

# Assessment of Public Financing on Participation Rates in Adult Literacy Programs in Nairobi County Kenya.

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper was to examine the influence of public financing on participation rates in adult literacy programs in Nairobi County, Kenya. The study sought to establish how financing influenced the running of the adult education centres. The study adopted a mixed method design whereby both qualitative and quantitative methods were utilized in this research. The study was guided by the Human capital theory as advocated by Adam Smith. The target population comprised of 30 adult education centres in Nairobi County. The research targeted one adult education officer, 30 principals, one hundred and twenty (120) adult literacy teachers and four hundred (400) learners. Therefore, out of the targeted 30 principals a total of 3 principals were interviewed. Out of the 120 adult literacy teachers a sample equivalent to 30% or 36 teachers were selected randomly. Out of the target population of 400 adult learners, 120 adult learners which forms 30% of the population was randomly selected. Questionnaires were administered to the teachers and the adult learners. While interviews were conducted on the county director, and on the principals. The findings established that most of the adult education centres in Nairobi County received inadequate direct funding from the government, thereby making the centres to have a challenge in running the centres leading to low assess and participation of the learners. There is a significant relation between the funding of adult education centres and the participation rates of adults in the adult education centres. Based on the study findings it can be recommended that the Government of Kenya and other public financing agencies should increase their funding allocation to the adult education centres in order to increase and sustain assess and participation. It was concluded that the funding in adult education centres should be increased so that more adult learners can be able to assess and benefit more by them participating in the learning programs offered at the adult education centres.

**Keywords:** level of adequacy, current sources, financing, access, participation, adult education centres, Nairobi -County, Kenya

## INTRODUCTION

### Background to the Study

The Kenyan government has been allocating quite a large percentage of the national budget to the education sector. This is seen by the increase on the money allocated to schools by the government. With the introduction of a new curriculum which is competency-based curriculum on top to the existing funding to schools, like the Free Primary education and the free secondary education, large amounts of the national budget are directed to funding education in Kenya. In the recent released financial year budget of 2023/2024, a total allocation of Ksh 628.6 billion was allocated to education. (Government report 2023). The other sectors which also receive heavy funding from the national education budget include the State Departments of Basic Education, University Education; and Vocational and Technical Training institutions,

was increase by 1.1, 60.8 and 2.7 per cent, respectively, in 2022/23.

(Republic of Kenya, 2022). Due to the increase in the Government spending in the formal education sector in Kenya; other informal types of education in Kenya such as the adult literacy education programs has been facing a lot of multiple challenges in the management and the running of the institutions. According to World Bank (2006; 2012), literacy and other basic skills imparted to adults and out of school youths through non-formal programs have both directly benefited the participants plus also indirectly by improving the family income and wellbeing of the whole society at large. It is noted that effective Adult Literacy Programs contribute directly and powerfully to poverty reduction of the individuals and to their families and communities at large. The adult literacy programmes have had a great number of the people enrolling in these centres to be women and the youth who might have fallen out of the mainstream education system due to some external forces like lack of school fees or other home related issues. The programmes capitalize on delivering crucial basic literacy and numeracy skills that equip disadvantaged individuals to improve their livelihoods and quality of life. (Republic of Kenya report (2021). Adult basic education complements schooling and gives a second chance to those who have missed the formal mainstream schooling, it also equips the parents with the knowledge on the importance of education. This makes the parents to be more supportive on education for their children. Leading to a more and improved conditions for community involvement in formal schools (World Bank, 2006; 2012). In developing countries high levels of illiteracy are also seen in the rural areas as well as the low-income earners settlements in the urban settings. According to the Republic of Kenya (2007), the Government of Kenya places Adult and Continuing Education (ACE) on its development agenda as part of the country's general policy of bringing about accelerated and sustainable socio-economic development. It recognizes the important role played by ACE in maximizing the human resource potential. The Kenya National Literacy survey of 2021 revealed that the Kenya literacy rate for the year 2021 was 82.62% which is a 1.09% increase from 2018, when the last survey was done. (Republic of Kenya (2021)

There are a number of ways through which mechanisms for comparing costs of a function or programme with its outcomes can be viewed they include:- development cost, operational costs, resource costs, trainings and outcomes and lastly return on investment costs (Unesco 2018) According to Unesco (2018,) the terms used implies on checking on the benefits that the participants are going to gain from attending the adult education programs and checking on if according to the government it's worth investing on., looking into the profitability of the programme. And if any positive returns are realised.

