

**STRATEGIES ADOPTED BY SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY TO IMPROVE  
STUDENTS RETENTION IN SECONDARY EDUCATION IN LOW INCOME  
AREAS: A CASE OF MATHARE SLUMS, NAIROBI COUNTY, KENYA**

**BY**

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## DECLARATION

I confirm that this research project is my original work and has not been presented in any other university/institution for certification. The project has been complemented by referenced works duly acknowledged. Where text, data, graphics, pictures or tables have been borrowed from other works-including the internet, the sources are specifically accredited through referencing in accordance with anti-plagiarism regulations.



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## **DEDICATION**

This research project is dedicated first to Almighty God who gives grace and strength to study. Glory and honour to Him. The work is finally dedicated to my husband, Stanley Maina, and our children Eva, Esther and Dennis. Thank you for your love, support and encouragement.

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## **ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

CBF	Constituency Bursary Fund
DEO	District Education Officer
EFA	Education for All
FPE	Free Primary Education
FSE	Free Secondary Education
GER	Gross Enrollment Ratio
MDGS	Millennium Development Goals
MOEST	Ministry of Education Science and Technology
NER	Net Enrollment Ratio
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
ROK	Republic of Kenya
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

## ABSTRACT

Despite efforts by the Kenyan government to improve access and retention of students in secondary schools, a number of those enrolled from low income families drop out before they complete the cycle mainly due to poverty. The purpose of the study was to find out the strategies adopted to improve retention in secondary school of low income people in Mathare slums, Nairobi County. The objectives of the study were to find out the strategies adopted by the schools and the community to improve retention in secondary education in the slums, establish the effectiveness of the government interventions aimed at improving retention in secondary education and suggest other ways to improve retention in secondary education among the low income population. The theoretical framework was based on classical theory of equal opportunities advanced by John Dewey in 1916. The study employed descriptive survey design. The target population was the 9 public day secondary schools in the slums and its environs. Stratified random sampling was used to choose 5 schools to include 1 girl's, 2 boys' and 2 mixed schools. The principals in these schools were all included in the study. Purposive sampling was used to sample 5 class teachers in each of the sampled schools and 3 informed specialists from organizations supporting education in the area including the DEO. The research instruments were analyzed by experts competent in the area of research to ensure their validity. The split half technique was used to test the reliability of the research instrument using Pearson Product Moment Formula. Piloting was done in one of secondary school, randomly selected from the 9 day secondary schools. Questionnaires were used to gather information from class teachers and interview schedules to gather information from the principals and the other key informants. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics assisted by the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) computer program. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically. Data was presented using frequency tables, pie charts and graphs. The study found that the strategies employed to improve retention include, getting bursaries and sponsors, allowing parents to pay in installments, sensitizing parents on importance of education and guidance and counseling programmes. The study found that government policies aimed at improving retention namely; Free Secondary Education and the Constituency Bursary Fund are not very effective. This is due to insufficient funds, cumbersome procedures, corruption and inconsistencies. Other ways of improving retention includes: The government should meet all educational needs of the public day schools, establishing boarding schools for the poor and deserving students, dealing sternly with criminal activities, including drugs abuse and trafficking. The study recommended that the government should offer free secondary education and have free boarding schools for the poor. The community should support schools financially, and support the youth outside school. Guidance and counseling should be enhanced. This study can be done in other slum areas in the country.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **1.1 Introduction**

This chapter highlights the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions and significance of the study. In the same chapter, the researcher will state the basic assumptions of the study, limitations and delimitations of the study. Conceptual framework, theoretical framework and definitions of operational terms are also given.

### **1.2 Background to the Study**

Education is recognized as a key catalyst to growth and development all over the world. It is crucial to development of job skills and other attributes that affect ability to function productively as a member of society (Eubanks and Eubanks, 2002). Secondary education is seen as a gateway to opportunities and benefits of economic and social development. Globalization and the increasing demand for a more sophisticated labour force combined with the growth of knowledge economies gives a sense of urgency to the heightened demand for secondary education. Providing quality secondary education to young people not only opens up more opportunities and aspirations but also builds tolerance and trust among a group of people where informed citizenship is crucial for the formation and maintenance of a cohesive and an open society (World Bank, 2005).

Over the years, Kenya like many other developing countries has endeavored to enhance development of education and training in order to develop its human capital, cope with emerging global technological and industrial trends as well as realize its national and international educational goals. Several education reforms have been

guided by the country's commitments to achieve Education For All (EFA) envisioned at the education forum in Dakar in 2000 and also the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Reforms in education that are aimed at expanding and improving the quality of education require adequate financial support. According to Gware et al (2006) educational reforms that are aimed at enhancing access and participation in the various educational levels carry major financial demands. Secondary Education is an expensive affair given the relatively high cost of secondary school inputs and the high secondary teacher unit costs.

In the late 1970's there was less economic growth and this had negative impact on education. The government introduced cost sharing in 1988 which required most costs in education to be met through partnership between public sector and non-governmental organization (NGO's), religious organizations, development partners, communities, individuals and private sector, (Republic of Kenya, 1988).

Introduction of cost sharing policy and the high poverty levels created a heavy burden on households. Communities met the cost of key non-salary inputs like tuition, text books and uniform. The government on the other hand, met the cost of specialized equipment, administration and management of bursaries and scholarship for the needy students, teachers remuneration in public schools and in service training (KIPPRA, 2006). Njeru and Orodho (2003) estimated that on average the household funding of secondary education was 60% while the government financing constituted 40%, and parents were to shoulder the responsibilities of erecting and maintaining physical infrastructure, text books, stationeries, boarding and feeding costs, tuition, activity

and examination fees. The policy resulted in decline in quality of education characterized by significant school wastage resulting from high dropout and repetition rates, reduced enrolment rates, low transition rates from one level to the next in government schools and poor physical infrastructure in learning institutions (Onsomu et al, 2004).

In an attempt to meet the 2015 target of Education For All (EFA) envisioned at the Education Forum in Dakar in 2000 and also the Millennium Development Goals (MDG's), Kenya like many other governments in the Sub-Sahara Africa took the bold step to abolish school fees for primary education. In 2003 Kenya introduced free primary education which according to UNESCO, added 1.5 million children (UNESCO, 2005). FPE raised a challenge to the government of ensuring that pupils who graduate from primary school access secondary education.

Participation rate in secondary education was then low. Transition rate, gross enrollment rate and net enrollment rate were low. These were partly due to the high cost of secondary education. Transition rate in 2002 was at 46.7% while GER and NER stood at 29.7% and 18.6% respectively in the same year (Republic of Kenya, 2005). The secondary schools were very few compared to the primary schools. According to Republic of Kenya (2009), there were 3667 secondary schools compared to 19124 primary schools in 2002. The number of primary schools increased to 25929 in 2006 while secondary schools increased to 5659.

In recognition of this problem the government introduced free day secondary education (FDSE) in 2008. This policy increased enrollment which grew from 1.18M

students in 2007 to 1.5M in 2009 and further to 1.8M students in 2011. The GER and NER also increased significantly as shown in the table below.

**Table 1.1: Gross Enrolment Rate and Net Enrolment Rate at Secondary School, in Kenya, 2007-2012**

<b>Years</b>							
<b>Enrolment indicators</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	
Gross enrolment rate (GER)(%)		36.8	42.5	45.3	47.8	48.8	49.3
Net enrollment rate (NER) (%)		24.2	28.9	35.8	32.0	32.7	33.1

**Source: EMIS, MOE, 2013**

From the table it can be seen that GER increased from 36.8% in 2007 to 45.3% and 48.8% in 2009 and 2011 respectively. The NER recorded an increase from 24.2% in 2007 to 35.8% in 2009. However there was a slight drop to 32% in 2010 which improved to 32.7% in 2011. Gender disparity index improved from 0.94 in 2008 to 0.96 in 2009 and in 2010 it favoured girls at 1.02 (Republic of Kenya, 2012) However some of the students who enroll in secondary education drop out before they complete the level. The retention rate at secondary school level declined from 96.2% in 2011 to 92.4% in 2012. This could be attributed to high school fees imposed in spite of the availability of fees guidelines for secondary schools (Republic Of Kenya, 2013)

### **1.2.1 Secondary School Retention**

Dropout lead to many of young people leaving school each year without finishing high school programmes and thus many young people who are out of school and lacking high school credentials, (Lamb et al, 2004). In recent years, advances in technology have led to an increased demand for a highly skilled labor force, making it

difficult for those leaving high school to find any meaningful employment. High school education is therefore the basic requirement for entry into the labor market. Completing high school is a basic prerequisite for many entry-level jobs as well as higher education and training and so students who drop out experience serious economic consequences. OECD (2010) states that retention of students to secondary schooling is linked to higher levels of skills and knowledge required for participation in our increasingly knowledge based society and the wider global community. Students who drop out of school rarely find employment and even when they do, they earn less compared to those who remain in school till they graduate. Employed dropouts work at unskilled jobs or at low-paying service occupations where they have very little opportunity for promotions. Norton et al (2000) observed that there is a positive effect of each additional year of schooling on income which has been estimated to range from 5% to 10%. The risk of unemployment for those with no school qualification is higher than those with. It is therefore important that wastage resulting from drop out which in turn reduces retention rate be curbed and students complete the cycle they enroll for without fail. Besides, dropouts waste resources spent on them which would otherwise have been used on other individuals to attain full school. Those who drop out of school have reduced chances of getting well-paying jobs which lead to other serious indirect problems.

The Kenya Education Support Programme Report (2005-2010) which is a publication of the ministry of education notes that dropout is a serious challenge that must be addressed so as to reduce wastage. There are several factors that undermine efforts to enhance access and retention. They also make it difficult to address the existing disparities in region and gender equity to education. One of the factors that undermine retention in school is poverty. According to Oxfam (2009), between a third and a half

of the Kenya's urban population live in poverty and given the pace of urbanization, urban poverty will represent almost half of the total poverty in Kenya by 2020. Statistics also indicate that the proportion of the urban population that are poorer of all, 'the food poor' and 'hardcore poor' has been on the rise. In Nairobi, Kenya's capital city, 60% of population lives in slums areas and inequality level are very high. The poor are disadvantaged in terms of access and retention. Colclough et al (2001) observed that children in poverty areas are at a high risk of not completing their high school education. Poor families may lack adequate resources that promote and support children development and school readiness (Ramey and Ramey, 1994). Children who live in poverty have a great deal less health care and this ultimately results in absenteeism. Demand for education is also very low. This requires that actions are taken to improve retention and completion by those enrolled.

The Kenya government has put in place strategies to enhance retention and reduce cost of education for the poor parents at secondary level. One such strategy is the secondary school constituency bursary. The aim of the fund is to cushion the country's poor and vulnerable groups against the high and increasing cost of secondary education, thus increasing retention. Despite the efforts Oyugi et al (2008) found out that thousands of the poor in the country do not benefit from these bursaries, leading to drop out. He argues there are loopholes in the allocation of the bursaries, leaving the poor to consider other ways to enhance retention.

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

Despite efforts by the Kenyan government to improve access and retention of students in secondary schools, evidence shows that they are still highly skewed in favour of the rich (Oyaro, 2008). Data from the ministry of education shows that primary to

secondary school transition rate has increased to 71% following the FDSE policy. However a good number of those enrolled in secondary schools drop out before they complete the cycle. The government subsidies are given to all the children in public secondary schools some of whom can afford the educational costs. These subsidies do not also meet all the costs of education. The poor households living in the slums find it hard to maintain their children in secondary schools due to the high hidden costs of education, which are not covered by the government subsidies. These include costs of uniform, books, stationary, pocket money, transport etc. Besides affordability costs, there are other factors that inhibit retention in secondary education sector. Some of these could lead to low demand for secondary education, all of which contribute to increased dropout rates in the slum areas.

