

Report by Alexia di Marco

Disadvantaged girls in Kenyan schools



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Our work involves school improvement through inspection, school workforce development and curriculum design for the UK's Department for Education, local authorities and an increasing number of independent and state schools, free schools and academies. We provide services direct to learners in our schools.

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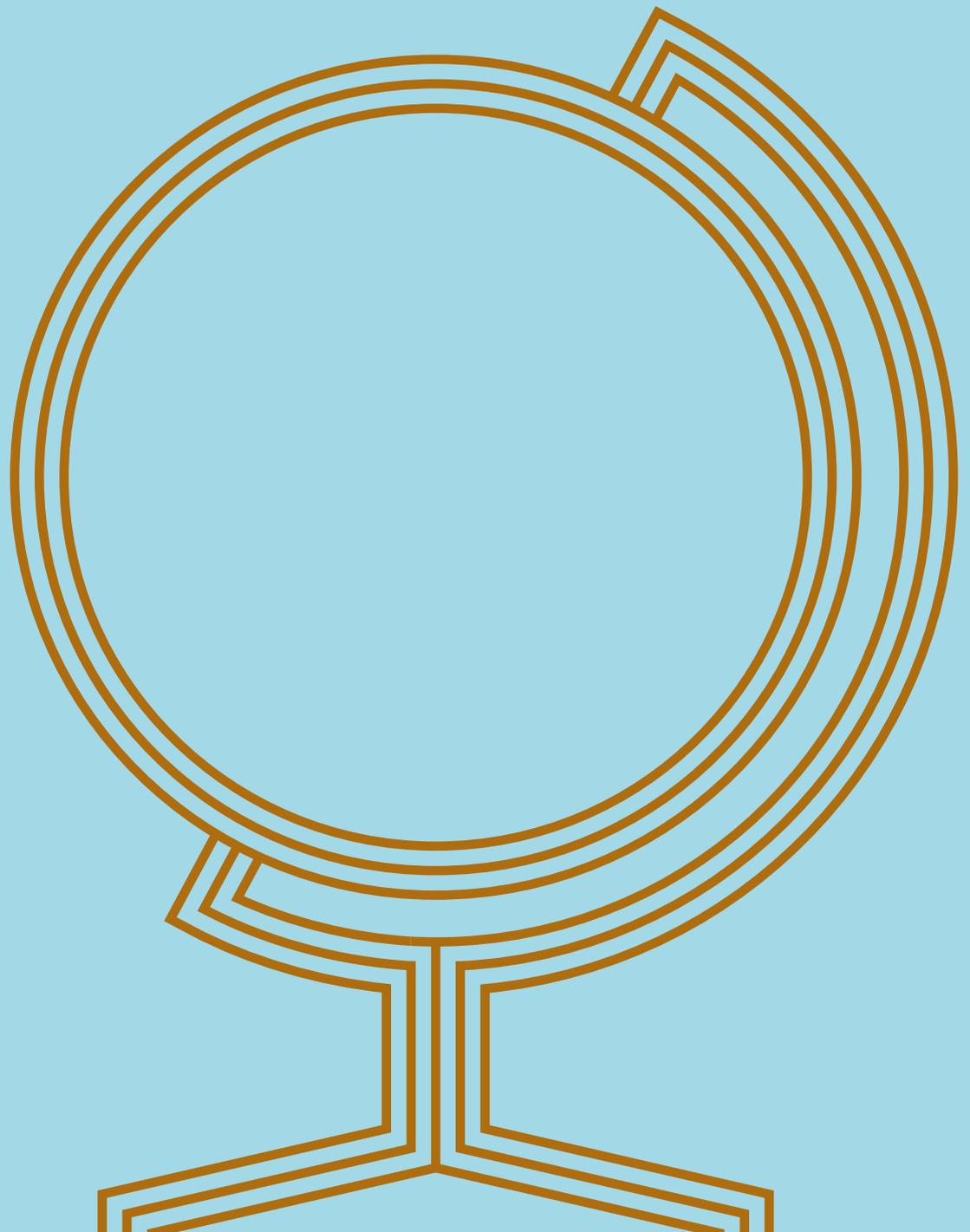
About the authors

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Executive summary



‘Wasichana Wote Wasome’ (WWW) (Swahili for ‘Let All Girls Learn’)¹ is a significant education programme in Kenya designed to improve access to and the quality of primary education for some of the country’s most marginalised girls.

This research is related to Education Development Trust’s Department for International Development-funded Girls’ Education Challenge (GEC) programme in Kenya. Complementing the monitoring and evaluation data gathered for the programme, this research was funded by Education Development Trust to enrich and develop a deeper understanding of girls’ experiences at school in Kenya.

It explores aspects of school and schooling that affect the participation and learning of marginalised girls in the Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs) of Turkana and the slums of Nairobi. The report offers a detailed, qualitative analysis of the practices and experience of education of 128 girls across 16 primary schools in these two regions. It examines:

- Why marginalised girls in ASALs and slums participate and learn better in some schools compared to others
- Why there might be a higher proportion of girls enrolled in some of these schools
- How reform can be supported in other Kenyan schools to increase enrolment, achievement and the completion of basic education for girls

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The challenge of education for girls

While most headline data for enrolment, completion, attendance and learning in Sub-Saharan Africa and Kenya are encouraging, the high-level statistics mask regional variation and gender disparities. Poorer girls in Nairobi slums and Turkana have lower enrolment and completion rates, as well as lower learning outcomes.

Methodology

The study involved visiting a total of 16 schools (eight in Turkana and eight in the Nairobi slums) for two days each in term two of the 2014 school year. Over the course of the research the team met with 128 girls, 53² teachers, 14 heads and two deputies, observed 53 lessons and carried out 48 ‘out-of-class’ observations.

¹ Referred to later in this report as GEC/WWW. ² The intention was for the team to conduct four classroom observations in each school, but in some schools it was not possible to complete all four in the given time.

- In Nairobi the schools selected were in the slum areas of Kibera, Mathare, Embakasi and Makadara. Six were low-cost private schools and two were government-run schools. Government schools are rare in the slums, as these are not recognised by the state as formal settlements in need of services.
- In Turkana the schools selected were from the South or Loima districts. All were government schools and two had boarding facilities.

Each case study represented one school and consisted of a combination of data collection methods:

- A semi-structured interview with the headteacher (or deputy)
- A school tour or observation of facilities
- Two out-of-class or general observations (leading to an orderliness score for each school)
- Up to four lesson observations (including headcounts) to explore lesson quality
- Up to four semi-structured interviews with the teachers who were observed
- Up to four focus groups in each school including about eight girls in each (from upper primary) – these were divided into separate parts (each conducted with the same girls). These included:
 - An introductory discussion of their confidence and aspirations for the future
 - A school mapping exercise in which they drew areas of the school they liked or did not like, and discussed why
 - A discussion of examples of girls affected by additional dimensions of marginalisation (cartoon images were used to aid these discussions). In the Turkana focus groups, the team was accompanied by a young female Turkana translator.

In Nairobi the schools selected were in the slum areas of Kibera, Mathare, Embakasi and Makadara. Six were low-cost private schools and two were government-run schools

The findings

Findings are presented in two chapters. The first gives the findings from each data source and the second presents a cross-case thematic analysis. The key points are described below.

The schools

- In the 16 case study schools, greater disparity was evident between the achievement of girls compared to boys in Turkana than in Nairobi, and the mean Gender Parity Index was higher in the Nairobi schools than in the Turkana schools.
- Most of the schools with higher Kenya Certificate of Primary Examination results had higher orderliness scores.
- The pupil/teacher ratio varied greatly between schools. It was generally higher in Turkana (39 pupils per teacher on average). In Nairobi, the low-cost private schools tended to have lower pupil/teacher ratios (23 pupils per teacher on average) and none had more than 33 students per teacher. The two government schools both had at least 45 students per teacher.



- All the Turkana schools were government funded, but there were extra costs charged to pupils, notably for items such as extra morning or evening prep lessons in upper primary, and for exam fees. In Nairobi this was also true for the government schools. The low-cost private schools charged fees.
- Headteacher and teacher absenteeism was commonly observed in the Turkana sample of schools, and less so in the Nairobi sample. There was a correlation between headteacher absence and the level of learning outcomes for each school.
- No observed lessons were assessed as 'high' quality using the framework devised: all were either low or medium. This is not surprising given that the study sample was taken from GEC project schools, which were selected on the basis of underperformance. A total of 26 lesson observations were carried out in Turkana schools; 17 were graded as low quality and 9 as medium. In Nairobi 27 lessons were observed, and 12 were graded as low and 15 as medium quality.

Focus group interviews with girls

- Analysis of the focus group interviews with girls revealed that they had high aspirations and hopes for the future. The most common aspiration was to go to university and pursue a career such as doctor, lawyer, journalist, engineer or pilot. In one school the girls wanted to earn a Masters-level degree. The majority of girls wanted to become a mother and start a family.
- The girls were confident in school but worried about fees. Almost all of the girls in Turkana and most of the girls in Nairobi were unsure they could complete primary school due to the fees (both the amount and the extent to which the schools actively or aggressively pursued their payment).
- Having support from home or school was important to the girls; they thought it increased the likelihood they could continue to study. Working hard outside school (paid work and/or chores) was reported to affect their ability to attend school, make time for learning and homework, and be ready to learn when at school. Often girls were tired during the day and had not had time to complete homework. The response of the schools was varied; few actively sought to support girls with these difficulties.
- The dimensions of marginalisation discussed in the focus groups were familiar to the girls but they spoke about some in more detail than others, particularly pregnancy and child bearing, caring for relatives, doing household work and marriage.

Analysis of the focus group interviews with girls revealed that they had high aspirations and hopes for the future

Cross-case thematic analysis

A thematic approach applied to a cross-case analysis reveals five key areas that the research participants associate with girls' difficulty attending school (listed in order of the frequency with which they appear in the data):

1. Fees (including the amount and collection process): in the Turkana and Nairobi schools, both the cost of school fees and extent to which the fees were aggressively or supportively collected by the school affected the girls, and was linked with the likelihood of dropping out.

2. Time for learning (including girls' access to extra lessons): girls were often excluded (inadvertently) from learning opportunities, particularly in Turkana. The girls there frequently said they were very keen to attend boarding school in order to have more time for learning, but that their family could not afford the fees. Extra lessons appeared to work for some girls in some schools in Nairobi. However, the reliance on additional lessons out of school hours may introduce further discrimination against girls and should not be seen as a solution to quality challenges. If girls are finding it hard to access additional learning time provided by the school, there is a greater need to improve the quality of the school's day provision.

3. Teachers (including teacher professionalism and skill): overall teacher professionalism was low in the Turkana schools. Absence was common, and teachers were often not present for the full lesson time and did not follow the timetable. These behaviours limited the productive learning time available to both girls and boys. The situation was better in Nairobi. The study participants valued – and seemed to be supported by – good relationships with teachers in their schools. They associated this with confidence and ongoing commitment to school.

4. Leadership and management (including the presence of the head and their approach to supporting girls): overall it appeared that the Turkana schools had issues of headteacher absenteeism, some of which can be explained by the remote locations of schools and challenging local geography. There was also a high level of headteacher transition: many of those who participated in this study did not like working there and wanted to leave. This was not a significant issue in Nairobi, where heads were found to have longer tenures and to be more often present in school. However, the physical spread of rooms within slums in some schools in the capital meant there was some dilution of leadership presence on a day-to-day basis.

5. Disease and disability (including HIV): in both Turkana and Nairobi the headteachers, teachers and the girls themselves remained relatively quiet about girls with HIV or disabilities, but it is probable that they are even less likely to access education. Such questions were part of this study but not its primary focus. It is, however, interesting to note the lack of information forthcoming on this topic compared with others. It is also interesting that the participants spoke a little more openly about HIV and disability in Nairobi than in Turkana.

Conclusions

This report suggests that schools should consider how they collect fees, build positive relationships between female pupils and teachers, and encourage active and professional leadership in order to build better learning environments in which girls are more likely to complete schooling and do well. Schools also need to continue to address quality issues and maximise learning time during the school day, and ensure that girls are not inadvertently excluded from additional learning opportunities offered outside the school day.

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Chapter 1

Introduction



This research explores aspects of school and schooling that affect the participation and learning of marginalised girls in the Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs) of Turkana and the slums of Nairobi.

The research

This research is part of Education Development Trust's Department for International Development (DFID)-funded Girls' Education Challenge (GEC) programme in Kenya. 'Wasichana Wote Wasome' (Swahili for 'Let All Girls Learn') is a significant education programme in Kenya designed to improve access to and the quality of primary education for some of the country's most marginalised girls (referred to as GEC/WWW). Complementing the monitoring and evaluation data gathered for the programme, this research was funded by Education Development Trust to enrich and develop a deeper understanding of girls' experiences at school in Kenya.

The report offers a detailed, qualitative analysis of the practices across 16 primary schools in these two regions.

The girls who were the subject of this study lived in areas that exacerbated their marginalisation from education and opportunities; in this instance the Turkana ASALs and Nairobi slums. Within these locations and among their populations there are additional factors that have been associated with low enrolment and high dropout rates among girls. For example, the prevalence of girls under 16 who have started child bearing, girls who are also heads of households, girls with disabilities, girls who care for sick relatives, girls who are engaged or married, girls living in extreme poverty or as street children, girls who are child workers and those living with HIV/AIDS.