According to Otieno, W & Colclough, C. (2007) Cost benefit analysis can be used in the following ways:

1. To identify how allocation of resources can be done especially in financial and human resources in education.
2. To identify the body or organisation that should finance education.
3. To help identify a way through which the cost of education can be increased so as to also increase the rate of returns.

As Voss (2007) confirmed that the Danish government enacted an act of Parliament whereby the government set aside 125 million Euros so as to boost adult and community programmes in the country. This made, Denmark to be more competitive and able to cope with the conditions of a globalized world this shows that where there was political will on the government side then, there is a direct development that is seen in the country.

In Africa Adult and community organisations are among the financially marginalized educational institutions. There are challenges such as lack of proper budget of the money that has been given to the organisations, lack of a clear transparency and accountability of the little money given by the government

and donors. (Afrik, 2000). These challenges could lead to a low participation in the adult education classes.

In Kenya, adult and community education is a programme that is run and managed by the Kenyan government together with many different providers such as Faith based organisations, community based organisations, NGOs such as UNICEF, UNESCO, and even individuals. These makes it difficult to determine the actual level of resources that get invested in adult learning in any given year. The directorate of Adult and Continuing education on average receives less than 1% of the total education budget in the country. (Kenya literacy report 2020) it is worth noting that Adult and Continuing Education as a sub-sector of education is inadequately funded, taking into consideration the magnitude of adult illiteracy and the need to encourage adults to keep learning through post literacy and other continuing education programmes. The funds allocated to ACE are used for various development activities and not limited to, development of learning materials, training of personnel and payment of salaries of the teachers. This study, therefore, sought to establish the extent to which public financing was influencing assess and participation rates in adult literacy programs in Nairobi, county Kenya.

## Literature Review

Adult and community education in Kenya has been on the country's development agenda since independence in 1963. This is seen in Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965, whereby literacy was seen as an essential tool in fighting the societal ills such as poverty, social injustice and economic welfare for all and hence necessary for sustainable development. (Kenya adult report 2012)

A Board of Adult Education was created in 1966 by an Act of Parliament, cap 223 Laws of Kenya. The Board was mandated to coordinate, regulate and advise providers and policy makers on all matters pertaining to Adult and Continuing Education (ACE) in Kenya.

The core responsibility for ACE rests in the Ministry of Education. However, its provision is provided for within the legislative and policy framework which guides the general education sector. Due to its heterogeneous and diverse nature, ACE is aligned to policies in other sectors beyond the mainstream education (Republic of Kenya, 2008; 2012a).

The Kenyan Government has continuously seen the need to enhance and support Adult and continuing education all through the years. This is seen by the numerous Government reports and sessional papers that have guided and influenced the development of education policies in the country. The most recent ones include;

The free primary Education (FPE) programme (2003) which is a strategy towards achievement of Education for All (EFA) with an aim of increasing literacy for adults and out-of- school youth.

Sessional paper No. 1 of 2005 on 'A Policy Framework for Education, Training and Research' recognized ACE as a vehicle for transforming and empowerment of individuals and the society.

Kenya Education Sector Support Programme (KESSP) 2005 – 2010 which is a government and donor initiative for funding programmes in the education sector to fulfil the MDGs and EFA goals in Kenya recognizes Adult and Continuing Education as one of its 23 investment programmes.

Gender Policy in Education (2007) that underlines the need to increase participation of illiterate adults, especially women and out-of-school youth in gender equitable basic literacy and continuing adult education programmes.

Lastly Under the 'Kenya Vision 2030' Kenya will provide globally competitive quality education, training

and research to her citizens for development and individual well-being. The overall goal is to reduce illiteracy by improving access to education and achieving 85% per cent adult literacy rate. Odhiambo. D. (2010).

According to Bertelsmann (2010) adult education increases productivity raises incomes and lowers benefit costs. Countries with higher levels of adult education tend to experience higher economic growth and lower unemployment rates. By equipping individuals with the skills needed for the job market, adult education contributes to overall economic prosperity

According to Volkman (2020) the cost of adult literacy programmes refers to the economic value of the various inputs that are used in the production of an adult who is literate. The economic value or cost of an input is measured in terms of opportunity cost, that is, the value of the input and how best it can be used. The total cost of an adult literacy programme includes the whole sum of the costs of the inputs to the program. This definition of cost implies that the costs of adult literacy programmes include not only the actual expenditures on inputs by the provider of training, but also the opportunity costs associated with 'free' inputs (such as donated equipment or free facilities), as well as the participants' time and expenditures they incur as they attend the trainings.