When these young people fail to access and complete secondary schooling, they miss access to a wide range of life chances. They fail to enhance their skills and competencies that would bring them future rewards in form of higher earnings. These increase their chances of exclusion and marginalization. There is therefore important to consider ways of ensuring that these students complete school benefit from education. This study set out to investigate the strategies adopted by the schools and the community to improve retention in secondary education in Mathare slums, Nairobi County.

#### **1.4 The Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to find out the strategies adopted by the schools and the community to improve retention in secondary education of low income people in Mathare slums, Nairobi County. The study also looked into possible measures that can be taken to improve retention in secondary schools in the slum areas so as to give

the children from this background the full benefits of education and thus enhance achievement of EFA goals.

### **1.5 Objectives of the Study**

The Objectives of the study were:

- i. To find out the strategies adopted by the schools to improve retention in secondary education in the slums.
- ii. To find out the strategies adopted by the community to improve retention in secondary education in the slums.
- iii. To establish the effectiveness of the government interventions aimed at improving retention in secondary education in the slums.
- iv. To suggest other ways to improve retention in secondary education among the low income population.

### **1.6 Research Questions**

The following Research questions guided the study:

- i. What strategies have schools adopted to improve retention of the needy students from the slums?
- ii. What actions have the community taken to improve retention in secondary education in the slums?
- iii. To what extent have the government policies aimed at promoting retention in secondary education in the slums been successful?
- iv. What other measures should be taken to improve retention in secondary education in order to enhance achievement of EFA goals.

### **1.7 Significance of the Study**

Educational reforms aimed at achieving EFA and MDGs have targeted access and retention to education. However students from low income areas are faced by several challenges which hinder them from completing the secondary education. They therefore require well thought strategies which will address their unique conditions and help them remain in school. Retention is necessary to ensure that they acquire knowledge and skill necessary to open opportunities for personal and economic growth. Findings from the study will help in formulating future education policies that will cater for all children and address the economic realities of the Kenyan people. School managements may borrow from the study findings and consider ways in which they can improve students' retention. The study may form a base from where other researchers can develop their research.

### **1.8 Assumptions of the Study**

The study assumed that:

- i. The sample used was a representative of all people with low income and that it was big enough for valid and reliable representative of all low income people.
- ii. The respondents were capable of reading the questionnaires and answer them truthfully.

### **1.9 Limitations of the Study**

Parents and dropouts would give important information but reaching them was difficult due to insecurity in the slums. Financing of research in terms of purchasing papers, typing, and binding work as well as transportation was not easy.

### **1.10 Delimitations**

The study was delimited to drop out and retentions and not the other determinants of internal efficiency. The research targeted the public day schools around and in the slums for most of the students in the area do not enroll in otherwise expensive boarding schools. The private schools were left out as these are not beneficiaries of the government subsidies and retention in these schools may not be a good indicator of the state of retention in the area. Educational personnel and other officers supporting education in the community also gave valuable information.

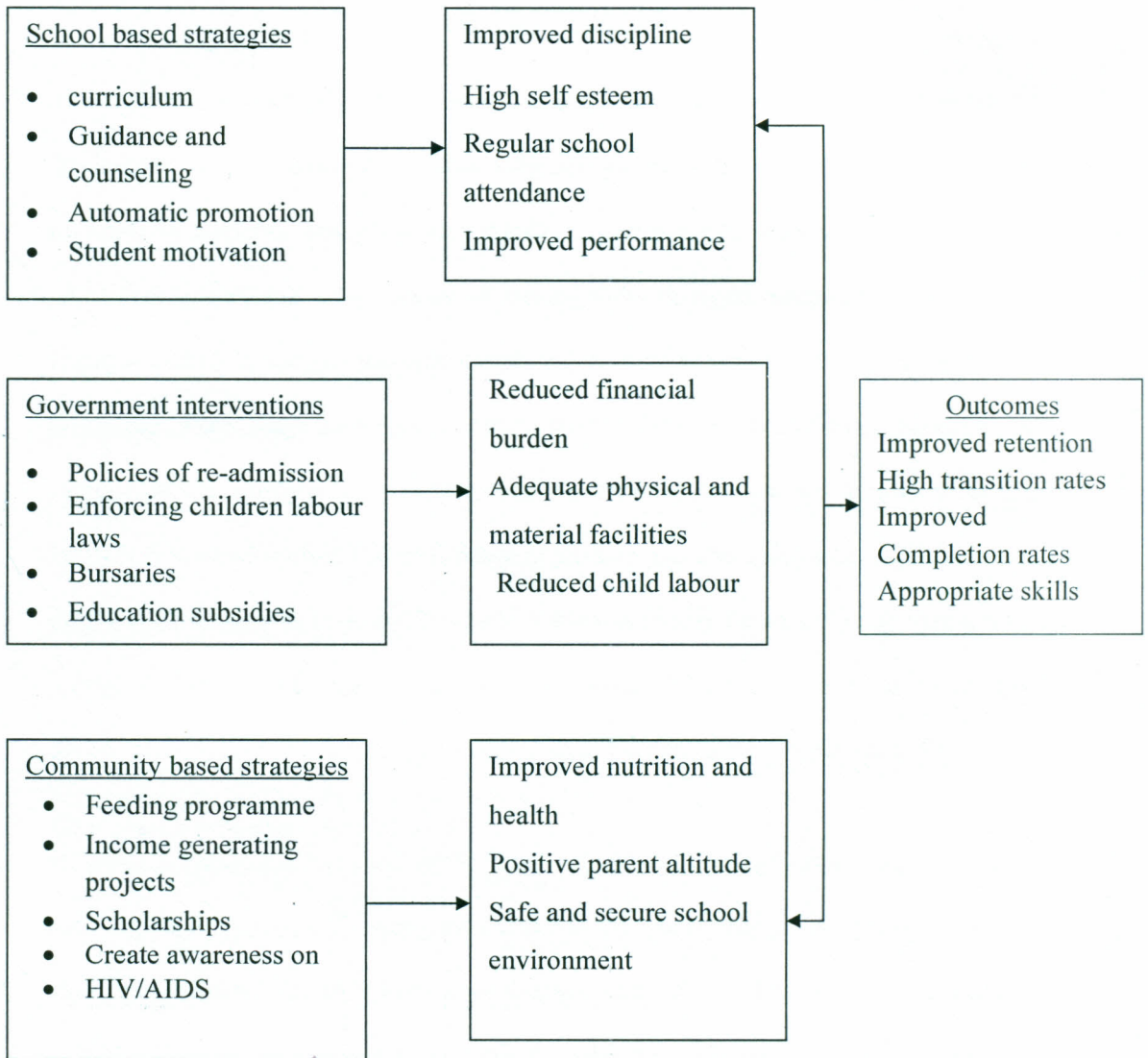
### **1.11 Theoretical Framework**

The study is based on classical theory of equal opportunities advanced by John Dewey, 1916. Dewey argues that education and learning are social and interactive processes, and thus the school itself is a social institution through which social reform can and should take place. In addition, he states that students should be given a chance to interact with the curriculum and take part in their own learning so as to benefit fully from the learning environment. Dewey argues that education should not only provide students with knowledge but should also teach them on how to live. Education should enable one acquire the required skills and be able to utilize them fully for the greater good as well as provide an opportunity to realize one's full potential. The education system should therefore remove all barriers and provide opportunities to all to develop their talents.

This theory is relevant for the study because retention of students in schools after enrollment is very important given that premature withdrawal from school denies them an opportunity to fully develop their potential. Financial constraints of many low income families lead to increased drop outs and absenteeism which lead to low

retention in schools. By adopting strategies to improve retention to secondary education, the vision of equal opportunities would be implemented and every child would acquire education that would enable them to exploit their inherited capacity, Although the government introduced FSE in 2008, there are hidden costs which the parents meet. These limit many parents from low income group from enrolling and retaining children in secondary school. This worsens the situation of low access and retention especially among the low income families. Njeru and Orodho (2003) ascertain this by stating that the status of the poor and vulnerable groups will only be worsened if the unequal participation in education is not resolved. The classical liberal theory is relevant to the proposed study since education is a basic human right which should be made accessible to all children regardless of their social, economic and cultural differences. It is on this background that the study focused on finding out the strategies adopted to improve retention among the low income people of Mathare slums.

## 1.12 The Conceptual Framework



Source: Researcher

**Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework of Strategies Employed to Improve Retention in Secondary Education**

The conceptual framework encompasses various strategies adopted to improve retention and completion rate. Retention and completion is affected by factors which include, school based factors, household/community factors and economic factors. These factors generally lead to students dropping out of school and thus not benefiting

from secondary education. Retention among the low income is crucial else they would miss out of educational benefits.

To improve retentions, the curriculum has been revised to make it more relevant to the learner. Schools have put in place effective guidance and counseling departments to improve students discipline and therefore performance. Motivation of students whose performance is poor instead of forcing them to repeat promotes retention. To improve retention the government introduced readmission policy for girls to resume schooling after they have given birth. Reinforcement of children labour laws safeguards the children from exploitation. Poor household are not able to meet the indirect cost of education. Poverty, parental attitude and unemployment make students drop out of schools to seek small jobs to subsidize family income. The government's policy of FSE and provision of bursaries to needy children are aimed at increasing access and retention by reducing the educational burden of the poor household.

HIV/AIDS pandemic has resulted in many children dropping out of school to head their orphaned siblings. Creating awareness to the young people is crucial to ensure students complete school. Other organization like NGO, FBO and private sectors collaborate with government to support the poor through scholarships, sponsorship and feeding programmes. Financial support is also given to the poor to start income generating projects. Improved retention ensures that students acquire skills that enable them earn a livelihood and contribute to economic development of the society.

### 1.13 Operational Definitions of Terms

<b>Community:</b>	Refers to the societies who resides near a school and have some interests in the affairs of the school.
<b>Continuing student:</b>	Refers to students who enrolled in the system of education and are still in the system at any class or grade.
<b>Grade:</b>	Refers to the student level of educational attainment
<b>Gross enrolment rate:</b>	The no of students enrolled in school as a proportion of corresponding appropriate age people in the country.
<b>Net enrolment rate:</b>	The number of students /pupils in the official school age group enrolled expressed as a percentage of the total population in that age group.
<b>Public school:</b>	A type of school that is developed and maintained by public funds obtained from the government, parents and communities.
<b>Repetition:</b>	Refers to remaining in the same grade or class in the subsequent year when one is expected to get promoted to the next grade.
<b>Retention:</b>	Refers to ability of an education system to hold on the enrolled students without passing them out prematurely, the opposite of drop out.
<b>Survival:</b>	Refers to the ability of enrolled students to go through the education system to graduation. Those students who remain in school and sit for KCSE are survivors.
<b>Transition:</b>	Refers to movements from one level to the next level, primary to secondary to tertiary.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter will review literature related to retention in secondary education. It will explore factors affecting secondary education retention and look at the various strategies that have been employed in different countries to improve retention. The strategies employed in Kenya will also be viewed.

#### **2.2 Secondary Education Retention in the World**

Retention is a serious problem that affects most children in the world. Retaining children in school once they have had access to the formal education is very challenging. According to Patrick (2008) school dropout is a serious problem facing the education sector all over the world and the rate of drop out had risen to epidemic levels internationally. Developing countries perform very poorly in retention in secondary education (World Bank, 2005). The situation is worse for the poor and for girls. This was confirmed by Filmer (2000) in his studies in Egypt which showed the retention of young males from poor families to be lowest at 47%, compared to 64% and 81% for middle income and rich families respectively.

Many communities in the United States face a silent epidemic year after year. A third to a half or more of the primarily low income and minority students they educate in their public school systems fail to graduate from high school (Balfanz, 2007). In 2003-2004, only about half of the students in the United States 50 largest city schools districts graduated from high school within 4 years (Marcella and Dianda, 2008). Data obtained from the National Centre for Education Statistics in 2012 showed that the nations' graduation rates increased to 73.4% in 2005-2006 and further to 78.2% in

2009-2010. Statistics also showed a declining overall dropout rates, from 8.1% in 2009 to 7.4% in 2010. However this is unsustainably high for a knowledge based economy. OECD countries also have a problem with school retention as shown by the OECD Better Life Index of 2001. The report shows high school completion rate of France, Korea, and United Kingdom as 71%, 80% and 78% respectively.