The girls who were the subject of this study lived in areas that exacerbated their marginalisation from education and opportunities

The context of this study

Girls' education has been shown to be critically important not just for their own health and prosperity, but also for that of their family and their nation's development. Girls are less likely to marry early if they are engaged in education³ and likely to have fewer children. Infant and maternal mortality rates are also lower for women who have completed their education, and their families are better nourished. UNESCO found that a child born to a literate mother is 50 per cent more likely to survive past the age of five, and that if mothers are educated, their own children (both girls and boys) generally go to school longer.⁴ Often the mother's

³Lloyd and Young, 2009; Duflo, Dupas and Kremer, 2015. ⁴UNESCO 2012b.

education has a greater effect on these factors than the father's, especially in countries where the gap in schooling between girls and boys is greatest.⁵

World Bank studies also suggest that for every extra year of primary education beyond the mean, a girl's eventual wage rate increases by an average of 10–20 per cent.⁶ It is also commonly agreed that a country's economy benefits from gender equality in education due to related and subsequent increases in women's participation in the workforce. At the World Economic Conference in 2009 the managing director of the World Bank summed up the business view of girls' education, stating:

Investing in women is smart economics, investing in girls, catching them upstream, is even smarter economics. If you invest in girls, if you educate girls, if you can get girls into jobs you solve so many problems, the population problem, the climate change problem, poverty.⁷

It is also noteworthy that girls who have participated in education have lower rates of HIV,⁸ appear to experience lower levels of domestic violence⁹ and are more likely to be politically engaged.¹⁰ There is also evidence that investing in girls' education is among the most cost-effective strategies for combatting climate change.¹¹

Girls' education is also a right enshrined for all children in the Convention on the Rights of the Child¹², and a global focus of the Millennium Development Goals and Education for All movement.¹³ In Kenya the government's commitment to the right of education for all can be seen through the free primary and secondary education schemes. The 2010 Kenyan Constitution also states in the Bill of Rights that 'Every child has the right to free and compulsory basic education.'¹⁴

Despite this and all of the compelling evidence demonstrating that girls' education is critical to global health and prosperity, it is still the case that in marginalised areas of Sub-Saharan Africa girls' participation (including enrolment, completion and attendance) and learning outcomes are frequently lower than those of boys.

Enrolment

Over the last 15 years gender disparity has narrowed substantially at all levels of education, with the greatest improvements seen in primary education.¹⁵ In developing regions the Gender Parity Index, as of 2015, was at 0.98 in primary and secondary education and 1.01 in tertiary education, and the UN reported that five of the nine developing regions had achieved parity.¹⁶ Unfortunately, more than half of the countries with gender disparity in primary education in 2012 were in Sub-Saharan Africa. Despite making the greatest progress towards universal primary education (in 2012, enrolment rates grew from 52 to 78 per cent), this region was the furthest from reaching this standard. Currently, 57 million children of primary school age are estimated to be out of school worldwide. Of these, 33 million are in Sub-Saharan Africa and 55 per cent (17.2 million) are girls.¹⁷

Whilst the overall picture in Kenya looks positive – indeed, girls' enrolment rates in primary school have increased faster than the global rate, from 63 per cent in 1999 to 85 per cent in 2011 – wide disparities remain in poorer communities and for those from the most marginalised groups.

Over the last 15 years gender disparity has narrowed substantially at all levels of education, with the greatest improvements seen in primary education

⁵Filmer, 2010. ⁶Herz and Sperling, 2004; Patrinos and Psacharopoulos, 2002; Hanushek and Woessmann, 2008. ⁷Okonjo-Iweala, 2009, cited in Moeller, 2014: 71 ⁸Jukes, Simmons & Bundy, 2008; Behrman, 2015 ⁹Sen, 1999. ¹⁰Barro, 1999. ¹¹Wheeler and Hammer, 2010. ¹²UN, 1989. ¹³UNESCO, 2000. ¹⁴Government of Kenya, 2010a: 53. ¹⁵UN, 2015. ¹⁶ibid. ¹⁷ibid.

In 2008, almost all children from affluent households in Nairobi had been to school, irrespective of their gender, but 55 per cent of poor girls (and 43 per cent of poor boys) in the north-eastern region had never been to school.¹⁸ Girls from the poorest 20 per cent of households lagged far behind boys in enrolment, and only around a third of the poorest girls living in rural areas achieved the minimum basic learning standard in an international assessment of grade 6 learning outcomes.¹⁹

Other data also highlight the stark regional discrepancies that the headline figures hide. Table 1 compares the proportion of out-of-school boys and girls in particular areas of Kenya in 2011. The proportion of out-of-school boys and girls in Nairobi is below the national average, while in the ASALs overall this proportion is far higher than the national average. In both areas the situation for girls is worse than for boys. In the two areas of focus in this study (Kibera, a slum in Nairobi and Turkana, an area within the Arid region), the number of out-of-school girls is more than two and five times the national average, respectively.

TABLE 1: OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN (%), 2011

	Nairobi	Kibera	Arid regions (ASALs)	Turkana	National average
Boys	1.3	6.4	15.1	-*	3.6
Girls	1.2	9.7	20.2	-*	3.8
Average	1.3	9	17.4	30.6	3.7

*Disaggregated data were not available Sources: ²⁰

Attendance

Regular attendance also varies by region. Uwezo Kenya²¹ asserts that ‘absenteeism is rampant’ in Kenya; in 2010 it reported that countrywide, 16 per cent of students failed to attend on any given school day, a figure that dropped only slightly in 2011 to 13 per cent. The national average of students who attend regularly is 86.5 per cent, yet in Nairobi it is 55.97 per cent and in Turkana 49.35 per cent; three out of ten enrolled students do not attend at all.²²

There is very little data on attendance by gender in Sub-Saharan Africa, and the available information presents a mixed picture. An analysis of the 2005–2006 MICS data from 12 African countries found similar rates of absenteeism from school for boys and girls.²³ Lloyd, Mensch and Clark’s²⁴ study found that school attendance among adolescents varied in Kenya by location, age and, in two of the three districts analysed, by sex. Although the majority of adolescents in their study were currently in school, attendance declined substantially during the teenage years. They found that in the Kilifi region adolescent girls were much less likely to be in school on any given day than boys, especially in the older age groups; less than one third of girls aged 17–18 still attended school, compared with nearly half of boys.²⁵

The national average of students who attend regularly is 86.5 per cent, yet in Nairobi it is 55.97 per cent and in Turkana 49.35 per cent; three out of ten enrolled students do not attend at all

¹⁸ UNESCO, 2012. ¹⁹ UNESCO, 2014. ²⁰ Uwezo Kenya, 2011; Uwezo Kenya, 2012a. ²¹ Uwezo Kenya, 2011: 2. ²² Uwezo Kenya, 2011: 53, 66. ²³ Loaliza and Lloyd, 2009. ²⁴ Lloyd, Mensch and Clark, 2011. ²⁵ *ibid.*



Completion

The challenge of school completion is particularly acute in Sub-Saharan Africa, where seven in ten children starting primary school were still at school in the last grade in 2007 and 10 million pupils drop out of primary school each year.²⁶ Children from poor families, rural areas, or ethnic or linguistic minorities also face a higher risk of dropout from education.²⁷

In Kenya's ASAL regions, fewer than one in six girls attend secondary school; in the urban slums, just half make this transition.²⁸ Lloyd, Mensch and Clark²⁹ found that retention of girls in school suffered in schools where boys were provided with a more supportive environment than girls in terms of information, advice and guidance; where teachers appeared to take subjects such as maths less seriously for girls; where boys were left free to harass girls; and where boys did not recognise girls' experience of unequal treatment. However, relatively little research has been conducted to examine why more girls than boys are dropping out, and what might help prevent it.

Learning outcomes

Getting students into school is only half of the problem; '[the] increase in access to education has not translated directly into improved opportunities for learning, particularly for girls.'³⁰ Results from international learning assessments in Africa, such as SACMEQ, PASEC and Uwezo Kenya, indicate that there is a fairly small, and mostly statistically insignificant, gap in the abilities of boys and girls in basic skills such as literacy and numeracy.³¹ Available data from national examinations in Africa show a more consistent pattern of a gender gap in favour of boys. In a Plan International³² study of girls' education, girls underperformed relative to boys in national examinations in all six of the African countries studied, including Kenya.

In Kenya, a UNESCO report found that among young men aged 15–29 who had left school after six years, 6 per cent were illiterate and 26 per cent were semi-literate, compared to 9 and 30 per cent, respectively, for young women. The proportion of semi-literate or illiterate women after six years of schooling has increased from 24 per cent in 2003 to 39 per cent in 2008.³³

A study of learning outcomes in informal neighbourhood schools showed that despite near gender parity in candidates sitting Kenya's Certificate of Primary Examination (KCPE, taken at the end of secondary school to gain entry to tertiary education), girls consistently underperformed relative to boys. In the 2006 KCPE examinations, more than 50 per cent of boys scored at or above the national average, whereas only 29 per cent of girls did so.³⁴ The 2010 KCSE results show that only 22 of the top one hundred scoring students are girls, and that girls outperformed boys in only 8 out of 47 districts.³⁵ Boys consistently have higher marks than girls in private and public schools, in both informal and formal neighbourhoods.³⁶ The gender gap in maths achievement in 2006 at the end of secondary school was a huge 39 per cent in 2010.³⁷

Promising practice

There is a limited, though growing, body of data available about what might be associated with the poorer performance of marginalised girls in Sub-Saharan Africa and Kenya, and ways to tackle their lower participation and performance. Lloyd

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²⁶ UNESCO, 2011. ²⁷ *ibid.* ²⁸ Government of Kenya, 2010b; Uwezo Kenya, 2012b. ²⁹ Lloyd, Mensch and Clark, 2011. ³⁰ Plan International, 2013: 1. ³¹ UNESCO, 2014; Uwezo Kenya, 2012b. ³² Plan International, 2013. ³³ UNESCO, 2012: 1. ³⁴ Epari et al. 2008 cited by Plan International, 2013: 6. ³⁵ Kenya National Examinations Council, 2011. ³⁶ Epari et al 2008 cited by Plan International, 2013: 8. ³⁷ UNESCO, 2010.

and Young's review³⁸ of the evidence found that globally, very few programmes targeting girls' education had been rigorously evaluated, and that very little research had been conducted in the developing world on which aspects of quality have a differential impact on girls and boys. They identified only two strategies for which the evidence was strong enough to be considered a 'proven' strategy for supporting girls' education: (1) scholarships or stipends and (2) the recruitment and training of female educators.

A systematic review for DFID³⁹ found that globally, there is evidence that the following interventions have a strong impact on participation and learning:

TABLE 2: INTERVENTIONS THAT HAVE AN IMPACT ON PARTICIPATION AND LEARNING

Supplies		
Evidence	Impact on participation	Impact on learning
Strong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Well-targeted cash transfers Information about the employment returns on education Provision of additional schools in underserved areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cash transfers
Promising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deworming School feeding Integrated water, sanitation and hygiene interventions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional schools
Institutions and policy		
Evidence	Impact on participation	Impact on learning
Strong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher training in subject content, pedagogy, management and gender equality with informal development of attitudes of inclusion and tolerance Girl-friendly schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group learning Tutoring Out-of-school clubs
Promising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involvement of women in school governance and community mobilisation Gender mainstreaming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher training on gender equality and pedagogy Involvement of women in school governance and community mobilisation Girl-friendly schools
Norms and inclusion		
Evidence	Impact on participation	Impact on learning
Promising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching personal, social and health issues linked with sex education Women's literacy programmes Supporting marginalised girls to discuss school practices and reflect on experiences Supporting girls to proceed to higher levels of education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complementary learning spaces (e.g. girls' clubs) Teaching personal, social and health issues linked with sex education Women's literacy programmes

Source: ⁴⁰

Lloyd and Young's review (2009) of the evidence found that globally, very few programmes targeting girls' education had been rigorously evaluated

⁴⁰ adapted from Unterhalter et al, 2013.

Lloyd, Mensch and Clark⁴¹ carried out a comprehensive literature review of effective strategies in three regions of Kenya (which were chosen to represent the country's overall demographic makeup). They found a combination of formal and informal training significantly reduced girls' dropout; formally training teachers in relation to pedagogy, gender equality and subject knowledge, and to develop attitudes of inclusion and tolerance informally. More recently, Plan International⁴² commissioned a study of the impact of classroom factors on girls' learning. Drawing on global evidence, the study identified a number of key factors that can contribute to improving girls' academic performance in relation to boys:

- Presence of female teachers in school
- Positive attitudes towards girls' academic capabilities among staff and students
- The use of open questions in assessments, and assessment through coursework rather than examination
- Teaching using problems embedded in real life and practical situations rather than purely abstract concepts
- Use of collaborative learning techniques

The purpose of this study

While most headline data for enrolment, completion, attendance and learning in Sub-Saharan Africa and Kenya are encouraging, the high-level statistics mask regional variation and gender disparities. Poorer girls in Nairobi slums and Turkana have lower enrolment and completion rates. This study investigates the practices, provision and experience of girls in a small number of Kenyan primary schools to assess why this is the case.

Poorer girls in Nairobi slums and Turkana have lower enrolment and completion rates

What follows

The next section sets out the aims, research questions, methodology, methods, and data sets collected and analysed. Following this are two sections that outline the findings, first by data source and second through a cross-case thematic analysis.

⁴¹Lloyd, Mensch and Clark, 2011. ⁴²Plan International, 2013.

Chapter 2

Methodology



This study adopted a case study approach applying ethnographic influences in the specific data collection techniques.

The study explores:

- Why marginalised girls in ASALs and slums participate and learn better in some schools compared to others
- Why there might be a higher proportion of girls enrolled in some of these schools
- How reform can be supported in other Kenyan schools to support enrolment, achievement and the completion of basic education for girls

The study involved visiting a total of 16 schools (eight in Turkana and eight in the Nairobi slums) for two days each in term two of the 2013–2014 school year. Over the course of the research the team met with 128 girls,⁴³ 53⁴⁴ teachers, 14 heads and two deputies, observed 53⁴⁵ lessons and carried out 48 'out-of-class' observations.

The schools

The 16 schools were selected from those involved with Education Development Trust's GEC/WWW programme and were broadly representative of the school types in the GEC project (see Table 3). They were selected from a possible 76 schools in Turkana and 212 in Nairobi in order to represent a range in terms of the relative success of girls' participation and learning outcomes. The team drew upon the Gender Parity Index (GPI) and government data on learning outcomes for the schools (based on 2012 and 2013 KCPE results) to determine their performance levels.

- In Nairobi the schools selected were in the slum areas of Kibera, Mathare, Embakasi and Makadara. Six were low-cost private schools and two were government-run schools. Government schools are rare in the slums, as these are not recognised by the state as formal settlements in need of services.
- In Turkana the schools selected were from the South or Loima districts. All were government schools and two had boarding facilities.

