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The Dilemmas in Financing Higher Education in Kenya, 1960-2012

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ABSTRACT

In the last two decades or so Kenya has witnessed increased demand for university education. This has forced education planners to experiment with a number of strategies to admit these increased numbers of qualified students to existing public universities. These strategies have seen remarkable flexibility in public university programs and admission requirements. Some of these strategies include: evening programs, weekend programs, holiday programs, and open and distance learning programs. But one which has raised enough public attention is the variedly labeled parallel, module two or self- sponsored students programs. Although this program has substantially increased access to public university education in Kenya, it has equally been criticized particularly on its ability to deliver quality university education. The argument has been that the programs were primarily tasked with the purpose of raising income and ensuring institutional survival in the prevailing harsh economic conditions. What is however unknown is the extent to which the program has promoted quality training for students and improved skills for public university academic staff. The brief paper seeks to address this gap. The paper will be based on secondary data and personal observations. This will go along way to addressing the reported declining quality of teaching and research in public universities not only in Kenya but also in sub- Saharan Africa

INTRODUCTION

Since independence, the demand for university education in Kenya has increased substantially (Sifuna, 1990; Ayot & Briggs, 1992). This increase has been attributed to the considerable importance that the government placed on education in promoting economic and social development, the purported private benefits of higher education such as well-paid jobs and better living standards, and the increasing numbers of school leavers thanks to government sponsored free primary education and subsidized secondary education. The increased demand for higher education has however been witnessed against the backdrop of slow economic growth, competing public needs and the pressure from the international donors such as the World Bank and IMF on the government to reduce funding social development including higher education. These and many other factors have connived to force the government to experiment with a number of strategies to fund higher education in order to increase access and equity.

From inception, the government adopted free public university education, where the government paid for tuition, student living allowances, pedagogical and research infrastructure, buildings and staff costs. In 1975, there was a slight policy shift in which the government introduced student loans scheme to cover only the cost of personal expenses, such as accommodation, meals textbooks and stationary, traveling, and other effects leaving the burden of tuition and capitalization on the government. A more radical policy shift was however, introduced in 1991, and partly due to World Bank and IMF continued pressure on the government to drastically reduce state funding to social services such as higher education. This is what led to cost sharing, which required students or their sponsors to cover both tuition and cost of maintenance of public university education institutions. Given the heavy government subsidization, cost sharing did not realize the stated objectives instead, many public universities continued to experience extreme financial difficulties hence putting pressure on the government to increase its fiscal support.

Consequently, the government directed public universities to turn to other sources to meet their staff costs, learning and research materials and even capital development expenditure (Kamunge Report, 1988). It was these developments, which introduced the current celebrated dual- track, parallel- track, or module II program of tuition policy. In addition were the income generating activities, which most public universities introduced. The public universities therefore diverted from their core business of improvement of the curriculum, pedagogy and research (Sawyerr, 2004). The module II program has significantly opened up access to university education in Kenya. However, critics argue that the program had primarily goal of raising income and ensuring institutional survival in the prevailing difficult economic conditions. What is however unknown is the extent to which the program has promoted quality training for students and improved skills for public university academic staff.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC UNIVERSITY IN KENYA

The development of university education in East Africa can be traced back to 1922 when Makerere College was established as a small technical college which grew into an inter-territorial institution admitting students from Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, and Zanzibar (Munyao 2010) In Kenya, *The Presidential Working Party on Education and Manpower Training For the Next Decade and Beyond*, otherwise referred to as *Kamunge Report* (1988: 69) observes that the development of university education in Kenya started with the establishment of the Royal Technical College in Nairobi in 1956 as a constituent college of University of East Africa. In 1961, the Royal Technical College was renamed the University College of Nairobi. In 1970, the University College of Nairobi was established as University of Nairobi thereby becoming Kenya's first university (Kalai, 2010:20; Ooro, 2009:4).

