Role of Constituency Development Funds on Secondary School Student Access in Soy Constituency, Uasin Gishu County

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Abstract

Owing to the increasing amount of fees, the objective of the study was to examine the role of CDF on secondary school student access in Soy Constituency. The study employed descriptive research design and collected data from 98 students, 12 principals, and 4 CDF committees. The findings show that the amount of CDF bursary allocated ranges from 5,000 to 10,000 (M = 6954.55), which constitutes 25% of fees required and varies from 22-31% across all forms. Moreover, 80% of the students agree that CDF has a role in access to secondary education, principals indicated that about 5% of students benefit from CDF bursary, and the CDF committees indicated that about 20% of students get CDF funds. Based on the findings, the study recommends that the Ministry of Education should leverage allocation and disbursement of CDF funds, the increment of bursary, transparency of vetting process, and collaborative allocation bursary funds.

Keywords: Secondary school, students, access, bursary, constituency development fund, principals, CDF committees

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

The World Bank acknowledges that the dynamic link between economic and educational advancement is essential for any nation (Leu and Bryner, 2005). Woodhall (2004) justifies that education is extensively recognized as a kind of investment in social and human capital that generates economic gains. Secondary schooling ought to provide access to abstract thinking and analytic competencies that enhance competitiveness in knowledge-based economic activities in a globalized economy. However, secondary education faces many challenges (Karemesi, 2010). Depending on the evidence sources, explanations, and methods utilized, the U.S. graduation degree is claimed to be anywhere from sixty-six to eighty-eight percent in recent times a broad spectrum for such a basic scholarly statistic (Miao, & Haney, 2004). The range of rated minority values is even greater from fifty to eighty-five percent (Warren & Halpern-Manners, 2007), which is attributed to a high federal funding. High rates of high school education, access, completion, and retention in the advanced countries including the UK and the United States have been clinched to an education grant system that provides for the needy.

Achievement of secondary education in the Sub-Saharan Africa is lower compared to the regions around the world, with access-biased in the inclination of the affluent population (Osei, 2004). Secondary support rates in Sub-Saharan Africa have significantly increased from nine percent in 1999 to forty percent in 2012 (Lewin, 2008). According to UNESCO (2006), the passage rate for secondary schools continues to grow in countries such as Uganda, Rwanda, and Burundi. The access and transition from primary to secondary education was equally at fifty-five percent in Kenya, this is despite the recent developments concerning the reduction of school fees, significant financial obstacles continue to impact the education sector negatively (MOE, 2014). Given the previous policy statements in consideration to equalizing school opportunities through bursary supports among kids from poor families, Soy constituency is not an exemption. It is for this reason that the researcher undertook this study.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

There has been a general outcry in the education sector about the learners' poor access to secondary education. The need exists to understand how programs such FPE, subsidized secondary education and bursary subsidies could assist to curb the same. Governments in both developed and developing countries found it necessary to fund education since it directly related to economic growth. Kenya being among the countries that need to achieve Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, started the bursary system for secondary institutions during 1993/1994 budgetary year (Government of Kenya, 2005). The scholarship aims at supporting the exposed groups mainly; orphans, girls, kids from slums and impoverished backgrounds in high potential regions and in Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASAL) areas (Lewin 2008). In 2003 the government through the CDF Act, initiated CDF bursary schemes in Kenya for secondary education. Study done by KIPPRA (2008) showed that high fee levels in secondary school are a leading cause of learners drop-out. The wastage and low enrolment rate have been attributed to the high cost of secondary education (Gachugi, 2005). Thus, it is for this reason that researcher undertook this study.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the role of the Constituency Development Fund on Secondary school student access, transition, retention, and completion in Soy Constituency.

1.4 Objective of the Study

• To investigate whether Constituency Development Funds has a role in access to secondary education in Soy Constituency.

1.5 Research Question

• Does Constituency Development Funds have a role in student access to secondary education?