In South Africa, retention rate stood at 60% of learners between grade 1 and 12 in 2007-2008. Malawi is sited to have the highest dropout rate of 25%, among the Southern Africa countries. In Uganda the rate is 13% although it is high at 37.5% in the northern part (UNESCO, 2011). According to Ajaja (2012), the dropout rate in Nigeria stood at 28.7% in 2012. He argued that over 85% of the country's criminal activities which had increased insecurity in the country were perpetuated by the youth who drop out of school. This makes school dropout a serious concern to all.

In Kenya, data from ministry of education shows that 92% of form 1 class in 2004 reached form 4 in 2007, an improvement from the 2003-2006 cohorts which was 87%. NER increased from 18.2% in 2002 to 20.5% in 2005. However 30% of students who enrolled in secondary education dropped out before they completed the cycle (Republic of Kenya, 2005). Many students drop out in the last 2 years of secondary education. Research has shown that secondary dropout rates are higher for girls than boys.

Retention is however not only a matter of keeping children in school. It is a more complex issue with many different dynamics and meaning all of which have implications. Although there are many reasons why students drop out of schools the consequences are remarkably similar, that dropout earns less, suffer from poorer

health as adults and are more likely to end up in jail than their learned peers (Furger, 2008). Dropouts head down a path that leads to continued cycle of poverty that creates immense challenges for families, neighborhood and communities

### **2.3 Factor Affecting Secondary Education Retention**

Rono (1990) studies highlights several factors that lead to low access and retention, which includes economic conditions, social cultural factors, school relations, students behaviours and pedagogical conditions.

#### **2.3.1 Economic Factors Affecting Secondary Education Retention.**

In Kenya, introduction of cost sharing policy in the 1980s, coupled with low economic growth in the 1990s, created a heavy economic burden on households. Communities met the cost of key non-salary inputs like tuition, textbooks and uniforms. The government on the other hand met the cost of specialized equipment, administration costs, bursary and scholarship for the needy students, teachers' remuneration and in service training (KIPPRA, 2006).

Although the FSE programme effected in 2008, certainly improved access to secondary education, it however found it difficult to ensure a retention rate of 100%. This is because of indirect costs of secondary education which are enormous and many parents cannot afford owing to the high levels of poverty in the country. The government subsidizes the cost of education by giving 10,265 shillings per student per year. Households are expected to pay for lunch, school building and boarding facilities. They also provide items such as school uniforms, books, and transport. These costs are still high for poor households who may find it hard to maintain their children in secondary school.

About 40% of the country's population lives below poverty line on less than one US dollar a day. Most of these people live in the slums, arid areas and pockets of poverty. For many families their household income has remained the same while the prices of food and other commodities have continued to go up. They therefore find it difficult to pay for the direct costs of secondary. Large inequality in income and wealth has been observed in many developing countries. Kenya has been identified as one of the ten most unequal countries in Africa (society for international development (SID, 2004). 10% of the richest control 42% of income whilst 10% of the poor control 0.76% of income. Given such inequality in income and wealth, and given that education is considered a means of upward social mobility in Kenya, equity in access and retention to secondary school is critical.

Both statistical data and empirical research suggests that children from poor households are unlikely to enroll in school or complete school if enrolled while those from rich households have higher chances of enrolment and retention. There is a strong link between poverty and dropping out from school. Hunter and May (2003:5) call poverty a plausible explanation of school disruption. Colclough et al (2000) studies found that one of the main reason why students failed to attend school was inability to meet the direct cost of schooling in Ethiopia and Guinea. This is supported by Mukundi (2004) who indicated that not only do school fees lead to under enrolment and drop out, but also limits attendance. Poor households tend to have lower demand for schooling than richer households. Although there are many benefits of schooling, poor households find it very difficult to meet the costs compared to those from richer households (Colclough et al, 2000:) For children from poor background in particular, the pressure on them to withdraw from school increases as they get older as opportunity costs of their time increases (Hunt, 2008). Such children

may be forced to look for small jobs so as to supplement the family income or may be called upon to take up some duties such as baby sitting so as to free other household members to work.

### **2.3.2 Social Cultural Factors Affecting Retention**

Maitima (2011) in her study established that the social cultural factors affecting access and retention include: Education of parents, work availability, orphanage, and parental altitude, marital status of parents, harassment at home, family size and early marriages. Vulnerability to risky behaviours, such as sexual activities, drugs and alcohol leads to dropout particularly in the slums (Mugisha, 2006).

Parents of children who either drop out of school or don't go to school have a low education or would have themselves no education or dropped out of school. Such tend to marry at a very early age and have large families. Cutbill (1978) observed that children from such families have a low self-esteem and are mostly, not involved in community and school activities.

Parents play vital role in the retention of students in school. Parents who condone absenteeism or fail to accept their legal responsibilities or have a negative attitude towards school contribute to poor retention. According to Reid (2008) students who attend school irregularly have high chances of dropping out of school before completing the given level and are unlikely to enroll in any other education or training institution (Wheatley and Spillane, 2001).

HIV and AIDS is one of the social economic challenge threatening and reversing the gains made towards Education for All (EFA). Yet education has been regarded as the

“window of hope” or the most effective initiative for reversing the devastation being caused by HIV and AIDS (World Bank, 2002). The prevalence of orphan hood among children in Sub-Saharan Africa has been greatly exacerbated by HIV and AIDS pandemic (Beagle et al., 2003). According to Orodho (2004) many of such orphans drop out of school in order to cater for the basic needs of their families. They are forced to engage in farming or seek some form of employment which causes them to move to large cities so as to earn a living for themselves and their families. Some are forced into early marriages.

Attitude plays a major role in provision of educational opportunities. However one factor that prevent girls from enrolling and continuing with education is the universal fundamental cultural bias in favour of boys Research carried out in Sub Saharan Africa found out that the wide spread operation of patriarchal system of social organization on early pregnancy, a heavier domestic and subsistence duties of female and generally lower regards for the value of female life, adversely affect the participation of girls and women in formal education (USAID, 2004).

Silver (1973) postulate that culture gives more responsibilities to girls than to boys thus overburdening them. He noted that in case whereby a mother dies a girl may be brought home to take care of the family and other siblings at the expense of schooling. In addition girls are also affected by such traditions as early marriages in exchange for bride price, transferring the school girl into a commodity for exchange auctioned to the biggest bidder, so that their brothers can continue with education, (Rono, 1990). In rural areas some poor families force their girls into early marriages so as to ease the family financial burden thus causing the girl to drop out of school. Poverty may cause poor orphaned girls to engage in sexual relationship with men who are older in

exchange with money. These relationships result in pregnancy of such girls who are then expelled from school cutting short their schooling (FAWE, 1994). Even though such girls are encouraged to return to school after delivery it is often difficult for such girls to get someone to remain with the baby when they go back to school. There is also the fear of the girl becoming pregnant again or the girl themselves fear being ridiculed or feel stigmatized (Corcoran, 1995).

### **2.3.3 School Related Factors**

Student's retention in school is affected by indiscipline among students and staff, poor and non- existence guidance, student teacher conflict, peer group influence, absenteeism, overloaded curriculum, lack of interest in school work, and student's cognitive ability. Natuello (1994) attributed the problems of retention to school related factors particularly inefficient school administration. School administration has been found to have significant influence on the school climate and can therefore predict student's retention in school. The school administrator is key in provision of a conducive school climate, motivation, satisfaction and communication to both teachers and students.

A good curriculum is relevant to individual needs of learners in their social traditional and geographical setting. An overloaded curriculum may lead to low retention, stressed students leading to indiscipline, such as truancy which ultimately leads to premature withdrawal (UNESCO, 1995).

Grade retention regardless of the grade in which it occurs drastically increases the likely hood that children will drop out of school (Hauser, 1999), (Holmes, 1989). Students who are normally retained at certain grades perform poorly academically

compared to the ones who get promoted to the next grade. This explains why grade retention leads to drop out. (Jimerson et al, 2002)

#### **2.4 Strategies Developed to Retain Students in Secondary Schools.**

Communities require a combination of efforts and policies to retain students in schools. According to Belfanz (2007) the communities should improve the economic vitality, cut the crime rate, reduce its social welfare cost, expand the schools, reduce concentrated poverty and achieve social justice.

Students at secondary school level experience multiple changes in their lives. They are expected to make independent decisions on whether or not to engage in schooling. They are faced with development changes associated with adolescence. The cognitive demands of schooling also become more complex. Those from very poor households have added responsibilities of caring for their siblings. They may also encounter more violence on their way to and from school and may become targets to crime or be actively recruited into gangs or criminal activities.

#### **2.5 School Related Strategies Aimed at Improving Retention**

Strategies must provide support to ensure that all students attend school regularly and that they are well instructed so as to master all the key academic skills required for school success. According to Belfanz (2007) schools must have well laid down measures to deter students from irregular school attendance, bad behavior and course failure. Good behavior must be modeled and rewarded, while poor behavior should be consistently dealt with. Children themselves are central to the decision to stay on or drop out of school. Consequently, student's feelings about school must be attended to in effort to design programmes to increase retention rates. Butterworth (1990) states

that schools should be made places where children want to be. However for many children, school is merely an escape from the drudgery of household and farm labour. Home life pushes children into school rather than the stimulation of school pulling children to its doors.

Retention can be improved by schools providing a curriculum that is relevant in their social traditional and geographical setting. It should focus on building a bridge from childhood to adulthood. It should prepare students for success in college, career and civic life. An overloaded curriculum may lead to low retention, stressed students leading to indiscipline such as truancy which ultimately leads to premature withdrawal (World Bank,1992) & (UNESCO, 1998).Efforts to expand extracurricular activities at school help to define a broader social role for schools.

Flexible school hours and timetable are also known to cut drop outs. Many children especially those in rural agricultural areas have pressure on them to work which often clashes with traditional schooling timetable. Temporary withdrawals at harvest times and for migrating communities pull children away from school which often leads to more permanent removals. Children in low income households are often called upon to take care of their siblings to free up other household members for work. Pre-school centers can prevent drop outs and retain the children usually girls in schools (Andvig et al, 2000).

Automatic promotion rather than repetition also reduce drop outs. Schools should support students to master the academic skill needed for promotion to the next grade. Research done by Colclough and Lewin (2003) indicated that in some contexts automatic promotion reduces drop out.

There are other factors that affect students' retention that schools ought to address. According to Nyaga (2005) students at this age are faced by multiple challenges associated with adolescence and increased schooling demands. Mentoring and counseling of individuals and groups in schools or schools partnering with external organizations gives those in need intensive support. Many programmes mainly developed in USA are based on the view that students leave school early because of consistency failure in school and poor academic progress resulting in low self-esteem and negative view of the school. A concerned teacher or trusted adult can make a difference between a student staying in school or dropping out.

Furger, R (2007) argues that schools should engage and partner with parents to ensure retention. Although the role of parent changes in secondary school, their ongoing engagement from regular communication with the school staff to familiarize with child's scheduled courses and progress towards graduation remains central to students' success. Providing information to children and their parents about the economic returns of education can increase attendance and reduce drop out.

## **2.6 Financial Support Aimed at Improving Retention**

A significant body of research suggests that targeting additional resources to district serving low income children can narrow the academic achievement gap between the poor and non-poor students. Some examples of such programmes include;

### **2.6.1 Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT)**

Conditional cash transfer (CCT) programme creates incentives for individuals to change their behavior by denying transfer to those who fail to satisfy the conditions. CCT has been shown to reduce child labour and increase school enrollment and

attendance. It has become an anti-poverty tool with approximately 29 countries implementing such programme (World Bank, 2009). CCT provide cash grants to families if they send their children to school or get them immunized. In Mexico the pioneering PROGRESA conditional cash transfer provide up to 3 years of monthly cash grant, equivalent to one fourth of average family income of poor mothers whose children attend school at least 85% of the time.

