



POLICY LEARNING FOR UNIVERSAL SECONDARY EDUCATION

Barriers and enablers of 100% transition
from primary to secondary school





ABOUT POLICY LEARNING FOR UNIVERSAL SECONDARY EDUCATION

Background

Kenya has made significant strides in realizing universal basic education through various interventions that respond to the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, which calls for “inclusive and quality education for all”. Some of the efforts include the free primary education policy of 2003 and the free secondary education policy beginning in 2008. However, more significant is the adoption of the 100% transition guidelines of 2019 to ensure that all children who complete primary school transition into and complete their secondary school education. Since the enactment of the 100% transition policy, there has been significant government commitment and operationalization, including direct investment in school funding and national and county-level scholarships and bursaries.

A multisector, multi-ministerial approach has been applied to drive the transition from primary to secondary school. The Ministry of Interior Affairs charged Chiefs and Assistant Chiefs with the responsibility of identifying learners that have completed primary school within their jurisdiction and following up on them to ensure their entry into secondary school. The national and county governments have invested in enhancing education infrastructure and providing bursaries to learners in need.

Despite the commitment and investments to ensure the success of 100% transition policy, disparities at the sub-national still exist. While the National-level transition rates give an impressive image, anecdotal evidence suggests a wide variance across the country, with only 11 counties carrying the 100 per cent transition burden by admitting more students. Besides, over 200,000 children per year are likely not to complete secondary school.

Methodology

To understand the levers of secondary school transition and the effectiveness of the multisectoral approach, Zizi Afrique in collaboration with the Ministry of Education – Directorate of Secondary Education partnered to implement the Policy Learning for Universal Secondary Education (PLUS). The PLUS study was conducted in four sub-counties: Cheptais, Kahuro, Sololo, and Dagoretti. The sub-counties are spread across four regions, previously referred to as provinces (Western-Bungoma, Central-Muranga, North Eastern-Marsabit, and Nairobi-Dagoretti respectively) and therefore achieve a reasonable geographical coverage and transition dynamics in the sampled schools.

We randomly selected 96 public primary schools in the participating sub-counties and administered household, school and village surveys to document levers of secondary school transition. Between January and April 2023, we actively followed a cohort of 6409 students who sat for KCPE in 2022 to track their transition and to actively observe and document the levers of transition.

Aim and objectives

PLUS aims to test the potential for driving change by focusing on policy enforcement and accountability, rather than plugging gaps. This will be achieved through:

- a. Generating evidence on the drivers and barriers to implementing Kenya's existing 100% transition policy and community accountability
- b. Co-creating with the Ministry of Education and stakeholders and testing a community accountability intervention that tests identified successful drivers of 100% transition.

FACT SHEET: BARRIERS AND ENABLERS OF 100% TRANSITION FROM PRIMARY TO SECONDARY SCHOOL

KEY INPUTS OF THE STUDY

The study targeted households and schools with students who sat for their KCPE in 2022 in 96 randomly selected schools and 113 villages in the four sub-counties.

SURVEY RESPONDENTS



SCHOOL PROFILE

- **Enrolment:** Enrolment of students was 13884 in Cheptais, 23606 in Dagoretti, 5866 in Kahuro and 5822 in Sololo.
- **Average School size:** On average, Kahuro, in Muranga has the lowest school enrolment, with an average size of 195 students per school, as compared to Dagoretti in Nairobi with an average size of 1,476.
- **Teachers:** In terms of teachers (both TSC and BOM employed), on average, Dagoretti had the highest pupil teacher ratio of 64, while Kahuro in Murange had the lowest of 20.

Table 1: Basic characteristics of participating schools (n=96)

	Schools	No. of Students	No. of teachers	Av. Sch Size	PTR
Cheptais	30	13884	398	463	38.12
Dagoretti	16	23606	347	1,476	64.02
Kahuro	30	5866	290	195	20.02
Sololo	20	5822	208	291	29.65

PERFORMANCE IN KCPE

On average, the KCPE mean score was 232.4, 259.0, 239.4 and 248.0 for Cheptais, Dagoretti, Kahuro and Sololo sub-counties respectively.

