



## PARTICIPATION OF KENYAN NOMADIC PASTORALISTS IN NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

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### **Abstract:**

The desire for any government that values the economic growth of its country is to provide education to its citizens. Kenya has made innumerable efforts towards this end since independence. However, several decades down the line, this is yet to be realised. The nomadic pastoralist community is one such a group that has remained out of school due to its palpetic lifestyle. Generally, formal education is appropriate for people leading a sedentary lifestyle, thereby making nomadic pastoralist community be persistently excluded from accessing formal education. Nevertheless, in efforts to promote access to education among communities that are mainly nomadic pastoralists, the Government of Kenya has established mobile schools in Turkana County. Several studies have been conducted on factors contributing to low participation of nomadic pastoralists in education, but very little research has been done on mobile schools. Using a mixed methods research design, various County Government documents and official documents found in schools were reviewed to obtain information concerning Mobile schools in the area of study. Purposive sampling was adopted for this study to identify schools and the population for study. Focused Group Discussions were also held for parents and the learners of the final grade in mobile schools. The quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics whereas thematic analysis approach was used for qualitative data. The findings were presented in verbatim and tables. This study found out that although mobile schools have promoted access to education among Turkana nomadic pastoralists, their level of participation in education is still significantly low. The study established that some of the conditions that enhance participation in education through mobile schools include: awareness and sensitization, community involvement and multi grade and multi shift approaches in education provision. Also importantly is adopting a multifaceted approach whereby there is both

provision of education, food and security. This study recommends further research to establish ways of sustaining mobile schools in provision in provision of education among the nomadic pastoralists.

**Keywords:** nomadic pastoralists, non-formal education, mobile schools, alternative mode of education, participation

## 1. Introduction

Globally, provision of education to all is the hallmark for development among developing countries. Therefore, many countries worldwide single out formal education as a means of economic development through development of human capital. The main threshold level necessary for everyone to share in this development is primary education. As a result, governments have put in place various approaches to respond to reducing any existing educational disparities. However, the responses to such initiatives vary from one group to another due to factors such as different historical experiences, traditional interests and attachments to clans or subgroups along with the wider communities in general (Sifuna, 2005). For nomadic pastoralists, inspite of their large global scale, their marginalisation from formal education persists and yet they belong to the low economic bracket (Carr Hill, Eshete, Sedel, & Souza, 2005). For a community that deploys mobility as a strategy for survival and welfare of their livestock, a kind of education promoting sedentary lifestyle contradicts their valued source of livelihood. This prompted the need to research on this marginalised nomadic pastoralist community.

The global efforts to fight illiteracy by promoting Education For All among the marginalised groups cannot be underestimated. These efforts have been met with many challenges thereby paving way for alternative schools such as Non-Formal Education (NFE). NFE was widely acknowledged quite early (early 80s), at both national and international levels as an appropriate approach to improve participation of those left out, unreached and dropouts from the formal education system (UNESCO, 2010). Mobile schools, as an alternative mode of education provision to nomadic pastoralists is a form of NFE after the failure of educational access to this marginalised community through the formal system of education. This therefore necessitated the current study due to challenges of practical operations facing this service provision to these wandering pastoralists.

Implementation of NFE in general terms has been met with numerous challenges. An evaluation of NFE in India and Bangladesh established the following challenges: attitude, perceptions and poor linkages with the formal education systems

thereby resulting to its being taken as a separate function for serving the out-of-school children. Moreover, the result of low investment level, low community involvement and quality related issues for instance training of instructors and number of hours of teaching have persistently constrained their implementation (Nath, Sylvia, and Grimes, 1999). In Kenya, it is regarded as a second rate education, hence suggesting that its implementation may have experienced hindrances (Lanyasunya, 2012). Therefore, this created the need to investigate the conditions that support and promote participation of nomadic pastoralists in mobile schools.

Studies elsewhere indicate that despite extensive experimentation with mobile schools in Africa as indicated in Tahir (1991), reaching the nomadic pastoralists through formal education has remained an uphill task. Studies in Africa indicate that since the first mobile schools were introduced in Nigeria, the model has remained almost non-existent in over two decades. This has been attributed to difficulties in its implementation. In addition, Kratli (2001) cited examples in Algeria and Nigeria as instances to show that mobile schools have not performed as expected. Studies elsewhere indicate that it proved impossible to continue classes because the nomads dispersed during the wet season (Gore, Eissa, & Rahma, 1998). This made the government of Nigeria as Ezeomah (2006) points out to introduce a curriculum that had nomadic friendly subjects such as animal husbandry. Hence, establishment of mobile schools does not automatically enhance education access; hence its NFE nature may encourage their success. Consequently, determining the conditions under which NFE education is delivered may contribute to improvement on its success.

The area of focus in this study was Turkana County which is part of the vast ASAL area covering 80% of Kenya. In Kenya, the ASALs occupy over 80 percent of the country and provide home for about 10 million people (Republic of Kenya, 2006). A total of 39 counties fall under ASALs including Turkana County which is located in the North Western region of the country. It is approximately 77,000 km<sup>2</sup> in size and borders Uganda to the west, Sudan to the North West and Ethiopia to the North East. The main livelihood in the county is pastoralism. The area is prone to constant cattle rustling clashes between the Turkana and their neighbours in Uganda, South Sudan and Ethiopia. Coupled with recurring perennial droughts have forced Turkana County to rely almost entirely on relief food from the government and non-governmental organizations (NGO) (Republic of Kenya, n.d.).

In spite of the introduction of various policies and programmes aimed at promoting access to basic education among its citizens, the nomadic pastoralist community still experiences challenges of exclusion. Whereas the National Net Enrolment Rates stood at 91.6% in 2007, the ASAL region posted 13.9% (UNESCO, 2010), a figure that is way below the average in spite of the implementation of Free