All GEC/WWW project schools are inherently low performing for marginalised girls – which is why they were selected for the programme – so there are no high-performing schools amongst the group. Details are given below about the performance of the school sample, but typically the schools displayed a mix of good and poor performance. For example, girls' participation might be relatively high in one school, but the learning performance low (or vice versa). There were a few schools that were high or low performing in both categories.

Girls' participation might be relatively high in one school, but the learning performance low (or vice versa)

⁴³The same girls took part in each focus group within each school. Each focus group included 6–12 girls. ⁴⁴The intention was to interview four teachers from each school, but in some cases it was not possible to complete all four interviews due to staff absence or unforeseen circumstances. ⁴⁵The intention was for the team to conduct four classroom observations in each school, but in some schools it was not possible to complete all four in the given time.

TABLE 3: SCHOOLS VISITED

Code	Type	Gender Parity Index (G`PI)	Size
N1	Low- cost private	1.1	Medium
N2	Government	1.2	Large
N3	Low- cost private	1.0	Medium
N4	Low- cost private	0.9	Small
N5	Low- cost private	0.9	Medium
N6	Low- cost private	1.1	Small
N7	Low- cost private	0.7	Small
N8	Government	0.9	Large
T1	Government	0.8	Small
T2	Government (boarding)	0.7	Small
T3	Government	0.8	Small
T4	Government	0.6	Small
T5	Government	0.7	Small
T6	Government (boarding)	0.5	Medium
T7	Government	0.5	Medium
T8	Government	0.7	Small

N = Nairobi, T = Turkana

Case study methods

Each case study represented one school and consisted of a combination of data collection methods (see Table 4):

- A semi-structured interview with the headteacher (or deputy)
- A school tour or observation of facilities
- Two out-of-class or general observations
- Up to four lesson observations (including headcounts): lesson quality, school facilities and general orderliness were observed using specialized tools designed for the project
- Up to four semi-structured interviews with the teachers who were observed
- Up to four focus groups in each school including no more than eight girls in each (from upper primary) – these were divided into separate parts (each conducted with the same girls). These included:
 - An introductory discussion of their confidence and aspirations for the future
 - A school mapping exercise where they drew areas of the school they liked or did not like, and why

- A discussion of case studies of girls affected by additional dimensions of marginalisation (cartoon images were used to aid these discussions). In the Turkana focus groups, the team was accompanied by a young female Turkana translator.
- General opinions on school

TABLE 4: TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS, INTERVIEWS AND OBSERVATIONS UNDERTAKEN

Method	Number of participants		Total
	Turkana	Nairobi	
Headteacher semi-structured interviews	6 heads (plus 2 deputies where head was absent)	8	16
School tours and look at facilities, etc.	NA	NA	16
Out- of- class observations	NA	NA	32
Lesson observations	26	27	53
Teacher semi-structured interviews	26	27	53
Girls' focus groups Part 1: Expectations and aspirations Part 2: General opinions on about school Part 3: School mapping exercise Part 4: Case studies of marginalised girls	64	64	128

TABLE 5: DATA SOURCES CREATED IN THE CONDUCT OF THE RESEARCH (PER CASE STUDY)

Headteacher semi-structured interviews

- Personal data and background, experience
- School timetable
- Staffing numbers, makeup and absences
- Management of SMC and/or PTA
- School policies, especially on fees and vulnerable girls
- EMIS/school data on enrolment

School tours and observation of facilities

- School compound description, size and security (e.g. presence of fence/gate, etc.)
- Buildings/facilities and upkeep, especially toilets (girls' toilets) and classrooms
- Presence of resources including water/solar or electricity

Out-of-class observations (x 2)

- Type and number of activities being performed by boys/girls (e.g. cleaning, cooking, fetching water, fetching firewood, helping teacher, sitting alone, playing, reading)

Lesson observations (up to 4)

- Seating arrangements for boys and girls
- Activities taking place led by teacher
- Number of girls/boys who are: off task/asking a question/being asked a question/getting praise/getting reprimanded/getting help
- Displays/furniture/equipment

TABLE 5: DATA SOURCES (CONTINUED)

Teacher semi-structured interviews (up to 4)

- Personal data and background, experience
- Professional or recent training
- Attitude to the school
- Sense of professionalism
- Lesson preparation
- Attitudes to girls in class
- Knowledge and support of vulnerable girls

Girls' focus groups (4 per school)

- Aspiration for their future lives (including profession/family life/home environment)
- Confidence (or lack thereof) about their future
- General likes and dislikes about the school
- General likes and dislikes about the school's physical environment
- Knowledge or direct experience of further marginalization (e.g. girls under 16 who have started child bearing or are heads of households, are engaged/married, or care for sick relatives; have disabilities or HIV/AIDS; work; live on the street or in extreme poverty; or are orphans)

SMC = school management committee; PTA = parent/teacher association; EMIS = Education Management Information System

Approach to analysis: 'orderliness' and lesson observations

It was of interest to the study team to understand and have mechanisms to characterise the variety of school environments and the quality of the opportunities for girls to learn. To assign each school an orderliness score, the researchers collected data using protocols and schedules designed to capture the right information and re-analysed multiple data sources with specific guiding questions in mind. Orderliness scores were based on observations, headteacher interviews and lesson observations during the case study visit. During the 'out-of-school' observations the research team noted the extent to which:

- The school timetable was followed accurately
- The headteacher's office was tidy, with important information such as the school development plan or enrolment numbers on display or to hand
- The headteacher or senior staff could easily access important data (such as the KCPE results)
- The head reported their interactions with the school management committee (SMC)
- Pupils were well behaved in the school compound at lesson change times or while queuing for their lunch
- The teachers' conduct in the school and classrooms during lesson time and movement between lessons was orderly

The lesson observations followed a protocol created for this study. It collected data on the numbers of girls and boys enrolled and present in each class;

To assign each school an orderliness score, the researchers collected data using protocols and schedules and re-analysed multiple data sources with specific guiding questions in mind



descriptions of the classroom (e.g. displays, equipment, furniture, ambiance); count of children on/off task; teacher questions asked to boys and girls, teacher reprimands given to boys and girls, and teacher help given to boys and girls; and a log of activity taking place at 10-minute intervals (as a minimum).

The researchers graded the quality of the lessons observed as low, medium or high quality (see Table 6). To gain a certain grade, most of the criteria in that category had to be satisfied.

TABLE 6: CRITERIA FOR LESSON OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

Low quality

- The teacher shows appropriate subject knowledge, but may show some misconceptions
- The teacher tells the students the topic of the lesson
- The teacher gives a limited explanation of the work
- The teacher asks none or a few questions to the class, often directed towards the same pupils
- The teacher sets the class one task
- The children are silent, but not necessarily on task
- The teacher does not check books or provide any feedback during the lesson
- The teacher leaves the class before the end of the lesson

Medium quality

- The teacher has good subject knowledge
- The teacher tells the students the objective of the lesson
- The teacher provides a good explanation of the learning through role play or demonstration
- The teacher asks the boys and girls questions fairly equally and selects different students each time
- The teacher positively encourages those less confident, or quieter boys and girls, equally
- The teacher may set more than one task
- The children are engaged and on task
- The teacher checks books there and then and provides feedback
- The teacher remains in class for the full length of the lesson

High quality

- The teacher has excellent subject knowledge
- The teacher gives a good explanation of the work (e.g. through use of an analogy or role play)
- The teacher uses questioning to thoroughly check the students' understanding (e.g. they ask a series of questions drilling down to an individual child's or class' understanding, then ask other children to determine if the answer is right)
- The teacher sets more than one task
- The teacher appropriately challenges the able pupils and supports those who are struggling
- The teacher checks the learning at the end of the lesson through questioning or other means
- The teacher gives detailed feedback where there are misconceptions

The researchers graded the quality of the lessons observed as low, medium or high quality

Limitations and considerations

The study focused exclusively on girls due to the large amount of information the team intended to collect within a relatively short timeframe for in-school work. However, during all discussions and observations researchers also considered the position of boys to broaden the perspective of the study. No focus groups were

undertaken with any out-of-school girls (those who had either dropped out or never enrolled), due to the desire to focus on in-school factors that might illustrate the educational context that either hinders or supports continued learning for girls.

Researcher presence will have had some impact on the behaviour observed and the responses during discussions. The headteachers and staff knew that this research was connected to a girls' education project, so they may have made a conscious effort to make their schools look good in terms of their treatment of girls. For instance, during lesson observations teachers may have made an extra effort to demonstrate what they considered to be good teaching, and to involve girls in the lesson. They may also have deliberately avoided displaying controversial practices such as corporal punishment.

Many of the topics discussed were sensitive, and participants may not have felt comfortable giving their honest opinions or sharing their personal stories. For example, the discussions with girls about HIV, pregnancy and teachers' treatment of them could have been influenced by embarrassment, shame or fear.

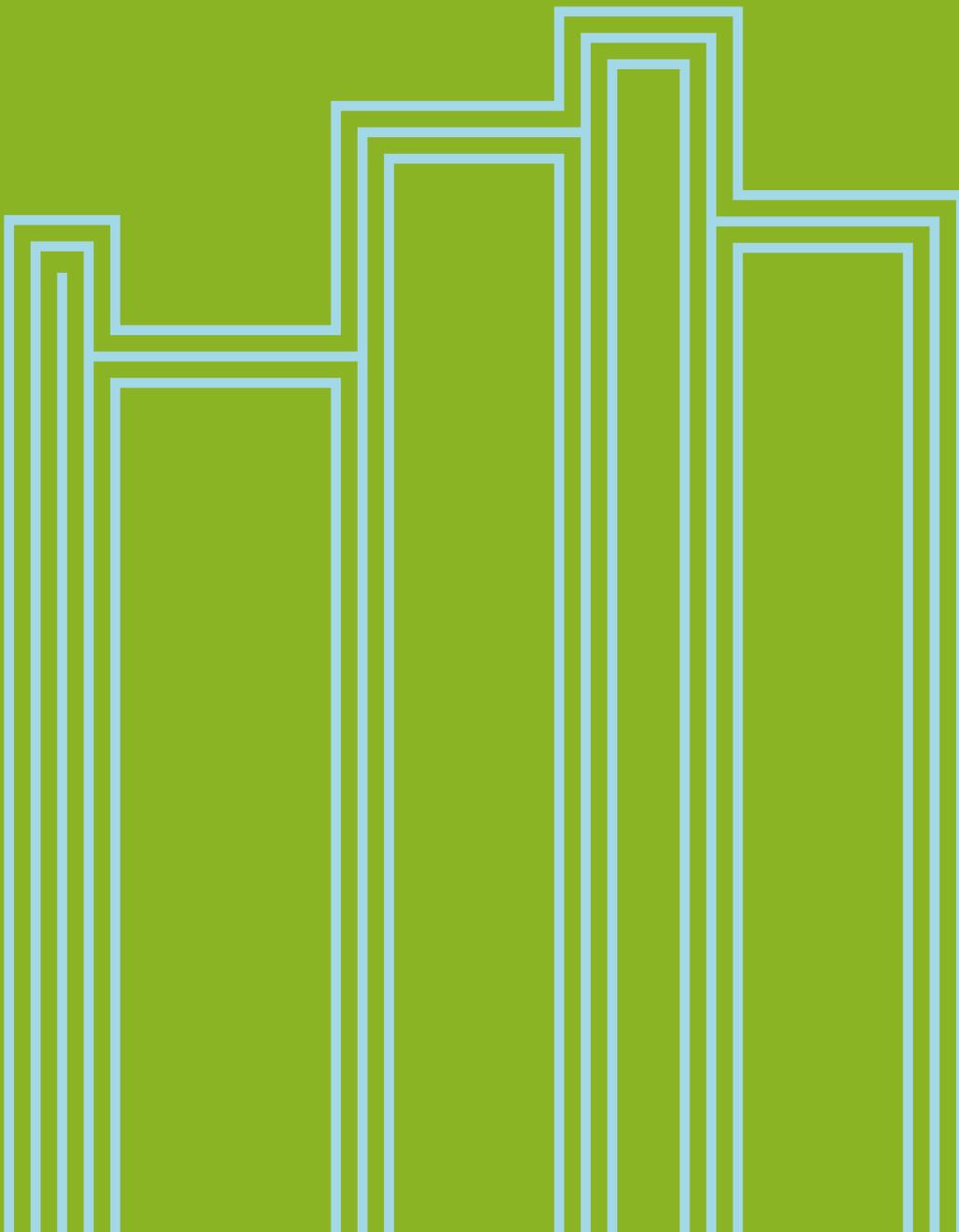
The team worked hard to mitigate the observer effect and encourage open and full participation by spending time in the schools and building a rapport with the girls participating in the study. All participants were provided extensive and clear descriptions of the study and its purposes, and given time to reflect and ask questions. Lesson observations were conducted discreetly to minimise disruption.

All names (school and individual) have been changed to protect the identities of institutions and individuals. The real names of each case study school in Turkana and Nairobi have been anonymised.

The team worked hard to mitigate the observer effect and encourage open and full participation by spending time in the schools and building a rapport with the girls participating in the study

Chapter 3

Findings by data source



This section presents the findings by data source, starting with some of the key information gathered from the 16 schools.

This is followed by four descriptive vignettes which illustrate the school environment in two schools in Turkana and two in Nairobi. The findings from the lesson observations, girls' focus groups, headteacher and teacher interviews are then detailed.

Greater disparity is evident between the achievement of girls and the achievement of all pupils in Turkana than in Nairobi

School context

Gender parity and KCPE scores

In order to contextualise the data that follow, the following tables and narrative describe the most salient features.