Subsequently, Moi University was established by an Act of parliament as the second university in 1983 while Kenyatta University College, then a constituent college of University of Nairobi became the third university through an Act of parliament in 1985. Egerton, another constituent college of University of Nairobi also become a fully fledge university in 1987. Thereafter, other public universities have been established including Jomo-Kenyatta University Agriculture and Technology 1994, Maseno University 2000, Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology 2002 and Open University 2011. Besides these fully fledged universities, are university colleges and campuses spread in different parts of the country. As at 2011, Kenya had about 7 public universities and 27 private universities. In addition, Kenya had 17 colleges and five more are expected before the end of 2011 (Wangenge-Ouma, 2012).

It is however important to observe here that longitudinal studies have demonstrated that university planning has not in many occasions accompanied the expansion of public universities instead they are guided by either presidential directives (Sifuna, 1998) or ethnic considerations (Mwiria, 1994). The majority of public universities in Kenya are offshoots of politics and ethnic pride rather than of a real need for the institutions. The new institutions were created on regional and ethno-centric politics consideration rather than responding to the new educational needs. Since serious planning was not a priority in the expansion of higher education, public universities are characterized by inefficiencies and ineffectiveness. The academic and non-academic staffs in these institutions are underemployed, facilities are underutilized, and many projects incomplete, while academic programmes are rigid. These among other factors have greatly eroded the quality of university education leading to many people questioning the true meaning of university." These questions have been raised on the backdrop of most of these public universities and their colleges lacking the requisite infrastructural facilities (e.g. lecture rooms, laboratories, libraries, and faculty offices), essential for quality learning and training (Munyae, 2011:1)

FINANCING HIGHER EDUCATION IN KENYA

Financing higher education throughout the world has seen dramatic changes in the last decades of the 20th and the first decades of the 21st centuries (Johnstone, 2009:1). In the main, these changes in financing are responses to a worldwide phenomenon of higher education costs tending to rise at rates considerably in excess of the corresponding rates of increase of available revenue, especially revenue that depends on taxation. The consequence in most of the world has been a shortage of revenue to accommodate, first the increasing costs of instruction and research and second, the increasing revenue needs of rising enrolment. Cumulatively, six trends have been evident each with economic, political and social roots and consequences. These trends while varying both among countries and within each country, form the context for higher education's currently wide spread financial austerity as well as for the emerging policy solutions which exhibit some very similar patterns despite local variations.

These trends are: (a) the increasing unit or per student cost of instruction, (b) the increasing enrolment, (c) the increasing knowledge based economies and the consequent additional expectations heaped on higher education to serve as a major engine of economic development and individual betterment, (d) failure of the governmental or public revenue to maintain their share of the cost increases resulting from these pressures on higher education expenditures, (e) the trend towards increased globalization which contributes both to the increasing cost trajectories and to the faltering government revenues, (f) the pattern of increasing liberalization of economies and the resulting decentralization, devolution, and privatization of public and private systems including institutions of higher learning (Johnstone, 2009:1-2). All these trends have been observed in Kenya with almost similar consequences.

Until the early 1970s, university education in Kenya was free and the full cost was borne by the government. The rationale for free higher education was based among other things, on the country's desire to create highly skilled manpower to replace the departing colonial administrators. In return, the university graduates were bound to work in the public sector for a minimum of three years. The government therefore provided all the funding for both development (for construction lecture rooms, laboratories, and libraries) as well as recurrent expenditure (mostly staff salaries). In addition, the government also sponsored or subsidized tuition fees for most of the students. This funding model not only allowed universities to admit "government sponsored" students per year but also made government funding to university education to be directly dependent on national economic performance. Subsequently, policy documents such as Sessional Paper No. 10 1965 on "*African Socialism and its Application to Planning in Kenya"* and the *Report on Higher Level Manpower Requirements and Resources in Kenya*, all stressed that high and middle level human resources were critical resources for achieving rapid economic growth and that the production of high level human resources was one of the goals of university education (Otieno, 2004:76).