According to Schultz (2004) the grant increases the transition rate significantly. Girls' enrollment increased more than for boys and also increased school re-entry among older children. Research from Malawi by Baird et al (2010) found that even very small incentive around US \$5 can have large effects. CCT increased the enrollment rates and improved regular attendance for those in school, both of which likely contribute to a modest but significant improvement in English test scores.

World Bank (2009) report indicates that CCT have led to reduction in poverty and reduced incidences of child labour. However CCT has costs that include monitoring students' attitude and ensuring that the funds are not diverted.

In Columbia and Ghana tuition vouchers have been used which target poor students. Columbia's PACES programme provides vouchers to students from poor neighborhoods to attend private schools as long as they maintain their grades. The programme led to substantial increase in both attendance and test scores for participants. Estimates using administrative records suggest the PACES program increases secondary school completion rates by 15 to 20 percent (Agrist et al, 2002). An introduction of a nationwide voucher project in Chile induced more than 1000 private schools to the market and increased the private schools enrollment by 20% points.

### **2.6.2 Provision of Educational Subsidies**

Reforms aimed at improving the quality of education of low income students target additional financial and other academic resources to the school districts that serve them to improve institution facilities. Such investments in the educational status of children from poor families play a key role in breaking the intergenerational transmission of poverty and destitution.

One such programme involves providing educational subsidies in form of food or money to low income parents. Brazil's, Bolsa Escolar began such programme in 1995 to pay mothers for sending to schools as many as 3 children. From 1995 to 2004, the federal government distributed money to each municipality based on poverty indices and a national census. The result of the programme was increased participation of families from 20% to 30% and declined dropout. Less than 1% of the students left school compared to drop out of 5% of non-participants (World Bank, 2001)

In Bangladesh a food for education programme achieved impressive success. Participating families received a monthly allotment of about 12-15 kg of wheat or rice, if the children attended school 85% of their time. According to Morley and Coady (2003), about 6% of beneficiary students dropped out of school compared to 15% of non-beneficiary students. In Australia, a study of a government initiated programme, the Student Income Support Policy Initiative (AUSTUDY) resulted in a dramatic increase in the amount of income support for full time students. The proportion of retention increased from 45 % in 1984 to around 74% in 1993.

### **2.6.3 Provision of Bursaries to Needy Students**

In 1994, the government of China directed bursaries to minority areas for their educational needs. Similarly the government of Mexico directs bursaries to help indigenous students pay for text books and other learning materials. Targeted bursaries are also used in Armenia, Chile, India and Paraguay. They are provided on a competitive basis to initiatives designed locally to promote increased participation and retention.

In Zambia and Malawi studies show that close to 70% of secondary students are entitled to bursary schemes which are supposed to cover 75% tuition fees for most beneficiaries and up to 100% for vulnerable groups such as double orphans. Bursaries schemes are also favoured to improve retention of girls in the schools, (World Bank, 2006).

In Kenya, the government in an attempt to enhance retention and reduce cost of education for poor parents at secondary level introduced Constituency Bursary Fund (CBF). This is aimed at cushioning the country's poor and vulnerable groups against high cost of education, therefore reducing the existing inequalities. The bursary scheme programme is aimed at enhancing access, equity and retention at secondary level. For these reasons, the bursary targets the vulnerable groups who include orphans, the girls and children from poor families in slum areas, pockets of poverty in high potential areas, and ASAL districts. The objective of targeting is to ensure that the systems and the processes that are used are able to minimize exclusion errors, are cost efficient, transparent and accountable in reaching the most in need (Sessional Paper no. 1 of 2005). However Okoth (2009) shows that thousands of poor students in the country do not benefit from CBF leading to drop out.

Schools also start income generating projects to supplement their income to enable them give grants to students who are unable to pay school fees.

#### **2.6.4 Offering Scholarship to Increase Retention**

In Lesotho, one of the strategies to retain students in school involves provision of scholarship. Orphans are identified through social welfare officers and their school fees, uniform and stationary needs are paid for. In Australia, programmes such as; the Australian Indigenous Education Foundation (AIEF), Higher Expectations Programme (HEP) provide scholarships to retain poor students in school. They fund tuition, boarding fees, leadership and mentoring workshops, orientation activities, extra curriculum and study tours (Buckley, 2010).

In India the national scholarship scheme has been implemented since 1961, to provide scholarship to the brilliant but poor students so that they can pursue their studies in spite of poverty. Talented rural children are educated in good schools in order to develop their talents through the scholarship scheme of talented children from rural areas for class vii and xii. In Kenya scholarships are offered to bright and needy students, by various organizations such as NGO, private organizations, corporate bodies, faith based organizations etc.

#### **2.7 Social-Cultural Strategies to Improve School Retention**

Some programmes apply incentives and rewards to increase school attendance rate. In Australia, sporting programmes, school nutrition programmes, and 'no school no pool' policies are examples of using hooks to attract non attending students in school. Programmes that have a focus on building cultural identity and pride in that identity

as focus on promoting education training and vocational pathway have been affected to achieve school retention (Buckley, 2010).

HIV and AIDS pandemic have greatly affected school attendance especially of the orphans. Providing knowledge about the pandemic and reducing the stigma and discrimination alleviates the impact. Providing psychosocial support will go beyond just counseling children on the consequences of infections but has the potential to reduce teenage pregnancy and early marriages (Nyabanyaba, 2009).

In Lesotho one of the strategies to retain students in school involves taking purely a pastoral approach to children. Teachers use the school attendance register to pursue the absence of students. They are then supported to become skilled at identifying and supporting learners at risk from dropping out of school with the provision of psychosocial support. Youth clubs in which children support each other and help to keep up with their school work and discuss issues of concern would be a way of creating critical circles of support for the vulnerable children. These can be done with the assistance of community based organizations which are closely linked with the schools.

## **2.8 Summary**

The literature review has shown that students' retention in secondary schools is a problem experienced in many developed as well as developing countries. There are several factors that affect retention of students in secondary education. These include economic conditions, social cultural factors, school relations and student's behaviours. Retention is also seen to be poorest among the low income families. The poor people most of who live in the slums experiences unique problems. They lack adequate

resources that promote and support children development and school readiness and also have a great deal less health care which ultimately result in many absences from the academic year. Demand for education is also very low hence the need for ways to stimulate the demand for education and improve retention.

The literature review has also shown that in the world different strategies have been employed to improve retention. Strategies used by schools includes, ensuring students are disciplined by rewarding good behavior and deterring bad behavior including absenteeism, providing a curriculum relevant to the social cultural and geographical settings, flexible school hours including pre-school centers, parents participations and guidance and counseling. Communities' involvement in educational issues is vital especially in dealing with social-cultural issues which greatly affects students' retention. They provide psychosocial support that helps in reducing crimes, teenage pregnancy and early marriages to the vulnerable children. Whereas these strategies improve retention, in Kenya, employing some may have limitations. The secondary school curriculum is mainly academic and used in all schools without social cultural or geographical considerations. Some schools may lack facilities to implement the curriculum fully thus disadvantaging the learners. This may be attributed to students' inability to meet the educational costs due to poverty. School hours are not flexible which increases the opportunity costs of schooling especially of the students from poor backgrounds like Mathare slums. There are several community based organizations that support education in the slums but some have been found to suffer from issues of corruption and accountability. Therefore, a gap exists and there was need to find out the strategies adopted by schools and the community to improve students' retention in the slums area.

Financial assistance to the poor is a strategy used all over the world, given that poverty is a major hindrance to retention. This includes conditional cash or food incentives which are given to families for taking children to schools, food programmes to encourage school attendance, education subsidies in form of cash, bursaries or scholarships which support the children education. They do not only pay for educational costs but also serves as incentives to encourage students to remain in schools. These have been seen to improve retention in secondary education in many countries. In Kenya, majority of those living in slum areas like Mathare find it difficult to remain in school given their poor economic status and increasing cost of living. The government interventions, namely the Free Secondary Education Subsidies and the Secondary Schools Constituency Bursary Fund are meant to improve retention, but may not have been very effective in improving retention. The Free Secondary Education Subsidies are given to all students enrolled in public schools .Given that this does not cater for all the educational costs, the students from poor background may still drop out of schools. The Secondary Schools Constituency Bursary Fund, have been found not to benefit the deserving students from poor background (Oyugi et al, 2008).Therefore, a gap exists and there was need to establish strategies adopted to retain students in secondary education in Mathare area.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This study sought to find the strategies adopted to improve retention of students in secondary education among the low income slum population. The following are covered in this chapter: research design, study location, target population, study sample and sampling procedure, data collection and analysis.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

The researcher used descriptive survey design. This type of design is appropriate for collecting information about people's attitudes, opinions, habits or any of the variety of education or social issues (Orodho, 2009). It is a means through which data on views, opinions, attitudes and suggestion for improving education practices and instructions can be collected. This method was appropriate for the study as it enabled the researcher to gather information on the strategies adopted by the schools and the community to improve students' retention in the Mathare slums

#### **3.3 Location of the Study**

The study was carried out in Mathare slums, Nairobi County. Nairobi has a skewed income distribution in favour of the rich. The top 10 of households in Nairobi command 45% of the total income while the bottoms 10 command 1.6% (SID, 2004). Retention is also seen to be poorest among the low income families. The poor people experiences difficulties in meeting educational and other financial obligations leading to their children dropping out of school. In Nairobi County, majority of these people with low income live in the slums such as Mathare, making this area appropriate for this study.

### 3.4 The Target Population

The target population was the 9 public day secondary schools in the slums and its environs. There are 3 boys', 2 girls' and 4 mixed girls and boys day schools. These schools are walking distance from the slum, and many students enroll in them for they cannot afford transport to and from far schools. There were 128 class teachers and 9 principals in these schools.

### 3.5 Sample and Sampling Procedures

Orodho, (2009) defines a sample as a small part of large population which is thought to be representative of the larger population. In this study the researcher used stratified random sampling to get a representative sample of 5 out of the 9 schools, which constitute 55.6%. The sample was stratified to include 1 girl's, 2 boys' and 2 mixed schools. All the principals in the 5 sampled schools were included. Purposive sampling was used to sample 5 class teachers in each of the sampled schools making a total of 25 teachers, which constitute 16%. Purposive sampling ensured that respondents were drawn from all the forms in each sampled schools. 3 informed specialists who include the DEO and 2 officers from organizations supporting education in the area were sampled using convenient sampling based on ease of access.

**Table 3.1 Study population size, sample size and percentage.**

Study group	Population	Sample	%
Public schools	9	5	56
Principals	9	5	56
Class teachers	128	25	21

### **3.6 Data Collection Instruments**

The research instruments for this study were questionnaires and Interview schedules.

#### **3.6.1 Questionnaires**

The researcher used questionnaires to gather information from class teachers. Questionnaires reach a large number of subjects and thus enhance generation of more standardized data from respondents who are literate. The questionnaires had three sections. Section A gathered demographic data of the respondents. Section B sought information on students' school attendance and dropout. Section C sought to gather information on strategies adopted by schools and the community to improve retention.

#### **3.6.2 Interview Schedules**

Interview schedules were used to gather information from principals and the other key informant. Interview method is appropriate as more information can be accessed and the researcher has time to clarify issues in the process of the interview. It is preferred for respondents who are more willing to talk but not write. They were used to extract information on strategies adopted by schools and the community to improve retention and to assess the effectiveness of government policies on retention.