TABLE 7: KCPE SCORES AND GPI OF SCHOOLS BY EXAM SCORE GROUPING

Location	Higher/lower KCPE exam scores ⁴⁶		KCPE 2013 mean score	KCPE 2013 girls' mean score	GPI of enrolment
Turkana	Higher N = 4 (includes 2 boarding schools)	Mean	260	232	0.6
		Range	250–267	207–257	0.52–0.67
	Lower N = 4	Mean	227	220	0.7
		Range	219–231	212–227	0.48–0.83
Nairobi	Higher N = 3	Mean	294	287	1.0
		Range	261--319	265–314	0.8–1.05
	Lower N = 5 (includes 2 government schools)	Mean	220	228	1.0
		Range	170--240	213–245	0.7–1.19

Greater disparity is evident between the achievement of girls and the achievement of all pupils in Turkana than in Nairobi. Table 7 shows that in the Turkana sample of schools the girls' mean score in their 2013 KCPE was lower than the overall mean score for all pupils. In the Nairobi sample of schools there was less difference between the girls' mean score and the overall mean.

It also shows that the overall mean GPI was higher in the Nairobi schools than in the Turkana schools. The Nairobi schools in the sample had roughly the same number of girls and boys enrolled, but in Turkana there were only two girls to every three boys. Interestingly, the higher-performing sample schools (in terms of girls' achievement) in Turkana were some of the furthest from gender parity in terms of enrolment and learning outcomes.

⁴⁶ 'Higher' and 'lower' performance was based on KCPE scores from 2013; those schools with mean KCPE score above 250 (the national average) were considered higher performers and those with a mean KCPE score below 250 were considered lower performers.

Orderliness, teacher/pupil ratios and fees

An 'orderliness' score from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest) was assigned to each school based on observations, headteacher interviews and lesson observations during the case study visit. During the 'out-of-school' observations the researcher team noted the extent to which:

- the school timetable followed accurately
- the headteacher's office was tidy, with important information such as the school development plan or enrolment numbers on display or to hand
- the headteacher or senior staff could easily access important data (such as the KCPE results)
- the head reported their interactions with the school management committee (SMC)
- the pupil conduct around the school compound at lesson change times or while queuing for their lunch
- the teachers conduct and presence in and around school and classrooms during lesson time and movement between lessons at lesson change times.

Table 8 shows the case study schools by region and performance and their associated orderliness scores, pupil/teacher ratios and the fees charged. Most of the schools with higher KCPE results tended to score higher for orderliness (most scored a 3), with the exception of one school in Turkana which scored higher for KCPE and 1 for orderliness. This school had recently reached a mean score above 250 in its 2013 KCPE for the first time in many years. It was suggested in an interview that this was because the chair of the SMC had personally coached the nine candidates. Despite this outlier, it is reasonable to note that most of the better-performing schools also scored at the upper end of the orderliness scale.

An 'orderliness' score from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest) was assigned to each school based on observations, headteacher interviews and lesson observations during the case study visit

TABLE 8: SCHOOL MANAGEMENT INDICATORS BY EXAM SCORE GROUPING

Location	Higher/lower KCPE exam scores		Orderliness (1–5) as observed	Pupil/teacher ratio	Fees (Ksh per term)
Turkana	Higher N = 4 (includes 2 boarding schools)	Mean	2.8	45	Insufficient data
		Range	1–4	29–63	100–700
	Lower N = 4	Mean	2.3	32	Insufficient data
		Range	2–3	21–54	100–700
Nairobi	Higher N = 3	Mean	3.3	25	2,333
		Range	3–4	24–29	2,000–2,600
	Lower N = 5 (includes 2 government schools)	Mean	2.6	34	1,172
		Range	1–3	14–62	150–3,000

Table 8 also shows that the pupil/teacher ratio varied greatly between schools. It was generally higher in Turkana (39 pupils per teacher, on average). In Nairobi, the low-cost private schools tended to have lower pupil/teacher ratios (23 pupils per teacher, on average) and none had more than 33 students per teacher. The two government schools both had at least 45 students per teacher.

All the Turkana schools were government funded, but pupils were charged for items such as extra morning or evening prep lessons in upper primary, and for exam fees. In Nairobi this was also true for the government schools. The low-cost private schools charged fees. 'Fees' is used throughout the report to indicate all costs associated with school as well as specifically to refer to the fees charged by some schools. As Table 8 shows, in Turkana there was little difference between the fees charged by schools with higher vs. lower KCPE results. In Turkana, the headteachers were not always willing to disclose the amounts they charged to students, so the data are partly based on the amounts reported by the students; since these charges were not provided in a consistent way, only a range is reported. In Nairobi the three schools with higher KCPE results charged higher fees than most of those with lower KCPE results. However, there was a wide range of fees charged by lower-performing schools. This group included the two government schools, which charged by far the lowest fees in the Nairobi sample (250 Ksh or less), and two of the cheaper low-cost private schools (charging 600 Ksh and 1,850 Ksh). One private school with lower KCPE results charged 3,000 Ksh per term.

Staff presence in school and teachers' gender

The study also tracked headteacher and teacher absenteeism on the days of the study visits. Across all eight schools that were visited in Turkana, in only three schools was the headteacher present for both days of data collection. In two of the schools that were visited the team did not meet the headteachers, both of whom were in Lodwar town (the most central and largest town in Turkana) on business at the time of the visit. In the three other schools the headteachers were only present for one of the days the team was there. In Nairobi all eight headteachers were present for every day of the research, with the exception of two who had to leave for meetings on one afternoon.

In Turkana, teacher absence was high in the eight sample schools. On average around two to three teachers were absent on each of the days the team visited the schools. This equated to nearly a third of the teaching staff in each school. In the Nairobi schools, teacher absenteeism was lower: only one school was without several of its staff on one of the days the team was present.

The gender balance of the teaching staff and SMC was also considered. As Table 9 shows, the Nairobi schools tended to have a higher proportion of female teachers and females on the SMC. All schools had at least one female teacher, but in most cases the majority of teachers were male. Interestingly, the Turkana schools with the lowest proportion of female teachers had the highest proportion of female students, and vice versa. In Nairobi the teaching staff at the government schools were predominantly (around 75 per cent) female, whereas most of the low-cost primary schools had more male than female teachers, but there did not appear to be any relationship with the GPI of students. Also, in Turkana there were no female chairs of the SMC; two schools in the Nairobi sample had female SMC chairs.

In Turkana, teacher absence was high in the eight sample schools. On average around two to three teachers were absent on each of the days the team visited the schools

TABLE 9: STAFF AND PTA GENDER BALANCE

Location		% of female teachers	% women on the SMC
Turkana	Mean	37%	42%
	Range	17– 55%	37–50%
Nairobi	Mean	53%	55%
	Range	33–78%	33–80%

School environment

This section presents four vignettes, each describing one school, which were chosen to present the range of contexts visited in the 16 schools. These accounts are based on a combination of out-of-lesson observations, in-lesson observation, interview data and researcher reflections.

The schools visited in Turkana generally consisted of several single-storey stone buildings, usually on a relatively large, fenced-in site. The school timetables, especially in schools with lower KCPE learning outcomes for girls, appeared to be only vaguely followed. In these schools girls and boys were seen doing chores in equal amounts, although the type of chores they were set varied by gender. Boys tended to carry tables or rocks, while girls would sweep, collect water and clean the compound. In the 'less orderly' schools children were seen doing fewer chores overall. In several cases the female teachers were also caring for their own children during school time. These children would either play outside or sit in the staff room, but they frequently wandered into lessons to get their mothers' attention. All of the schools in our sample in Turkana received food (maize and yellow peas) from the World Food Programme. During lunchtime the girls were observed playing football or chasing each other in few of the schools.

In Nairobi five of the schools had classrooms that were single-storey rooms made of corrugated iron with a dirt floor. At least three of these schools had classrooms spread across an area of the slum, rather than having a single school centre or hub. The two government schools in the sample were made of brick, and some parts were two storeys high, with a good-sized compound surrounded by a fence. Only one low-cost private school was made of brick; it was three storeys high. The building was new (having opened in January 2014) and had been built with funds received from an individual American donor. There was no playing area or space outside the building for the students.

Although the orderliness of the Nairobi schools varied in terms of pupil behaviour, the school timetable was usually followed as written, even in the schools with lower learning outcomes. Fewer girls and students were observed undertaking chores in the Nairobi schools than in Turkana. If girls were seen undertaking activities for the teacher, they tended to be errands such as carrying books.

In several cases the female teachers were also caring for their own children during school time. These children would either play outside or sit in the staff room, but they frequently wandered into lessons to get their mothers' attention

Food was not provided in four of the low-cost private schools in Nairobi. The two government schools did provide food, again from the World Food Programme, and two of the low-cost private schools also provided food paid for by school funds. These two private schools had relatively high fees, and actively pursued the collection of these fees. During lunchtime in Nairobi, no girls were observed playing in any of the private schools. In the two government schools with outside space, girls played football, chase and other games.

At no time during any of the visits was corporal punishment seen taking place, but the team did hear what sounded like a child being beaten in the class next door on three occasions (once in Turkana and twice in Nairobi). In some schools the girls reported that corporal punishment was administered.

The vignettes on the following pages describe visits to two schools in Turkana and two in Nairobi.

At no time during any of the visits was corporal punishment seen taking place, but the team did hear what sounded like a child being beaten in the class next door on three occasions

T4: Turkana

The school is just beyond the village. Two boys come running up to open the gate and the head comes out to greet us. The compound is quite large, over an acre in size. The ground is sandy with one large tree and several smaller newly planted ones. There are several single-storey stone buildings with corrugated iron roofs, a block for upper and lower primary, a block for the head's office and staffroom, a block for the kitchen, and a block for the head's and deputy's houses. There are four large water tanks, but only two are in operation; they supply a tap near the kitchen. The Kenyan flag is raised just outside the main block and rocks are arranged in rows on the ground. Assembly has just taken place.

We speak with the head about the GEC project (he is unfamiliar with it as he has just been transferred to the school). He is welcoming and immediately helps us organise our lesson observations and focus groups. He tells us it is common practice to help girls return to school once they have had a child, but that he is not familiar with any girls being pregnant in this school as he is new. We also meet the head of the SMC, who tells us they have a female pupil representative on the committee. She is in standard 7, but we are unable to meet her since she has not yet returned to school this term. The chair of the SMC says he is committed to helping the girls at the school, and presses us to give a scholarship for two girls who did well in the KCPE and would like to attend secondary school. A day or so later, we receive a call from the chair reminding us about these two girls. He is persistent in seeking support for them.

At lunchtime all of the children sit under the large shady tree. The head speaks with them in Kiswahili and they pray together. A group of tall boys in standard 8 step forward to carry the huge pot of maize and beans to a concrete platform from where it is served. A teacher oversees each class coming up one by one; the girls always went first.

'Two of the teachers really encourage questioning and draw out the answers from the girls when they are shy. One teacher tells us they know that 'girls can outperform the boys'. In upper primary the children have a longer day; they take evening prep lessons'

After lunch, games are played. Even the girls are playing football. A boy from the village comes in through the small gate and starts fighting with another boy. The head separates them. Another two boys fight over a jerry can and again the head intervenes. Several girls are playing chase around the school building. Other children are washing their faces, hands and feet at the tap, trying to keep cool.

Several teachers are absent, so the head sets work for those classes and goes back and forth to check on them. He sends one class out to collect thorns and any litter around the school compound. They come tearing back and place it all in a big pile. Many have brought back large parts of thorn bushes. The teachers speak mainly in Kiswahili and Turkana to the children. Two of the teachers really encourage questioning and draw out the answers from the girls when they are shy. One teacher tells us they know that 'girls can outperform the boys'. In upper primary the children have a longer day; they take evening prep lessons as the solar lighting in two of the classrooms helps them to work in the dark. We are told the girls are walked back into the village as a group once the lessons are done.

A school table and bench are carried to the shade of a tree for our focus group. The girls seem happy to speak with us. They are relaxed and seem surprised by some of our questions; they don't think girls are treated any differently to boys. The

head joins us for some of the focus group, but the girls continue to speak openly. He encourages them to speak out and say what they think. The girls tell us that marriage is very common in the area, but that they all want to finish school. The girls like assemblies; they are told to take courage and be confident during assembly and they like hearing that. Once the head is gone they tell us that they like the new head, although they don't know him well. They do not act any differently now that he is gone. They tell us about one teacher in particular, a male teacher, who they say is very supportive and they feel they can confide

in him. We are told that the girls do not have a preference for male or female teachers, and that one of the male teachers is more understanding of their problems. They are given sanitary pads and this helps them attend school, they tell us. They tell us about a few girls who may go to secondary school this year, and that this makes them feel confident about their own futures. One girl in our focus group is struggling to pay her exam fees but so far she has been allowed to come to school. They pity the girls in the village who do not attend school, as they don't think they will have a future without the school.

T7: Turkana

The school is just outside the village. It has a large compound of several dusty acres and a few thorn trees surrounded by a wire fence. The school building is a long, single-storey, stone block with a corrugated iron roof. Each class has its own room and there is also a head's office and a library (though it has ceased to be a library and is now a staff room despite the sign on the door). The kitchen is a small stand-alone building, already radiating heat and thick smoke as the daily meal of maize and yellow peas is prepared for lunch. Two brand new toilet blocks sit 100m away: one for girls and one for boys. These toilets are not yet in use, so the children share a small corrugated iron shed with a wooden door hanging loosely from the hinges.

On arrival we are not greeted by anyone but find the deputy in the head's office. She tells us that the head is away for several days. We discuss the GEC project, which she has not heard of (she had just been transferred to the school), and show her our research certificates. She seems indifferent, and in talking with her it is clear she is unhappy to have been transferred from her previous school. As we talk, her own child, who is not more than three years old, comes in and out of

the room, climbing on and off her knee. She tells us that pregnant girls should not come to school since they provide a bad example to others, but considers that they may take their KCPE exam if they have registered. She says that the community here are quarrelsome.

At lunchtime the lunch queue for the lower primary students is a river of moving, pushing, shouting children. It eventually results in a pile-up with several small boys crushed on the floor; the younger girls in the queue hold onto each other and look on. The cook comes out waving a spoon and the queue moves backwards a few steps. The little boys squashed by the queue seem tearful but fight their way back into the

'She tells us that pregnant girls should not come to school since they provide a bad example to others, but considers that they may take their KCPE exam if they have registered. She says that the community here are quarrelsome.'

line. Meanwhile, several other boys are climbing the thorn tree next to the kitchen and throwing rocks. Another group of girls play by the water tap near the kitchen and others sit dozing outside the classrooms. There are no footballs or games taking place.