There are also emerging gender differences in Kahuro, where girls performed significantly higher than boys and in Sololo where boys performed better than girls

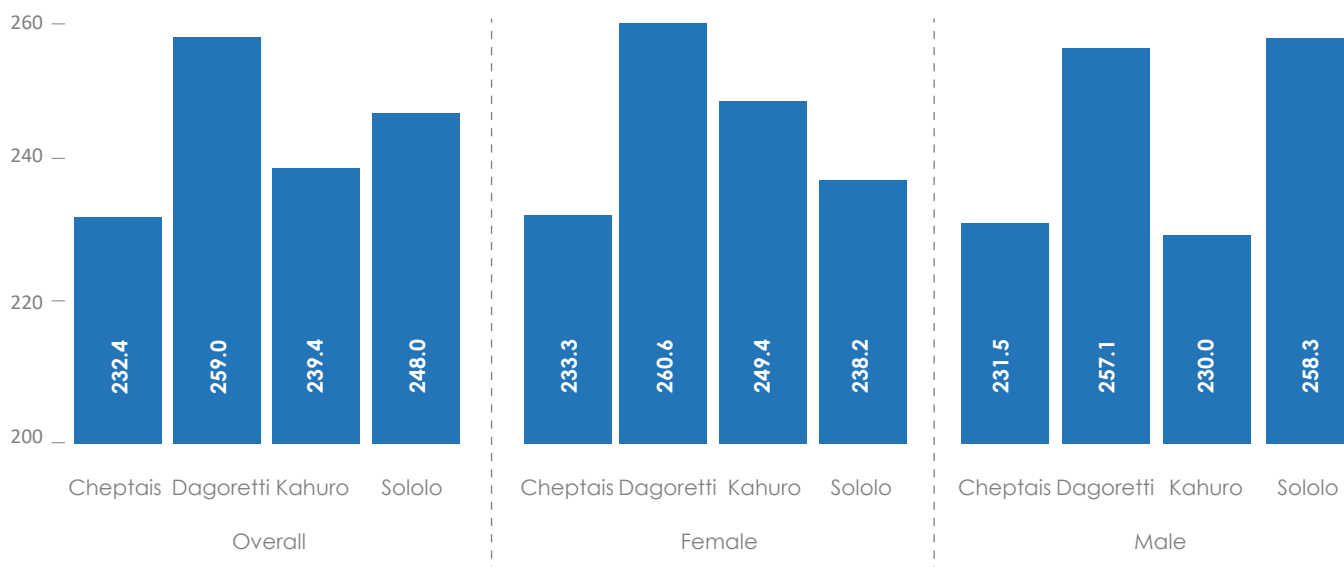


Figure 1: 2022 KCPE mean scores by sub-county and gender (n=2843)

SUPPORT WITH HOMEWORK

We observed differences in how households extended homework support to their children by sub-county. Overall, 72% of household reported to sometimes or always supporting their children with homework.