2.0 Literature Review

2.0 Constituency Development Funds in Kenya

CDF was founded in 2003 by the CDF Act (2003), and contained in the Kenya Gazette Supplement Number.107 (Constituency Development Fund, 2003). The fund intends to help all constituency-level community projects, especially those aiming to fight poverty at the local levels. The fund includes an annual monetary allocation commensurate to 2.5 percent of the state's ordinary income. Seventy-five percent of the reserve was allotted equally amongst all regions. The remaining twenty-five percent was distributed as per constituency scarcity and poverty levels. A maximum ten percent of each constituency's yearly allocation may be used for an education support scheme. According to the Revised CDF Act (2007), 15 percent of each constituency annual allocation may be used for an Education Bursary scheme (Constituency Development Fund, 2007). CDF Act (2007) states that an education Bursary scheme shall be considered as a development project for purposes of the Act, provided that such a project shall not be allocated more than 15 percent of the total fund allocated for the constituency in any financial year (Republic of Kenya 2005). The funds are disbursed to the selected students in secondary schools (Republic of Kenya 2005). In January 2013, Parliament enacted CDF Act, 2013, hence actually repealing CDF Act 2003 as amended in 2007 (Constituency Development Fund, 2013).

2.1 Constituency Development Funds and Student Access to Secondary Education

Expanded access to secondary school in both developed and developing countries is one of the essential ingredients for economic growth in the region. Expanding access is one of the greatest challenges faced by secondary education systems throughout the developing world (World Bank, 2008). In countries, where the secondary gross enrolment rate was less than 15 percent (e.g. Burkina Faso, Burundi, Tanzania) increases in secondary access to say 60 percent without reforms would require a quadrupling of allocations to secondary, which could absorb resources approaching half the public education budget. According to Lewin (2008), the extent of financial requirements of secondary school expansion was by estimating the funds needed to reach different enrolment targets based on the cost per pupil as a percentage of Gross National Product (GNP) per capita, the number of students in the age group as a ratio of the total population, and the desired enrolment rates, using typical Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) values for pupil-teacher ratios, teachers' salaries, non-teachers' salaries, and non-salary expenditures as a percentage of GNP, for school age groups as a percentage of the total population.

If per student cost could be reduced to about 20 percent of GDP per capita at lower secondary and 40 percent GDP per capita at upper secondary the same result could be achieved for a recurrent expenditure on secondary education of a little less than 3 percent of GDP (Onsonu, 2006). UNESCO (2007) supports local efforts to meet this need, along with improving access to high school education and improving its quality. In Kenya, however, the increase in primary school access, secondary school access remains small (Nguare, Onsomu, & Manda, 2006). With declining trends in secondary Gross Enrolment Rate as witnessed in the 1980's and 1990's, the government

was concerned that further decline would undermine energies towards EFA targets (Republic of Kenya, 2005).

2.3 Theoretical Framework

According to Human Capital Theory, people invest in education for future monetary and non-monetary benefits. The development of human knowledge through education is a process of investment in human capital that involves both private and social cost (Blaug, 1990). The theory also emphasizes on present investment in education in order to enjoy future benefits such as employment opportunities, higher earnings, improved standards of living, and higher production hence leading to economic growth (Psacharopoulos & Patrinos, 2001). This theory forms an important theoretical base of this study because it explains the reason why government invests in education informs of CDF bursaries. Investment in the education of children from poor background sets off a process of intergenerational poverty reduction (UNESCO, 2007). The World Bank (2001) asserts that education is a creator of human capital and that fairness in the provision of education is, therefore, paramount.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

According to Orodho (2005), a conceptual framework is as a basis of representation where examiners/researchers represent the connections between variables in the research and portray them diagrammatically. The researcher hypothesizes that when CDF bursary are used to support needy learners then it leads to enhanced access to secondary education and vice versa.

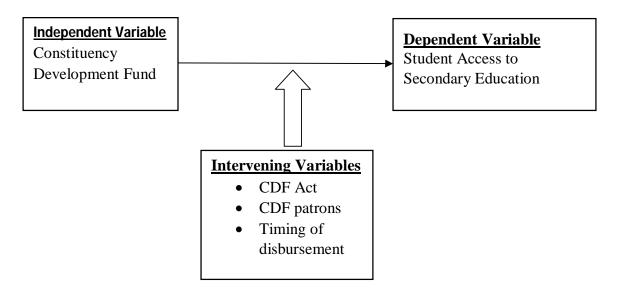


Figure 1. Conceptual framework (Author, 2015)

3.0 Research Design and Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study used a descriptive research design. According to Kothari (2008), descriptive research studies are those studies, which are concerned with describing the characteristics of a

particular individual, or of a group. The researcher employed the design since it gives specific predictions, with narration of facts and characteristics concerning the issue at hand.