Primary Education (FPE) in year 2003. This means that accessing education in the region still suffers a challenge. Contrastingly, even in terms of NFE, the first pilot study for mobile schools was carried out in Turkana during the 1974-78 Development Plan (Republic of Kenya, 1974:69). These “schools on wheels” did not prove viable and no mention is made of them in subsequent official documents (Ngome, 2005). Republic of Kenya (2008a) noted that there were over 50 mobile schools supported by the government across the ASAL region, out of which 60 % are in Turkana. Mobile schooling is regarded as “schools on wheels”, whereby the school is supposed to move with the clusters of nomadic pastoralist families as they move from one place to another in search of pastures and water for their livestock, their main economy. For a mobile school to be established, it requires a minimum of 25 learners only, be in a region where the distance to formal primary school is big and where transition rates to secondary schools are low. It operates from ECDE up to grade three, where the pupils transit to the formal primary school. The Ministry of Education confirmed that mobile schools had been around for long (10 years) in the region (UNESCO, 2010) and they were instrumental in promoting provision of basic education to the learners (ALRMP, and Republic of Kenya, 2004). In spite of the introduction of mobile schools, an NFE approach, the status of education in Turkana County is still characterized by low enrolment levels, high dropout rates and poor infrastructural development. At the time of the study, Turkana had 61 Mobile schools (60% of total schools spread in Kenya’s ASAL region) which was the highest in comparison to other ASAL Counties (Ministry of Education office, Turkana County; NFE Information Desk, 2013), thereby creating interest for this research. This study focused on establishing the extent to which mobile schools had promoted participation in education in Turkana County, and the conditions that had enhanced and supported participation of nomadic pastoralists’ children in education through mobile schools in Turkana County.

## **2. Research Methodology and Theoretical Perspective**

### **2.1 Research Approaches on Nomadic Pastoralists**

Unless the persistent gap between policy intention and practice are addressed, defective policy will continue affecting nomadic education Turkana Nomadic pastoralists included (Aderinoye, Ojokheta, & Olojede, 2007). Establishing FPE on one hand is very different from ensuring that all the children of school going age are actually in school. To begin with, the curriculum for formal schools lacks apt connections with situations familiar to students belonging to nomadic pastoralist group (ibid., Imhabekhai, 2004). This contributes to formal schools being seen as a risk to the community and by extension to the nomadic pastoralists of Turkana. Schools therefore, appear to be a

threat to their moral fabric; hence, hindering education provision among marginalized nomadic pastoralist groups (Aderinoye et al, 2007). Moreover, for the girls who complete formal schooling, they report an uncomfortable sense of displacement (Dyer, 2001) due to the perceived notions associated with formal education. Therefore, Imhabekhai (2004) suggests that the education program provided to nomadic pastoralists should be categorized according to age and sex due to their already established family roles on gender lines. This was in a study conducted in Nigeria, hence the need to also investigate on the scenario in Kenya. In addition, since child labour is central in the production system (Imhabekhai, 2004), attending school for this nomadic pastoralist group remains a challenge. Furthermore, the language of instruction may act as a hindrance to participation in education as noted by Ng'asike (2011) and Imhabekhai, (2004). This points out the need for use of local language for instruction and to the participants so that participation may improve. Hence this study looked at the conditions promoting access to education through mobile schools. Furthermore, all these studies were conducted on formal school, hence creating the need to look at mobile schools.

One of the major factors affecting implementation and consequently participation levels in nomadic education is funding. Without adequate funding, the educational programmes cannot thrive well since its distinctiveness makes it quite expensive (Imhabekhai, 2004; Aderinoye et al, 2007, Vogt & Clemont, 2004). Woldab (2012) and Semali (2007) also found out that low teacher motivation which goes hand in hand with financial aspect is another factor that hinders education provision among nomadic pastoralists. Studies elsewhere have also shown that shortage of teaching and learning facilities, inadequate facilities such as toilets, lack of teachers and the school distance are other factors hindering education provision among nomadic pastoralists (Woldab, 2012; Imhabekhai, 2004; Ng'asike, 2011). So far these studies were conducted in formal schools and were mainly quantitative studies. Therefore, this study aimed at filling the gap by studying mobile schools and using mixed methods approach.

Locally, Sifuna (2005) conducted a study on increasing access and participation of pastoralist communities in primary education in Kenya. The outcome of the study indicated that there is need to articulate vibrant policies and include such communities in planning as well as integrate elements of their prevailing traditional education institutions. Policy Implementation requires ensuring that certain components are institutionalised in order for it to be effectful (McDonnell & Elmore, 1987) as discussed later in this document. In Kenya, a study was carried out in Samburu on factors affecting access to basic formal education among the nomadic pastoralists of Northern Kenya (Lanyasunya, 2012). The outcome indicated that distance, cost, domestic work, gender, guardian's education level, occupation and mobility of the household were the

main factors affecting access to education among the Samburu and other nomadic pastoralist communities by extension (ibid).

Therefore, a variety of research approaches have been utilized in empirical investigations on nomadic pastoralists in the recent past. Research studies within the quantitative paradigm have sought to provide the general outlook on the status of nomadic pastoralists in formal education. Surveys conducted by Woldab (2012); Migosi, Nanok, Ombuki, C., Ombuki, N., Evusa, and Metet (2012); Aderinoye, Ojokheta and Olojede (2007) and Lanyasunya (2012) have provided insights on the status, trends, patterns and the determinants of access to education among the nomadic pastoralists. However, in all these studies, none has focused on mobile schools and they are mainly quantitative studies.

On the other hand qualitative studies have addressed the processes and the contexts in which education provision concerned with promotion of education access among the nomadic pastoralists groups operate. Many countries, Kenya included, have made numerous efforts towards education provision targeting all its citizens, hence favouring the sedentary society and leaving out the nomadic pastoralists groups. Dyer (2008) and Ng'asike (2011) used ethnographic design to understand the interplay between education and development among nomadic pastoralists group in India and Kenya, respectively. Sifuna (2005) employed a mixed method design to document ways of increasing access and participation of pastoralist communities in Primary Education in Kenya, but focused on formal schools. Therefore, this study builds on this tradition by adopting descriptive survey design using mixed methods research model to understand the extent to which the Mobile Schools innovation has promoted access to Education. It also examined the conditions that have enhanced enrolments in Mobile Schools in Turkana County, Kenya.

## **2.2 Research Methodology**

Descriptive survey design using a mixed methods research model was adopted for this study. According to Creswell (2012), mixed methods involves collecting and analysing data using qualitative and quantitative methods in a single study for better understand of the problem. In tandem with Creswell (2012) on maximum variation sampling, this research focused on three different mobile schools with different dimensions as represented by the cases falling at both ends of the continuum as discussed later in this document.

This study was guided by the following research questions: a) to what extent have mobile schools promoted participation in education in Turkana County? b) What are the conditions that have enhanced and supported participation in education through mobile schools in Turkana County?