### **3.7 Piloting**

Before actual data collection, the research instrument was piloted in one day secondary school. The school was randomly selected from the 9 day secondary schools attended by students from the slums. The aim of the pilot study was to detect any weakness in the instruments for data collection and if the questionnaires were clear to the respondents. Problems that arose during the pre-testing would be sorted out by reframing the questions.

### **3.7.1 Validity of Research Instruments**

The research instrument should be able to depict what it is meant to measure. For the purpose of this study the questionnaires and the interview guides were examined by the supervisors who gave their opinion in view of reviewing or adopting in readiness for use in the research. This ensured validity of the research instrument.

### **3.7.2 Reliability of the Instruments**

Orodho (2009) defines reliability of an instrument as the consistency in producing a reliable result. An instrument is reliable if it gives similar results after several administrations under similar conditions. To test the reliability of the instrument in this study the split half technique was used. The instrument was administered to one randomly selected school only once. All the even numbered items were assigned to one group and all odd numbered items were assigned to another group. Using Pearson product moment correlation, the correlation coefficient was calculated. Reliability was then calculated using the Spearman –Brown formula:

$$\text{Reliability} = \frac{2r}{1+r}$$

Where  $r$  = the actual correlation between the halves of the instrument (obtained using Pearson products moment correlation).

At random, the scored items were divided into two groups of all odd- numbered in one half and all even- numbered items in the other half. The even – numbered items were scored and their scores added together for each teacher. The same thing was done to the odd –numbered items. Subject's scores from one part were then correlated with scores from the second part using the Pearson product moment formula. A split

half coefficient of 0.559 was obtained. To obtain coefficient of the whole instrument the Spearman Brown prophecy formula was used:

$$\text{Reliability} = \frac{2r}{1+r}$$

Where r = the actual correlation between the halves of the instrument (obtained using Pearson products moment correlation)

$$= \frac{2(0.559)}{1+0.559}$$

$$= 0.717$$

A coefficient of 0.717 was acceptable as an indication that the instrument was a reliable tool for collecting data in the study.

### **3.8 Data Collection Procedures**

The researcher obtained an introduction letter from Kenyatta University to introduce her formally to the National Commission for Science, Technology and innovation, which then issued a permit to conduct research. Consent to carry out the study was then sought from the County Director of Education and the County Commissioner, Nairobi County. The researcher visited the sampled schools and organizations and introduced herself to the head of the institution. Once permission was granted the researcher booked an appointment with the target respondents to administer the questionnaires and conduct the interviews. The collected information was then edited to check for completeness, accuracy and uniformity.

### **3.9 Data Analysis and Presentation**

After data collection the researcher checked the completeness of the questionnaires. Quantitative data collected was coded and analyzed using descriptive statistics assisted by the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) computer programme. The result was presented in frequency tables, pie chart and graphs. Qualitative data

was analyzed thematically. The researcher went through the same process of data management that is editing and coding and examining the relationships between the variables. Relevant interpretation, discussion and recommendations were then drawn from the analyzed data.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the findings of the data collected from sampled principals, class teachers and informed specialists including the area District Education Officer. The study sought to find the strategies adopted to improve retention in secondary school of low income people in Mathare slums, Nairobi County. The sample was chosen using random and stratified sampling technique. Questionnaires were used to gather information from the 25 sampled class teachers and interview schedules were used on the 5 sampled schools principals and the 3 key informants. Questionnaires were administered, filled and collected within a week. The return rate was 25(100%).

#### **4.2 Demographic Information**

This section presents demographic information of class teachers who were sampled for the study. It is presented under the following sub-headings: academic qualifications, teaching experience, and category, size of the schools they teach and the class distribution.

### 4.2.1 Academic Qualifications of Participants

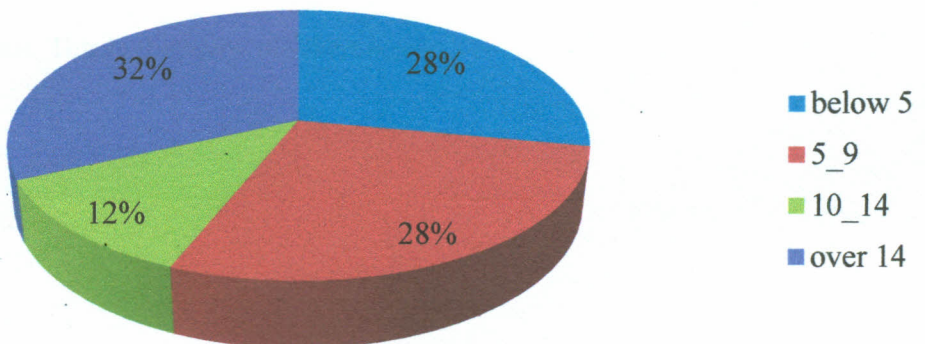
**Table 4.1 Academic Qualifications of Participants**

Academic Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Post graduate	6	24
Graduate	14	56
Diploma	3	12
Others	2	8
Total	25	100

Table 4.1 shows that of the class teachers sampled 6(24%) were Post Graduates, 14(56%) were Graduates, 3(12%) were Diploma graduates and only 2(8%) had other lower qualifications. This indicates that students in the Public Secondary Schools in the area are in the hands of professional teachers.

### 4.2.2 Teaching Experience

From the figure 4.1, it can be seen that 8(32%) of the sampled teachers, had teaching experience of over 14 years. Those with between 10 and 14 years were 3(12%), between 5 and 9 years were 7 (28%) and those below 5 years were 7 (28%)



**Figure 4.1: Teaching Experience of the Participating Class Teachers**

### 4.2.3 Category of Schools

In this study three major categories of schools were considered. They included two boys' schools, one girl's schools and two mixed schools. This gives a total of five schools out of nine public day schools in the area. From every school five class teachers participated. This is shown in the table below.

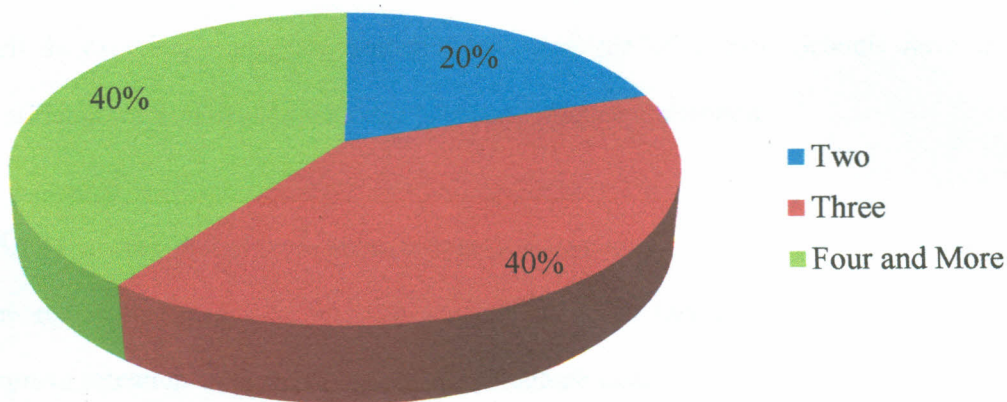
**Table 4.2: Category of Schools and Number of Class Teachers' Respondents**

Type of school	Frequency	Teachers' respondents	
		No.	%
Boys	2	10	40
Girls	1	5	20
Mixed	2	10	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100</b>

The table shows that 10(40 %) of teachers who responded were from boys school, 10(40 %) from mixed schools and 5(20%) from girls school.

### 4.2.4 Size of the Sampled Schools

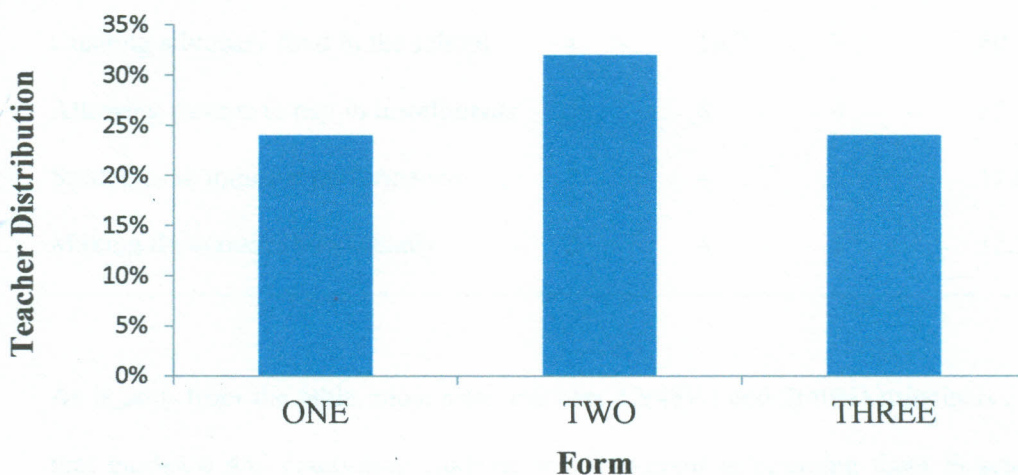
The size of the schools was determined by the number of streams. 1(20%) of the schools had two streams, 2(40%) had three streams and the rest 2(40%) had more than four streams. This is shown by the chart below.



**Figure 4.2: Size of the Sampled Schools.**

#### 4.2.5 Distribution of the Teacher Respondents in the Various Forms

There were 5(20%) form one class teachers, 6(24%) form two class teachers, 8(32%) form three class teachers and 6(24%) form four class teachers. This ensured that information was given by well sampled teachers.



**Figure 4.3: Distribution of the Teacher Respondents in the Various Forms.**

#### 4.3 Strategies Adopted by Schools to Improve Retention

The Kenya government has put in place strategies to improve retention at secondary level by reducing cost of education for the poor parents. However as the research as

well as experience suggests, students still drop out of school .Schools have to considered ways of dealing with this problem to improve retention.

#### 4.3.1 Measures Taken by Schools to Improve Retention

The researcher sought to find out the strategies the schools were employing to improve retention of the needy students in Mathare slums from the class teachers and the school principals .The responses are discussed below.

**Table 4.3: Measures Taken By Schools to Improve Retention**

Responses	Teachers		Principals	
	No.	%	No.	%
Guidance and counseling	12	48	2	40
Getting bursaries and sponsors	11	44	2	40
Having a lunch programme	4	16.7	5	100
Talking to parents to create awareness	4	16.7	5	100
Creating a bursary fund in the school	4	16.7	3	60
Allowing parents to pay in installments	2	8	4	80
Strategies to improve performance	1	4	1	12.5
Making the school child friendly	2	8	1	12.5

As is seen from the table, most class teachers 12(48%) and 2(40%) principals stated that guidance and counseling students was important in retaining them in schools. Other than poverty, there are many forces that push students out of school. Students at this age are faced by multiple challenges associated with adolescence and increased schooling demands. Mentoring and counseling of individuals and groups in schools or schools partnering with external organizations are therefore crucial in giving those in

need intensive support and hence help them remain in school. This agrees with Nyaga (2005) who argues that lack of guidance and counseling in dealing with students' issues have contributed to their state of mind and low retention in secondary education. According to 11(44%) teachers and 2 (40%) principals getting bursaries and sponsors assists the students remain in school. This confirms the fact that lack of school fees is a major cause of dropout. The schools inform parents when and where to get such bursaries and assist in filling of the forms. This agrees with study done in Zambia and Malawi where bursaries schemes were found to improve retention especially of girls in schools (World Bank, 2006). All the 5(100%) principals as well as 4(16.7%) teachers indicated that starting a lunch programme is crucial in keeping students in school. Some students attend schools not just because they are interested in learning, but because they are also assured of food at lunch time. This is supported by a study done in Bangladesh where a food for education programme achieved impressive success in improving retention (Morley and Coady 2003). Another strategy as indicated by all the 5(100%) principals and 4(16.7%) teachers is regular talking to parents to create awareness on importance of education and their roles in education. This agrees with Furger, R (2007) who argued that schools should engage and partner with parents to ensure retention. He said that regular communication with the school staff to familiarize with child's performance remains central to students' success.