The government used these arguments as the basis for expanding and subsidizing higher education in Kenya (Otieno, 2004:76). By the late 1970s, it was evident that the demand for public university education was higher than the ability or willingness of the government to provide public resources that are adequate to meet this demand (Cheboi, 2008). However, what was so much devastating for Kenyan public universities and the rest of sub-Saharan African countries were that from the 1980s, most countries experienced financial constraints due to poor economic performance and high population growth added to the need to provide other basic services such as primary education, healthcare, and infrastructure. Consequently, public university education therefore faced severe competition from other sectors for limited government funds (Otiende, 1986; World Bank 1988). As was expected, the government and the international donors challenged the universities to justify their existence and claim to massive public funds (World Bank, 1986,1988).

In the decades of 1990s, the government dilemma was how to manage public university systems effectively in the context of fiscal austerity measures introduced by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. With the financial constraints and the implementation of structural adjustment programs, the government of Kenya, like other governments in Africa undertook a review and/or do adjustment in public university financing (Eshiwani, 1990; World Bank, 1988). During the 1991-92 academic year, the government for the first time introduced the cost sharing or user charges scheme which required public university students to pay university fees. The term cost sharing refers to shifting at least some of the higher education cost burden from governments or tax payers to parents and/or students (Johnstone, 2006). The cost sharing was first a statement of fact- that is, that the costs of higher education are shared among governments/tax payers, parents/students and philanthropists. However, it also referred to the articulation of a policy that some of these costs must be met, not by relying predominantly or even exclusively on governments, but by being shared among parents and/or students in addition to taxpayers. The cost sharing was most frequently associated with tuition fees and user-charges especially for governmentally or institutionally provided room and board (Johnstone, 2009:11). In Kenya, the cost sharing policy in public universities took four related forms. These include: introduction of tuition fees payment, dual track tuition payment and/or special students tuition payment, introduction of user charges, and the establishment of student loan programs. To cushion the poor students, the government re-introduced the higher education loans board, which was first, experimented with in the 1973-1974 financial year.

THE STUDENT LOANING PROGRAM IN KENYA

The history of the student loaning system in Kenya goes back to the 1970s, when the government faced increased enrolment amidst dwindling economic performance occasioned with oil shock. Consequently, the government re-introduced[1] a loan program in its 1974-1975 financial years under the name University Students Loan Scheme. The Loan Disbursement and Recovery Unit in the Ministry of Education administered this scheme, however, without clear policy guidelines. Without clear policy guidelines, several factors undermined the program's successful operation (Otieno, 2004:77). Meanwhile, the government undertook reforms including requiring students to apply for the loans from their home districts; having the loan application forms endorsed by the chiefs/local administrators; introducing meal cards and "Pay as You Eat" instead of free meals; abolishing "boom" an unrestricted stipend of about US$ 64 per semester. These reform measures, however, proved ineffective in improving the program since they did not address some of the fundamental shortcomings. A more comprehensive reform were realized in 1995, when the government set up the higher education loans board through a act of parliament.

The longitudinal studies have shown that the board has tried to overcome some of the difficulties experienced by the previous Loan Disbursement and Recovery Unit. For example, one of the board's major achievements has been the increase in the number of students funded in both public and private universities, made possible by the board's aggressive campaign to recover outstanding loans (Otieno, 2004:80). However, on financing capital and recurrent investment, the universities still relied on government funding. The downward economic performance in Kenya not only witnessed the inability of the government to adequately fund the public university education but also the increasing economic role being played by special tuition paying students in the financial sustainability of the public universities.

THE DUAL TRACK TUITION PROGRAM

In 1994, the government decreased education budget from 37% of its total annual recurrent budget to about 30% stating that it was not possible to allocated additional funding to higher education (Kiamba, 2004). This shortfall in government budget for higher education brought about the impetus for the higher education institutions to look for alternative income generating projects. To this end, several strategies for revenue diversification were adopted including: establishment of units for income generation such as consultancy, farms, and even petrol stations (Kigotho, 2000), and overhead charges for university staff involved in external research contracts. The University of Nairobi, for example established the University of Nairobi Enterprise Service Ltd to handle her income generating activities. However, the most sustainable and potentially lucrative form is what came to be known variedly as parallel, module two or self- sponsored students programs. These programs were introduced in public universities in 1998 in which the universities admitted regular students sponsored by the government in addition to students who were self sponsored.