### **2.3 Data Sources: Non-formal Education and Data Collection**

Mobile schools were conceptualised as Non-Formal Education mode of education provision due to the flexibility involved in terms of delivery, structure and content. Turkana County was ideal for this study since its locality is where the first piloting of mobile schooling was carried out in the early 1970s. In addition, it has the largest percentage of mobile schools managed by the government in Kenya (ALRMP & Republic of Kenya, 2004). A list of mobile schools and their locations in the Sub-County was obtained from the Turkana County Education office. The 61 mobile schools were spread in the six divisions which include: Turkana East, South, West, Central, North and Loima of Turkana County.

The sampling design was done in stages. First, the study drew a sample of two out of the six divisions of Turkana County based on the varied potential of capturing the cases with rich and varied patterns of conditions and processes taking place in mobile schools in line with objectives of the study as proposed by Mugenda and Mugenda (1999). To arrive at the two divisions, the researcher purposively picked them on the basis of the divisions with the highest number of mobile schools as a parameter in order to get more robust conclusions about the study. From the two divisions, three schools were selected for this study. Therefore, three schools were purposively selected. Two from Turkana West division, whereas the third one was selected from Turkana Central division. To arrive at the three schools, a formal case study screening procedure was employed. This was based on reviewing of documents and enquiring from area educational office. Based on parameters of school performance and demographic characteristics such as population size; in terms of enrolments, sustaining students through to graduation and the number of clusters that it serves, accessibility (whether the data needed could be collected from the individual case); resources available (whether resources were available to support travel and other data collection and analysis costs); the time available and lastly the security of the area. From the two extreme values used for sampling, two schools were selected for the study. These were high and low performing schools and then one falling at the middle of the continuum of the two extremes. The schools were found to possess the required information and characteristics with respect to the objectives of the study.

In all the three schools used in the study, each had only one teacher officially appointed from the village they were attached to. Therefore, a deliberate (purposive) sampling technique to pick the only three teachers was used as is asserted by Ogula (1998). From the selected three cases, the parents of the third grade were purposively selected to form a focus group discussion. They were presumed to have had their children in school for a long period of time, hence were information rich in regards to the objectives of the study. The involvement of parents in the study enabled obtaining

of the stakeholders perspective and the community at large in line with study objectives. Further, it can be argued that they are the ones who release their children to go to school, hence are information rich for this study in line with its objectives. In addition, the teachers of these schools were interviewed as respondents. They were also viewed as being knowledgeable regarding the children as their custodians when they are in school. The focus group discussions were composed of mainly female parents due to the social economic structure of the community, where women are mainly left behind with the children while boys and men take the animals to graze.

Lastly, the children in the third grade which is the final grade of the mobile school were used to form a focus group. With the help of the teacher, four learners per school were selected for the study. This type of FGD helped in capturing of the voices of the children and enabled them to be heard as the main beneficiaries of the schools in terms of accessing education contrary to the assumption that children may not be able to or are not entitled to have a point of view (Greig, Taylor, & Mackay, 2007). These learners, who were presumed to have been in the mobile school the longest and hence, were deemed information rich. A total of 6 FGDs were conducted, three consisted of pupils and the other three, parents of the pupils in the third grade. Additionally, three teachers of the three schools involved in this study were interviewed.

Data from FGDs and interviews was analysed qualitatively using descriptive and interpretative techniques. Data from document analysis which was mainly quantitative was analysed descriptively and used for triangulation with the data collected using FGDs and interviews. Responses from the six focus group discussions that had been tape recorded were translated from Turkana to English and transcribed. Data from in-depth interviews with the three teachers, which had been recorded, were and also transcribed. Content analysis was the data analysis method adopted for this study for both the focus group discussions and the in-depth interviews with the teachers. This was done in order to match the responses with the themes and categories that had been identified and to ensure that they were in line with the objectives of this study as espoused by Bogdan and Biklen (2003).

#### **2.4 Researcher Positionality**

Since the researcher is a teacher by profession and was involved in the actual data collection; the researcher's bias was a concern. The researcher relied on "practising reflexivity," which Guba describes as revealing the researcher's own assumptions to his audience (Guba, 1981p.56). This was done with the help of an education expert from the area of study who used the instruments for data collection to indicate the researcher's assumptions that could impinge the research work and consequently helped reduce biases in the study (Yin, 2003). By keeping a reflexive diary (Primeau, 2003) through



addressing the specific concerns of the study and by examining and clarifying researcher's own assumptions, experiences and orientations at the outset of the study, the researcher sought to dispel any prejudices that could impact the study. It allowed the researcher to go beyond personal initial preconception and generate the findings of the research from the words of the respondents and the context of the study.

In addition, this being a community that is characterised by gender roles culturally, the researcher sought the help of two male research assistants from the local community. This helped in building trust during the actual data gathering exercise.

## **2.5 Theoretical Perspectives**

This study was guided by Becker's Human Capital Theory (1964). This theory argues that education provision to citizens of a country enables them to participate in economic development activities through equipping them with skills. The need for the government to provide education to its citizens is built on the premise of Human Capital Theory. Free Primary Education (FPE) policy was introduced in Kenya in year 2003, where all children are expected to attend school without paying for tuition. However, even without fees payment, not all communities are reached through formal education. In efforts to provide education to all, the government undertook the drive for mobile schooling. This was aimed at enabling them participate in development as attending to school translates to a means of acquiring skills helpful for economic development. For the Turkana nomadic pastoralist group which is not able to participate in formal education, mobile schooling is instrumental in enabling them access education within their palpatic lifestyle.

In addition, another theoretical construct used in the study is Policy Implementation Theory (McDonnell & Elmore, 1987). This theory posits ways of shaping policy outcomes so that when enacted, they have long-term policy effects. The proponents of this theory came up with the notion of policy instruments or mechanisms that translates substantive policy goals into concrete actions. Although, the Government of Kenya has made efforts to provide FPE to all its citizens, the Turkana nomadic pastoralists were still left out of the formal education system. Therefore, through mobile schools an NFE, its realization needs attention in line with propositions by McDonnell & Elmore (1987). The successful implementation of such a policy is therefore pivotal and hence the need to establish the extent to which the policy instruments have impacted on the promotion of access to education among this marginalised group. This theory was therefore of significance for this study in assessing whether the policy mechanisms translated into appropriate policy goal of providing education to all its citizens and specifically to the Turkana nomadic pastoralist community.