3.1 Target Population

The study was conducted in Soy Constituency, which is in Eldoret West Sub-County in Uasin Gishu County (UGC), Kenya. Soy Constituency has got a population of 165,127 with its headquarters being Eldoret Town (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2009). There are 40 public secondary schools in the Constituency, which are boarding, day or mixed day and boarding. The study targeted the 15 CDF committee members, 40 principals, and 9961 students in public secondary schools in Soy constituency.

3.3 Sampling and Sampling Technique

In this study, the sample frame consisted of CDF committees, principals, and students in Soy constituency. The study used purposive sampling in selecting 98 students, and simple random sampling in selecting 12 principals and 4 CDF committees. A sampling formula (Frazer & Lawley, 2000) was used in determining the sample size that represents the target population. (Ryan, 2013)

3.4 Data Collection

The data was collected using questionnaires and interview schedules as research instruments. The design of the questionnaires and the interview schedules ensured validity and reliability (Creswel, 2013; Frazer & Lawley, 2000; Bryman, 2006). Quantitative data were obtained through administering of the questionnaires and examining relevant existing records, while qualitative data was obtained by interviewing respondents and reviewing existing literature. The interview schedule was prepared for CDF Committee members.

3.5 Validity and Reliability Research Instruments

The validity of questionnaires and structured interview materials was established by seeking advice from the experts of Education Management of in the University. Validity is the degree to which results obtained from the analysis of the data actually represent the phenomenon under study (Dane, 1990). The reliability of the research was determined using test-retest method (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). According to Nsubuga (2000), correlation coefficient of above 0.7 indicates acceptable reliability of an instrument. The correlation of test-retest data obtained from the pilot study gave 0.81, which is greater than 0.7. Hence, the questionnaires used had acceptable levels of reliability.

3.6 Data Analysis and Presentation

At the end of data collection, all data collected were screened to ensure that responses are legible and understandable and that responses are within an acceptable range and are complete (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). Data were categorized and recorded. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze quantitative data and thus make conclusions based on the results, that is, mean and standard deviation was computed while qualitative data was analyzed using description and thematic text. Data was presented in form of frequency tables, bar graphs, and charts.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

The researcher sought a permit from the relevant authorities (National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI), the District Commissioner, Eldoret West Sub-

county, and school principals. In the field researcher sought informed consent from respondents by making them aware that the information sought was meant for a research project. In addition anonymity and confidentiality were maintained in all respects. As an ethical measure, the researcher treated the respondents with respect and courtesy.

4.0 Results and Discussion

4.1 Background Information

The response rate of questionnaires was high because the mean rate of response rate was over 90% (Table 1). Fundamentally, the response rate of students, principals, and CDF committees were 88.78%, 100%, and 100%. Table 2 shows that out of 87 students, female students comprised 57.5% (50) while male students comprised 42.5% (37). The distribution of students across different form levels shows that form one, two, three, and four students comprised 16.1% (14), 37.9% (33), 25.3% (22), and 20.7% (18) of the participants respectively (Table 3). Moreover, the findings indicate that out of the 12 principals, two came from boys' boarding, two came from girls' boarding, one came from mixed boarding, and one from mixed day and boarding (Table 4). Moreover, two principals came from boys' day, two from girl's day, and two came from mixed day.

5.2 The Role of CDF on Student Access to Secondary Education

5.2.1 Descriptive Statistics of Fees

Descriptive statistics of the amount of fees required for the year, amount raised by the parent, and the amount of CDF received depicts significant trends in the role of CDF in promoting accessibility to education. The descriptive statistics (Table 5) indicates that the fees required per year range from 53553 to 10000 (M = 25509.09, SD = 11407.932). From the descriptive statistics, it is apparent that the amount of fees raised by parents (M = 20454.55, SD = 12129.416) is higher than the amount received from the CDF (M = 6954.55, SD = 2173.184). These findings are consistent with the assertion by Nguare, Onsomu, and Manda (2006) who stated that access to education is this a challenge as parent have to raise increasing amounts of fees each year. Further analysis of the data indicates that CDF fees received constitute 25% and fees raised constitute 75% of the fees required in a year (Figure 3). According to Koech (2000), the government recommended parents to raise 95% of the fees in cost sharing strategy of 1988. In this view, the CDF has significantly reduced the amount raised by parents to 75%, and thus, it has a remarkable role in promoting access to education among the needy students.