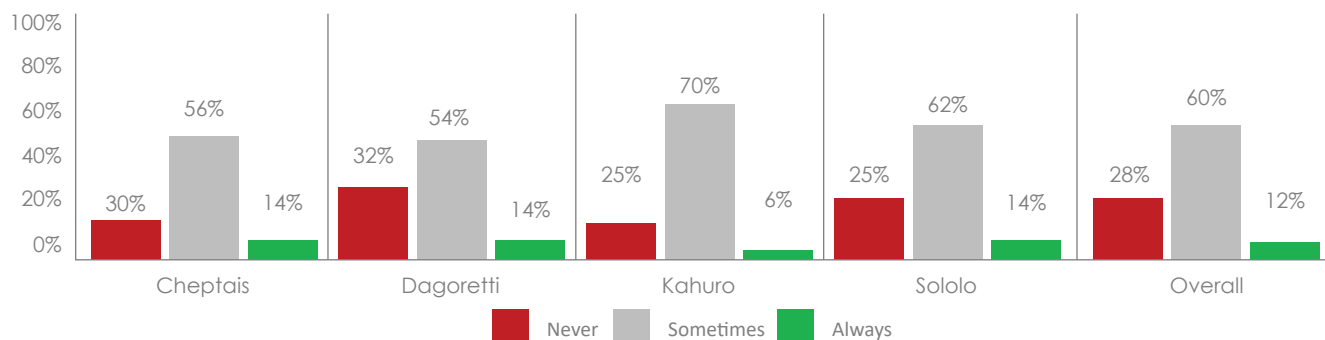


Fig. 2: Household support with homework

PARENTS EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS

We explored aspiration by asking parents to state the highest level of education they would wish their children to attain and the perceived chances of attaining the desired level. Parents across the four sub-counties have high aspirations for post-secondary education, with a preference for university education (84%).

Table 2: Parental aspirations % (n=2843).

	Cheptais	Sololo	Kahuro	Dagoretti
Primary	0.63	0.66	0.15	0.13
Secondary	2.02	6.57	1.49	0.65
College	17.93	19.05	9.08	6.75
University	79.42	73.73	89.29	92.47

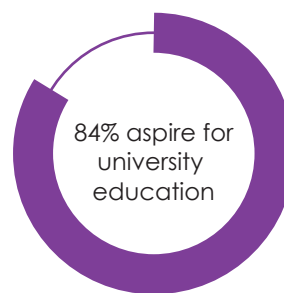


Figure 3: Parental aspiration for university education

The high levels of parental aspiration do not match the perceived chances of the child attaining the aspired level of education. While overall, 84% of the parents aspired for university education, 48% of them felt the child had higher chances of reaching university.

In addition, about 2 in every five parents perceived their children to have low chances of joining secondary school

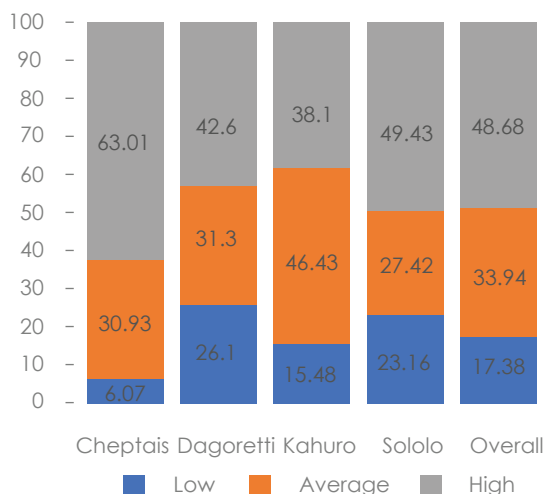


Fig. 4: Chances that a child will attain aspired level (n=2843)

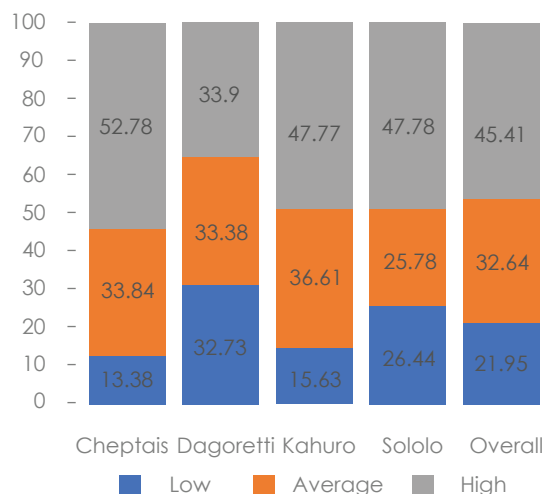


Fig. 5: Chances the child will join secondary school (n=2843)

TRANSITION TO SECONDARY SCHOOL

Through the surveillance, we actively followed learners through their schools and households. In total, we tracked 6,409 candidates reaching 6,216 (97%). Kahuro had the highest transition rate of 98%, while Sololo had the lowest of 91% (Fig. 6).