Through this theory, policy instruments related to this study were of five distinct categories. These categories include first, mandate. This is concerned with the units responsible for policy implementation. Mobile schooling is under NFE unit within the Ministry of Education. On the other hand, the NGOs also have some level of mandate since some of them have sponsored the schools in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, which is an arm of the government. The second category is inducement. The staff responsible for implementation is given some inducement as an incentive in form of money. This provision is shared by the NGOs and the government. The third category is capacity building of the persons responsible for teaching in these schools. While this is recognised as an important component by McDonnell & Elmore (1987), the study found out that this area had deficiency in that the qualification of teachers was based on the person with the highest level of education in the group. This did not matter whether it was at primary or secondary school level whereby the opinion of this study is that each level has its limitations. The fourth instrument is bargaining. This was also another instrument that is important for its success. This means that there is need to sensitise the recipients of the service being provided by the government through the policy provisions. The community receiving the service need convincing that by having education provision, their cultural fabric is still safe guarded and their family roles are still upheld. This is confirmed by the mobile aspect of the education provision since it's based on the premise that it is provided to this mobile community and is mobile in itself. Lastly, transfer of official authority is the other category of instruments necessary for successful policy implementation. The government is required to delegate and assign responsibility of the running of the schools to the County Education office which works closely with the school committees based on the cluster group that is being served by a school as this nomadic pastoralist community moves from place to place in search for pastures. These committees are in charge of not only overseeing the daily running of schools, but also ensuring that they have teachers and pay them.

These mechanisms have facilitated the conceptualisation of successful Policy Implementation process. This study established that these mobile schools in Turkana County are managed by the government, Church Organisations and the NGOs. Since the aim was to provide education to the unreached nomadic pastoralist Turkana community who are not able to access formal education which encourages sedentary lifestyle, mobile schools are flexible. Because of their portability nature, mode of delivery and also being able to serve this community without them neglecting their family roles of livestock husbandry; the mobile schools were found to be effective. Additionally, the mandate of running these schools is within the Ministry of Education under the NFE unit. On the other hand, the teachers in these schools must have a certain level of education as qualification and are given some inducements in form of

payment. Consequently, these policy mechanisms are instrumental in the analysis of the extent to which mobile schooling, an NFE, has enhanced the participation of nomadic pastoralists in education. Therefore, these two theories have been used to support the provision of access to education among the nomadic pastoralist groups.

### 3. Findings and Discussion

Through focus group discussions with parents and pupils on one hand and in-depth interviews with the teachers on the other, the conditions that have promoted participation of nomadic pastoralist children in mobile schooling were brought to the fore. They have been discussed under the following subsection under the objective of: a) finding out the extent to which mobile schools have promoted access to education and, b) the conditions through which Mobile Schooling has enhanced and supported participation in education in Turkana County.

#### 3.1 The Extent to which Mobile Schools have Promoted Access to Education

The critical role that the mobile schools are expected to play is to promote access to education among the nomadic pastoralist communities who lead a nomadic pastoralist lifestyle. This is in line with the Human Capital Theory whereby, education is seen as having a link to economic development of a country. It is on this basis that the Government of Kenya has made an obligation to provide basic education to all its citizens as enshrined in the Constitution (2010). Mobile school is an innovation meant to promote access to school among the marginalised Turkana nomadic pastoralists. Having been established on the premise that they are 'schools on wheels', they are expected to serve a given cluster of the population. The cluster is composed of population that moves together in search of pastures. This means that since the school is within the reach of the targeted community, school attendance would be expected to be favourable. Through the FGDs with parents, the study found out that the school is convenient since their children are able attend school after they have carried out their family chores. One of them pointed out:

*"But this school is far much better than many others which are far away from home. When your child attends this school, they are still able to carry out their work at home and if they are needed to take care of the livestock they can do it. If they are needed to go and look for the lost goats they can first go and look for it and then come to school. The child gets all the education that is needed both at home and at school. It is easy to also know what they learn in school. Sometimes the teacher told me to go and learn with my children... but you see I also have other small children to look after."*

The schools are thus perceived as appropriate by the community since they are able to carry out their family chores and still attend school, something that is presumed to be lacking in formal schooling. In addition, a teacher confirmed that school attendance was flexible in that pupils attended when they were free after having done their family chores. Some came to school for some time and would later leave to go and attend their family roles. All the teachers interviewed confirmed this. One of them said:

*“You know most of these parents do not care what point of the lesson you are in, they sometimes come into class when you’re teaching, even without greeting you they say something to the child and then suddenly the child stands up and leaves the class, following the parent. This child will later come on the same day or at lunch time. In some cases some report back to school the following day or the day after.”*

In spite of the fact that the mobile schools had promoted provision of education to the nomadic pastoralists in the Turkana Community, the extent to which they had improved access was still generally low. Going by the data gathered from document analysis, the enrolments have been decreasing over the last three years in two of the schools, despite the government’s efforts to provide education. The documented data on the enrolments in the schools used in this study was confined to three years only. These ranged between years 2010 to 2012 due to the research time frame when this study was conducted, in year 2013. To start with, Table 1 shows the enrolment trends for school A, B and C (these are pseudonyms used for the sake of this study). School B in 2010 had 85 learners, whereas in 2011, they were 75 and in 2012, 73 learners. In school C, 90 learners were the total enrolled, in 2010, 75 learners in 2012 and 50 in 2012. This indicates that the enrolments have been declining over time. Therefore, unless this decline is checked, then some of the mobile schools may eventually close down. The findings of this study therefore confirm Kratli (2001) who argues that the relationship between pastoralism and education is generally known to be problematic. However, there is need for further research to establish ways of sustaining mobile schools in provision of education to nomadic pastoralists. Contrastingly, School A had been having increased enrolments over the years in comparison to the other two schools. This particular school had night classes for parent pupils. The teachers who were two for the whole school confirmed that the sponsors were providing food for both day and evening pupils, something that was attributed to the large school population.

Table 1, shows the distribution of the school population in the three schools used in the study. For the sake of this study, they are named as school A, B and C.