Generally, the dual track tuition policies were characterized by a restricted “merit based” entry to free or very low cost higher education, with other applicants not so admitted permitted entry on a fee paying basis. In Kenya, the students admitted into regular program pay tuition fees of about US$ 200, while those admitted under dual track paying about US$ 1600 and considerably more in other disciplines such as medicine. The students who attain the Joint Admission Board (a non-statutory body made up of the Vice Chancellors, Deputy Vice- Chancellors, Principals, Deans of Public Universities, and representatives from the ministry of higher education) prescribed cut off point on their Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) education are admitted into the regular state supported programs. In principle, KCSE holders with C+ and above qualify for public university admission, however this cut off point depend on total public university student bed capacity. Therefore, the Joint Admissions Board sets the entry cut off point and/ mark for government sponsored students from year to year. For example, out of 90,000 students who qualified for public university admission in 2009/2010 academic year, only 31,611 students were admitted into public universities by the Joint Admissions Board. This meant that about 58,389 students who qualified to joint universities could only do so under the dual track system (Anami and Oriedo, 2011).

On the other hand, the students on dual track gain entry to public universities on the basis of different criteria that vary from university to university. At the very initial stages of the dual track programs, candidates had to be form four leavers who met the minimum university entry requirement of C+ but could meet the JAB cut off point for government sponsorship. In an attempt to increase the number of self sponsored students, various public universities have made admission conditions more flexible and accepted students from different academic backgrounds including holders of A level certificates, Kenya Advanced Certificate of Education, P1 holders, diploma holders and even certificate holders from government recognized institutions (Otieno, 2004). Similarly, many public universities have also employed the shift method where students study in an alternating system to accommodate more numbers. And lately, many universities have chosen affiliation with middle level colleges and foreign universities in addition to distance learning. But more conspicuous are the ubiquitous constituent colleges and satellite campuses that are landmarks of every average Kenyan urban centre (Abisai, 2011).

These measures have significantly increased public university access and raised additional public university income as at 2011 the students enrolled under the dual track program were the majority in all public universities and the satellite campuses. For example, in August 2008, the Vice Chancellor for the University of Nairobi, Prof. George Magoha was reported saying “without the parallel programs operations in public universities would have ground to a halt a long time ago. Fees charged for the various programs now contribute more than 60% of the budget of all public universities” (Daily Nation, 24th August 2008). This statement by the vice chancellor meant that the dual track programs have contributed immensely towards the financial stability of the public universities and enabled them to supplement funds received from the exchequer. However, the other stakeholders have questioned the dual track system particularly on grounds of equity and quality. These questions have arisen on the background that many public university lecturers are overworked, underpaid, and that the university libraries have no reference books and journals and research is not being carried out to generate more knowledge.

This explains the remarks by the former Kenyan Prime Minister Raila Odinga when he said “university

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education seem to benefit only the rich. For instance, the numbers of students who join the University of Nairobi because they can pay are more than those who get admitted because of their good grades". Similar sentiments were echoed by the Secretary of Commission for Higher Education Everett Standa when he said "the thirst for money in public universities has overlooked issues of practicalities then admitting students" (Daily Nation, 24th August 2008).

THE QUESTION OF QUALITY OF UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

Here we seek to answer the following questions: – in the context of higher education in Kenya how should we define quality? Who is or should be responsible for maintaining and/streamlining quality in Kenyan public universities? What are the determinants of university quality education? What are the discernible trends and concerns when it comes to quality in higher institutions of learning in Kenya? And what are the public perceptions of quality in the era of dual track programs? Materu Peter in the World Bank Working Paper on *Higher Education Quality Assurance in Sub- Saharan Africa: Status Challenges, Opportunities and Promising Practices* (2007) argue that the notion of quality is hard to define precisely, especially in the context of tertiary education where institutions have broad autonomy to decide on their visions and missions.

