THE ROLE ON GENDER POLICY IN 'SCALING UP' GIRLS 'ACCESS TO SECONDARY SCHOOL EDUCATION IN KENYA

Nzau Arthur Kalanza, Lecturer- Department of Educational Foundations, Moi University, P.O Box 3900-Eldoret 3010 Kenya   *Email :Arthurknzau@hotmail.com

Lewis Ngesu muli, Senior Lecturer Department of Educational Foundations, University of Nairobi

Partrick Kiliku Musyoka, Lecturer- Department of Linguistics and Foreign languages, Moi University, Kenya

Alice Njeri Gichohi, Department of Nursing, Kenyatta University-alice_shecan@yahoo.com

Esther Nthoki Mutind, Post graduate student-Department of Educational administration and foreign studies, Moi University.

Abstract

 The Kenya government's commitment to increase girls' participation, retention, transition and completion at secondary school level is well documented in official government documents. It is also part of the Governments commitment to meet its commitments on international declaration on girl child education such as the millennium development goals. One of the clearest indicators of this commitment is the development of a gender policy on education. This paper outlines the stated policy intentions and envisaged strategies to achieve this objective. The benefits of providing girls with secondary school education and strategies for promoting girls with secondary school education are outlined in this paper. At the global level 'Scaling up 'of Good practices in Girls education has been identified as an important factor for effective implementation of gender related policies programmers and projects. This paper therefore discusses Concept of scaling up, the rationale for 'scaling up', strategies for 'scaling up, girls education, how to "scale": global, national and local partnerships, types of 'scaling up' and the conditions for effective 'scaling up' projects programmes and policies for girls education. From the above the author recommends that the gender policy is an invaluable tool and should be implemented as envisaged and its monitoring and evaluation done to measure its success or otherwise. There is also need for the government to provide the required financial and human resources especially now that the right to education has been enshrined in the Kenyan constitution. Consequently in revising the Education Act the issue of provision of secondary school education for girls should be given serious attention Further more Education policy makers should be sensitized on the importance of scaling up of good practices in girls education if the barriers that affect them will be overcome . there should also be a deliberate effort to create the conditions that are necessary for effective scaling up of good practices in girls education

KEY worlds: gender policy, girls education, scaling up

1.Introduction

1.1 Gender policy on secondary school education

The policy of the government of Kenya is make secondary school education part of basic education and it aimed at achieving a transition rate of 70 per cent by 2008. Despite the measures taken by the government girls' participation, retention, transition and completion at secondary school level is low (MOE, 2007:13-14)

The scenario above made the ministry make the following policy statements in an effort to address the challenges facing girls' education: Continue to develop and implement policies that that create an enabling environment to enhance girls retention and transition; Implement affirmative strategies for the benefit of the girl-child education; Develop modalities for open and distance learning, as well as non-formal education, to enable girls access secondary school education; Support implementation of the Children's act with regard to the child's right to education;Develop modalities for enhancing performance and efficiency of day schools Create an enabling environment and co-ordinate stakeholder participation in provision girls education and Provide governance and management structures that facilitate establishment, rehabilitation, expansion and provision of sanitation facilities and materials for girls in school(MOE,2007:14)

In implementing the above mentioned strategies, the ministry chose to use the following strategies: Advocating for girls' education among parents and communities, sensitizing them against negative socio-cultural practices and facilitating re-entry of girls who drop out of school due to pregnancy and early marriage; Enhance in-service of teachers in science, mathematics and technology (SMT) subjects to encourage participation and improve performance of girls in these and related subjects; Establish Centres of Excellence in each district(one for boys and one for girls)to serve as Model schools; Mobilize resources in Arid and Semi |Arid lands to a)expand and increase the number of boarding schools to support girls education)provision of houses for women and laboratories for girls' schools and c)enhance posting of female teachers in these areas; Enforce rules and regulations against sexual harassment in schools; Provision of adequate and gender responsive teaching and learning materials and implement empowerment programmes to enhance girls participation and performance in SMT subjects; Undertake continuous review of the curriculum to ensure gender sensitivity; Implementing affirmative action on bursaries and support infrastructure improvement, particularly for girls schools and students from disadvantaged areas; Ensure gender balance in Boards of governors, Parents Teachers Associations(PTAs) and Headship of secondary schools and Continue capacity building of teachers in gender sensitive pedagogy in SMT and other subjects(MOE,2007:14-15)