**Table 1:** Distribution of School Population from year 2010 to 2012

Year	School Population		
	School A	School B	School C
2010	90	85	90
2011	125	75	79
2012	137	73	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>352</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>219</b>
<b>Yearly Average Enrolments</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>73</b>

The yearly average enrolments for the three schools are as indicated on Table 1. The highest was school A with 118 learners, followed by School B with 78 while the lowest was School C with 73 pupils. To obtain the Yearly Average Enrolments, the following formula was used:

$$\text{Average} = \frac{\text{total enrolled in three years}}{\text{number of years}}$$

School A has food programme run by a church organisation which is regularly provided unlike the other two schools which are experiencing food shortage as a result of the government's directive to suspend provision as reported by the teachers during the in-depth interviews. Among the schools that were used in this study, School A has learning sessions at night which constitutes the adults (parents) as mentioned earlier in this paper. The growth of the school is attributed to availability of food. Conversely, lack of food and other inputs may also affect schooling. A teacher said:

*“The government provides instructional materials, books for students, chalks, blackboard, textbooks, pencils, pens for teachers. UNICEF on the other hand provides books and food. However, for this term, there has been no provision of food. This has led to a very big drop in terms of school population to about 43 students. For a child who is less than 7 years walking for about 5 kms and may be the child is surviving on one meal a day, it makes it difficult for them to continue with school. Due to the problem of food shortage, the school runs for half day only’ (the teacher explained).”*

Therefore, this explains that the differences in enrolment trends as reflected in Table 1 is not just because of the presence of a mobile school, but also as a result of multiplicity of factors. It also suggests that mobile schools require vital components such as provision of food and flexible mode of delivery when the teaching-learning is taking place in order for them to succeed in enhancing access to education. This further brings to the fore the need for adequate human resource to facilitate this kind of

flexibility. Moreover, the teachers should be trained so as to be able to handle learners of varying characteristics in terms of varying ages and of different grades in line with their varying stages of learning. Considering that the schools generally had only one teacher against a large learner population, this could have contributed to the declining enrolment trends for the two schools and subsequently may have a negative influence on quality of education. This is because, with 118 pupils for the school with the highest population which had two teachers translates to each teacher having about 59 pupils. This shows that the ratio is too high for the teachers to attend to all the learners effectively. It is also against the official recommended ratio of 1:40 (TSC, 2006) which is also the ideal ratio set by UNESCO and other international standards. Apart from very high teacher pupil ratio, the teacher qualification has a central role to play towards learners' achievement and quality of education, hence cannot be ignored. Therefore, teachers' capacity which is embedded in certain core competencies such as knowledge, teaching skills and attitude need to be addressed so that these teachers may effectively teach. Consequently, this may lead to improved participation in the mobile schools. This study therefore recommends the need for institutionalising teacher training for these mobile schools as confirmed by the school that is performing relatively well, whereby the teacher is trained in Early Childhood Education.

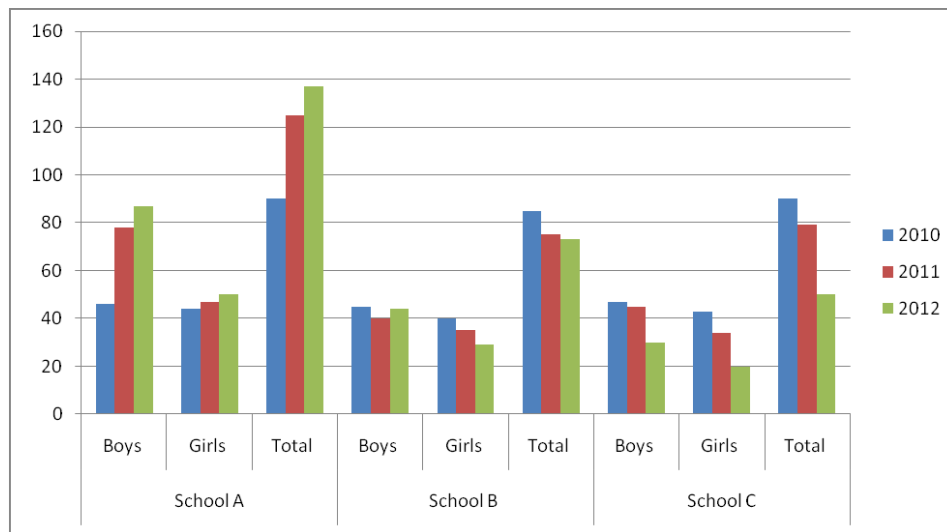
While the main focus of mobile schools is to provide education to all nomadic pastoralists children non-discriminately, the extent to which different social groups participate in education through attending school varies. The Turkana community has different social groups based on gender and age of a child. This study found out that although the mobile schools have enhanced access to education to all social groups, the enrolment trends for both boys and girls of different age sets vary. For instance, the social groups based on their ages have varying drop out trends from school, as a result of the community's cultural practices. Girls for instance stay in school as long as they are not yet of age to be married off. This explains why girls are fewer in school than boys as Table 2 indicates.

**Table 2:** Gender Enrolments per School from Year 2010 to 2012

Year	School								
	School A			School B			School C		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
2010	46	44	90	45	40	85	47	43	90
2011	78	47	125	40	35	75	45	34	79
2012	87	50	137	44	29	73	30	20	50

This information is further illustrated in Figure 1. The figure shows the total enrolled boys and girls in the three schools between years, 2010 and 2012. What is clearly

pointed out is that boys are more than girls in all the three schools that the study focused on.



**Figure 1:** Gender Enrolments per School from Year 2010 to 2012

Since dowry is paid in form of livestock, then upon reaching what is considered the maturity age, they are married off. This confirms what Schilling, Opiyo and Scheffran (2012) emphasize by pointing out that livestock is a symbol of prosperity and prestige and storage of wealth among the nomadic pastoralist community. This means that girls are likely to attend school for a shorter period then drop out to get married in order for their parents to gain wealth in form of livestock. Family roles therefore play a major role in determining the extent to which one stays in school. One teacher said:

*“The girls, just like their mothers are expected to help with taking care of the family chores. If it is looking after their younger children and cook for them, that is their work. Even caring for the sick or when their parents are away, they look after the other members of their family. ...they even come to school with their younger siblings. But later when they seem ready for marriage their roles at home are increased and so they attend school very few times then they stop completely after they are married off. ..But for boys, they attend school when they are young and when they grow bigger, they are expected to take the animals to far away distances in search for water and pastures. In some cases the boys and strong young men take the animals far away up in the hills for several months. This may take three or even four months before they return. So if they were already enrolled in school, they continue from where they had left.”*

Additionally, a parent discussant said:

*“Girls’ work is mainly to help with fetching firewood, water and cooking and taking care of their younger children. They sometimes help with looking for the lost animals while the boys are looking after the livestock. But when they are not working they go to school.”*

Apart from family roles, child labour practices have influenced the participation of nomadic pastoralist children in schools. This is in agreement with Imhabekhai (2004) who found out that child labour is central to production. These vary based on their gender. This study found out that the presence of a mobile school does not automatically imply that the attendance will be in totality. A teacher observed in one of the interviews that the school population was decreasing:

*“Nobody was able to join the primary school in 2010; instead, for the twelve who dropped out constituting, 4 girls and 8 boys, some of the boys went to dig gold at Naduat, a village nearby. While all the girls got married.”*

This is a pointer to the varying causes of dropping out from school due to different family roles, a characteristic of the nomadic pastoralists as pointed out by Ng’asike (2011) and Krätli (2001).