Creating a bursary fund in the school was stated by 4(16.7%) teachers and 3(60%) principals as a method schools employ. These funds are established to cater for needy and deserving students. The schools' old students, parents, teachers and the community at large are all involved in contributing to the fund. Another strategy schools employ is to allow parents to pay in installments to enable them clear fees as the students are

kept in schools as indicated by 4(80%) principals and 2(8%) teachers. Parents visit schools and make arrangements on how to pay the fees depending on their income.

Other strategy to improve retention mentioned by 2(8%) teachers and 1(20%) principal is making the school child friendly. Butterworth (1990) stated that schools should be made places where children want to be. Considering that most students come from the slums where basic amenities are of poor quality, schools can provide better environment with such facilities as clean toilets and good study areas. Students should feel secure and safe in schools. Teachers who show concern with student's welfare and serve as trusted adults provide the required emotional and social support which may not be provided at home. This will help in retaining students in school. Schools also strive to improve performance in order to improving retention according to another 1(4%) teacher and 1(20%) principal. This is in agreement with Ainley and Sheret (1992) who stated that students leave school early because of consistent failure in school and poor academic progress resulting in low self-esteem and negative view of the school.

#### **4.3.2 Strategies Adopted by the Parents to Improve Retention of Students in**

##### **School**

The role played by parents in improving retention is crucial. Parents are required not only to provide material support but also moral support to the students. Although most parents are poor, some have understood that education is a tool that can deliver them from poverty. The study sought to find out the strategies the parents have adopted to help keep the students in school. The respondents gave the following responses.

Most parents organize with the schools to pay fees in installments according to 15(45.5%) respondents. Some parents look for sponsors and bursaries from the CDF,

City Council, MOE and other organizations was indicated by 9(27.2%) respondents. A number of parents engage in small businesses to raise some money for their family upkeep and school fees was mentioned by 5(15.2%) respondents. They practice table banking where they make contributions and loan out the cash to the members at small interests. This way they raise the capital to start the income generating projects or are able to boost their businesses. Some parents form and register self-help groups and are therefore able to access small loans from certain organizations .Another 2(6.1%) respondents indicated that some parents live near the schools to avoid paying bus fare for the children, thus reducing education cost.

#### **4.4 Actions Taken By the Community to Improve Retention in Secondary**

##### **Education in the Slums**

The second objective of the study was to find out what actions the community had taken to improve retention in secondary education in the slums? Community plays an important role in education. Participation takes different forms. The respondents were asked to name the organizations that play important roles in improving retention in secondary school in the slums. The following organizations were identified:

- i. Religious organizations, which include the Catholic Church, Redeemed Gospel Church, Muslims as well as some Asians communities. These have various educational projects and funds.
- ii. There are several community based organizations and the following were mentioned, Undugu Children and Youth Society, Mathare Youth Sports Association (MYSA), Christian Foundation for Children and Aged (CFCA).
- iii. There are also NGOs in the area which include, USAID, Kurji Compassionate International, World Vision and FAWE. Corporate bodies mentioned include the Equity Bank, Aghakan Foundation and Jomo Kenyatta Foundation.

- iv. Most schools have established Old Students' Organizations. These organizations support students' retention in different ways as discussed below.

#### **4.4.1 Sponsoring Students Education**

The study found out that 2 out of the five schools under study have official sponsors. Others schools are sponsored by various organizations as mentioned above. According to 26(78.8%) respondents these organizations pay students fees fully or partially. This is considered the most effective way of keeping students in school, given that they are from poor background. This is supported by Abagi (1997) who confirmed that economic factors are responsible for high drop out of students.

Another 8 (24.2%) respondents said that some buy for them school uniforms, text books and writing materials. In addition some sponsors provide personal effects including sanitary pads which are crucial in retention of girls. According to 5(15.1%) respondents some of the organizations pay rent for the families that are very poor and the orphans. This makes the parents as well as siblings encourage the students to remain in school. The study found that some of the orphaned students are placed in the homes established in the region and supported by these organizations. Sponsors also participate in guidance and counseling of the students so as to overcome the many challenges that threaten their retention, indicated 13(39.4%) respondents. This is extended to the parents to ensure there is family support at their homes. These findings agrees with the scholarship programme for the poor in Australia where according to Buckley,S and Purdie, N. (2010), the programme funded tuition, boarding fees, leadership and mentoring workshops, orientation activities, extra curriculum and study tours. This greatly improved retention of the poor in school. These findings are supported by Research from Malawi by Baird et al (2010) who

found that even very small incentive around US \$5 can have large effects on retention. Another 8(24.2%) respondents indicated that the sponsors make a follow up of students' performance and take necessary measures. They get involved in following up those that drop out of schools through their social workers.

#### **4.4.2 Other Community Initiatives Aimed at Improving Retention**

The study sought to find out other community initiatives aimed at improving retention in secondary school. The study found that the community also engages students outside schools. According to 5(20%) teacher respondents, they organize sports activities, environmental days, dancing competitions and talents shows. These provide them with forums to develop their talents and raise their self-esteem. These forums are also used to talk to them against engaging in the vices in their area. Mentorship programmes are developed through which students receive counseling, encouragements and are able to share their experiences and challenges. These work to make the students well-adjusted all of which improves retention. This agrees with Buckley (2010) who found that such programmes that have a focus on building cultural identity and pride in that identity as focus on promoting education training and vocational pathway have been affected to achieve school retention. The community also takes responsibility of the schools and the students' security.

According to 4(16%) teachers; students in uniform are protected by the adults in their community. They are not allowed to loiter during school hours and this improves school attendance and discipline. The schools in the area encourage the immediate community to own the schools by involving them in their activities observed 2(8%) respondents. They allow them to use some of the school facilities like school halls for community meetings and playing grounds. This work to improve the relationship

between the school and the community. The community also gets involved in raising funds for the schools which improve the facilities making schools child friendly which improves retention said 3(12%) respondents.

#### **4.5 Effectiveness of Government Policies Aimed at Promoting Retention in**

##### **Secondary Education in the Slums**

The third objective of the study was to find out the extent to which the government policies aimed at promoting retention in secondary education in the slums have been successful. The respondents mentioned the following government policies which are aimed at improving retention:

- i. Free day secondary education,
- ii. Secondary schools constituency bursary fund,
- iii. Readmission of girls in schools after giving birth and;
- iv. The ministerial schools fees guidelines.

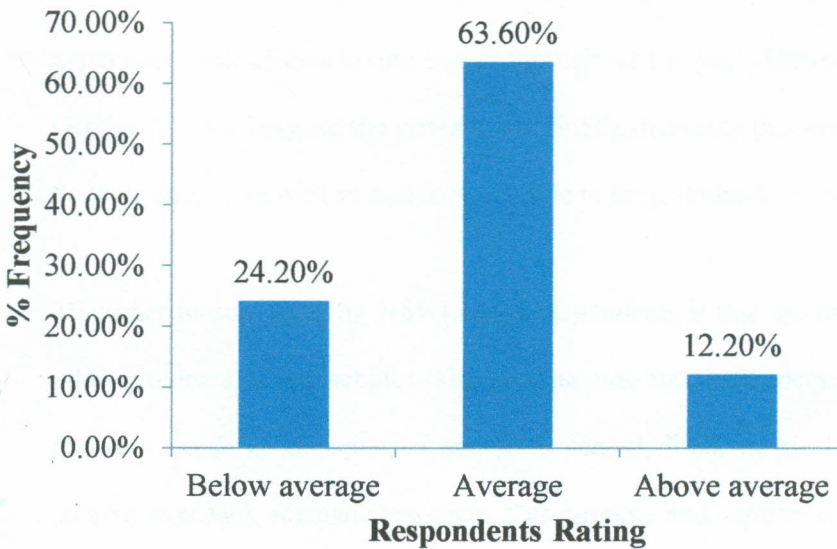
The study focused on the two that the respondents voted as the main policies that have had greater impact, namely the free day secondary education and the secondary schools constituency bursary fund. They were asked to rate their effectiveness in improving retention in secondary education in the slums and suggest ways in which they can be made more effective. The findings are discussed below.

##### **4.5.1 The Free Day Secondary Education**

The Kenya government has made endeavors to provide quality education and training in order to achieve access, equity and quality at all levels of education. The Free Day Secondary Education was introduced in 2008 as one of the educational reforms emanating from the sessional paper no.1 of 2005. In this policy a subsidy of 10,265 shs is given to every child in a public secondary school. The government hoped this

would improve retention especially of the students from poor background. Respondents were asked to rate the effectiveness of the programme in retaining students in school and give reasons for their rating. The figure below represents the rating of its effectiveness.

As can be seen from the figure below, most respondents 21(63.6%) rated it as average, 8(24.2%) said it was below average and only 4(12.1%) rated it above average. The study found that it has not been very effective in retaining the students in school.



**Figure 4.4 Respondents' Rating of Effectiveness of the FDSE**

Respondents gave the following reasons as to why the programme is not effective in retaining students in school. Most respondents 11(33.3%) said that the amount is not enough to cater for all school needs. There are other hidden costs of education, which are not covered by the government subsidies which include costs of uniform, books, stationary, pocket money, transport etc. Taking into consideration that some parents are extremely poor, they find it difficult to retain their children in school because they

cannot afford these hidden costs of education. This agrees with Abagi (1997) who found that children whose parents could not afford cost of instructional materials and uniforms tend to go to school irregularly and in the long run drop out of school. The findings are supported by Murithi (2012) who found that the FDSE subsidies are inadequate and that the cost of compulsory items and other direct payments by parents are prohibitive to meet all the educational needs. According to 6(18.1%) respondents this fund is disbursed late to the schools. Some students will have been sent home by the time the funds are received and some of these drops out of school. This agrees with Chabari (2011) whose study established that the subsidies are not disbursed in time. He argues that disbursement should have been such that the schools should not experience lack of purchasing power throughout the year. However the area District Officer felt that because the government finally disburses this money, schools should do their budgeting well so that they are able to keep students in schools.

The other reason given by 2(6%) of the respondents is that the fund does not address other problems of day scholar. The poor parents may lack adequate finances to cater for such needs as transport to and from school, food, medical care etc. The poor parents may lack adequate resources that promote and support children development and school readiness (Ramey and Ramey 1994). However 3(9%) respondents felt that the fund had reduced the poor parents' fees burden and what needed to be done was to increase the fund. This agrees with Muasya (2012) who found that enrolment and retention had increased since the introduction of free day secondary education. With an amount of the fees paid some parents are able to pay the balance and hence retain the students in school.

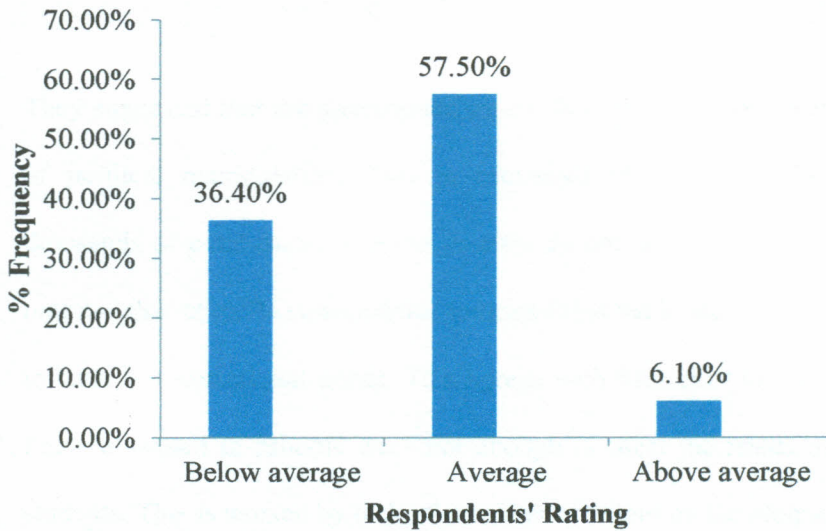
#### **4.5.2 Suggestions on How to Make the Free Day Secondary Education More**

##### **Effective**

The respondents were asked to suggest ways in which this policy can be made more effective in retaining students in schools and they responded as follow. Twenty percent of the respondents suggested an increase of the amount of subsidy so that it caters for most of the educational costs (Muriithi, 2012). Another 20% felt that the money should be disbursed to schools in good time. This is supported by Chabari (2010) who found that the FDSE subsidies are inadequate and are not disbursed in time. He stated that cost of compulsory item and other direct payments by parents are prohibitive. The government should also establish a follow up mechanism of the students who drop out of school mentioned another 20%. However majority of the respondents, 40% said that what the government needed to do was to make secondary education completely free to improve students' retention

#### **4.5.3 Secondary Schools Constituency Bursary Fund**

Constituency Bursary Fund was introduced with the aim of cushioning the country's poor and vulnerable groups against the high and increasing cost of secondary education, thus increasing retention. The respondents were asked to rate the effectiveness of the secondary schools constituency bursary fund and suggests ways of making it more effective. The responses are as shown in fig 4.5.



