Abstract:

The basic underlying variable of the FPE program, which was implemented in 2003 in Kenya, is SES (socio-economic status) of families, since it was intended to ensure that all children, especially those from poor households, access primary education. To enable gains in access, equity and quality to be maintained in the second year of implementation of FPE, the GOK in conjunction with The World Food Programme (WFP) introduced the School Feeding Programme (SFP) as one of the GOK's Core Poverty Programmes within the Economic Recovery Strategy in 2004. The programme, whose time frame is 2004-8, reaches one million children attending school within the arid and semi-arid lands (ASALs) and various Nairobi slums. The pre-primary and primary children are provided with a daily midday meal and optional mid-morning snack. The deworming component of the SFP led to a reduction in worm infestation amongst pupils (WFP, 2005). Studies and statistics from various other sub-Saharan countries show that the net enrolment of girls is still lower than that of boys, despite the FPE and SFP programmes . . . - ..

The educational disadvantages faced by girls are varied and deeply rooted in cultural practices and traditional attitudes (Elimu Yetu Coalition, ACTIONAID, 2005). Muthaiga Primary School, in which the study was carried out is situated within the up market Muthaiga residential area. At its inception, the school, used to cater for children from well-to-do families, but it currently caters for many children from poor households. Despite this, the school is not classified within the category of schools that benefit from such GOK interventions as the SFP. Therefore, the school's PTA initiated its own SFP for two reasons: 1. There are no canteens or shops near the school for the children to buy lunch from; 2. To provide pupils with subsidized meals, hygienically prepared by persons employed by the PTA, with children from very poor households receiving free meals. The study, therefore, intended to identify strengths and weaknesses or bottlenecks of the FPE programme and give recommendations as regards improving girls' access to education. This was done by collecting the views of all girls in Standard 8 and twenty four boys chosen at random from the three Standard 8 streams; views of female parents; and views of key informants (members of staff, especially female teachers) on various other variables that might also have an impact on girls, access to education e.g. age; family background (living with both biological parents; living with one biological parent and a step-parent; from a female-headed household); violence in the family; etc. The study's findings will be used to make parents and communities understand their roles and responsibilities, bearing in mind that the resources allocated for FPE are not adequate to offer quality education for all.