UNESCO (2005) confirms that ACE are diverse and there is no specific method through which it can be determined. There includes diverse, methods of financing, mode of training, sponsorships and method of delivery

According to UNESCO (2021) there are other external costs that influence the learning and sustainability of adult learners in the adult education programs which include meals, travel and incidental costs for participants and for other personnel. These input-based cost categories may be rearranged in different ways. For example, input costs may be grouped according to the source of expenditures (institutional costs and private costs), or the length of service of inputs (recurrent costs and capital costs). This scheme provides basic information for costing and planning of ACE.

According to Burnett, N. & Birmingham, D. (2010) the common sources of finance include the government (or different levels of government), the sponsor, the employer-private sector, the participants and the community. This scheme provides additional information which is useful for financial management of adult literacy programmes. The other category is the functional category which includes needs assessment, development, delivery and the evaluation of the program. This scheme is useful for program evaluation purposes.

According to Biao, I (2022), there are other costs that are linked to adult literacy programs, which include the costs of running the programme plus the other hidden costs that are incurred by the students as they attend the adult education programs Institutional costs are divided into recurrent costs and capital costs. Recurrent costs are measured in terms of the expenditure by providers on both personnel and non-personnel items. Capital costs are measured in terms of annualized expenditures on buildings. Private costs consist of direct private costs and indirect private costs. Direct private costs refer to participants' own expenditures related to training (such as fees and spending on writing supplies, transportation, etc.). The current study thus seeks to identify areas whereby public funding has been done in adult literacy programmes in Nairobi County.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Despite the need for the government to fully support the adult education programs financially in the country, there is great underfunding on the amount of funding that is directly given to the adult education centres. These has a direct influence on the participation rates of the adults in the adult education centres. Leading to

low assess and participation of adult learners in the adult education centres. Therefore, this study sought to find out how funding of adult education centres has a direct influence on assess and participation of adult learners in the adult and community education centres in Nairobi County Kenya.

### **The Purpose of the study**

This study sought to assess the extent to which public financing of adult education programmes has influenced participation rates in adult education centres in Nairobi County, Kenya.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The objective of this study was to assess the adequacy of public financing of adult literacy programmes in enhancing participation rates in adult literacy programmes in Nairobi County, Kenya.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study was guided by the human capital theory. As stated by Adam Smith (1776) and enhanced by Teixeira, (2007) which explains that the human capital is based on the fact that investments in people, and empowering them in areas such as education, will lead to workers becoming more productive and more skills reinforcement. human capital theory rests on the assumption that education is highly instrumental and even necessary to improve the production capacity of a population. The human capital theorists argue that an educated population is a productive population they further emphasize on how education increases the productivity and efficiency of workers by increasing the level of cognitive stock of economically productive human capability.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

This study adopted a mixed-method design. The mixed method combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques (Teddie & Tashakkori, (2012). Creswell (2015) argues that a mixed method research design comprises a process that starts with data collection, analysis, and mixing of qualitative and quantitative research methodologies in a single study to better understand a certain research topic. Data was then collected and analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics and presented in tables, and percentages

### **Target Population and Sampling**

The target population consisted of one (1) Sub-County Adult Education Officer, one hundred and twenty (120) adult literacy teachers and four hundred (400) learners. The study used 1 District Adult Education Officer serving in the district (Sub-County). The study then used simple random sampling technique of 30% to be adequate for the nature of study as advocated by (Orodho J.A Khatete & Mugiraneza, 2016). In each category leading to having a sample size of sixty (60) adult literacy teachers and 120 adult learners. Participated in the study.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

The research instruments used in this study were interview schedules for the district adult education officer, and questionnaires for adult education teachers and learners were used closed items were analysed using statistical analysis while open-ended items were analysed using descriptive statistics. Data was presented using frequency and percentage tables.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Adequacy of Public Financing of the Adult Literacy

The study sought to establish if the funds given to the programmes is enough to run and manage the programmes and if the funds have a link with the number of learners who have enrolled in the programmes and their retention rates.