**Figure 4.5: Respondents Rating of the Effectiveness of the Secondary Schools Constituency Bursary Fund**

From the figure it can be seen that most respondents 19(57.5%) rated it as average, 12(36.4%) said it was below average and only 2(6.1%) rated it above average. This shows that the policy has not been very effective in retaining students in school. The respondents gave reasons why it is not very effective as follows .According to 11(37.9%) respondents, not all the needy students have access to the funds. The procedures are cumbersome and sometimes demands that you must have registered as a voter in the constituency making it more difficult for the parents. This agrees with Oyugi et al (2008) who found that thousands of the poor in the country do not benefit from these bursaries, leading to drop out. He argued that there are loopholes in the allocation of the bursaries, leaving the poor to consider other ways to enhance retention.

According to 7(24.2%) respondents the bursary is given to some of the students who are not needy hence denying the very needy. This agrees with Nasongo and Wachiye (2010) who found that there are cases of political interference in bursary allocation.

They suggested that the government establish a special management structure devoid of political manipulation. This is supported by Okoth (2009) who found that thousands of poor students in the country do not benefit from CBF leading to drop out. Another 6(20.7%) respondents indicated that the bursary awarded is not sufficient to cater for educational needs. This agrees with Muriuki (2011) who found that the funds allocated to schools were not enough to meet the needs of all the deserving students. This is worsen by lack of consistency where by the recipients in one year are not assured of the same the following year. This leads to wastage when the students drop out. However 3(10.3%) respondents mentioned that the bursaries reduce the educational burden of the beneficiaries. This view is also shared by Muriuki (2011) whose study found that the bursary scheme slightly improves secondary school retention.

#### **4.5.4 Suggestions on How to Make the Constituency Bursary Fund More**

##### **Effective**

The principals and the other key informants were asked to suggest ways in which the bursary funds can be made more effective in improving retention. Majority of the respondents (62.5%) said the bursaries should be channeled directly to the schools. This is because the teachers are better placed to identify the needy and deserving students. Another 12.5% suggested that the government should give clear guidelines on who should benefit and make a close follow up. The government should establish a management structure devoid of political manipulation to run the CDF (Nasongo and Wachiye, 2010). The amount should be increased and given consistently throughout the student's course to ensure the student complete the educational level was indicated by 25% of the respondents. This will keep the students from the very poor households in school and ensure there is no wastage of funds that occurs when they drop out of

school. The Constituency Bursary Fund is currently under direct control of members of parliament and has often been used as a political instrument thus compromising its effectiveness. The fund is allocated to friends and political supporters who are not necessarily needy (Onuko, 2012). The government should establish a management structure void of political manipulation and enlighten the public on the procedures of applying to improve its effectiveness. Schools should be highly involved in selecting the beneficiaries. This fund would then be one of the important ways of the government improving retention by directing the funds to the needy.

#### **4.6 Other Measures to Improve Retention in Secondary Education in Order to Enhance Achievement of EFA Goals**

The fourth objective of the study was to find out other measures that should be taken to improve retention in secondary education in order to enhance achievement of EFA goals.

##### **4.6.1 Government Interventions**

The respondents gave the following suggestion as possible measures the government can take to improve retention. Majority of the respondents, 14 (42.4%) said that the budgetary allocation to the needy should be increased. According to 9(27.2%) respondents, very poor students should be given full sponsorship. This will ensure maximum use of public funds and the wastage that results when they fail to complete school does not arise. Another 3(9%) respondents suggested that the government should release the funds to schools in good time. The government should also follow closely the implementation of the school fees guidelines by the schools. This will stop schools administration from high locating the fees, increasing the burden of the poor. However 10(30.3%) respondents indicated that secondary education should be made

completely free and compulsory. Once completely free parents will have no excuse of keeping their school going children at home and they can be prosecuted through the local administration. The government should then be in a position to reinforce law on child labour.

According to 8(24.2%) participants free boarding schools should be constructed for the very poor so that they can have a child friendly environment to study away from the harsh home conditions. This will retain those enrolled in school until they complete. Some respondents 5(15.2%) said that what should be done is to introduce a feeding programme for schools in the slums that will ensure that students are well fed. This agrees with the study by Morley and Coady (2003) in Bangladesh where a food for education programme achieved impressive success on students' retention. Another 2(6.1%) suggested that the government should curb criminal activities in the slums and deal sternly with the culture of drinking. They said local brewing provides cheap but unhealthy alcohol with the results of many unproductive people who can barely take care of their families.

#### **4.6.2 Suggestions on Ways Parents can Improve Retention**

Majority of the respondents, 50.7% felt that parents need to be more committed to the education of their children. This can be achieved through constantly meeting the parents to sensitize them on the need to get more involved in children affairs and also being good role models. Parents should also work closely with teachers on issues of discipline was indicated by 21.1% of the respondents. This is in agreement with Handerson (1987) who stated that when parents are involved in their children's education, the children perform better academically and socially. This in turn will improve retention in schools.

#### **4.6.3 Suggestions on Ways Schools can Improve Retention**

The class teachers and the principals were asked to suggest other ways in which schools could improve retention. Most of the respondents 9(30%) suggested that enhancing the guidance and counseling of the students with regular mentorship programme is key. Persons who are role models can speak, motivate and encourage the students to take education seriously and also cope with the many challenges they encounter. Another 5(16.7%) respondents said that schools should be made child friendly and improve facilities so they can develop talents through co-curriculum activities. This will make the students who do not excel academically benefit from schooling. To subsidize the fees and reduce the parents burden, another 5(16.7%) respondents said that the schools should engage in income generating activities and exercise honesty in the use of such income. Schools should seek to develop the needy kitty and those that have should improve it was indicated by 2(6.7%) of the respondents. The schools should create awareness on the need of this fund and encourage all stakeholders to contribute and also look for well-wishers. They felt that the schools can effectively deal with their financial challenges of retaining their students and stop over relying on the government. This agrees with Mutegi (2011) who stated that there is need to cost share the increased cost of education among all stakeholders including local authorities, communities and community-based organizations, hence easing the cost burden on the government on financing education

#### **4.6.4 Suggestions on ways the Community can Improve Retention.**

Majority of the respondents 12(36.4%) said that it is very important for the community to own the schools and get more involved in their programmes and students discipline. They should engage in raising funds for the schools also. According to 7 (21.2%) respondents the community should engage the youth more in

useful activities outside school. Given that the students are day scholars the community should engage them more in productive activities so as to avoid them engaging in harmful activities. According to 6(18.2%) respondents the community should donate food and clothing to the poor as well as build more homes for the orphans. Another 5(15.2%) participants said that the community in partnership with the local administration should deal sternly with drugs, alcohol and other vices in their area, all of which lead to students drop out. This agrees with Belfanz (2007) who stated that the communities should improve the economic vitality, cut the crime rate, reduce its social welfare cost, expand the schools, reduce concentrated poverty and achieve social justice. This would improve the lives of the students and make their environment safe which would improve retention. These students will then contribute positively to the welfare of the same community including raising the economic standards.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the study findings, conclusions and recommendations. Also presented in the chapter are suggestions for studies that could be carried out by future researchers. The responses were based on the objectives of the study aimed at establishing the strategies adopted to improve retention in secondary school of low income people in Mathare slums, Nairobi County.

#### 5.2 Summary

The purpose of the study was to find out the strategies adopted to improve retention in secondary school of low income people in Mathare slums, Nairobi County. The main objectives were:

- i. To find out the strategies adopted by the schools to improve retention in secondary education in the slums.
- ii. To find out the strategies adopted by the community to improve retention in secondary education in the slums.
- iii. To find out the effectiveness of the government interventions aimed at improving retention in secondary education in the slums.
- iv. To suggest other ways to improve retention in secondary education among the low income population.

The researcher used descriptive survey design to investigate the strategies adopted to improve retention. The target population was the 9 principals and 128 class teachers in the 9 public day secondary schools in the slums and its environs. Informed specialists including the area District Education Officer were also included. The

sample consisted of 5 schools; sampled using stratified random sampling to include 1 girl's, 2 boys' and 2 mixed schools. Five principals, 25 class teachers and 3 informed specialists were sampled. Questionnaires were used to gather information from class teachers and interview scheduled were used for principals and the informed specialists. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics assisted by the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) computer program. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically. Data was presented using frequency tables, pie charts and graphs. The study found that students in the public secondary schools in the area are in the hands of professional teachers, majority of whom have teaching experience of more than ten years. The strategies that the schools and the community employ to improve retention include, getting bursaries and sponsors, allowing parents to pay in installments, sensitizing parents on importance of education, supporting parents to establish income generating projects, establishing lunch programmes and guidance and counseling programmes. On the effectiveness of the government policies aimed at improving retention; namely Free Secondary Education and the Constituency Bursary Fund the study found that they are not very effective. This is due to insufficient funds, cumbersome procedures, corruption and inconsistencies. Other ways of improving retention include; the government should meet all educational needs of the public day schools, establishing boarding schools for the poor and deserving students, dealing sternly with criminal activities, including drugs abuse and trafficking.

### **5.3 Conclusions**

Following are the major findings from the study, discussed under the following sub-headings.

### **5.3.1 Strategies Adopted By Schools to Improve Retention of the Needy Students from the Slums**

The study found that all schools experienced students' absenteeism which eventually leads to drop out. The form twos are most affected followed by the form fours. The study found that the schools take the following measures to improve retention; getting bursaries and sponsors from the CDF, City Council, MOE and other organizations to help them pay fees and retain the students in school, allowing parents to pay in installments, sensitizing parents on importance of education, supporting parents to establish income generating projects, establishing lunch programmes to ensure students have at least a meal in a day and guidance and counseling programmes.

### **5.3.2 Actions Taken By the Community to Improve Retention in Secondary Education in the Slums**

The study found that there are many organizations supporting education in the area which include: Religious, community based organizations, NGOs and Corporate bodies. Their largest contribution in improving retention is through financial support to the students and their families, this is achieved through; paying students' fees fully or partially, buying for them learning materials and personal effects including sanitary pads for the girls and paying rent for the very poor families and the orphans. Some sponsors participate in guidance and counseling of the students and their parents and also follow up those that drop out of schools through their social workers. These strategies help in improving students' retention in schools. The community organizes social events and activities such as Sports, environmental days, dancing competitions, talents shows and mentorship programmes. All these provide the students with forums in which they receive counseling, share their experiences and challenges. Where the

community has been made to own the school, they take charge of students security and discipline.