Descriptive statistics of fees of form one (Table 6) indicate that the fees required per year in form one range from 36500 to 10000 (M = 24595.45, SD = 7530.846). The amount of fees raised by parents (M = 17050, SD = 8303.614) is higher than the amount received from the CDF (M = 1745.45, SD = 2018.115). Comparison of the amount raised and received shows that the amount of fees raised constitutes 69% while the amount received from CDF constitute 31% of the required fees (Figure 5). Comparatively, the descriptive analysis fees of form two indicate that the fees required per year range from 10000 to 42000. From the descriptive statistics, it is evident that the amount of fees raised by parents (M = 18863.64, SD = 9412.999) is higher than the amount of fees received from CDF (M = 7454.55, SD = 2207.425). The distribution of form two fees (Table 7) shows that the amount of fees received from CDF comprise 28% while the amount of fees raised by parents comprise 72% of the fees required (Figure 7).

The descriptive statistics (Table 8) of fees among form three students indicate that the fees required range from 53553 and 10000 (M = 27337.75, SD = 11995.995). The amount of fees raised (M = 21337.75, SD = 12544.259) is higher than the amount of fees received (M = 7166.67, SD = 2037.527). Moreover, the descriptive statistics show that the required fees vary from 10000 to

53553 (M = 28504.42, SD = 11995) while the amount of CDF vary from 5000 to 10000. Fundamentally, the amount of fees raised (M = 21337.75, SD = 12544.259) is higher than the amount of CDF received (M = 7166.67, SD = 2037.527). Analysis of the proportion of fees shows that the amount of fees received from CDF forms 25% while the amount of fees raised by parents forms 75% of the required fees in form three (Figure 9). In comparison, the descriptive statistics of form four (Table 9) depict that the required fees range from 53553 to 10000 (M = 28171.08, SD = 11647.105). The amount of fees raised by parents has a mean of 21837.75 (SD = 12706.083) and the amount of fees received from CDF has a mean of 6333.33 (SD = 1614.330). The proportion of fees raised by parents comprise 78% of the fees required in form four (Figure 11).

5.2.2 Opinions of Students

The analysis of data indicates that 80% of the students agree that CDF has a role in access to secondary education while 14% and 6% disagree and remain undecided respectively (Figure 12). According to Njeru and Orodho (2003), increasing cost of education without cost sharing through bursaries and scholarships hinders students from poor backgrounds from accessing secondary education. Hatt, Andrew, and Baxter (2005) add that bursaries have marked impact on student access to secondary education for it creates opportunities for the needy students to pursue their studies. Qualitative analysis of the responses indicate that those who stated that CDF has a role in access to education cited it saved their fee situation, those who indicated that CDF has no role in access to education cited the amount is insufficient, and those who are undecided cited that they could have accessed education without CDF.

5.2.3 Students Benefit from CDF

The principals indicated that they have students who have benefited from the CDF funds. Moreover, the analysis of the proportion of students who has been receiving CDF funds over the years indicated that their percentages have been increasing with time. The increment has been due to the streamlined and organized distribution of bursaries to the needy students who deserve financial aid (Republic of Kenya, 2005). The data show that the percentages since 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, and 2015 has been 4.3%, 4.5%, 3.8%, 4.5%, and 5.1% respectively (Figure 13).

5.3.4 Opinions of Principals

Most CDF committees indicated that over 25% of students in their jurisdiction apply for CDF funds (Figure 14). The CDF committees acknowledged that CDF funds have a role in enhancing accessibility to secondary education by students. These findings are in line with establishments that CDF enhances participation of students in secondary schools (Malsory, 2006). However, the CDF committees cited inaccessible application forms, corrupt practices, and competitive application of CDF bursary funds by needy students, priority given to students in colleges and universities, and insufficiency of CDF funds as some of the factors that limit the number of students who receive funds. Moreover, most CDF committee stated that below 20% of students who have applied for the bursary funds receive them.