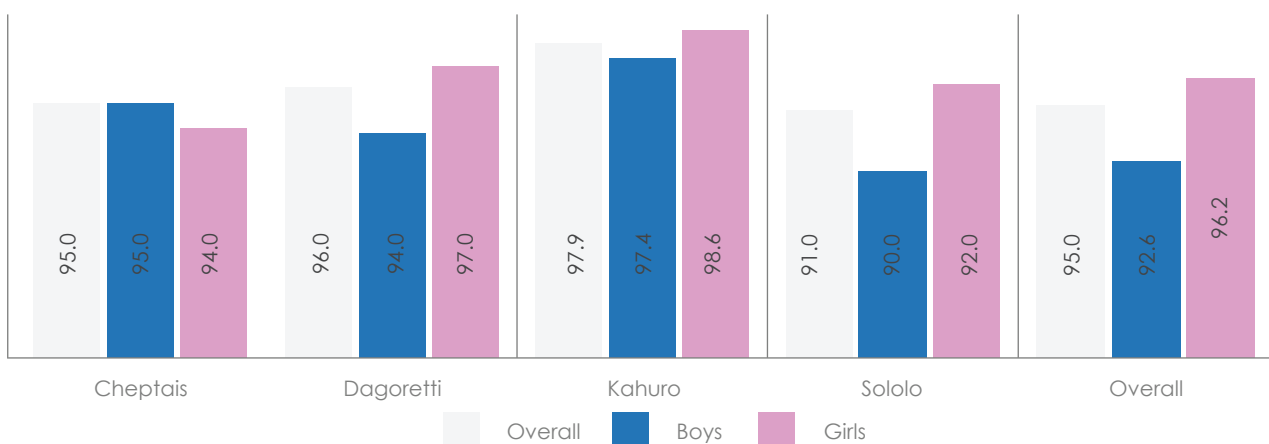


Fig. 6: Proportion of children joining form 1 in 2023 (n=6217)

LEVERS AND BARRIERS OF TRANSITION

Enablers: The enablers to secondary school transition tended to focus on initiatives existing in the system to minimize cost barriers. Households perceived the National Government Constituency Development Fund (NGCDF) (67%), bursaries by county government (47%) and scholarships by corporates (42%) as the main enablers for secondary school transition. During during tracking, more than 90% of the students were supported by their households to join secondary school, and only less than 10% were supported by NGCDF and County government.

Table 3: Key enablers of secondary school transition as identified by households (n=2843)

Key enablers of secondary	Overall(%)
NGCDF Bursaries	67
County government bursaries (MCA and Governor)	47
Scholarships by corporates (e.g. Banks, Telcos, e.t.c)	42
Elimu scholarship	30
Support by relatives	14
Support by individuals	18
Community/Harambee	22
NGO/FBO/CBO	15

Responsibility for enforcing 100% transition: Overall, a mix of individuals are involved in enforcing the 100% transition policy including the local administration, that consist of the chief and sub-chief who play a critical role; this was consistent across the respondent categories. Parents were also perceived as critical players by village and school heads.

Table 4: People involved in ensuring all children transit to secondary school in this community.

	Overall(%)
Chief	71
Sub-chief	52
Parents	51
Village heads	42
School teachers/headteachers	24

Barriers: The most prominent barriers to secondary school transitions as cited by households, school and village heads were cost of schooling, drug and substance use, peer pressure and poor performance of the child.

Table 6: Key barriers to secondary school transition by sub-county in % (n=2843)

	Cheptais	Dagoretti	Kahuro	Sololo	Overall
School fees and related costs	17	22	69	11	29
Drug/substance abuse	11	7	33	6	14
Peer pressure/influence	10	7	28	8	13
Poor performance	8	6	28	9	12
Early Marriage	12	5	16	7	10

Cost barriers – specifically lack of boarding fees (35%) and resources to acquire school uniform and personal effects (43%) – were major reasons for not joining form 1 in 2023.