Contrary to the general believe, the study also noted that the main economic activity of nomadic pastoralists is also built on education and not around livestock only. This is in agreement with Krätli (2001) who points out that education is seen as an opening for another alternative source of livelihood outside livestock economy. Further still, for those who join school and later drop out, not all of them end up getting married for the case of girls or taking care of livestock for boys. The study found out that some pupils dropped out of school in order to go sell charcoal and still others to work as domestic workers. This child labour practice can be curbed through establishment of mobile schools as was the case with the school near Kakuma which had managed to attract many school going children rather than the children going to work in order to eke a living, a practice that encourages child labour.

It is however, noteworthy that at the time of this study, it was during the dry season, hence the general total number of enrolments per school were low as confirmed in the document study as indicated in Table 1 and also as observed by the teachers. One of the teachers had this to say:

*“Right now the students are very few, but in the next three months, they will be many, especially if the animals will have pastures. But it is difficult to give the exact number of learners at any one time. This is because we always have some of them who have taken*



*the livestock very far away. However, all of them still come back later, though at different times."*

This indicates the difficulty of keeping track of the exact numbers of learners in a school as already echoed by Dyer (2001), considering their lifestyle as nomadic pastoralists. In addition, it implies that even the mobile schools still face the challenge of providing education to all the learners, despite their flexible mode of approach. Therefore, the low enrolments in mobile schools are to some extent attributed to their lifestyle. Nevertheless, if there were more teachers, the enrolments in schools would be more. This concurs with Migosi et al. (2013), in their findings that the main factor that explains low enrolments levels in primary education in Turkana is harsh climatic condition. So enrolments keep fluctuating due to reasons related to availability of food and water for both domestic and animal use.

### **3.2 Conditions through which Mobile Schooling has Enhanced and Supported Participation in Education in Turkana County**

This subsection has discussed the conditions through which mobile schools have enhanced participation in education under several themes. They include: curriculum content, awareness and sensitization, flexibility found in mobile schooling, community participation and linkage of education provision with meeting of other needs.

#### **3.2.1 Curriculum Content**

Provision of education to the nomadic pastoralist community has been an uphill task. This means that reducing education inequalities among these disadvantaged groups has had little impact among the population. This is because some do not find any relationship between education and social economic development. More so, some community seem uncomfortable to have their children join school for fear of losing their communal values. One of the respondents' in a focus group had the following to say:

*"Sometimes there is fear that if these children learn this education, they will not be able to observe what we teach them at home. They may be taught things that are not good and end up being lost. But if they keep the training given by their parents, they will know how to take care of the animals and take part in family duties and other matters."*

This can be corroborated with what the teachers observed as parents' way of ensuring that their children are being taught the right 'things'. They confirmed that at the initial stage, some parents would accompany their children and would insist on sitting with them in class in order to learn with them. This would happen a few times

and then stop completely. This is in agreement with groups Aderinoye et al, (2007) who points out that to the community, schools appear to be a threat to their moral fabric. In addition to literacy and numeracy, the curriculum should have content that meets the clients' needs. Therefore there is need to include some traditional values in the curriculum content of this community which is not the case. This is in agreement with Sifuna (2005) who emphasizes the need to include elements of the existing traditional education institutions of the targeted community in the taught curriculum.

When this is corroborated with the focus group from the pupils, it does reflect a different response. On being asked to indicate their career aspirations, the occupations that they wished to do are very distant from their traditional livestock husbandry. Some of them wished to become teachers, others doctors, others managers of NGOs and others nurses. This therefore shows that they have mixed feelings. They seem ready to leave their traditional viewpoint of life and embrace change. This confirms that in reality, what the parents fear about losing 'their traditional social fabric' as a result of education is true to some extent. Therefore the curriculum content should encourage not only the wishes of parents but also the pupils by having the prescribed school curriculum in place.

Moreover, lack of continuity in terms of schooling due to the family roles of the community contributed to the hindrance of education provision in some situations. This is because of the pelipatic lifestyle of this community in search of pastures and water for their livestock. Though this community is nomadic, there are instances where only the strong men would take the animals for grazing further away from where the rest of the communal cluster is. This confirms what Aderinoye et al, (2007) found out in his study that the migratory nature of nomadic pastoralists limits their participation in formal education since it favours sedentary lifestyle. The teacher on the other hand should have ways of ensuring that all students are taken care of. Though this was in terms of formal education, the current study confirms that even with mobile schools, the provision of education is still affected by the same challenge due to the specific family role dynamics. One of the teachers pointed out:

*"When the animals do not have food, the big boys and strong young men must take them further away in the hills where not everybody is able to go. When this happens, it may take three or four months before they return. This is quite a long time for them to be able to pick up from where they had left. As their teacher, I try teaching them from where we left without at the same time neglecting those who have been coming to school so that no pupil is left out."*

According to the Theory of McDonnell & Elmore (1987), the component of bargaining that contributed to the implementation of the policy of Free Primary Education Policy was the Mobile School innovation. In addition, the aspects of curriculum content and use of multi-grade approach are aspects of the bargaining so that this nomadic pastoralist group can access education.

This study recommends that the curriculum content in the mobile school education provision should also be inclusive of some elements of the existing traditional education of the targeted community. Teachers should also be able to use multi-grade approach in their curriculum delivery so that all pupils are taken care of in spite of their different entry behaviour. This would help cater for the interests of all stakeholders, hence promote participation of this marginalised group in education.