5.0 Summary, Conclusion, Recommendations, and Suggestions for Further Research5.1 Summary of the Findings

The study has established that CDF funds have a role on secondary on secondary school student access in Soy constituency, Uasin Gishu County. CDF funds have a role in access to education because the amount of CDF bursary range from 5,000 and 10,000, which constitutes

between 22-31% of the fees required. Overall, the analysis of form one to four data indicates that CDF fees received constitute 25% and fees raised constitute 75% of the fees required in a year. Comparison with form one data shows that the amount of fees raised constitutes 69% while the amount received from CDF constitutes 31% of the required fees. The distribution of form two fees shows that the amount of fees received from CDF comprise 28% while the amount of fees raised by parents comprise 72% of the fees required. Analysis of the proportion of fees shows that the amount of fees received from CDF forms 25% while the amount of fees raised by parents form 75% of the required fees in form three. The proportion of fees in form four is that the amount if fees received from CDF comprise 22% while the amount of fees raised by parents comprise 78% of the fees required in form four.

Qualitative analysis of the responses from students indicate that those who stated that CDF has a role in access to education cited it saved their fee situation while those who indicated that CDF has no role in access to education cited the amount is insufficient. The opinions of the principals indicated the proportion of students who has been receiving CDF funds over the years have been increasing with time. Moreover, 80% of the students agree that CDF has a role in access to secondary education while principals indicated that about 5% of students benefit from CDF bursary. The outstanding views are that CDF enable the needy students to access secondary education because they cannot afford to pay all school fees. Besides, the principals stated that CDF funds have a significant role for parents use them as a form of assurance for the payment fees. The CDF committees rated the proportion of students who apply for CDF bursary and most of them (50%) indicated that over 25% of students apply, which means that over 25% try to access secondary education by applying for CDF bursary. The CDF committees indicated that CDF funds have a role in accessibility to secondary education as about 20% of students got CDF funds. However, inaccessible application forms, corrupt practices, competitive application of CDF bursary funds by needy students, priority given to students in colleges and universities, and insufficiency of CDF funds as some of the factors that limit the number of students who receive funds.

5.2 Conclusion

The study has revealed that CDF play a significant role in education because it promotes access to secondary school in Soy constituency. The findings show that CDF have a role for it contributes between 22-31% of the fees required, principals holds that it benefits about 5% of students, and 80% of students perceive that it has a role in access to education. Moreover, the data of the CDF committees indicated that CDF funds have a role in accessibility to secondary education for about 20% of students get bursary whenever they apply. Nevertheless, students have trouble in applying for CDF as they have to overcome challenges such as inaccessible application forms, corrupt practices, competitive applications, and preference of students in colleges and universities, and insufficiency of CDF funds. Therefore, the findings of the study revealed that CDF funds play a central role in student access to secondary schools in Soy constituency, Uasin Gishu County.

5.3 Recommendations

In the view of the findings, the study offers some recommendations to enhance the role of CFD in improving education access to secondary schools.

- The Ministry of Education should leverage allocation and disbursement of CDF funds to improve secondary school access to students.
- The CDF committee should increase the amount of funds allocated to the needy students and provide consistent support to enhance access to secondary schools by students.

- The CDF committee should vet students and determine the needy ones to prevent their dropout, and thus, improve access to secondary schools by students
- Secondary schools and CDF committees should collaborate in allocating bursary with a view of improving access to secondary schools by the needy students.
- The county governments and constituencies should harmonize allocation and disbursement
 of funds to eliminate duplication of roles, eradicate corruption, and promote the role of
 bursaries in access to secondary schools by the needy students.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Research

As the study had some limitations and noted some issues during the process of research, it identified areas of further research to enhance understanding of the role of CDF in access to secondary school education by students.

- i. As the study was done in Soy constituency in Uasin Gishu County, further studies should be done at county and national level to enhance external validity of the findings.
- ii. Since the study assumed that CDF bursaries were a key determinant of students' access to secondary education, further research is necessary to establish confounding variables that mask or magnify the role of CDF on accessibility to secondary education.
- iii. To enhance understanding of the role of CDF funds and confounding variables on students' access to secondary education, further research is essential to delineate external and internal factors that determine accessibility to secondary education.
- iv. Given that counties also provide bursaries to students, further research should examine the role of county bursaries in students' access to secondary education.