Materu Continues to argue that any statement of quality implies a certain relative measure against a common standard and such a common standard does not exist. In the recent past, various concepts have evolved to suit different contexts ranging from quality as a measure for excellence to quality as perfection, quality as value for money, quality as customer satisfaction, quality as fitness for purpose, and quality as transformation.

Other institutions have adopted International Standard Office (ISO) in some of its activities as a symbol for quality. However, the core issue in quality is the extent to which the institutions of higher learning are meeting their commitments and promises to its stakeholders. The World Bank Report thus goes a head to define quality as "fitness for purpose" meeting or conforming to generally acceptable standards as defined by an institutions quality assurance bodies and appropriate academic and professional communities (Materu, 2007: 3).

The Handbook on Processes for Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Kenya (2008) also concur that quality means different things to different people, and is relative to processes and outcomes. Quality is a different concept and quality in higher education is much more confusing. Quality in higher education is perceived as consisting of a synthesis of conformity, adaptability and continuous improvement. It is a synthesis of a range of expectations of many stakeholders. The students may focus on facilities provided and perceived usefulness of education on future employment. The academic staff may pay attention to the teaching learning process. Management may give importance to the institutions achievements. Parents may consider the achievements of their children. Employers may consider the competence of the graduates. Quality may therefore be viewed from many approaches. The Handbook concludes that quality as fitness for purpose and fitness of purpose that is quality measured against stated mission and objective as the most accepted interpretation of quality in the context of higher education (CHE, 2008).

The principal contribution of a university to society turns on the quality of the knowledge it generates and imparts, the habits of critical thought and problem solving it institutionalizes and inculcates in its graduates, and the values of openness and democratic governance it promotes and demonstrates. The easiest means of getting a handle on the issues of quality of performance of universities are; the caliber and commitment of the teaching and research staff; the range and quality of curriculum and pedagogy and the quality and extent of education facilities, including the means of accessing traditional as well as worldwide knowledge (Sawyerr, 2004).

THE WEIGHT OF HISTORY

Generally, in the colonial and early independence years, the question of the quality of the universities in Africa was hardly ever in issue as the institutions were able to operate at close to “international standards” in effect, the standards of the relevant colonial power. The second factor that helped to ensure the quality levels of the institutions was the crucial fact that for many years the institutions remained small with low enrolments and, in addition to substantial state subventions, benefited from support by foreign governments and international donor agencies and foundations. The university staff enjoyed reasonable good conditions of service and there was in place adequate staff development programs which ensured that young faculty moved on to higher qualifications, while senior faculty had leave and other opportunities for self renewal and updating (Sawyerr, 2004).

These conditions that facilitated the development and the maintenance of international standards were to undergo substantial and dramatic change in the late 1970s and throughout 1980s. These were occasioned by collapse of the national economies and reduction of government funding to public universities compared to the early years after independence. Government resources faced competition from other social and economic sectors and from the mid-1980s, and were acerbated by the policy of re-directing national resources away from university education to basic education. A further factor was the coincidental reduction in the general support of higher education by international donors (Sawyerr, 2004). The implications for learning environment at public universities were catastrophic. The story of the resulting deterioration in physical conditions in most African universities in the 1980s and 1990s has often been told and in the words of Sawyerr, 2004, what needs to be emphasized are the consequential transformation in the teaching, learning, and research environment.

Before 1985, most institutions of higher learning in Kenya adopted several methods to ensure quality education. These included; affiliation with Partner University, continuous assessment tests, mid term tests, final examination, assignments, class work individual papers, individual projects, group projects and external examination. In some universities, the students evaluated all the courses by means of questionnaire that permits quantitative rating. However, with increased private sector participation in higher learning appears to have provided a trigger for governments, and to a less extent institutions, employers and the public, to give greater attention to education quality. These were compounded by the rapid enrolment, decreased public funding, dual track admission policy and brain drain.