### **3.2.2 Awareness and sensitization**

Information is a powerful tool in enhancing a programme's implementation and consequently its level of acceptability. What emerged as having encouraged access to school was awareness and sensitization by the local chiefs, the teachers who are in those schools and Non-Governmental Organizations such as Norwegian Church Aid and UNICEF. A chief in an interview confirmed this:

*"There is a day all of us, the chiefs and a few elders were summoned for a meeting at the education office where we were briefed on what was expected of us in making sure that all children were to start going to school. This did not mean that even the older people who wished to could not....so we were told to inform our people about school. We were told to appoint a seven member committee for each school which was going to be looking after school matters. They were also to help with telling the people to take their children to school."*

Effective awareness and sensitisation on the need to go to school in order to promote education among this nomadic group is clearly affirmed by a teacher who aptly put it:

*"This school was mainly established to prevent children from going to work at the camp and also take care of those who were not in school at all. I went to the camp to gather children to come to school. The church did a lot of work in discouraging parents from having their children going to the camp to work there and sell charcoal. We have managed to control this." (Teacher, School A).*

This confirms that mobile schools have promoted education among the nomadic pastoralist group since they are ready to embrace it as an alternative source of economy. Moreover, in some cases the children reported as having followed their peers who had already joined the schools subsequently developing interest with time. Following MacDonnell and Elmore's Theory of Policy Implementation of 1987, transfer of authority is one of the instruments necessary for effective policy implementation. This instance indicates that the authority to implement the policy of education provision was transferred from the Ministry of Education to the people who are targeted for the policy/ programme. Awareness and sensitization which was greatly used is in line with the component of bargaining according to the theory of MacDonnell and Elmore (1987). In order for children to attend school, they needed to be convinced of its importance. In addition, provision of these mobile school innovations was a move towards taking the interests of these nomadic pastoralist groups into consideration as another part of bargaining. By so doing, mobile schools were therefore hoped to serve nomadic pastoralist groups more effectively.

Through awareness and sensitisation, coupled with linking education to certain career aspirations, the readiness of the community to embrace education as an alternative footing for a source of income was observed as a motivating factor to join school. Their interests for some as already mentioned ranged from becoming doctors, nurses, teachers and managers of Non-Governmental Organisations. However, for some, their readiness to embrace change was clearly noticeable. A pupil said: *'For me... I would want to become anything. I would like to be able to read hard and become somebody. ....Anything that would make me help our people is what I want.'* Therefore, contrary to the general believe that their main economy is livestock husbandry; this nomadic pastoralist community is ready to embrace education as an alternative route for gaining source of income hence making awareness and sensitisation pivotal.

### **3.2.3 Flexibility Found in Mobile Schooling**

Flexible nature found within Mobile Schooling has played a key role in the improved participation of nomadic pastoralist children in school. The importance of addressing educational needs of the nomadic pastoralist communities while respecting their cultural practices cannot be underestimated. Introduction of mobile schools was aimed at providing a kind of school that would take care of their educational needs without disregarding their nomadic way of life. This study found out that a type of education that is agile enough and responsive to the survival of the culture of the nomadic community whose economy is based on livestock, is critical. The family roles of the community, for instance, are critical and cannot be ignored. Therefore, flexibility, on one hand, is in terms of children from the same family attending school on alternate

days, while on the other hand, it is in terms of the time when the children attend school. Moreover, flexibility is also portrayed in terms of place and venue where schooling takes place. One parent discussant said:

*"My children attend school on different days so that there is someone to take care of the animals. I find this very good because all of them have a chance of learning and still the livestock has someone to watch over them as they graze. You see three can come to school a day like today, as the others are taking care of the animals, then the next day they exchange."*

Still one of the pupils was quoted saying:

*"I do not come to school if we are taking the big animals far away to look for water and food. I wait until we return, then I come to school. I also learn when I am in the hills grazing the animals."*

This observation indicates that the learners are able to carry out their family roles and still continue with schooling though at varying times, different places and in that case seasonally. The teachers also confirmed flexibility in terms of time and the teaching approaches required of them unlike in the case of formal schools, something that can be regarded as bargain in line with theory on which this study is based.

Another teacher aptly put it:

*"I do three sessions in a day. Two are held in the morning and one in the afternoon. They take about two hours. I have learners of different ages that may be at different levels in terms of what I have taught because their attendance is not regular like what is found in normal schools."*

This study found out that since learners are at different levels of learning, it makes the school run in form of shift and multi-grade classes. Therefore, a child could still catch up on lessons in the mid-morning, afternoon or evening class. This is a factor that indicates enhancement of access to education in this community. The study is in agreement with the findings in Ingubu, Kindiki and Wambua (2010), who emphasize that having shifts in education provision rapidly increases access and improves retention of learners since there is an increase of school places. Giffard-Lindsay (2008) has also confirmed that learning in shifts is feasible in pastoralist areas. However, with the shortage of teachers, this may not be done effectively. The fact that some of the teachers as already noted have support teachers, confirms this. Moreover, perhaps the

teacher qualification may have contributed to the quality of teaching, thereby influencing the low participation levels of these children in education.

Provision of education to nomadic pastoralist communities has also been heightened by the fact that the school is mobile in nature, and hence moves with the clusters of the nomadic communities as they move with their livestock in search of pastures and water. This way of providing education within the domains of the beneficiaries has also enhanced access to education among these nomadic pastoralists of Turkana County. One of the teachers pointed out:

*“At times I have to leave the other pupils with the boy teacher who assists me and go to the watering points at certain times of the day. When I do this, I’m able to meet boys who may not be able to attend class due to their family roles. This prevents them from dragging behind in learning as others continue with learning.”*

The findings of this study confirm the study by Patrick and Ijah (2012) which was conducted in Nigeria. They opine that when a school is located within the domains of the beneficiaries, the level of participation of pupils improves greatly. Therefore, this study concludes that proximity of a school to their homes has further enhanced schooling among nomadic pastoralists of the Turkana community.

In addition, this study found out that multi-grade is a characteristic quality of pupils in mobile schools, which requires a specialised way of teaching as already pointed out earlier in this document. Further, it was found that due to different times of school attendance, multi-shift system is operational. Therefore, this study recommends that the number of teachers should be adequate in order to be able to meet the needs of the pupils in mobile school set ups in case of multi-shift system.

### **3.2.4 Community Participation**

The schools are run by management committees whose membership is constituted from among the community as already mentioned earlier in this paper. This in a way has contributed to community ownership of the school hence encouraging majority of the children to attend. Moreover, the teachers who are hired by the committee are from the recipient community receiving education, hence they are able to move with them as they move from one place to another. This also reduces the alley of fear of insecurity in terms of their children being alienated from their culture through education as purported by Auma, Migosi, & Ombuki (2013). Therefore, community ownership has been seen as a driving force for encouraging children from this nomadic pastoralist groups to access education.

