

## Relationship between School Feeding Program and Retention of Learners in Primary School Baringo County, Kenya

Kokwee Zachary Kiprotich\*  
Kenyatta University, Kenya

**\*Corresponding author**

*Kokwee Zachary  
Kiprotich*

**Article History**

*Received: 01.06.2018  
Accepted: 07.06.2018  
Published: 10.06.2018*

**DOI:**

10.36348/sb.2018.v04i06.003



**Abstract:** The purpose of the study was to find out whether school feeding programme affect retention of learners in primary school education. The study was done in 10 primary schools in Mogotio Division. The unit of analysis constituted of 70 respondents (Head teacher/ Heads of school feeding program, Teachers, parent representatives and pupils). Purposive random sampling was used in this case whereby all the 70 respondents were picked to fill the questionnaire. Descriptive statistics analysis was used whereby the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) programme is used. On retention, the study concludes that there were transfer cases in the center. Most parents take their children to private schools citing many reasons, which range from poor performance in public early childhood education centres, poor teaching methods, lack of skilled staff in public centres, and to a little extent due to poor feeding habits in the local primary schools. The findings of this study may be of use to the various primary schools for it would assist them understand better the issues related to school feeding programmes. This would see school managers in the various centres provide learners with balanced feeding programs and create awareness to parents on its importance to proper learning and holistic development of their children. The study would also go a long way to helping the government in making relevant policy to safeguard the wellbeing of primary school learners by providing well balanced feeding programs to these centres as well as budgetary allocation to the same.

**Keywords:** School Feeding Program, Learner’s retention.

### INTRODUCTION

The importance of school feeding programmes cannot be overlooked at all costs. Millennium Development Goal 2 calls for increased primary school enrolment and reductions in the gender gap in school enrolment. School feeding programs have been an important and prominent part of education policy development in recent decades, and have been implemented widely in developing countries and for low-income populations in developed countries. It is anticipated that the school feeding can improve educational participation (enrolment, attendance, and age at school entry), achievement and cognition (test scores, grade progression), nutritional status (height and weight-for-age and micronutrient status) [1]. They also encourage students to stay in school longer as well as performance/ improved learning.

Food for Education programmes has been implemented in two basic forms: - Children are fed in school (School Feeding Programme) and families are given food if their children attend school (Food for schooling Programmes). Both programmes combine educational opportunity with food-based incentives and

use food as an incentive for parents to send their children to school.

Food for education programmes provide immediate sustenance for the hungry and empower future generations by educating today’s children ([www.catholicrelief.org](http://www.catholicrelief.org)). The WFP Annual Report [2] states that SFPs throughout the world have successfully attracted children to school and retained them by offering what they would not get elsewhere. The primary objective of a school-feeding programme is to alleviate short-term hunger, enabling children to learn. School based feeding Programmes have proven effective in encouraging enrolment, increasing attention span and improving attendance in school. School feeding takes 'the hunger of the child at school only. However, the report further noted that of fundamental importance are the family members who aren't schooling, adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women whose nutrition directly affects the health of their offspring or malnourished pre-school children. Food for schooling was designed to develop long-term human capacity by making the transfer of resource to a household contingent upon attendance to school by enrolled pupils. This enables poor families to release children from household obligations so they

can go to school. Apart from feeding all family members, they can sell the grain for cash to buy other needed goods such as clothing or medicine.

### **Statement of the problem**

The government recently introduced School Feeding Programme home grown in Mogotio District in schools that had been left out by the WFP Project, as an intervention for improving on effective schooling in view of the inconsistent and unreliable rains especially after the pulling out of School Feeding Programme, WFP due to increase in the number of dependants. The government cautioned that the programme would be discontinued when the situation improves. Pupils' participation in school seemed to be clearly affected by the availability or non-availability of food at home or at school. Out of the five divisions of Mogotio District, the programme only covered three divisions i.e. Kisanana, Mogotio and Emining. Due to the hardships experienced in the district, the government made an effort and introduced SFP in all schools in the three divisions as a way of enhancing education access and academic performance among learners. A need to provide empirical evidence of the benefits of the programme in the face of the likely termination or discontinuation of the programme was seen to be necessary. The study sought to investigate the situation in the district to establish if there was any relationship between SFP on one hand and enrolment, attendance, retention and academic achievements on the other hand.

