from the Kenya's main policy institutions such as the Institute of Public Analysis Research (IPAR), the Kenya Institute of Public Policy Research Analysis (KIPPRA), and the University of Nairobi's Institute for Development Studies (IDS) were also reviewed.

## **5.2 SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS AND FINDINGS**

The findings of this study have formalized my assumption that NGOs have played an integral role in the implementation of Free Primary Education in Kenya and will continue to be vital in the years to come. The responses from teachers, community members, researchers and community leaders were realistic; they applauded NGO's commitment and innovation, but also referenced cases in which NGOs acted as fronts for illegal operations. I expected more criticism of NGO activism in the area, based on critiques that surfaced during my literature review. NGOs like the Rockefeller Foundation in the early post-independence era represented the interest of northern companies, promoting imperialistic objectives. The apparent strategies of northern NGOs like the Rockefeller Foundation to secure colonial policies created trust issues with Kenyans and NGOs. Although there is skepticism that still remains, my research shows that relations between the general public and NGOs, in Eldoret, are cooperative.

The swift responses during the post-election violence in Eldoret authenticated the positive dynamic role NGOs play in the community's development and growth. SNV, the International Red Cross, UNICEF and the Kenyan Red Cross responded not only with basic needs resources such as food, clothing and shelter, but also with peace building initiatives. By setting up temporary schools in the IDP camps, students were kept focused on school and partially distracted by the chaos throughout the community. It is through innovative techniques that truly fit the needs of the community that a trusting relationship begins to form between the NGOs and the community they serve.

I chose to examine SNV based on their creditable history in the region. SNV hires their development officers from within the countries they are working in. This approach is essential in project formulation as the officers themselves are inherently familiar with the conditions within

the country and are personally tied to the future of the country. Within each portfolio office, there are six subdivisions: eco-tourism, horticulture, livestock, water, sanitation and hygiene and renewable energy. Sustainable projects in each of these sectors promote growth and development for the community as a whole. SNV is also a creditable non-profit recognized within the NGO community for their research and publications. The publication on pro-poor education in Eldoret focused attention on the poorly managed Kenya Private Sector Schools Association (KPSA) and the Ministry of Education in Eldoret responded once the SNV reports were released.

The reviews and perceptions of SNV's history and work in Eldoret instills a sense of optimism within researchers and educators but SNV is just one NGO in one city and as the discussions revealed, not all NGOs in Eldoret have been as successful or benevolent. With the changing dynamics in international aid for education, each NGO chosen as the vehicle funding will flow through will have to be scrutinized by the international, national and local communities. Accountability frameworks will be given greater attention and NGO actions will have to be more transparent to determine the organization's capacity to take on such a responsibility.

### **5.3 AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

This study was a preliminary study examining the role of SNV Netherlands in Eldoret. By conducting a case study, I was able to centralize my studies and research in order to gain a deeper understanding of the perceptions of NGOs. Through the interview and focus group research, I was able to validate my hypothetical claim that NGOs play an indispensable role in the implementation of education policy. Initially, I wanted to examine the impact of NGO

participation on implementation procedures, but my secondary research on NGO involvement and accountability frameworks revealed that multiple factors influence policy implementation and as such, determining the impact of one sector (NGOs) would require more time in the community and a deeper understanding of impact assessment. As a result, the study morphed into a comprehensive case study examining the role of SNV in the education sector.

The role of NGOs defined in this study will be changing drastically in the years to come if the international community chooses to use NGOs as the channel through which funds will be distributed to schools and communities. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the activities and history of individual NGOs in the community will be monitored closely by the donor community to determine quality assurance, integrity and capacity of NGOs. We must raise the question in future studies; do NGOs have the capacity to allocate funding effectively, to interface with all schools receiving funding? Do NGOs have the number of qualified personnel to execute the role of the Ministry of Education and government of Kenya? One of the major criticisms voiced in focus groups and interviews is the limited role of the Ministry in the day to day functions within individual schools. The Ministry of Education officers admitted to the stress associated with the maintenance of 900-plus schools in one county. Although there is no denial that funds have been siphoned from school accounts from the national government, we cannot overlook the lack of a well-organized record keeping system within the Ministry of Education. As SNV unveiled, there was no record kept of the number of private schools in operation in Eldoret. If a school does have a record, it might not be filed in the same system. If there is not a sound information keeping infrastructure in operation, the NGO cohort responsible for managing fund allocation would have to create one and maintain the record keeping base.

With increased emphasis on accountability relationships between NGOs and donors, communities and schools, we must also question how NGOs chosen to fill the role of the MOE for fund distribution be selected. Will only northern NGOs with a history with donor countries be selected or will southern local NGOs be selected? Would NGOs form a union and work together as distributors, creating budgets for NGOs and monitoring the progress of the schools? These questions are not meant to raise suspicion or undermine the abilities of NGOs, but rather to show the amount of consideration that needs to be spent on defining the new role of NGOs and how the new responsibilities will be fulfilled.



## APPENDIX A

### QUESTIONS GUIDING FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

- 1.) What is your full name?
- 2.) What is your position title?
- 3.) How long have you been in office?
- 4.) What is your constituency/school district?
- 5.) How much education have you received?
- 6.) Where did you receive your education?
- 7.) Was it difficult for you to complete your school?
- 8.) What is your opinion of the FPE policy passed in 2003? What benefits have you witnessed in your district?
- 9.) How many schools are in your constituency?
- 10.) What is the college enrollment rate for your area?
- 11.) The term “brain drain” is brought up a lot. Do you think it affects your area? Are more students seeking post secondary education elsewhere?
- 12.) How do you think more or different educational policies or initiatives could help with the betterment of the community?

- 13.) What are some of the major barriers children, boys and girls, face in regards to completing a full education?
- 14.) Do you think there are more obstacles for girls compared to boys? If so, what are they?
- 15.) What are some of the areas that need most improvement in the school system?
- 16.) What do you think one of the greatest benefits of education is for the community?
- 17.) Are school fees a big issue for families? Would community groups help alleviate the stress of families?
- 18.) Have there been any significant NGOs or international groups who help with education programs? (This includes monetary aid to building of schools, school supplies or sponsoring school fees)
- 19.) Do you think international relations or politics affect your community? If so, in what way? If not, do you think your community members would be receptive to international aid or support?
- 20.) There have been some articles written in the newspapers about students not wanting to become teachers. Why do you think this is the case? Is this a vocalized issue in your area?
- 21.) Are you familiar with SNV, a Dutch NGO working in your region?
- 22.) What impact have they had on the Kenyan education sector?

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