### **5.3.3 Effectiveness of Government Policies Aimed at Promoting Retention in Secondary Education in the Slums**

The study found that the two government policies aimed at improving retention, namely, The Free Day Secondary Education and the Constituency Bursary Fund have not been very effective. The FDSE was rated average due to the following reasons. The fees subsidy is not enough to cater for all school needs for there are still other hidden costs, late disbursement and the view that the fund does not cater for other problems of day scholar. However it was felt that the fund had reduced the poor parents' fees burden and what needed to be done was to increase the amount. The CBF was also rated average. The study found that; the bursary awarded is not sufficient to cater for educational needs, many needy students have no access to the funds due to cumbersome and corruption procedures where the bursaries are given to able and undeserving students and lack of consistency where one is not assured of the fund throughout the course. However it was felt that the fund reduces the educational burden of the beneficiary thus affecting their retention in school. The amounts should therefore be increased and the bursaries channeled through schools for proper identification and allocation to needy students.

### **5.3.4 Other Measures to Improve Retention in Secondary Education in Order to Enhance Achievement of EFA Goals**

The study findings indicated that a lot can still be done to improve retention as follows. The budgetary allocation to the needy should be increased and channeled directly to the schools. The very poor students should be given full sponsorship to

retain them in school and hence achieve maximum use of public funds. The schools should be made to strictly follow school fees guidelines. Some respondents said that secondary education should be made completely free and compulsory and government reinforces law on child labour. Free boarding schools should be constructed for the very poor. A feeding programme for schools in the slums should be introduced that will ensure that students are well fed. Schools should enhance the guidance and counseling of the students and have regular mentorship programmes. Schools should be made child friendly by improving the academic performance, physical and material facilities, and developing talents through co-curriculum activities. To subsidize the fees and reduce the parents' burden, schools should engage in income generating activities and exercise honesty in the use of such income.

Community should own the schools and get more involved in their programmes and students discipline. They should engage the youth more in productive activities so as to prevent them from engaging in harmful activities. The community should support the poor materially and financially including building more homes for the orphans. Members of the community should partner with the local administration and deal sternly with drugs, alcohol and other vices in their area, all of which lead to students drop out. The study concluded that if students' educational needs are fully met in schools which are child friendly and students receive moral support and life skills, learning will continue without interruptions. Retention will improve and this will be in the right direction towards meeting the country's EFA goals.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

The study found that although there are several strategies aimed at improving retention, there are still other ways the government can employ to improve retention of students living in the slum areas which includes;

1. The government should make education free by meeting all educational needs of the public day schools. It should monitor schools to ensure proper use of these funds so as to reduce fees burden of the parents and improve retention.
2. The criteria for awarding bursary to needy students should be revised so that it is done at school level where the students' needs and academic ability is well understood by the teachers.
3. Boarding schools for the bright and needy students should be established to enable them learn in a conducive environment and thus enhance retention, since retention is still hindered by conditions at home.
4. Guidance and counseling should be enhanced and students equipped with life skills to enable them cope with challenges experienced in their environments
5. The community should get more involved in school affairs. It should support schools financially, and enhance youth support programmes.

#### **5.5 Recommendations for Further Research**

1. A study can be done to find out effectiveness of government policies in improving retention in high income areas.
2. This study was conducted in Mathare slums, a similar study should be done in other slums in the county to find out the strategies employed to improve retention.

3. A study be done to find the strategies used to improve retention in the private and informal schools in this area

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRES FOR THE CLASS TEACHERS

Through the principal

.....secondary school

I am currently undertaking a research project on the strategies adopted to improve retention in secondary education in low income areas. The research project is a partial fulfillment of master of education (M.Ed.) course at Kenyatta University.

Please fill in the required information. Confidentiality of the provided information is guaranteed, so feel free to give the correct information. Your cooperation and assistance is highly appreciated.

Thank you

Maina Mary W.

**SECTION A**  
**Demographic Data**

Please respond to each question by ticking (✓) against the appropriate information that apply to you and your school or writing a short statement.

1 What is your highest level of education attained?

Post graduate ( )

Graduate ( )

Diploma ( )

A-level ( )

Any other (specify) -----

2. How many years have you taught in the current station?

Less than five years ( )

5-9 years ( )

10-14 years ( )

Over 14 years ( )

3. Which is appropriate for your school?

Girls school ( )

Boys school ( )

Mixed school ( )

4. How many streams are there per class?

One ( )

Two ( )

Three ( )

Four or more ( )

5. In which class are you a class teacher?

One ( )

Two ( )

Three ( )

Four ( )

## SECTION B

### Students' Participation

Please give the following information concerning the class you administer as a class teacher.

6. i) What was your class enrollment in form one?

ii) What happens to class enrollment as students move from form one to four?

Decrease ( )

Increase ( )

Remains the same ( )

iii) Please give the class enrollment as each form moved on from form one to four.

Form one ( )

Form two ( )

Form three ( )

Form four ( )

KCSE candidature ( )

7. i) Do you experience student's absenteeism?

Yes ( )

No ( )

ii) If yes, in which form are they seriously affected?

Form one ( )

Form two ( )

Form three ( )

Form four ( )

8. i) Were there new students enrolled in your class during the four year period?

Yes ( )

No ( )

ii) If yes, how many were enrolled in the following forms?

Form one ( )

Form two ( )

Form three ( )

Form four ( )

9 i) Were there students who dropped out of school in your class?

Yes ( )

No ( )

ii) If yes, how many dropped out in the following forms?

Form one ( )

Form two ( )

Form three ( )

Form four ( )

**SECTION C**

**Strategies Adopted to Improve Secondary Retention.**

11. In your opinion what are the effects of low retention of students in secondary education?

.....  
.....

12. What measures has your school taken to improve retention.

.....  
.....

13. i) Are there students who are sponsored in your school?

Yes ( )

No ( )

(ii) If your answer is yes, name the organizations that sponsor students.

.....

14. What measures have they put in place to improve retention?

.....  
.....

15. i) Name any local community initiatives aimed at improving retention in secondary school.

.....

(ii) How do they support the students or the school to improve retention?

.....  
.....

16. (i) Does your school have an official sponsor?

Yes ( )

No ( )

(ii) If your answer is yes, what role has the sponsor played in improving retention? .....

17).i) How do you rate the effectiveness of the following government initiatives in improving students' retention in secondary education?

Free Day Secondary Education ( )

Below average ( )

Average ( )

Above average ( )

Briefly explain the reasons for your rating.....

ii) Secondary school constituency Bursary Fund.

Below average ( )

Average ( )

Above average ( )

Briefly explain the reasons for your rating. ....

18. Suggest other ways in which the following can improve retention in secondary education among the low income population;

a) Government. ....

.....

b) Parents. ....

.....

c) Schools. ....

.....

d) Community. ....

.....

**APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR SCHOOL PRINCIPALS**

S.No	Objectives	Main Question	Possible Probing Questions
1.	To find out the strategies adopted by the schools to improve retention in secondary education in the slums.	What actions has the school taken to improve retention of students in school?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. For the time you have been in this school, how do you rate retention of students in the school?</li> <li>2. In which classes do most students drop out of school?</li> <li>3. What strategies have you as a school adopted to improve retention?</li> </ol>
2	To find out the strategies adopted by the community to improve retention in secondary education in the slums.	What strategies have been used by the community to improve retention of students in school?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What are some of the methods the parents in this area use to retain their children in secondary school?</li> <li>2. Can you name some of the organizations/groups in the area that support secondary education?</li> <li>3. How do they improve students' retention?</li> </ol>
3	To find out the effectiveness of the government interventions aimed at improving retention in secondary	To what extent have the government policies aimed at promoting retention in secondary education in the slums been successful?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Name the government policies that are aimed at improving retention in secondary schools?</li> <li>2. Which of these policies have had the largest impact on students' retention in your school?</li> </ol>

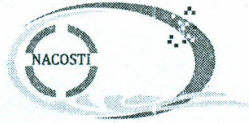
	education in the slums.		<p>3. How do you rate their effectiveness in improving retention in secondary education?</p> <p>4. In your opinion what measures can the government take to make these policies more effective in improving retention in secondary education?</p>
4	To suggest other ways to improve retention in secondary education among the low income population.	What other measures should be taken to improve retention in secondary schools in order to enhance achievement of EFA Goals.	1. What else do you think can be done to improve retention in secondary education in the slums?

**APPENDIX 3: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICER  
AND OTHER KEY INFORMANTS**

<b>S.No</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Main question</b>	<b>Possible probing questions</b>
1	To find out the strategies adopted by the schools to improve retention in secondary education in the slums.	What actions have the schools taken to improve retention of students in school?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. For the time you have been in this area, how do you rate retention of students in the schools?</li> <li>2. In which classes do most students drop out of school?</li> <li>3. What strategies have your office /organization adopted to improve retention?</li> </ol>
2	To find out the strategies adopted by the community to improve retention in secondary education in the slums.	What actions has the community taken to improve retention in secondary education in the slums?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What are some of the strategies the parents in this area apply to retain their children in secondary school?</li> <li>2. Name other organizations / groups in this area that support secondary education?</li> <li>3. How do they contribute to the retention of students</li> </ol>
3	To find out the effectiveness of the government interventions aimed at improving retention in secondary education in the slums.	To what extent have the government policies aimed at promoting retention in secondary education in the slums been successful?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Name the government policies that are aimed at improving retention in secondary schools?</li> <li>2. How do you rate their effectiveness in improving retention in secondary education?</li> <li>3. In your opinion what measures can the government take to make these policies more effective in improving retention</li> </ol>

			in secondary education?
4	To suggest possible interventions to improve retention in secondary education among the low income population.	What other measures should be taken to improve retention in secondary schools in order to enhance achievement of EFA goals.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In your opinion what else can be done to improve retention in secondary education?</li> <li>2. Suggest ways in which your office/organization can improve retention in secondary education in the slums.</li> </ol>





**NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE,  
TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION**

Telephone: +254-20-2213471,  
2241349, 310571, 2219420  
Fax: +254-20-318245, 318249  
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9<sup>th</sup> Floor, Utalii House  
Uhuru Highway  
P.O. Box 30623-00100  
NAIROBI-KENYA

Ref. No.

Date:

1<sup>st</sup> September, 2014

NACOSTI/P/14/8652/2869

Mary Wamuyu Maina  
Kenyatta University  
P.O. Box 43844-00100  
NAIROBI.

**RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION**

Following your application for authority to carry out research on *"Strategies adopted to improve retention in secondary education in low income areas: A case of Mathare Slums, Nairobi County, Kenya,"* I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in Nairobi County for a period ending 31<sup>st</sup> July, 2017.

You are advised to report to the County Commissioner and the County Director of Education, Nairobi County before embarking on the research project.

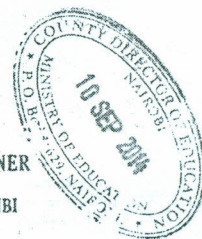
On completion of the research, you are expected to submit **two hard copies and one soft copy in pdf** of the research report/thesis to our office.

  
DR. S. K. LANGAT, OGW  
FOR: SECRETARY/CEO

Copy to:

The County Commissioner  
The County Director of Education  
Nairobi County.

**COUNTY COMMISSIONER  
NAIROBI COUNTY  
P. O. Box 30124-00100, NBI  
TEL: 341666**



THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:

**MS. MARY WAMUYU MAINA**  
of **KENYATTA UNIVERSITY, 35029-200**  
**nairobi**, has been permitted to conduct  
**research in Nairobi County**

on the topic: **STRATEGIES ADOPTED TO**  
**IMPROVE RETENTION IN SECONDARY**  
**EDUCATION IN LOW INCOME AREAS: A**  
**CASE OF MATHARE SLUMS, NAIROBI**  
**COUNTY, KENYA.**

for the period ending:  
**31st July, 2017.**

Applicant's  
Signature

Permit No : **NACOSTI/P/14/8652/2869**  
Date Of Issue : **1st September, 2014**  
Fee Received : **Ksh 1,000**



Secretary  
**National Commission for Science,  
Technology & Innovation**