As a consequence the government set up the Commission for Higher Education (CHE) through an Act of Parliament (Universities Act, 1985) to make better provisions for the advancement of university education in Kenya. The CHE has the following core functions: accreditation and quality assurance and regular inspection of universities, planning for the establishment and development of higher education and training, mobilization of resources for higher education and training, co-ordination and regulation of admission to universities, documentation information service and public relations of higher education and training. However, in 2009, the Government of Kenya: Public Universities Inspection Boards noted that the CHE has no mechanisms for external quality assurance by ensuring compliance with established internal and external quality assurance processes in the universities. Moreover, the Moi university chancellor Prof. Bethwell Ogot even posited “in Kenya, for instance, there is an accreditation type of evaluation by which new private universities receive official approval after meeting minimum quality standards. This kind of evaluation is conducted by the Commission for Higher Education (CHE). It should be noted, however, that CHE does not evaluate public institutions, nor would it be qualified to carry out the evaluation, given that the majority of the members come from public universities (Ogot, 2005: 659).

The situation is even worse in private universities. This was observed by the *Daily Nation* Editorial of 19th

February 2010 arguing that "admittedly, the Commission for Higher Education has little capacity to superintend over these institutions. Once it has given a charter or letter of interim authority, seldom does it monitor to check quality and standards. Ultimately, it is the knowledge-thirsty learners who suffer, as they get inferior education and because of the schedules where they attend classes in the evening, they hardly get a chance for group discussions. Not that the public universities are any better. They suffer as much. Discussions over declining quality of university education is not new; it has been going on for the past two decades. But we are reading dangerous levels […] worse, it is common to have masters degree holders teaching postgraduate classes; courses taught without reading and reference materials; or exams moderated downwards to accommodate weaker students". Recently, professional bodies such as Institute of Certified Public Accountants of Kenya (ICPAK) and the Kenya Engineers Registration Board added their voice the quality concerns in public universities arguing that "we are now forced to ask applicants for their secondary education certificates…the degree is no longer a reliable measure of job seekers ability as certain universities are churning doubtful quality learning" (Some, 2010).

While it is a recognized fact that the dual track policy has opened invaluable opportunities to those students who attained the minimum university admission requirement but had no possibility of securing an admission because of the limited opportunities available in the government funded/regular programs, their introduction has seen remarkable public outcry about the provision of quality education in our public universities.

In 2009, Government of Kenya: Public Universities Inspection Boards noted that there was widespread perception that quality education and training in public universities has declined as a result of increased student enrolment, inadequate and outdated equipment and facilities, frequent university disturbances, and low university academic staff moral. As a consequence there was heavy workload and limited faculty development opportunities in addition to lack of modern teaching learning environment. And given the low salaries for academic staff it become common for a lecturer to teach in at least three universities in a single semester (Business Daily September, 2011).

To most stakeholders in Kenyan the question posed by Moses Oketch (2003) in his articled published in *Higher Education Policy* Vol. 16, 313-332 that "How does market model define student- are they clients, customers or students" remain relevant. Similar views were at one point held by the Executive Secretary of Inter-University Council of East Africa Prof. Nyaigoti Chacha when he said "Universities in Kenya no longer offer but sell education. Today, a department or a school in a Kenyan university is honored not by the number of PhDs, research output, consultancy and publications, but on how module 2 (parallel degree) fees collected. There is nothing wrong with commercialization of education. In fact, according to one commentator, that is how it should be, especially since there is little or no external support for the universities. The problem, however, is with the implementation of the commercialization: our universities have tended to consider numbers over quality. Another problem arising from this is that money collected is not used to improve the education system and facilities."