### **Sustainability of the School Feeding Program**

The issue of sustainability of SFP is a concern of UN-World Food Programme, the schools, communities and the government. Due to the dwindling resources, the World Food Programme has in many for an expressed its intention to withdraw the programme [3]. In Cote d'Ivoire, for a school to qualify for WFP support, parents must organise an association and then build a kitchen and a storeroom. The Parents Teachers Association (PTA) then hires cooks or parents cook in turn and manage the food stock. The parents also provide fresh vegetables and other ingredients to enrich the food [3].

In Kenya, the current phase of the programme emphasis sustainability of the programme. Schools are encouraged to initiate income-generating projects. The UN-WFP creates partnership between the schools, the parents, teachers and local officials. According to the WFP School Feeding Programme [3], parents associations have proven to be key to community participation. As a general rule, the essential services required for school feeding such as cooks, kitchens, stores among others should be covered by the communities either through providing services itself or contributing cash to pay for the services.

During a School Feeding Programme management workshop held at Izaak Walton Hotel in Embu between 30<sup>th</sup> July to 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2002, the Director of Education in her opening speech noted that the current phase of this project laid great emphasis on the sustainability of the School Feeding Programme. In this regard, the World Food Programme and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology have initiated sustainability strategies for School Feeding Programme based on mobilisation of communities and local resources. Communities will be expected to take over gradually the feeding programme currently supported by the World Food Programme. This demands greater participation by school committees, district and divisional level committees in planning and implementing the project. The Director further noted that there is urgent need to reactivate participatory implementation nature of sustaining the School Feeding Programme. Despite the many efforts that have been put in place, the sustainability process of School Feeding Programme is still faced with many challenges and constraints. Schools and communities are still not in a position to initiate micro-projects that would sustain School Feeding Programme [4].

### **Influence of SFPs on Retention**

It seems reasonable to assume that students who commit themselves to completing their education will be more motivated and perform at higher levels of achievement. Some schools seem more successful than others in retaining students through to completion of the required years. An effective school feeding program is known to influence students' participation in compulsory schooling and completion [5]. Ainley, Batten, and Miller [6] concluded that students' feelings of success and general satisfaction with school resources such as a good feeding program influenced their intention to remain at school. The effects of school feeding program on students' continuation in schooling and beyond have not been as carefully researched. Schools that provide a relevant curriculum and a supportive SFP would be expected to have higher retention rates. However, students' family background also contributes to their commitment to secondary education. Ainley and Sheret [7] found that by middle years, pupils have educational plans about the level to which they intend to continue at high school.

The educational objectives of the WFP's school feeding programme are well defined and associated with clear indicators. Schools, which manage to effectively run their program well, are guaranteed of keeping children in school. Giving three meals per every school day reduces school transfers since every parent is comfortable with their children's participation in school [8].

**STUDY FINDINGS**

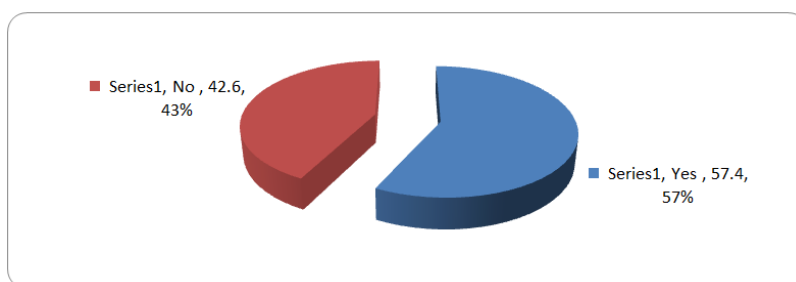
Influence of School Feeding Program on Retention of Pupils.

The study was to establish whether there were transfer cases in the centre. According to the study

findings presented in the table above by 57.4%, majority of the respondents said that there were transfer cases in the centre. Other respondents said that there were no transfer cases in the centre as shown by 43%. The information on whether there were transfer cases in the centre is also presented in the figure below.

**Table-1: Whether there are Cases of Transfers in the Centre**

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	35	57.4
No	26	42.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>N=61</b>	<b>100.0</b>



**Fig-1: Whether there are Cases of Transfers in the Centre**

The study was to establish whether there were cases of children transfer in the school because of poor feeding. Majority of the respondents also indicated that most parents take their children to private schools citing many reasons, which range from poor performance in public primary schools in the region, poor teaching methods, lack of skilled staff in public centres, and to a little extent due to poor feeding habits in the primary schools in the region.