A third of teachers are absent, and some of the classes are noisy whilst they wait for the next lesson. We learn that whilst evening classes are available, few of the girls attend. The boys are allowed to sleep in one of the buildings after evening class, but the girls are forbidden and have to make their way home in the dark and do their chores at home. The teachers' subject knowledge is weak, and in one lesson the teacher tells the class that 'very is a word used to describe overcoming difficulty'. We see a maths lesson with only two girls, one of whom is struggling. The teacher beckons the girl to the front of the class. She stands there waiting, facing the blackboard, hoping the answer will come. During and after lessons the teachers speak mainly in Turkana.

During our focus group with the girls they tell us that they fear the teachers and being beaten, and that are they often called names like 'wifey' or 'whore'. They don't have one teacher they can go to for advice. Several of the girls are more talkative and by the second day they share information about some of the staff, including a story that the previous head and deputy had sold the sanitary pads meant for the girls. At the end

of the second day one of the girls tells us that they are now afraid to speak with us because their teachers have threatened to beat them should they speak lies. We resolve this matter with the deputy and speak with the head over the phone to be certain of the girls' safety. The issue is also reported to the GEC project Turkana field officers so they may follow up and visit the school the following week. The girls inform us that their exam fees are around 700 Ksh (£5) per term in upper primary. This may explain why standard 8 has very few girls. They also tell us that the

'We learn that whilst evening classes are available, few of the girls attend. The boys are allowed to sleep in one of the buildings after evening class, but the girls are forbidden and have to make their way home in the dark and do their chores at home'

teachers usually 'eat the exam fees', meaning that they misappropriate the money. The girls also tell us that they had brought money for a dormitory in which only the boys are allowed to sleep in because it is feared the girls would start relationships if they also stayed. The girls therefore have to walk home in the dark or choose not to attend evening classes, as many of them do.

N1: Nairobi

The school is close to one of the slum's slightly wider, concrete roads. We walk down a short alleyway behind a row of stalls/shops to find the headteacher's office. It is a small corrugated iron room with educational posters and various charts on the wall showing the numbers enrolled, the timetable and the

school development plan. The head welcomes us and takes us on a tour of the school. Most of the classrooms are along another alleyway parallel to the road that we arrived on. All made of corrugated iron, they are hot inside. Each classroom feels like it is ready to burst with students; they are packed tightly in dark rooms

with no windows. One of the classrooms has the toilets at the back, and the smell is strong. Class 1 and 2 share their classroom space: separated by old maize sacks hanging from the ceiling, each class faces in the opposite direction. The noise is deafening from class 2 who are speaking in unison, but class 1 do not seem concerned. There is a secondary school here too; it is part of the same school but they have different teachers.

Back in the head's office we talk to him about the GEC project. He is very pleased the programme has come to his school. He tells us that he has very strong relationships with the community and parents. Many girls enrol and stay at his school, and their learning outcomes are good. He tells us that girls are very important in their society and must perform even better.

There is no kitchen, and food is not provided. The children get their own lunch, or on occasion the head and other teachers provide for them. There is no play area either, but the children make use of all available space. The smaller girls and boys play outside the head's office, climbing on a wooden pallet. The older ones sit in their classrooms. We see two parents who have come to feed their children lunch in the younger classes. They tell us how much they value the school.

The teacher in class 8 has very good subject knowledge and the children seem to enjoy the lesson, despite the heat and the cramped conditions. The teacher asks lots of questions, which keeps the students engaged. He addresses misconceptions with diagrams on the board. He seems to focus on boys and girls equally, and gives positive praise when they speak. There are as many girls as boys in the class.

We use the head's office for the focus group with the girls. The head brings bananas and fried potatoes for them to eat. He has already told me that one of the girls is struggling at home. She is living with her stepmother, who is making her do chores so late into the night that she goes to bed at 1am. The girls open up quickly. They tell me how safe and happy they feel at the school. They have several teachers on whom they rely for support and advice. Some of the girls are struggling with the school fees, but are confident they will find a way or that the teachers will help them. The girl being made to do chores for her stepmother does seem very tired, but she says she is determined not to give up school. She says the teachers understand her situation when she cannot do the homework, and they usually allow her to do it at lunchtime.

N5: Nairobi

The school is far into the slum. We leave the concrete roads far behind and make our way down narrow mud alleyways. Piles of burning litter and kiosks on either side of the narrow road make it hard for the vehicle to progress so we continue on foot. We arrive at the head's office; he is interested to meet us. He is concerned for my safety and insists we call for a local man to guard us. We talk to him about the GEC project; he is interested in how

the project works and is keen to stress that his school would like some funds and that the boys should receive more as they are needy. He tells us that girls do have problems here due to what he calls 'cubicle living' but otherwise he has no concerns for the girls.

He takes us on a tour of the school. The classrooms are spread across several different locations. His office, made of corrugated iron, is

next to the nursery class. We walk down a muddy slope that twists and turns and has low, single-storey mud or corrugated iron homes crowded along either side. One classroom is at the bottom of the slope; the others are set further back. The upper primary classes are clustered together around a very small open space that the children use to play on. There is no running water, only a small barrel that catches rainwater. There are two toilets with wooden doors.

In the classroom it is dark, as there are no windows. Inside, the noise of the rain on the roof makes it hard to concentrate. We observe a lesson by a teacher who has just left secondary school. His subject knowledge is acceptable, but he is clearly frustrated quite regularly by the pupils. At the end of the lesson he tells the whole class to stay behind. He tells them to kneel on the floor and ask for his forgiveness for being noisy. This surprises us as the class seemed well behaved. The young teacher asks one girl to follow him; we also follow. In the staff room he gives her some books and asks her to carry them. He runs his key over her school jumper as he gives her instructions about where to take the books. She looks nervous and runs out with them into the rain. We speak with a young female teacher who tells us she does not want to be a teacher and that she is pregnant so she must keep her job for as long as she can.

At lunchtime there is no food. The children are not allowed to sit in their classroom. They stand around in tightly packed groups on the small patch of earth. A teacher whistles at them from the staff room window and tells them to keep quiet.

We meet our focus group of girls in a classroom during lunchtime. The girls seem very pleased to

'We observe a lesson by a teacher who has just left secondary school. His subject knowledge is acceptable, but he is clearly frustrated quite regularly by the pupils. At the end of the lesson he tells the whole class to stay behind. He tells them to kneel on the floor and ask for his forgiveness for being noisy. This surprises us as the class seemed well behaved.'

be speaking with us. They tell us how nice it is to hear from us and speak with us. They say that they are often afraid of being at school. Sometimes the neighbours climb through the school and break things, or their loud radios disturb their lessons. They do not feel that the teachers provide them with much support. They all want to finish primary school and stay in education, but many of them are concerned about paying their school fees, especially those living with step-parents or guardians. Any support they receive for their fees comes from outside the school. They tell us that the teachers, both male and female, often tease them, and do not listen to them when they have problems. They say that the head is usually away for meetings and that the teachers spend most of their time in the staffroom, not the classrooms. They talk about the peer pressure on girls in the community and say that the school doesn't help them feel confident enough to deal with their problems. According to the focus group, many girls have dropped out of this school, usually because they could not afford the fees and then got pregnant.

Lesson observations

The team endeavoured to see four full lessons in each of the 16 schools. In total it was possible to observe 53 lessons (three or four per school). This section outlines the main findings from those lesson observations. Each lesson was graded as high, medium or low quality, according to set criteria discussed earlier. Table 10 shows the breakdown of the number of lessons graded in each category by school.

TABLE 10: QUALITY OF LESSON OBSERVATIONS IN HIGHER- AND LOWER-PERFORMING SCHOOLS

Location	No. of observations	No. of low/medium/high		
		Low	Medium	High
Turkana – total	26	17	9	0
Higher-performing schools		4	6	0
Lower-performing schools		13	3	0
Nairobi – Total	27	12	15	0
Higher-performing schools		2	10	0
Lower-performing schools		10	5	0

Around half of the lessons were graded as 'medium', and the rest were deemed to be of 'low' quality

No 'high' quality lessons were observed. This is not surprising, given that the study sample was taken from GEC project schools, which are themselves selected on the basis of underperformance. Around half of the lessons were graded as 'medium', and the rest were deemed to be of 'low' quality. Overall, more observed lessons were graded as medium quality in the schools with better learning outcomes, and more observed lessons were graded as medium quality in Nairobi than in Turkana. Table 11 displays the practices that happened often, rarely and never over the course of 53 lesson observations.

TABLE 11: RESULTS OF LESSON OBSERVATIONS

Often happened

- The teacher shows appropriate subject knowledge
- The teacher has appropriate mastery of languages of instruction
- The teacher tells the students the focus of the lesson
- The teacher explains the work required
- The teacher asks the class questions or gets them to do an example on the board
- The teacher asks the boys and girls questions fairly equally
- The teacher sets the class one undifferentiated task
- The children are silent
- The teacher collects the books for marking/marks the work in class

Rarely happened

- The teacher has good subject knowledge
- The teacher has good mastery of the languages of instruction
- The teacher asks the class to do examples on the board, building their understanding from an easy to a more complex example
- The teacher positively encourages quieter or less confident boys and girls
- The children are engaged and trying hard
- The teacher remains in class for the full length of the lesson

TABLE 11: RESULTS OF LESSON OBSERVATIONS (CONTINUED)

Never happened

- The teacher has excellent subject knowledge
- The teacher has excellent mastery of the languages of instruction
- The teacher gives a good explanation of the work (e.g. through use of an analogy or role play)
- The teacher uses questioning to thoroughly check the students' understanding (e.g. they ask a series of questions, drilling down to an individual child's or class' understanding, then ask the other children to determine if the answer is right)
- The teacher challenges the able pupils and supports those in need appropriately

Typical medium- and low-quality lessons

Figure 1 (opposite) describes a typical medium- and low-quality lesson.

- **In the lesson graded as medium** the teacher had an objective, she explained and role modelled the work for the children through clapping their names, and then tested their understanding by getting them to do it for themselves. Most children seemed able to do the exercise easily and understood the purpose of the lesson. The teacher checked their understanding by getting individual children to clap out names and later by moving around the classroom and marking books. The teacher remained present for the full length of the lesson.
- **In the lesson graded as low quality** there was very limited teacher explanation or teacher–student interaction. Although it was clear that the pupils had done this topic before, there was no assessment of their learning or recollection. The teacher relied on one boy at the front to do the examples on the board. There was no activity other than the textbook exercise.

In this lesson, the teacher arrived late then informed us that the lesson was complete after only 15 minutes of teaching. This was fairly typical of lessons observed in Turkana. Teachers often arrived at a lesson, introduced a topic, went through a page or so in the textbook, set an exercise and then left the classroom. They returned at the end of the lesson or asked a pupil to collect the books.

Teachers often arrived at a lesson, introduced a topic, went through a page or so in the textbook, set an exercise and then left the classroom

FIGURE 1: TYPICAL MEDIUM AND LOW QUALITY LESSONS

Typical medium-quality lesson

Context

Class 2 English lesson. The alphabet was strung across the ceiling and there were posters of animals and kitchen utensils with their English and Swahili names. Most of the children shared a textbook (one between three). All children had their own pencil and exercise book. They sat at wooden desks with benches attached.

Activities taking place

8:35am Purpose of lesson explained: they will be learning about syllables. Teacher claps out several of their names in syllables and repeats it to reinforce the sounding of syllables.

8:40am The teacher asks the children to clap out each other's names in syllables, as a whole class at first, and then she picks individual children to do this. About 10 girls and 12 boys are asked. The teacher praises all of them and asks the class to clap out the syllables of a name if a child claps out the incorrect number of syllables. The teacher claps with them, but tries not to lead what they are doing. She moves around the classroom, sometimes standing at the back where they cannot see her.

8:45am The teacher writes a series of words on the board. She and the children clap out the syllables of those words together. She writes down in full sentences how many syllables each word has.

9:00am The teacher instructs the children to go to the textbook and complete a task on syllables. The children busily set about the task. Almost all are engaged. Several are taking longer to write the date and word. The teacher helps them.

9:05am As they work on the task, the teacher moves around the classroom marking books and checking understanding. She helps two girls and four boys.