2.BENEFITS OF PROVIDING GIRLS WITH SECONDARY SCHOOL EDUCATION

Rihani (2006:2) identifies five main benefits of Girls secondary education: a)commitment to girls education will pressure communities and countries to build more secondary schools for girls .Existence of a secondary schools increases primary enrolment and quality. Ensuring that all students are within a reasonable distance of a middle school that is affordable will increase parental commitment to schooling. Their involvement leads to higher quality education b) girls' secondary education results in social benefits for the whole society. Secondary education equips students with critical thinking enabling civic participation and democratic change .it also increases economic opportunities. According to (Cunningham *et al* 2008). Social inclusion of adolescent girls that keeps them on a path to achieving their maximum human potential will result in significant economic growth . Marginal investments on girls education cam have a substantial impact on gross domestic product growth and well being. The true costs for un educated girls' which include lower health status of their children, lower life expectancy, skills obsolescence of jobless girls less social empowerment etc are high

 c) Girls are a valuable health resource –perhaps the most important benefits are found in the health field where women and girls are positioned to address some of the most significant health challenges facing developing countries .Girls' secondary education reduces child mortality, increases child immunization and   nutrition ,reduces child stunting and lowers fertility rates and unwanted pregnancies d)girls' secondary education can mitigate against HIV and AIDS since it offers an opportunity to catch girls when they are most vulnerable when they can and must learn healthy behaviours and e)girls secondary education is a tool for poverty alleviation because it produces high returns in terms of wage growth

2.1 STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING GIRLS SECONDARY EDUCATION

Rihani (2006:2)suggests that these include: increasing access and retention-building more schools will reduce travel costs and improve girls' safety .Clean ,separate toilets for female students and teachers increases retention .Providing a safe environment, including reporting procedures   for   students   and   teachers   reduces   sexual   harassment   b)improving equity/quality/relevance/- once girls gain access to secondary education they often become discouraged or drop out of school for financial reasons ,but   also out of frustration with a school environment where gender inequalities prevail, classes are not participatory, teachers and teaching examples are biased towards males   and the curriculum is not relevant to their lives. Teachers must be trained in student centred practices. Schools also should seize the opportunity

for HIV and AIDS prevention Education and teach responsible behaviour and life skills.d) enhancing motivation and pay off –to truly value education girls should see that it will lead to a job and an income .additional training and role models can help

Increasing funding for adolescence girls and tracking what it achieves will benefit both today's girls and tomorrow's girls by providing services to today's girls and learning from those experiences to better for girls tomorrow. Incentives for school attendance through conditional cash transfers (Fishbein and Shady 2009)or scholarships (Angrist *et.al* 2002) have been shown to keep girls in school and are cost effective .

Girls engagement in the labour market could be enhanced through building marketable skills facilitating the labour force entry process and alleviating labour constraints and expectations .skills could be enhanced by improving the relevance of the education curricula developing . governments should also advocate for girls by making the law work better for adolescence girls by repealing laws that discriminate against girls in the work place ,schools or family and ensure equality of access to health services, education, jobs and earnings ,credit and property ownership . They could also mobilize communities,families, men and boys to support adolescent girls .They could sponsor programmes or provide incentives to engage religious leaders and community leaders and head teachers to foster healthier, more supportive communities where girls can create and execute their own solutions (Cunningham *et al* 2008)

3. Concept of scaling up

Samoff, Sebatane & Dembele (2001:6) formulated a broad conception of ''scaling up ''in education: Scaling up in education is intended to expand access and improve quality for more people over a geographical area, and to do so in ways that are efficient, equitable and sustainable. Since education is central for development, the strategies adopted to promote reform by enlarging the scale of effective pilot must address the broader development objectives of empowerment, equality, and social transformation and sustainable''.