The findings are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Allocations and Projected Expenditures of Adult Education centres

Area financed	Gok(kshs)	Other sources	Projected expenditure	Variance (Kshs)
Centre one	35,000	8,000	82000	-47,000
Centre two	42,000	5,000	140000	-93,000
Centre Three	37000	6,000	120000	-77,000
Centre Four	54,000	15,000	156,000	-87,000
Centre five	44,000	12,000	135000	-79,000
Grand total	212,000	46,000	633,000	-375000

The findings on Table 1 show that all the 5 centres received public funding from the government. Unfortunately, the money given by the government fell below the projected budgets of the centres. For example, Centre two had a deficit of Kshs 93,000, Centre three had a deficit of Ksh 77, 000. Centre Four Ksh 87,000 and Centre five Ksh 79,000. The total number of the funding in all the 5 centres that were sampled for the study shows that there was a deficit of Ksh 375,000 (Names of centres withheld for confidentiality purposes). These findings were an indication that public funds channelled directly to centres are inadequate in financing the operations of adult education programmes in Nairobi County.

Teachers who were interviewed indicated that some of the money that is received was used for the construction of classrooms and buying of furniture to be used by the learners. The money was also used to make teaching and learning materials so that they are used in the learning process.

The centres that didn't have their own classrooms and furniture recorded a low enrolment and retention of the learners. This is because the learners indicated that they were not comfortable using the alternative learning centres offered like the halls of the nearby churches, secondary and even primary schools as their centres for learning. The centres that started to build their own classrooms felt that the money was not enough to buy furniture and other facilities for the chairs and tables for their use. The money was still not enough to fully complete the construction of the classrooms and washrooms for their learners.

Due to inadequate public funds, the teachers also commented on the teaching and learning resources whereby they said they were not enough for effective learning process to take place. The centres also lacked enough funds to finance daily running of the centres. The adult teachers also commented on the low salary that they received at the end of the month. Some of the teachers were just volunteers at the centres, who later left when they found other well-paying jobs. All these has made the adult education programmes to be unattractive, leading to low enrolment and retention rates of the learners in almost all the centres. The District Adult Education Officer also said that the public funds were inadequate, making the running of the

programmes to be challenging.

Table 2: Adequacy of Public Financing and Enrolment and Retention rate

Effect of funding	frequency	Percentage %
Enough public funding to start income generating projects for the learners acts as an incentive for learners to enrol and remain in the programme	72	82
Enough public funds enables adult education teachers to enrol to teach and remain in the programme	40	68
Enough public funds enables the teaching and learning materials to be available and enough for learners to remain and enrol in the programme.	40	66
Enough public funds enables the provision of physical facilities for the enrolment of the learners in the programme	80	72
Enough public funds enables for the support of the learning process by both the learners and the government.	80	70

Table 2 shows that Provision of public funds determines availability of start-up capital for income generating projects which makes learners to enrol and remain in the programme. These acts as a catalyst for the learners to really like and enrol in large numbers into the learning centres. Which according to the study it was 82%. Provision of public funds determines the teaching and learning materials availability leading to the enrolment and retention of the learners which was at 66%. Provision of public funds determines the availability of physical facilities enrolment and retention of the learners in the programmes this led to high retention rate of the learners it was 72%. Provision of public funds enables the support of the learning process by both the learners and the government adult education learners to enrol and remain in the programme which was at 70%. Adequacy of public funds determines the provision of adequate adult education teachers thus enrolment and retention which was at 68%.

These findings show that adequacy of public funds to adult education programmes plays a major role in enhancing enrolment and retention rates as it enhances the provision of facilities needed by the programme, facilitation of awareness campaigns and provision of incentives for learners which motivates them to join and remain in the programme. Most of adult learners could be discouraged from participating in the programme if learning environment is not conducive (Kebathi, 2004).

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study examined the level of adequacy of current sources in facilitating access and participation in adult education centres in Nairobi County, Kenya. The findings of this study point to the conclusion that public funds channelled directly to centres are inadequate in financing the operations of adult education programmes. This has made adult education programmes unattractive, leading to low enrolment and retention rates. This makes the centres to be unattractive to the learners leading to low enrolment and retention rates. Delay in the disbursement of public funds for adult education programmes is also a challenge which causes delays in the implementation of projects, discouraging many adult education learners from participating in the programme.

The findings of this study point to the following recommendations:

1. The government together with other funding agents of adult and education programmes should fund the programmes efficiently so that the programmes can be attractive to the adult learners.
2. The government plus the other funding agencies need to do a needs assessment of the learners in the

programmes. This will act as a guide to the funders so that they can know the most urgent issues to be addressed in the programmes. Plus, how to budget the available funds. Therefore, making the programmes attractive to the learners.

3. The programme to have adequate enough qualified and competent personnel to enable it achieve its mandate of providing adult and continuing education to all the adult learners. In the end it will lead to high enrolment and retention of the learners.

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