The researcher was to establish whether there are strategies parents have put in place to retain

children in school in each learning days in the centre. On this question, most of the respondents said that parents have taken the role of provision of quality food in the primary schools in the region. Some parents also indicated that they organize committees in the centres whose main role is to ensure effectiveness and cleanliness on the types of foods prepared. Other respondents indicated that the school management committee prepared a strategic plan, which gives guidelines on school feeding programme requirements, which attract and enhance retention in the primary schools.

**Table-2: Extent to which the Feeding Program in the School enhance Pupils' Retention**

	Frequency	Percentage
Very great extent	10	47.6
Great extent	8	38.1
Little extent	3	14.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>N=21</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The study sought to find out the extent to which the feeding programs in the school enhance retention. On this question, 48% of the total respondents indicated that the feeding program in the

school enhance retention of pupils to a very great extent, great extent (38%), little extent (14%) as shown in the table above respectively. The information on extent of pupil's retention is as shown below;

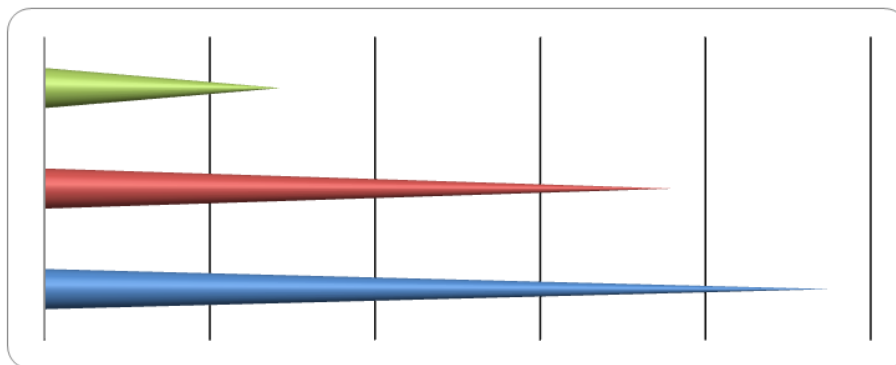


Fig-2: Extent to which the Feeding Program in the School Enhance Pupils' Retention

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The study found out that majority of the respondents said that there were transfer cases in the center. Majority of the respondents also indicated that most parents take their children to private schools citing many reasons, which range from poor performance in public early childhood education centres, poor teaching methods, lack of skilled staff in public centres, and to a little extent due to poor feeding habits in primary schools in Mogotio District-Baringo County. The study concludes that there were transfer cases in the center and that most parents take their children to private schools. They cited many reasons, which range from poor performance in public early childhood education centres, poor teaching methods, lack of skilled staff in public centres, and to a little extent due to poor feeding habits in the local primary schools centres.

## REFERENCES

1. Levinger, B. (1986). School feeding programs in developing countries: an analysis of actual and potential impact.
2. World Food Programme. (2006). *Where We work: Malawi*. www.fantaproject.org.
3. World Food Programme. (2001). *Into School, Out of Hunger. WFP Global School Feeding Programme: Rome*.
4. Richter, L. I. N. D. A., Griesel, D., & Rose, C. T. N. T. H. I. A. (2000). The psychological impact of a school feeding project'. *Addressing Childhood Diversity*, 74-93.
5. Whaley, S. E., Sigman, M., Neumann, C., Bwibo, N., Guthrie, D., Weiss, R. E., ... & Murphy, S. P. (2003). The impact of dietary intervention on the cognitive development of Kenyan school children. *The Journal of nutrition*, 133(11), 3965S-3971S.
6. Ainley, J. (1984). *Staying at High School in Victoria. ACER Research Monograph No. 23*.
7. Ainley, J., Foreman, J., & Sheret, M. (1992). High school factors that influence students to remain in school. *Journal of Educational Research*, 85, 69-80.
8. Bennett, J. (2003). Review of School Feeding Projects. The effect of a biscuit with red palm oil as a source of  $\beta$ -carotene on the vitamin A status of primary school children: a comparison with  $\beta$ -carotene from a synthetic source in a randomized controlled trial. *European Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, 55, 756-662.