"Scaling up' is considered a desirable process, but also a process that is hard to define. It is usually sought to both accelerate progress as well for seeking to make the best use of limited resources-i.e. achieving economies of scale. "Scaling up" is also seen as important for grounding reform by drawing on local experiences to inform macro level service delivery reform.

The discussion about reforms for advancing gender parity and gender equality is fundamentally a discussion about processes of social change, given the deep rooted attitudinal barrier that exist more generally towards the advancement of girls and women. Linking social change processes to purposive policies and institutional systems is at the heart of "Scaling up". Scaling up is also

seen as emphasizing both appropriate policies aimed at defined and desired outcomes, as well as appropriate implementation structures. In this sense it also understood to focus on learning about processes of change, and set them in motion; and on institutions-how to embed these processes of learning and change in institutional and organizational cultures. Most importantly as with all change processes there are challenges of politics, as institutional and other cultures are engaged in processes of reform that may encounter resistances..

3.1 THE RATIONALE FOR 'SCALING UP'

The impetus for ''scaling up'' in current international discourse stems from several factors .International agencies need to be able to show to their local constituencies that their investments and energies are yielding significant results. Small scale or pilot projects may not yield results that are demonstrable at a level of scale that shows significant impact significant impact (Sammoff ,Sebatane & Dembele 2001).''Target oriented approaches", such as MDGs increase the need for agencies and governments to go for scale in order to achieve the magnitude of the challenge outlined in terms of key development indicators.

Interest in "scaling up" is also linked to a shift in donor priorities and approaches. Donors now prefer to work in more co ordinated approaches, pooling resources to work with governments on a coherent agreed set of policy reforms.

3.2 STRATEGIES FOR 'SCALING UP ' GIRLS EDUCATION

Subrahmanian (2005) identifies the following as key strategies for 'scaling up' girls' education: targeting disadvantage populations with extra allocations of resources to overcome demand-side constraints; reforming systems including teacher training, curriculum and pedagogy; improving accountability of services through improved disaggregated data collection ,monitoring and evaluation systems that feedback into the design of policies and programmes through building effective review mechanisms; developing effective partnerships between multiple providers to ensure concerted action which would need better regulations systems with criteria for ensuring gender-awareness ;working with communities in a sustained manner to support changes in norms around appropriate roles and actions for boys and girls, to strengthen change agents to deal with potential resistance of backlash and Developing strong legal frameworks that support the above changes.

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3.3 HOW TO "SCALE": GLOBAL, NATIONAL AND LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

According to (UNGEI, n.d., 3) acceleration of the pace of change and the "scaling up" of innovative projects that have demonstrated results in terms of effecting positive changes requires 'new ways of working by most of the agencies involved. Acceleration and 'scaling up' are aimed at achieving change with the target of 2015 in mind. Acceleration requires an increase in of political will and grater partnerships in improving the pace of change: 'scaling up' focuses more technically on identifying lessons of positive change and identifying the institutional mechanisms and processes that that can take positive change to a greater level of scale and coverage. Both are complementary: The political will and multi-actor collaborations required to support acceleration particularly in terms of marking resources more available is a pre condition for ensuring that innovative procedures that have a tremendous impact at a local scale are taken up with the right balance of policy ,institutional structures mechanisms and resources, and an enabling environment . These require an attention to the 'techniques 'and practices that sustain change-building capacities through training, incentive structures, monitoring systems, feedback and review mechanisms. Change in policy and institutional capacity requires change in several interrelated dimensions most of which necessitate new forms of partnerships. These dimensions include financial partnerships, agenda setting partnerships, and implementation partnerships. These cut across the global national and local domains where education and gender-equality policies are operational.