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Appendix A: Tables

Table 1
Response Rate

Respondents	Target Population (N)	Sample population(n)	Response (r)	Response rate (r/n)*100%
CDF committee members	15	4	4	100
Principals	40	12	12	100
Students	9961	98	87	88.78
Totals	10016	114	103	90.35

Table 2
Gender of Students

		Frequency	Percent Valid Percent		Cumulative
					Percent
	Male	37	42.5	42.5	42.5
Valid	Female	50	57.5	57.5	100.0
	Total	87	100.0	100.0	

Table 3
Form Level

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Form 1	14	16.1	16.1	16.1
	Form 2	33	37.9	37.9	54.0
Valid	Form 3	22	25.3	25.3	79.3
	Form 4	18	20.7	20.7	100.0
	Total	87	100.0	100.0	

Table 4
Type of School

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Boys Boarding	2	16.7	16.7	16.7
	Girls Boarding	2	16.7	16.7	33.3
	Mixed Boarding	1	8.3	8.3	41.7
37-1: 1 N	Mixed Day & Boarding	1	8.3	8.3	50.0
Valid	Boys day	2	16.7	16.7	66.7
	Girls Day	2	16.7	16.7	83.3
	Mixed Day	2	16.7	16.7	100.0
	Total	12	100.0	100.0	

Table 5
Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Fees Required for the Year	87	10000	53553	27409.10	11407.932
Amount Raised by the Parent	87	8000	48500	20454.55	12129.416
Amount Received from CDF	87	5000	10000	6954.55	2173.184
Valid N (listwise)	87				

Table 6
Form One Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std.
					Deviation
Fees Required for the	32	10000	36500	24595.45	7530.846
Year				,	, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,
Amount Raised by the	32	5000	28000	17050.00	8303.614
Parent		2000	20000	1,000.00	0000.01.
Amount Received from CDF	32	5000	10000	7545.45	2018.115
Valid N (listwise)	32				

Table 7
Form Two Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Fees Required for the Year	37	10000	42000	24595.45	9128.128
Amount Raised by the Parent	37	5000	32000	18863.64	9412.999
Amount Received from CDF	37	5000	10000	7454.55	2207.425
Valid N (listwise)	37				

Table 8
Form Three Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Fees Required for the Year	42	10000	53553	28504.42	11995.995
Amount Raised by the Parent	42	5000	47553	21337.75	12544.259
Amount Received from CDF	42	5000	10000	7166.67	2037.527
Valid N (listwise)	42				

Table 9
Form Four Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Fees Required for the Year	11	10000	53553	28171.08	11647.105
Amount Raised by the Parent	11	5000	47553	21837.75	12706.083
Amount Received from CDF	11	5000	10000	6333.33	1614.330
Valid N (listwise)	11				