Seating arrangement

Front of class facing blackboard

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G G G B G B B B G G B B
B G G G G G B B B B
  B B B G G G B B B
    R B B G
  
```

G Girl B Boy R Researcher

Typical low-quality lesson

Context

Class 7 mathematics lesson. The classroom environment was very bare and uninspiring. There were no posters or displays. The children were sharing textbooks (one between four). They sat at wooden desks with benches attached.

Activities taking place

2:10pm The teacher arrives 10 minutes late. He writes the mathematics mnemonic BODMAS on the board. He tells the children what BODMAS stands for and writes each word of the mnemonic on the board. The children repeat what the teacher says and write it in their exercise books.

2:15pm The teacher asks one pupil to do one example on the board. A boy sitting at the front of the class is chosen. He is able to do the example correctly and quite swiftly – it appears that the class have studied this topic before. A girl is asked to come forward to do another example. She is less confident and hesitates at the board. The boy who did the last example is asked up to help her. She stands back and watches him write the answer on the board. When he is finished the teacher asks the class if his answer is correct. They mumble and the teacher says 'yes!' The girl and boy return to their seats.

2:25pm The children are asked to do an exercise from the textbook. The teacher comes over to us and tells us the lesson is complete (only 15 minutes in). We explain that we will stay in the lesson until it ends, just to see how the children are doing. The teacher looks a little pained by this. He will be back in a minute he says and he leaves the classroom.

The children move seats to be nearer friends or get help, and others get up to borrow pencils etc. One or two turn around to look at us at the back of the class, but for the most part they are writing in their exercise books.

2:45pm The teacher comes back and collects their exercise books. As he comes in he reprimands one boy for crouching next to his friend's desk and perhaps copying their work. We leave with the teacher and thank him.

Seating arrangement

Front of class facing blackboard