Recently, the Kenyan Press has been awash with headlines depicting that all in not well when it comes to the provision of quality university education in public universities. In September 29th 2011 in an article appearing in The *Standard Newspaper*, entitled "Tame Craze for University Expansion" Okech Kendo argued that the quality of higher education started slipping down from the year 2003 with the appetite for more universities overriding the imperative of better planning. In the same article, Kendo argues, "now you can buy degrees, even if you do not have the aptitude for higher education. Forged about quality checks and the thinning of the academic ladder. That was then and this is now" (The Standard, September 29th 2011:15). The following month, public universities became the focus of almost all the Daily News papers in Kenya. The Standard News Paper in an article entitled "Have Varsities Become Degree Mill" argued that "public universities have taken a profit making route and are thus driven more by the need for self sustain and have surplus. As a result, they are expanding their scope and their expansion has become an obsession and it is threatening the very ideals that it should be advancing…recently, press reports insinuated that a public university had been offering an illegal degree program and had to recall its graduates to re-take a course after getting approvals from concerned authority. Another university college was denied accreditation status by the National Council for Legal Education a body that approves law curriculum after admitting the students to pursue that course. Last year, the Engineering Registration Board had also rejected some engineering degrees offered by some public university…citing substandard curriculum (The Standard, October 7th 2011: 16). Two weeks after, the Commission for Higher Education Secretary and Chief Executive in an article entitled "Quality of University Education on Spot" was quoted saying "CHE is concerned that some employers are forced to retrain their employees. We want universities to continuously review their training programmes to meet the changing market needs" (The Standard Wednesday, 26th 2011: 25).

In the following week, the Daily Nation in its editorial entitled "Quality of University Must be Safeguarded" lamented that "recently, Moi University introduced a nursing course at a new campus in Alupe, in Busia, yet it does not have the resources to do so. Consequently, the Nursing Council of Kenya suspended the program in which 26 students had enrolled. Second, Masinde Muliro University Administration had been at loggerheads with the Engineering Registration Board, which has rejected its engineering programs due to flaws […] it is imperative that the authorities deal with the uncontrolled development that threatens to undermine the quality of higher education" (Daily Nation, Tuesday November, 2011: 12).

In November 9th 2011, the Daily Nation featured an article entitled "The Fall and Fall of University Education Standards in Kenya". In this article, Pauline Kairu lamented that "educationists have raised the red flag over the deteriorating quality of education in Kenya's institutions of higher learning. Most have blamed the expansionist regimes of the current administrators, whose passion have been fuelled by the billions of shillings collected through the popular module II programs, for the downward trend. At the University of Nairobi, as in many other institutions across the country, the situation calls for urgent intervention". These reports are indeed a demonstration that the Kenyan publics are not only dissatisfied with public university education but more importantly are calling on the relevant stakeholders to urgently address and rescue the declining quality of university education particularly in public universities.

CONCLUSION

The increasing demand for higher education coupled with slow economic growth, competing public needs such as healthcare, elementary education and infrastructure and the pressure from international donors such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund to reduce funding of university education, prompted the Kenyan government to introduce cost sharing in higher education in early 1990s. However, the introduction of cost sharing and the increasing need for the universities to fundraise to effectively meet the budgetary deficits has raise serious issues to do with quality of public university education. The Kenyan mainstream press was continued to have tittles such as "Kenya: Poor Quality of University Education is Worrying" and "Enrolment Chaos Dent the Quality of Degrees". On the 26th January 2011 the president of Kenya while awarding the Charter to Mt. Kenya University remarked "in this regard, setting up of any new campuses and any new collaboration should be subjected to detailed scrutiny by the ministry and the commission to ensure that quality of education is not compromised". The questions that arise is how can public universities provide quality education in the context of increased enrolment? Is the proposed East African Higher Education Regulatory Agencies relevant when it comes to provision of quality public university education in Kenya? Even as we strive to make higher education accessible to more students, we must not forget that quantity cannot be a replacement for quality.

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FOOTNOTES

[1] *It was a re-activation of the colonial government student loaning scheme of 1952, which it just stopped funding after independence*