Appendix B: Figures

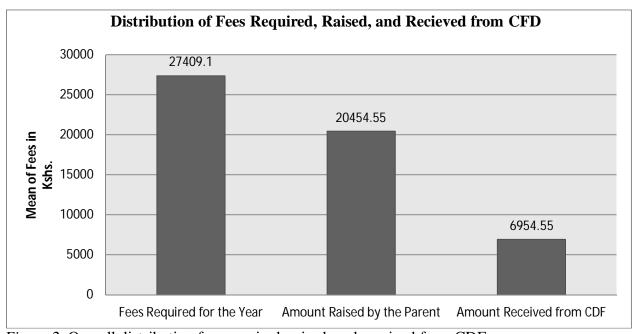


Figure 2. Overall distribution fees required, raised, and received from CDF

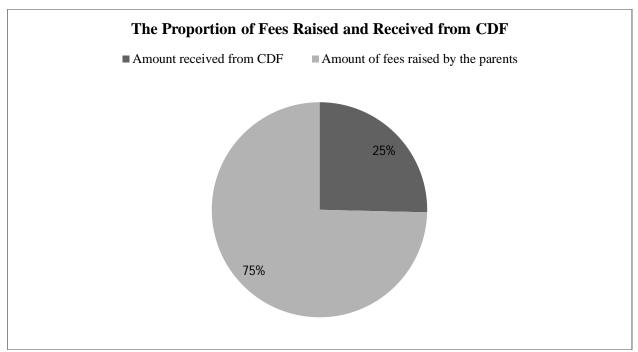


Figure 3. The proportion of raised and received fees

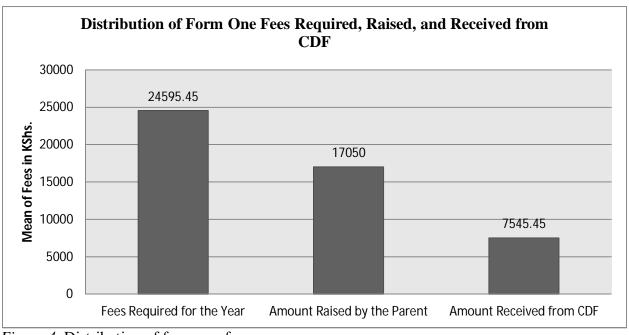


Figure 4. Distribution of form one fees

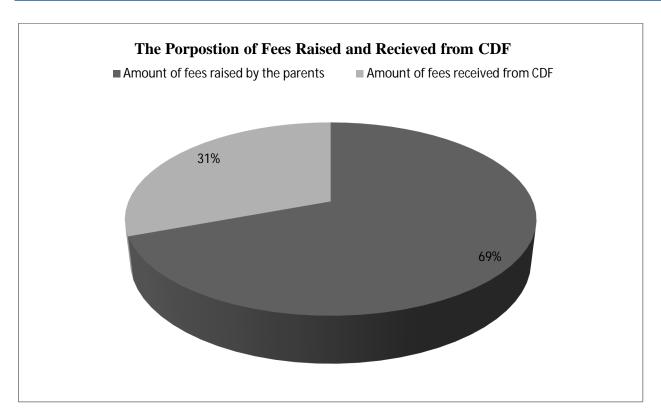


Figure 5. Proportion of fees raised and received in form one

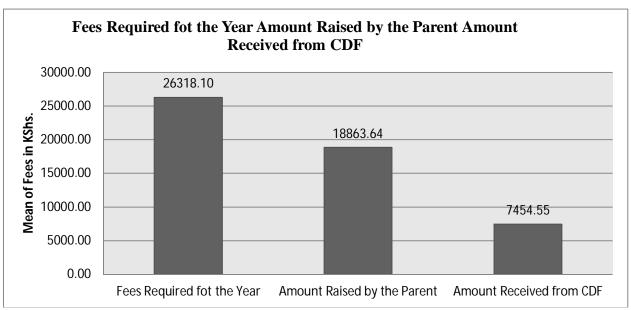


Figure 6. Distribution of form two fees

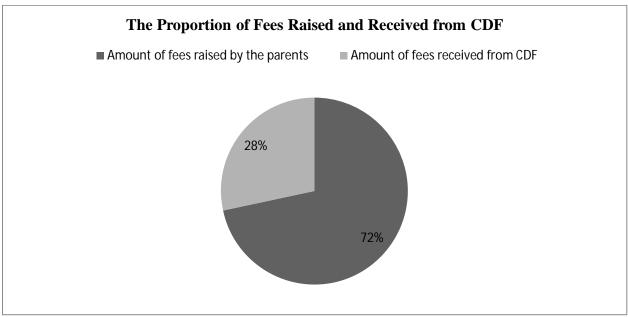


Figure 7. The proportion raised and received fees in form two

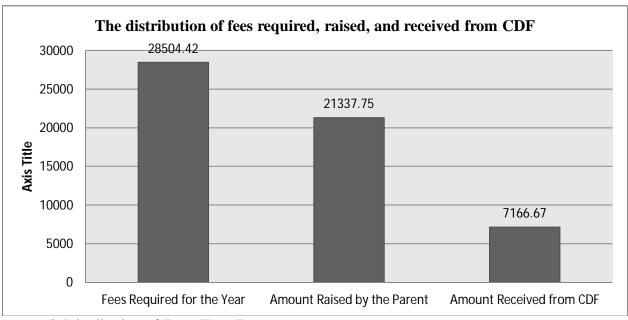