 Underpinning these different partnerships is a range of issues relating to educational systems. A core issue relates to the education system in a given country context, comprising infrastructure and inputs, professional providers and stakeholder representation. A related system is the financing that is to ensure that resources reach the system at all levels of delivery. This includes budgetary reform and expenditure frameworks that protect allocations from being diverted. Management systems are critical for putting in place those institutional mechanisms that can best leverage financial resources for service delivery. These include addressing conditions and incentives for   teacher performance (Development committee,2003,a)Co-ordination is central in this process-coordination between sectors(Development Committee,2003b)as well as Co-ordination within sectors across these dimensions

3.4 TYPES OF 'SCALING UP'

According to(Samoff ,Sebatane & Dembele, 2001)there are different approaches to a) 'Scaling up' by replication which involves the taking up of a successful model and adopting the same to local contexts elsewhere .b) Scaling up' by explosion where by the pilot stage is by passed and a model is developed to serve an entire country or large parts of it and c(and Scaling up' by association whereby many distinct efforts are linked together to constitute a large -scale strategy each, functioning in its distinct approaches and implementation structures

3.5 CONDITIONS FOR EFFECTIVE 'SCALING UP' PROJECTS PROGRAMMES AND POLICIES FOR GIRLS EDUCATION

According to (Subrahmanian 2005) for 'scaling to up' to happen there is need for public accountability and political will. She argues that in the face of resistances to and lack of widespread public support for girls' education,' scaling up is likely to encounter challenges. It is there fore important to strengthen the capacity of the innovation and its champions to negotiate and advocate. Unterhalter *et al* (2004) support the idea of a publicly accountable criterion' of achievements and challenges in achieving gender equality, drawing on existing data. Such public accountability is necessary for citizens to follow progress of their countries or regions in making progress on girls' education and can help fuel demand for reform

Participation of local communities who then own and sustain the reform is also important. Where genuine participation is a commitment, communities will be in a better position to set the terms of their engagement with state policies and own and manage reform at local level (Subrahmanian 2005)

Creation of new institutional structures is necessary where values underlying effective and innovative approaches are not embedded in large scale systems. This means that both the targeted mechanisms as well as the universal schooling system need to be oriented to similar values and approaches to learning so that all children benefit (Subrahmanian 2005)

It is also critical to create consensus on common goals and their meaning among the partners involved in girls education (Subrahmanian 2005)

The credibility of gender equality reforms requires legal mandates that are unlikely to change based on policy whims and can endure government changes.

According to (Unterhalter et al, 2004) the role of Women's activism in promoting and sustaining gender-equality reforms is critical. Organizations such as FAWE (forum for African Women

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Educationists) have been involved in research, advocacy, training and capacity building and provide technical advisory   services to many African governments.

Supportive conditions for 'scaling up' at the global level are a crucial factor since donors are likely to play a critical role given the increasing linkages between external resources and sector programmes in education

4. CONCLUSION

From the foregoing the authors concludes that the gender policy on education clearly articulates what should be done to enhance girls' participation, retention, transition and completion at secondary school level. It is therefore important for the government to commit the financial and human resources required. It should also monitor the implementation of the policy and use the lessons learned in revising the policy. The literature reviewed clearly indicates the benefits of providing girls with secondary school education. It is therefore important that this information be disseminated to the Kenyan public. It has also emerged that if the policy is implemented as planned it will address the issues that are crucial in "scaling up' good practices in girls education. The authors, based on the available literature conclude that 'scaling up' good practices in girls education is the way to go in Kenya if the Millennium development goal on girls and women's education as well as vision 2030 will be realized . There is also need for the Review of the Education Act to be expedited and to ensure it captures the provision of secondary school education for girls. All stakeholders involved in education should be sensitized on the concept of 'Scaling up" and deliberate efforts should be made to crate the conditions necessary for effective 'scaling up' of good practices in girls education

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