```

G G G B G B B B G G B B
  B G G G G G G G G
    B B G G G G B B B B
      B B B G B G B B G G G
        B B G
          B R
  
```

Focus groups with the girls

The research included focus groups with the upper primary classes in each of the 16 schools. The same group of girls were interviewed four times over two days, with each session lasting between 1 and 1.5 hours.

Expectations and aspirations for their future

High hopes for the future

In the first session the girls were asked open questions like: 'what would you like to be doing in 10 years' time?' This was a popular question and would lead to lengthy discussions. The most common aspiration was to go to university and pursue a career such as doctor, lawyer, journalist, engineer or pilot. In one school the girls wanted to gain a Masters-level degree. The majority of girls wanted to become a mother and start a family. About ten of the 128 girls did not want children at all. Several of these girls from Turkana wanted to become nuns; others from Nairobi reported that it was because marriage and relationships were unhappy and challenging. Two others, also from Nairobi, said it was to do with their fear of diseases like HIV. All of the girls who wanted families, however, wanted to finish their education before they had children. They also all wanted to have children within marriage. The girls from Turkana generally wanted larger families of around four to six children, while in Nairobi the girls tended to want about two children.

Confident in school but worried about fees

The girls were asked how confident they felt about the future and if they had any fears. They were asked to place themselves on a line ranging from 'not confident at all' to 'very confident'. Usually once the researcher asked the girls why they were standing at the very confident end of the line they would shift towards the less confident end. In Nairobi the girls generally demonstrated greater confidence about their futures. The most frequent reason given for a lack of confidence in the future was to do with school fees. Almost all of the girls in Turkana and most of the girls in Nairobi were not sure they would complete primary school due to the fees – both the amount charged and the extent to which the schools actively or aggressively pursued payment.

Lack of support from home and school

The next most frequent reason given for a lack of confidence in their futures was a lack of support from home and school. The girls commented that their confidence was built by having support from home or at least one supportive teacher who encouraged them at school. It was interesting that this teacher did not necessarily have to be the guidance and counselling teacher or a female teacher; when asked, the girls did not demonstrate a preference for female teachers in their responses.

Overall, it appeared that school fees (and how they were collected) and the quality of relationships with teachers were critical to the girls' confidence and continued presence at school.

Usually once the researcher asked the girls why they were standing at the very confident end of the line they would shift towards the less confident end. In Nairobi the girls generally demonstrated greater confidence about their futures

General questions about school

Relationships between teachers and pupils important for girls

In the second session with the girls they were asked more general questions about their school, such as what they particularly liked about it and what they would like to change. The most frequently mentioned aspect that they like about school was the general experience of being at school and the opportunity to learn. The relationships with teachers were the next most commonly cited reason for liking or disliking school. Some of the girls said they disliked being beaten. As discussed above, corporal punishment was not directly observed during the visits, but the girls' reports of being beaten were supported by some evidence of it taking place in classes that were not being observed.

The girls were also asked whether any of their friends had dropped out of school and whether they had ever thought of dropping out. The most frequent answers reflected what the girls had said about school fees in the previous session: other girls or friends had been forced to drop out of school due to the fees; only then had they become pregnant or got married.

Work outside school makes school harder for girls

The focus group discussions also frequently highlighted the girls' perceptions that they had more work or chores to do at home than the boys. Again, these comments would flow from open questions like 'what problems do girls face at school?' or 'have you ever thought of dropping out?' This perception was reinforced by the teachers, who also frequently justified girls' lower performance as the result of the chores they had to do at home. The girls also complained that sanitary pads were not available and said this was important to them. They explained that extra classes were harder for them to attend compared to the boys. They felt that the timing of extra early morning and evening lessons was unfair as they were afraid to walk to or from school in the dark. Again, these comments usually came up when the groups were asked 'what do you not like about school?'

They felt that the timing of extra early morning and evening lessons was unfair as they were afraid to walk to or from school in the dark

School mapping

School not always a safe place for girls

In this third session with the girls they each sketched a school map and indicated where on the school grounds they liked being or felt safe and where they did not like being or felt afraid. Toilets (and their quality) were the most frequent issue raised by the girls in this exercise. In some cases, it was apparent that the head's office and staff room were frightening places to go. Although girls typically talked about the school site as a safe place this was not always the case. In one Nairobi slum school the headteacher informed the team that two upper primary boys had tried to rape a younger girl behind one of the classrooms the day before.

Table 12 summarises the typical places the girls liked most or least at school.



TABLE 12: RESULTS OF SCHOOL MAPPING DISCUSSION

Places the girls generally liked most at school

- Under a tree/in the cool shade somewhere
- By the tap where you can drink (if there was water)
- In the play area or field
- In a classroom with a friendly teacher
- In the assembly area at assembly time
- In the girls dormitory (if there was one)

Places the girls generally least liked at school

- The toilets
- The kitchen, as it was hot
- The alleyways around the school (if in a slum)

Places that varied by school

- The head's office
- The staff room

Dimensions of marginalization that affect girls

In the fourth and final session the girls were shown ten pictures that portrayed ten dimensions of marginalisation for girls. The girls were asked to speak about themselves or other girls they knew who were affected by one or more of these aspects of marginalisation. They were asked if anyone had supported girls affected by these dimensions of marginalisation to stay in school. Table 13 notes the most frequent responses to each of the pictures.

TABLE 13: FOCUS GROUP RESPONSES TO PICTURES OF MARGINALISED GIRLS

Dimension of marginalisation	Most typical/frequent response
Under 16 girls who have started child bearing	Girls generally giggled when they saw the picture of the pregnant girl in school uniform. They explained that they were giggling because it was such an unlikely picture because no girls would continue to attend school whilst pregnant; they would be chased away by the school or they would be too ashamed to attend. If, however, they were in standard 8 they were allowed to return to take their KCPE exams. In exceptional circumstances they might return to school after the baby is born to continue their education. In most schools the girls could tell many stories of other girls they knew who had got pregnant at a young age.
Heads of households	The girls would explain that there were few girls in the community who were heads of households. With the exception of two focus groups in Turkana, most responses were along the lines of 'we don't really know girls like this'. They reported that if a girl were left as the head of the household it would only be for a temporary period.
Girls with disabilities	The girls showed great interest in the pictures of girls in wheelchairs, with crutches or using Braille. They said there were not many girls like this in their community, and they were rarely seen because these girls were usually kept at home. When asked why they were at home, the girls explained that the family did not have enough money for school fees or that they were ashamed of the girl. In Turkana there was one special school near Lokichar and the girls reported that this is where the disabled girls went. The study team met fewer than five girls with disabilities in our focus groups, and their disabilities did not affect their ability to learn or make it particularly hard to either get to school or move around at school.

The girls were asked to speak about themselves or other girls they knew who were affected

TABLE 13: FOCUS GROUP RESPONSES TO PICTURES OF MARGINALISED GIRLS (CONTINUED)

Girls who care for sick relatives	The girls reported that they did sometimes care for sick relatives, but it was not usually a permanent feature in their life and they were still able to come to school. They said they missed at most one day of school per term if a member of their family were sick. If a member of the family was sick there were often other family friends, neighbours or family members who would help. However, two girls said they had missed a whole term of school to care for someone. The groups explained that it was always the girls, not the boys, who would be required to help with caring responsibilities.
Engaged/married	In Turkana the girls reported that early marriage was common. The girls had many direct experiences of their friends, cousins, sisters, etc. that they could discuss. Early marriage also happened in Nairobi, but less frequently. In both Turkana and Nairobi the participants said they knew girls who had been married when the family could no longer afford to pay school fees. In Turkana, school fees and a girl's value as a bride usually motivated the family to make her 'wear beads', which symbolised that she was ready for marriage. In Nairobi it seemed that the girls would choose marriage if they were less confident about school and their future.
Extreme poverty	The picture shown to the girls to represent this dimension of marginalisation was of a girl in rags looking on as two girls walked to school. The girls found it intriguing. They said that they saw girls like this around and that many of them used to come to school, but that their parents did not have enough money for the fees.
Street children	The girls in Turkana said that they did not see any street girls. They said 'perhaps they are in Lokichar town but they are not in our villages'. In Nairobi the girls reported that there were some street children, but that more boys were affected by this dimension of marginalisation. One group informed us that this was because the boys were less willing to put up with issues or fights at home, so they would leave home and become street children. Another group said that it was because girls found work easier to get or they would be taken in by another family to do their chores. Meanwhile boys could only look for scrap metal, which they would do on the streets. None of the groups could name anyone who was supporting or helping these girls.
Working children	The girls usually saw this set of pictures and immediately talked about chores, rather than paid work per se. In Nairobi they told us that they did lots of chores, more than the boys, and that it made them too tired for their homework. Occasionally they spoke about girls who were forced into prostitution to make money. In Turkana the girls spoke less about the chores they performed, though it seemed that they had just as many (if not more) than the Nairobi girls. In addition to the chores, both the Turkana and Nairobi girls often helped their mothers with paid work on the weekends, such as cleaning someone's house (in Nairobi) or making baskets and mats (in Turkana).
Orphans	The focus group participants knew of many girls (and boys) who were orphans. It seemed that this issue was greater in Nairobi than Turkana, where the girls explained that extended families would usually take in the orphaned girls. The girls in Nairobi informed us that being orphaned or living in extreme poverty tended to lead to some of the other dimensions like becoming a working child, a street child or getting pregnant.
Living with HIV/AIDS	The girls in Turkana said that nobody had HIV, or if they did that it was a secret. There was slightly more openness about this issue in Nairobi. They said that girls were not likely to come to school if they had HIV since they were ashamed of it, and often their parents would not allow them to attend school. The girls said that people would learn of their condition and tease them if they attended school.

Two girls said they had missed a whole term of school to care for someone

Headteacher and teacher semi-structured interviews

During the visits to each of the 16 schools the team interviewed each headteacher (or deputy if the head was not available). The interview usually took over an hour and was the first activity undertaken at that school. A total of 14 heads and two deputies were interviewed. During the visits the team also interviewed up to four teachers in each school. In some schools it was not possible to interview four teachers for a range of reasons – some schools did not have four teachers present, while in others timetabling issues and the schedule of activities prevented all four from being involved. In total, 53 teachers whose lessons were observed were interviewed.

Headteacher interviews

Table 14 summarises the typical responses to key questions or areas of discussion. It was clear that headteachers in the Turkana schools had a short job tenure. Five of the eight heads had been in post for less than one year. It was also noticeable that headteachers were more absent at the schools visited in Turkana. Job tenure was longer in Nairobi, and all of the heads were present on at least one of the days of the study visit.

TABLE 14: HEADTEACHER RESPONSES TO KEY QUESTIONS

Topic area	Typical response
Experience and tenure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Turkana, five of the heads had been in post at that school for less than one year. Seven of the eight heads had previously been headteachers in other schools. • In Nairobi, seven of the heads had been in post for several years and five had founded the schools themselves. Only the two government heads had previously been headteachers of other schools. For all six heads of low-cost private schools, this was their first headship.
Enjoyment of their job and reason for becoming a head	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the schools with better learning outcomes the headteachers said that they enjoyed their job. • Generally, the headteachers in Nairobi were positive about their positions and enjoyed their work. The headteacher at one school in Nairobi, N1, seemed to be particularly values driven and committed. • In Turkana several of the heads were looking for other opportunities and wanted to be moved from the 'hardship area'.
Teachers' commitment	<p>The heads were asked if they had problems with absenteeism or staff commitment in general:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Turkana the question was not initially well understood. When explained, they would say that their teachers could not be committed in this area since it was too harsh. They would cite water and food access as critical factors affecting staff commitment. In one school the head reported that he actively motivated his staff with fried chicken once a term and other such treats. • In Nairobi schools with better learning outcomes, the heads seemed to value teacher commitment and recognise it more. In these three schools they described how they helped to maintain their teachers. In the other five schools they complained that their turnover was too high because the 'grass was always greener elsewhere'.
Role of the SMC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Turkana four of the heads reported an active and supportive SMC, whilst the other four said the SMC was not very active or supportive. • In Nairobi, six of the heads reported having an active and committed SMC (or 'school board' as they called it). The other two heads reported that the SMC was not active or supportive.

Generally, the headteachers in Nairobi were positive about their positions and enjoyed their work

Role of the PTA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Turkana six of the heads said the parents and community were not supportive and reported that they did not have a PTA. Some of these heads were quite negative about the community, and saw it as a problem for the school rather than as a source of support. • In Nairobi three of the heads reported having an engaged PTA that made an important difference to the school.
Policy around pregnant or vulnerable/marginalised girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Turkana three heads seemed to empathise with the situation of pregnant girls but still said it was best not to allow them to attend school. Few heads mentioned the government policy requiring pregnant girls to be allowed to remain in school. • In Nairobi four of the heads also seemed to empathise with the situation of pregnant girls, but only one school seemed to have actually supported a pregnant girl. • The majority of the heads said that the girl would be encouraged to 'deliver and then return'. They would not be encouraged to remain in school whilst pregnant unless the girl was in standard 8 and already enrolled in the KCPE, in which case the heads said that they would be allowed to return to just sit the exam.
Fees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While some headteachers were understanding of the late payment or inability to pay fees, most in Turkana said they could not afford to overlook it. In Turkana the two heads of the boarding schools explained that the fees had to be paid to run the school. They were sorry if girls were struggling and would try to support them, but this was not usual practice. Another day school with very high fees seemed less supportive of the girls if they were unable to pay. • In Nairobi, two heads were understanding about the issue and explained that they would support the girls to stay in school, because otherwise there was no hope for them. In the two government schools the heads were similarly supportive, but explained the fees were low so it was not usually an issue. In the other four schools the heads explained that they needed the fees to run the school and so they would be supportive but they could not run a free school.

While some headteachers were understanding of the late payment or inability to pay fees, most in Turkana said they could not afford to overlook it

Teachers

After each lesson observation the teachers were interviewed about their lessons and their attitudes towards girls at the school. Table 15 summarises the typical responses to the key questions.

TABLE 15: TEACHER RESPONSES TO KEY QUESTIONS

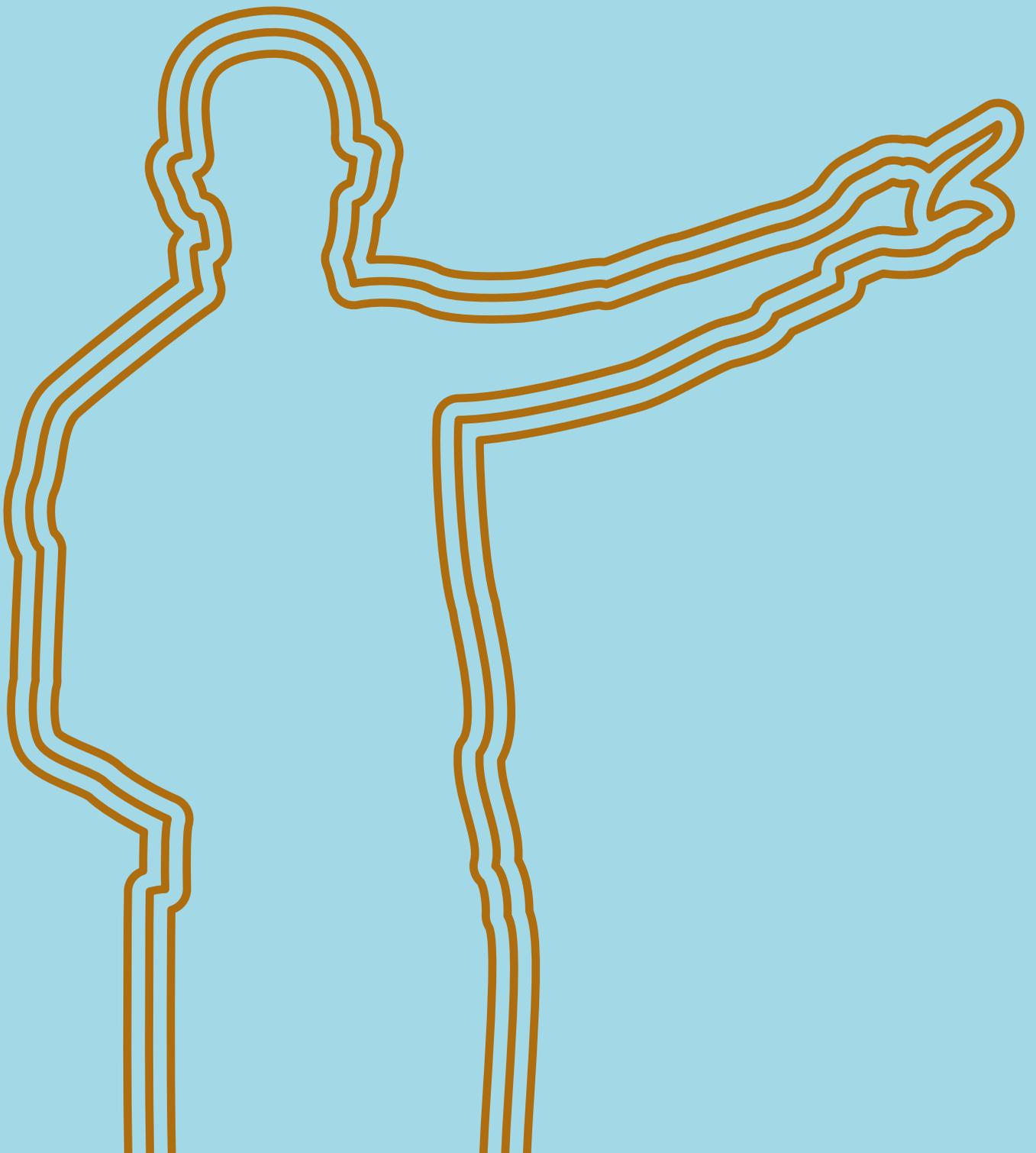
Topic area	Typical response
Experience and tenure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Turkana, most of the teachers were civil servants employed by the Teachers Service Commissions (TSC). Most had taught in more than one school. • In Nairobi, teachers in four of the low-cost private schools were young school leavers and did not have a teaching qualification. In the two government schools almost all of the teachers were fully qualified and employed by the TSC.
Preparation for the lesson observed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers reported that they used the scheme of work linked to the textbook to prepare their lessons. However, out of the 53 teachers interviewed, not one was able (or willing) to share a written lesson plan.
Attitude towards the school and their job	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Turkana, teachers from other parts of Western Kenya often told us that it was an area of hardship and appeared to regard their job as a chore. However, a few teachers said that they were committed and saw the importance of teaching. • In Nairobi, the teachers in two of the low-cost private schools seemed quite committed to the head and grateful for their jobs, yet the teachers in the other four private schools were less committed. In the two government schools the TSC teachers appeared committed and seemed to enjoy their jobs. Many were school leavers and saw this as a stepping stone to better jobs. Often they were more interested in speaking about their future career plans than talking about teaching, the girls and the school.

Boys' and girls' performance at school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Turkana, two thirds of the teachers expressed the view that girls were less able than boys. Teachers reported that 'girls were less motivated' or 'it was not in their nature to learn'. In a few exceptional cases the teachers there would tell us how the girls could outperform the boys and that they thought they were brighter. • In Nairobi the views tended to be more balanced. The teachers would discuss the different challenges girls and boys faced and how it may affect their results, but overall they would indicate that they believed girls could excel just as well as boys. • In Turkana most of the teachers interviewed at the day schools informed us that girls did not perform as well boys because they did not attend boarding schools. At the two boarding schools the teachers said the girls were lucky there since they were not distracted. • In Nairobi five (mainly male) teachers noted that menstruation or 'the cycle' explained why girls performed less well. They said that the girls were missing time off from school and so were unable to learn as much as the boys. In Turkana, teachers rarely mentioned this.
Relationship between teacher and female pupils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In three of the schools in Nairobi, teacher support for the girls was evident. In Turkana it was only really evident in one of the schools, where teachers expressed genuine concern and support for the welfare of the girls. • In both Nairobi and Turkana, some of teachers commented that the girls would get better support from, or be more likely to confide in, female teachers.
Concerns for girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Turkana, teachers gave mixed responses when asked about the challenges for girls' education. Five teachers said that the challenge or problem for girls was their culture and their parents who did not value their education. Four teachers said marriage was a problem for girls. Another four said the girls faced no problems, and a further four said that fees were the problem. Other issues that were mentioned included abuse, menstruation and pregnancy. • In Nairobi, the interviews covered a range of challenges. Four teachers said that fees were an issue and explained the differences in performance as girls would miss school time looking for their fees. Seven said that chores were an issue for girls, and another seven said that abuse at home affected the girls' performance. These teachers commented that abuse was a real problem in 'cubicle living' (living in the slums), and that the girls frequently suffered sexual abuse.
How teachers help the girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teachers did not appear to have a structured approach to helping girls deal with their problems. Most said that they treated all girls and boys the same. Teachers reported that for serious problems of abuse or early marriage, they had an open ear for the girls and that they would guide them and advise them as needed. A small number of teachers said that they had passed an issue on to the police or the chief. • In Turkana, several teachers mentioned life skills classes, but others reported that such lessons did not take place regularly and that it was not the appropriate place to discuss sensitive issues. • Only a small minority of the teachers in Nairobi said that their school offered life skills lessons or saw them as an opportunity to help motivate and support the girls in solving their problems.
Policy on pregnant or vulnerable/marginalised girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall, teachers were not very supportive of girls who had fallen pregnant. • The teachers said that pregnant girls were officially encouraged to remain in school, but that actually they were encouraged to leave immediately and only return for their KCPE exam if they had registered.

In Turkana, two thirds of the teachers expressed the view that girls were less able than boys

Chapter 4

Cross-case thematic analysis



A thematic approach applied to a cross-case analysis reveals five key areas associated with girls' difficulty attending school.

Listed in order of the frequency with which they appear in the data:

- Fees (including cost and how fees are collected by the school)
- Time for learning (including girls' access to extra lessons)
- Teachers (including teacher professionalism and skill)
- Leadership and management (including presence of the head and their approach to supporting girls)
- Disease and disability (including HIV)

Each of these themes is discussed below, drawing heavily on quotes from the focus groups, as well as interview data with headteachers and teachers.

One of the overriding and most frequently mentioned concerns that the girls' voiced about their schooling, including their ability to attend and continue learning in the future, was the payment of school fees