Figure 8. Distribution of Form Four Fees

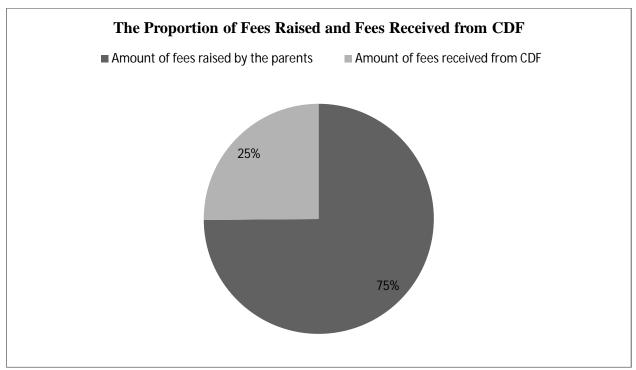


Figure 9. The proportion of required and received fees in form three

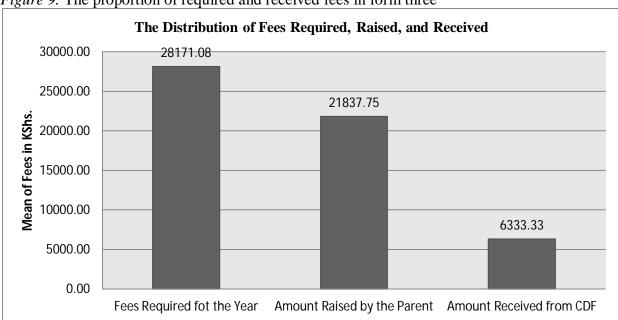


Figure 10. Distribution of Form Four Fees

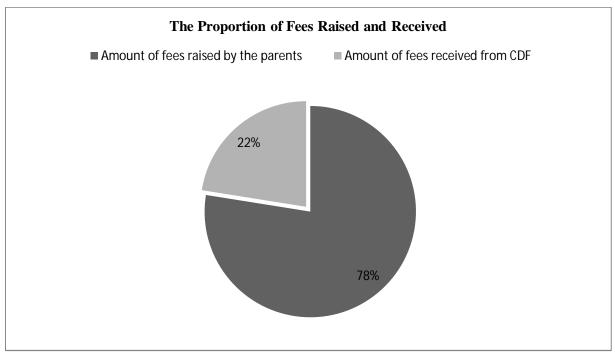


Figure 11. The proportion of raised and received fees in form four

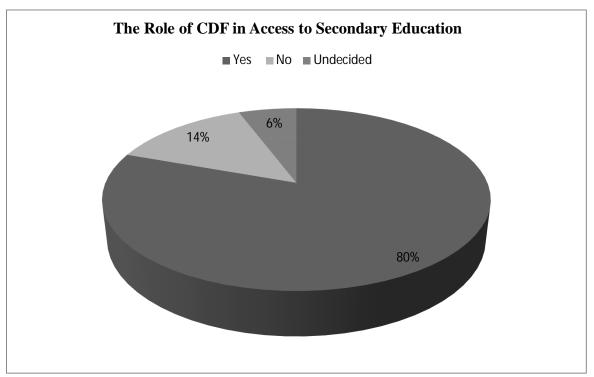


Figure 12. The proportion of responses regarding the access to secondary education

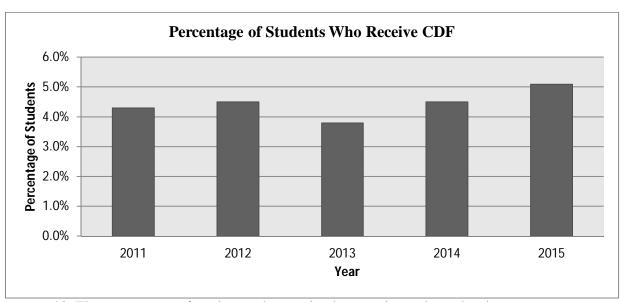


Figure 13. The percentage of students who receive bursary in twelve schools

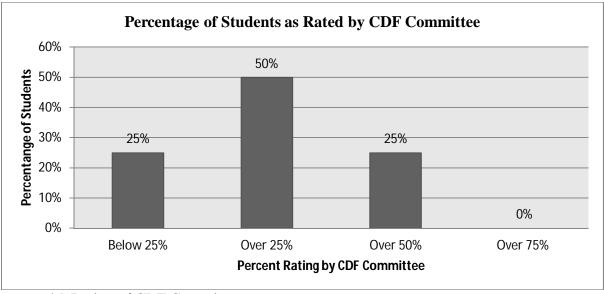


Figure 14. Rating of CDF Committees