The nomadic pastoralist community upholds its cultural values highly. Anything that affects or influences this position is seen as a security threat. Moreover, with occasional cattle rustling incidences triggering conflicts with their neighbours is also problematic. Security is a condition that contributes to community ownership. This is in terms of the cultural values for the targeted community and the safety of the pupils in case of conflicts. This study confirms that for a community that highly values their traditions, culture and skills that are useful in supporting the survival of the family, they require their children to attend school in an environment that provides a sense of security. Therefore, such a condition is necessary as it implies that it does not alienate the children from the families and disempower them socially and economically as Dyer (2006) purports, with regards to what formal schooling does to traditional cultural societies. Teachers also pointed out that insecurity for fear of attacks can be a threat to the running of the mobile schools. One of them aptly put it:

*“Whenever there is any form of insecurity, such as a conflict like an attack from Uganda, no classes take place and in fact no lighting should be seen at night anywhere for the fear of the enemy noticing where you are. Even coming to teach for me as a teacher I get scared and also want to stay away in case of an attack. Pupils also stay away from school because no parent would want to have their children killed.”*

The study found out that mother tongue is used in these schools as the language of instruction. Use of local language for instruction gives confidence to people with respect to their cultural background. It also makes teaching easy and hence gives the mobile schools a reflection of their own cultures. In one of the schools, one of the pupils asserted: *‘I enjoy learning in my local language especially when we learn “number work” using songs’*. Studies elsewhere have shown that the instruction in mother tongue is highly important at the beginning of schooling for development of a strong educational foundation, as well as to strengthen the learners’ cognitive development (Khan, 2014). Therefore, language of instruction was an important input in enhancing community ownership of the mobile school innovation among the Turkana nomadic pastoralists.

Finally, since the mobile schools are established within the domains of the village, then the learners are able to access school after and when not carrying out their family roles, consequently, they are able to enjoy security of keeping to their cultural values as well as opening a new avenue for earning a living by embracing formal education as is already being viewed by some of them as found out in this study.

### 3.2.5 Linkage of Education Provision with Meeting of other Needs

A multifaceted approach has also contributed to improved participation of nomadic pastoralist children in education. The study found out that when there is food and water for domestic and livestock use, the schools run continuously. This is confirmed by two teachers in two of the schools who pointed out that some of the big boys go away for up-to three months to take care of camels up in the hills, after which, they return. In addition, when there was continuous food supply by the government as previously observed by two of the teachers in the schools used in the study, school attendance was good. However, with reduced supply of food, the enrolments dropped. Considering the harsh environmental condition of the region, availability of food for both animals which is their economic livelihood and human beings is a challenge. This therefore contributes to fluctuating enrolment trends from time to time as they move in search of food and water. Consequently, since the nomadic communities prioritise the survival of the family above everything else, it is a prerogative for every member of the family to contribute to the welfare and support of the family (Ng'asike, 2011). Hence enrolments keep fluctuating seasonally as they have to leave school at various times to carry out their family roles. The importance of taking a multifaceted approach is further emphasized by a teacher in one of the schools who observed that:

*“Currently we are experiencing a drop in enrolments since the time the government stopped providing food. I hear we shall be provided through other means. Currently I borrow from the nearby primary school where we are attached. And the food which was meant to last for a month was enough to take us for only one week. But whenever I bring that food, the attendance is very good.”*

This was in tandem with Lanyasunya (2012), who suggested the need to focus on provision of water and food, medical facilities and enhancing their capacity for diversification of livelihoods in order to ease the burden of provision of education. Therefore, meeting the basic needs of the children and to some extent having food and water for the animals within close proximity are critical inputs that are required in order to have them participate in education. This study therefore, suggests that there is need to improve the policy implementation framework at the grass root level in order to consider the necessary inputs for making this mobile school a success.

Education is still very critical for the nomadic pastoralists' community's survival. One of the teachers reported on having been teaching on hygiene related topics to all learners when teaching Science subject. The school of the said teacher had experienced cholera outbreak, a waterborne disease which had even claimed a few lives. As a way of



preventing further spread of the disease within the said cluster, the community was taught on preventive measures. This teacher said:

*“Sometimes I teach many things outside number work, reading and writing. I teach many other things like two months ago, there was a cholera outbreak in this area whereby we even lost two people. This is due to the problem of water as you can see how our well is (pointing out to the direction where there is some water springing from underground). So I decided to teach on hygiene and ways of preventing diseases caused by contaminated water.”*

Therefore, education is likely to play a pivotal role in empowering such a community both academically in terms of literacy and on their social economic wellbeing. Consequently, a multifaceted approach should be considered at the policy level if education is to be effectively provided among the nomadic pastoralists.

#### **4. Conclusion**

This study found out that mobile schools have contributed to improved access to education. This was indicated through the enrolled numbers in these schools considering that to start a mobile school; one required a minimum of 25 learners only as already indicated in this document. The conditions that have promoted and enhanced participation of nomadic pastoralists’ children in mobile schools are several. They include the kind of curriculum content, awareness and sensitization by the local leaders, flexibility found in mobile schooling in terms of educational service delivery, community participation in promoting access to education and linkage of education provision with meeting of other needs, such as food and water. Underlying these conditions are issues related to proximity of the school to the community, provision of food by the government and NGOs, multigrade and multi shift learning, issues of security and use of mother tongue as having enhanced access to education among these nomadic pastoralists. The sense of security attributed to ownership of the school is in terms of teachers having come from the community targeted by this education provision and use of local language may have contributed to improvement in participation in education.

This study also found out that enrolments and access to school vary. This depends on different social groups which are defined by one’s gender and age of the learners. Since the school is within the village and is mobile in nature, both boys and girls are able to attend school after they carry out their family roles. However, access to

education among the boys is higher than that of the girls due cultural orientation based on their family roles and societal expectations.

Although the mobile schools have promoted access to education, the level of participation of nomadic pastoralist children in education is relatively low. This can be attributed to a number of challenges as found out in this study. To begin with the nomadic lifestyle still affects access to education due to search for food and water for both livestock and domestic use. Moreover, with one teacher per school indicating a shortfall in terms of teacher-pupil ratio, effective educational service delivery through mobile schools is a challenge. Lack of training for these teachers has further influenced the success of these mobile schools hence affecting the overall participation of the nomadic pastoralist children in education. Girls' participation in education is more problematic in comparison to the boys because of cultural and societal expectation. In addition, insecurity is also an obstacle to learning as schools do not run at such times. However, since this study is based on the view that education is regarded as a way of building human capital and empowering people to participate in economic development, then mobile schools have contributed to capital development. Moreover, whether a parent gives only one or two or three of his children and is left with the others helping at home or with the livestock, this would still be considered a step towards human capital development.

Nevertheless, all is not lost. If these schools are equipped with enough trained teachers and food programme is sustained, coupled with raising awareness and sensitisation, then, this innovation can help build the human capital among this marginalised group. The government with the help of NGOs may need to work more closely to make this innovation a success. Therefore, there is need for further research to promote the sustainability of this innovation along policy lines.

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