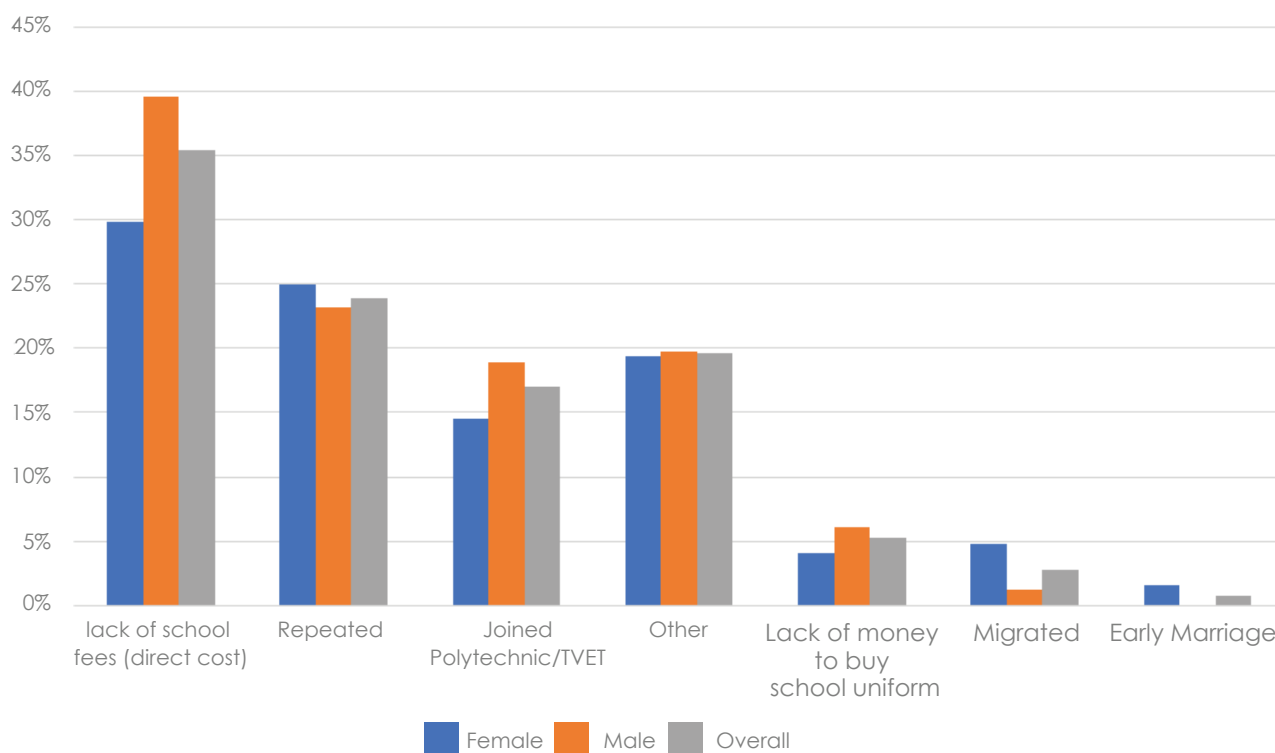


Figure 7: Reasons for not joining form 1 in 2023 (n=288)



A young girl with dark hair, wearing a blue long-sleeved shirt and green pants, is looking at a picture of a school building. The picture is held in her hands. The background is a plain, light-colored wall. The image is partially obscured by a purple overlay containing text.

Key messages

- 1 Stakeholders should work together to ensure every child gets an opportunity to transition to secondary school and for accountability in enforcing existing policies and guidelines.
- 2 Differentiated and targeted support to children, to ensure those with the greatest need are supported to not only join but also complete secondary schools.
- 3 Creating awareness, especially among households on the existing support systems and their roles of supporting children education.