Fees

One of the overriding and most frequently mentioned concerns that the girls' voiced about their schooling, including their ability to attend and continue learning in the future, was the payment of school fees. All the Turkana schools and two of the Nairobi schools in this sample were government funded, and therefore officially 'fee free'. Yet even these schools charge for items such as exams and extra morning or evening prep lessons, particularly in upper primary. In Nairobi there were six low-cost private schools in the sample that charged fees.

Turkana

In the data presented earlier in the eight Turkana schools it was clear that there were barriers to girls entering and remaining in school. The headteachers, teachers and girls themselves reported that the opportunity cost of being in school was prohibitive for some. This was worse in Turkana than in Nairobi. The focus groups talked a lot about their concerns about fees when asked about their 'hopes and fears for their education' or the likelihood of 'dropping out of school'. The school data also posed interesting questions about girls' enrolment in Turkana. For example, the two boarding schools in the sample had relatively low GPIs – 0.7 and 0.5. This may have reflected the cost of the fees at these boarding schools, which were relatively high at roughly 700 Ksh (£5) per term.

Across all eight schools, the exam fees seemed to represent the girls' greatest concern. The majority did not seem confident that they could 'find a way' to pay these fees:

'I was sent to get exam fees but my parents said they had no money. I just had to stay at home and they wanted to put beads on me [wanted me to marry]. But I wanted to come to school. Then [my parents] wanted me to make baskets and

brooms and go to Lodwar with them. But then I just came to school myself.
(Girl at T1)

'I am not confident that I will finish standard 8 because I am being helped now to pay the exam fee by a neighbour but it may stop, and my parents are not working.' (Girl at T6 boarding school)

Beyond the amount of the fees, the way in which the school approached collecting the fees appeared to upset or concern the girls. For instance, at T7 the girls explained that the school collected the fees in a highly aggressive manner. This school has a very low GPI (0.5).

'Sometimes when the teacher is requesting the exam fee some children take long to collect it. In one case I didn't have any money at home, so the teacher caned me and caned me and made me sit at the front of the class while the others did the exam.' (Girl at T7)

Girls at other schools described being supported and allowed to sit mock exams without having paid their fees. At T1, for instance, the girls commented that they were supported and not harassed about their fees. At this school the GPI was 0.8, one the highest of all Turkana schools.

'I didn't pay for my exams yet... Sometimes I go and sell baskets for a little money but the teachers are kind and tell me to keep the money for myself because it is not enough.' (Girl at T1)

In Turkana, girls have value in marriage and poverty was acute. One of the main dimensions of marginalisation that the girls spoke about was early marriage. This issue was reinforced by teacher comments:

'[The] poverty level of the community is bad so they tend to sell girls for the dowry. They give their girls like they are animals. They need to be told 'this girl needs to go to school.' (Teacher at T3)

However, when discussing this form of marginalisation with the girls, marriage was rarely given as the root cause of dropout. The girls and several of the teachers indicated that failure to pay the fees was often the precursor to a family's decision to have their daughter married.

'It is very disappointing for a girl to not be able to move up a class [because they can't pay the fees].... It is easier to go to market and to get married because your parents do not have money.' (Girl at T7)

Nairobi

The girls in Nairobi also consistently raised fees as a concern in the focus groups. It is interesting to note that the school with the highest GPI, a government school (N2) with six girls enrolled to every five boys (GPI = 1.2), charged the lowest fees – 150 Ksh (£1) per term.

Again, similarly to Turkana, whilst the amount of the fees appeared to affect the girls' confidence, the way in which the school collected them also played a critical role. In one school, N1, the fees were 2,000 Ksh (£13) per term but the school was highly supportive and frequently let the girls delay payment or even cover the fees out of school funds or the teacher's own pocket.

Beyond the amount of the fees, the way in which the school approached collecting the fees appeared to upset or concern the girls

'If you can't pay your fees, here we have wonderful teachers who pay for you.'
(Girl at N1)

'If they can't pay they still come – right now it is the end of the month and we find that many have not paid but we don't chase them. So we let them take their exams and continue. There was a boy just here with 50 shillings to pay, so they can pay little by little; that is ok too.' (Head at N1)

At N6, another low-cost school where the fees were not aggressively chased, the GPI was 1.1. The girls here also spoke of the support they received from the school if they were struggling to pay the fees.

'It becomes hard to send a child home [for not paying fees], and yet they haven't taken anything [food]. They will never come back. Even 100 Ksh for the exams is too much. We sent children to get fees and some never came back, so we had to send other children to collect those children back. The situation [in this slum] is that if they stay at home they will just play video games and I don't want that.' (Head at N6)

'I like this school because when I came in standard 8 I couldn't pay the registration but I found the head pays our school fees if we needed it, and sometimes when there is no food at home he gives us food to eat which sustains me.' (Girl at N6)

'You know in this school you can still stay. You go to the teacher and they pay for you and say "if your mother gets money just bring it when you can".' (Girl at N6)

Although the girls frequently reported concerns about fees, just over half of them said they felt confident that they could find a way to pay their fees. This may have been because there were more economic opportunities for parents or families in Nairobi than in Turkana, where only a minority of girls reported being confident that they could pay their fees.

'I know I will find a way because it is my hopes and dreams – I am confident... And my mum has a job selling clothes and encourages me.' (Girl at N3)

As in Turkana, the girls in the Nairobi focus groups reported that problems with fees were often a precursor to other forms of marginalisation. In Nairobi, pregnancy was the most frequently mentioned problem.

'Pregnancy and early marriage are very common and forced upon them by circumstances. They live in this sort of society and are very poor and cannot afford fees.' (Head at N1)

'You usually have some cases like a girl stops coming to school and then you find she has no money and has gone to work somewhere or got pregnant.'
(Teacher at N3)

Discussion

In the Turkana and Nairobi schools, both the cost of the school fees and the extent to which the school aggressively or supportively collects them affected the girls – and was linked with their likelihood of dropping out. Other research affirms the negative connection between fees and girls' attendance at school. Choti

Although the girls frequently reported concerns about fees, just over half of them said they felt confident that they could find a way to pay their fees

(2009), Subramanian and Warrington and Kiragu⁴⁷ all consider the opportunity cost for families of educating a girl in Africa. Families may need children and girls to undertake income-generating opportunities,⁴⁸ and it is often the girls who are less likely to receive family support for their education.⁴⁹ The impact of schools' aggressiveness in collecting fees is far less well researched. More research on this topic would prove useful.

The accounts from girls in this study also suggest that dropout caused by an inability to pay fees may indeed be a precursor to early pregnancy and marriage, which in turn would make it harder for girls to continue their education in the future. Indeed, the girls often said that other school friends had become pregnant or gotten married because they had lost hope of completing their education due to the fees. This fits with the conclusion drawn in Lloyd and Young's⁵⁰ review of studies from a range of contexts: 'pregnancy and early marriage are more likely to be consequences rather than causes of early school leaving'.

Time for learning

Another theme that emerged from the data was the amount of time girls had for learning. The interviews and focus groups reiterated that time is a major determinant of girls' ability to learn at school.

Turkana

In Turkana, both of the boarding schools in the sample had a longer school day. For upper primary and the exam classes in particular this included early morning and evening prep lessons. Many girls at the day schools explained that they wanted to attend boarding schools, as they recognised they would get access to more learning opportunities there. The girls often said that boarding school would allow them to focus on their studies and not get distracted by their chores or other disturbances at home.

'We have to do chores at night, so we want to come to boarding school.

Parents give you work to do, and then you can't do your homework.' (Girl at T1)

However, fewer girls than boys attended the two boarding schools in our Turkana sample of schools, perhaps due to the higher fees and/or the fact that girls are needed at home.

The government day schools ran extra classes for exam preparation but the girls were sometimes inadvertently excluded from accessing this additional learning time. For instance, just over half of the girls reported that they were expected to undertake chores at home in the morning or evening so they were unable to attend these extra classes, or were forbidden from walking to or from school in the dark. In Turkana the sun rises at about 6am and sets at around 6.30pm consistently throughout the year, so classes starting at 5am or finishing at 8pm required a school commute in the dark.

'It is very hard for girls to do night preps that finish at 9pm. You can meet with drunkards, beggars and animals at night and when alone. A boarding school would be better; then we don't need to move at night. Boys are allowed to

The girls often said that boarding school would allow them to focus on their studies and not get distracted by their chores or other disturbances at home

⁴⁷Subramanian, 2005; Warrington and Kiragu, 2011. ⁴⁸Choti, 2009. ⁴⁹Subramanian, 2005. ⁵⁰Lloyd and Young, 2009: 27.

stay overnight at the school, so they can do morning preps. But us girls are not allowed to stay overnight because the teachers think it will encourage relationships.' (Girl at T7)

The boarding schools, T2 and T6, had the highest mean scores for the 2013 KCPE, and there may have been a relationship between learning outcomes and learning time. It therefore appeared that girls were excluded from being able to learn more and do better, since fewer girls attended boarding school and many of them reported that they were not allowed to attend extra classes at their day school.

There appeared to be a lack of common understanding of why girls miss days of school. Headteachers frequently noted that girls missed school time due to menstruation. Of the 64 girls in the Turkana focus group, a minority cited that they would be absent for one day or so every few months due to menstruation, but more often they said it was due to activities such as family chores, caring for sick relatives or seeking out school fees.

'One of the girls doesn't come to afternoon classes... [Why not?] She says she assists her mother at home. [What assistance?] I don't know, maybe cooking or fetching water. She misses all the afternoon lessons.' (Teacher at T7)

Several of the girls also informed us that the chores they had to do in the evenings or early mornings (such as fetching water or firewood, cooking, cleaning the utensils or looking after their younger siblings) made them very tired when they got to school. Thus not only did girls miss school to undertake these activities, but once in school their capacity for learning was limited due to exhaustion.

Nairobi

In four of the low-cost private schools in Nairobi, there appeared to be more opportunities for girls to learn than in other schools. This extra time included morning, evening or weekend classes, especially for upper primary. These four schools had a mean KCPE score of 280 in 2013. By comparison, the two government schools in the sample did not offer extra classes and had a mean KCPE score of 238 in 2013. The participants of this study thought that time for learning was an important factor that could support girls' educations:

'We allocate extra time. You know, as a private institution there is that feeling that we must perform. We even come to school on Saturdays, but for free. I also personally meet standard 8 on Sunday afternoon after church. We have group discussion; we are revising.' (Teacher at N4)

'We try to follow the government timetable, but it says that the children should be gone by 4pm for free time. But we know if we do that we are putting them in the eye of the lion's mouth because they go to videos, to wasting [time] really. So we introduced clubs like debating, etc. So you find our timetable is a little bit stretched back.' (Teacher at N1)

The girls seemed more able to attend these extra classes in Nairobi. Only a minority voiced an issue with commuting to and from school during the early morning or late at night.

'I don't like the reporting hours here. At around 6am you can't pass on this bit of road because the lights are off and I am afraid.' (Girl at N3)

There appeared to be a lack of common understanding of why girls miss days of school

Teachers also frequently cited that girls had lower attendance rates due to menstruation.

'Upper primary girls have more unique problems. The girl is staying with her father and she is undergoing this 'cycle' and she is afraid to tell her dad. So the girl is absent three days in a row but the boy keeps coming. So girls are kept away from school when they need sanitary facilities. So often nobody knows what is happening with a girl if she is not coming.' (Teacher at N7)

'We also have the natural girls' disease – the period – so most of the time they are absent because they lack towels. Most of the time boys are doing better because they are always present in comparison to girls... You never know what will come up in an exam – she may have been absent and missed a topic.' (Teacher at N4)

Most of the girls agreed that sanitary pads were important for them to receive, but as in Turkana, only a minority said that menstruation actually affected their attendance.

Despite the appearance of more opportunities to learn for girls and better KCPE scores in Nairobi, the focus group participants still described aspects of life that they thought prohibited attendance. As in Turkana, girls said that other activities like chores, working or caring for others affected their attendance and distracted them from school work. Overall, six of the focus groups in the Nairobi sample reported that chores were a problem for them.

'I can't do my homework or come to the Saturday lesson because I am doing my chores.' (Girl at N8)

'If I go home now at 7pm from school I am the one washing the utensils, I mop the house. I don't get to sleep until midnight. Then I fall asleep at my desk. [Why are you the one working?] Because I am with my stepmother. I was the last born and I came here to stay with my father and stepmother so she took me as her oldest own child and makes me work. [Do you tell her you have homework?] My father tells her, but she wants me to do the chores. I am so exhausted I can't do my homework.' (Girl at N1)

Teachers agreed:

'The reason is surely that these girls don't get enough time to work. She works the whole day, she is very tired and she cannot concentrate on her studies. You find the homework they don't do completely. When you ask them why they haven't done this, they say 'My mum asked me to cook, to do this, to search for the young ones, to get firewood.' And so you see, they have these challenges that may interfere with the standard of their education.' (Teacher at N5)

'As I take this class – most of the girls have absented themselves too much. The parents take the girls to work. Boys are not absent as much as the girls because most chores are done by the girls.' (Teacher at N5)

'The girls don't do as well as boys because they are often doing mummy's work.' (Teacher at N8)

If I go home now at 7pm from school I am the one washing the utensils, I mop the house. I don't get to sleep until midnight

Lastly, four of the Nairobi schoolchildren from different years had to share a classroom. These schools were on such cramped sites that these classes did not have their own room. Some shared classrooms were so small that only one lesson could take place at a time, meaning each class may have missed much of its curriculum and learning time as they waited for others to finish. Other shared classrooms were larger and two lessons could take place at once, but the noise of the teachers and children made it difficult for each class to focus and concentrate on their own lesson. One school in which classes 7 and 8 shared a small room had the lowest 2013 KCPE mean scores in the study. It is possible that the learning time for classes sharing a space is significantly reduced, which may affect girls in particular.

These schools were on such cramped sites that these classes did not have their own room

Discussion

Girls were often excluded (inadvertently) from learning opportunities – particularly in Turkana. The girls there frequently said they were very keen to attend boarding school where there was more time for learning, but commented that their family could not afford the fees. Reflecting this lack of opportunity for girls, the GPIs at the Turkana boarding schools were low (0.7 and 0.5). Many girls at day schools said that they were afraid to commute to early morning or late evening classes in the dark, and that they often needed to do chores during this time. In Nairobi the girls seemed more able to attend extra classes and receive more time for learning, but both teachers and girls reported that chores at home were a barrier to girls' learning. In both Turkana and Nairobi the girls often commented that chores not only prevented them from attending extra lessons, but also made them tired at school and less able to concentrate in class.

Although none of the research participants talked openly and directly about the quality of instruction and schooling, it appears to be a factor. As noted elsewhere in this report no observed lessons were judged to be of good quality. This combined with the common practice of offering additional learning time which teachers highlighted as particularly important for standard 8 pupils and which girls indicated was difficult for them to access present problems. Although additional learning time appeared to work for some girls in some schools in Nairobi, the reliance on additional lessons out of school hours may introduce further discrimination against girls and should not be seen as a solution to quality challenges.

Unfortunately, there appears to be limited empirical data from low income countries on the effect of time for learning on girls' learning outcomes. In high income countries it has been found that "Increasing allocated time without increasing productive time is unlikely to improve educational performance."⁵¹ Whilst this may be so, given quite how little time for learning many of the girls in our ASALs and slums had, it seems plausible that getting them into lessons and extra lessons may have some impact on their performance. Although it is clear obvious that more time should not be a substitute for improving the quality of learning during the school day itself.

⁵¹ Walberg et al, 1994: 98-9

Teachers

Another important theme from the data was linked to participants' views about the impact of teacher professionalism and skills on girls' learning at school.

Turkana

Teacher absence was high in the eight schools in Turkana. On average, around two to three teachers were absent on each of the days the team visited the schools. This equated to nearly a third of the teaching staff in each school being absent on any one day. This level of teacher absence is likely to affect the learning outcomes of both boys and girls.

When teachers were present, they were observed to spend limited time teaching. Across the 26 lessons observed in Turkana, they were present in the classroom for an average of 10 to 15 minutes of a 35-minute lesson. And in a few cases teachers were also caring for a young child while teaching the lesson.

It was also common to find that the school and the teachers were not following their timetable. On many occasions the team asked to see the timetable in order to join a particular lesson, but then found that teachers were in the staffroom, or the teacher would take a lesson simply because the team was present.

'Sometimes the lessons happen, and sometimes they don't; we don't follow the timetable. The teachers don't attend the classes regularly.' (Girl at T3)

Similarly, teachers in Turkana mentioned life skills classes as a source of support for the girls, but the girls reported that these did not take place regularly.

The girls who took part in the focus groups reported that teachers' care and compassion was important to them. Girls believed that the more detailed or personal knowledge teachers had of their problems, the more support the teacher provided. A good teacher relationship seemed especially important for girls who felt that they did not have a positive relationship or encouragement from home. It was not necessarily the guidance and counselling teacher who the girls would choose to confide in or build a relationship with. The girls explained that this support affected their confidence about their future education and aspirations.

'I am confident that I will achieve all of these things because I have faith in my teacher. Teacher Boniface is my role model – he came from a poor family and now he has a job and has made it.' (Girl at T1)

Therefore it is not surprising that the GPI was lowest (0.5) in a school where the girls reported that they did not have a teacher who they felt cared for them or who they could confide in. Furthermore, the girls in this school reported that they received regular verbal abuse from the teachers.

'Sometimes if you have not had dinner you are lazing or drowsy. So the teacher will say "what's wrong with you? Were you having sex last night"? When we are just tired because we do not eat.' (Girl at T7)

In addition, few teachers in any school were supportive of girls who had got pregnant. It is government policy in Kenya to keep pregnant girls in school until they give birth. But the girls said that the schools had 'chased away' pregnant girls.

Teacher absence was high in the eight schools in Turkana. On average, around two to three teachers were absent on each of the days the team visited the schools

T3, where the teachers seemed to be more supportive of pregnant girls, also had a higher GPI of 0.8, one of the highest in Turkana (see quote below). At T7, which had the lowest GPI of 0.5, the girls informed us they would be chased away if they became pregnant.

'We don't chase them; they usually stay until that day. But when the pregnancy is big they fear being here and just go back alone.' [So you allowed them to be here?] 'The policy today says the child must be there whether pregnant or not. You have to understand their situation.' (Deputy at T3)

'She wanted to repeat here but the teachers refused. They said "what are you doing here with this stomach, go back home".' (Girl at T7)

Of course, a girl's decision to leave school if she becomes pregnant is not just the school's but also the family's and her own. Many girls said they would feel fear, embarrassment and shame if they got pregnant. The team did not come across any evidence in any schools to suggest that the teachers directly addressed this fear or shame, for instance at a life skills lesson.

Girls with more confidence in their academic achievements and progress had more confidence about their future and their ability to stay in school. Girls reported that this confidence was supported by the positive feedback they received from the teachers. At T3, which had one of the highest GPIs in the Turkana sample (0.8), one girl clearly explained:

'I am very confident about my future because I am serious in my studies and am making good progress. I know this because my teachers tell me this.' (Girl at T3)

The girls did not have a preference for confiding in or getting support from male or female teachers. In fact, the teachers' gender did not seem relevant, and many of the girls even preferred the male teachers.

'We like Dennis the maths and Kiswahili teacher. The male teachers are generally better than the females; they care more. I don't think the female teachers like us girls.' (Girl at T4)

As well as their relationships with teachers, girls also talked about the importance of teachers' skills. Lesson quality seemed to be a critical feature that affected learning outcomes for girls. In observations at four out of eight schools, all 16 lessons seen were graded as low quality. In these schools the average KCPE score was low (227). In the four other schools the team graded lesson quality as medium in all ten observations that were completed; the average 2013 KCPE results were found to be higher (260). Unsurprisingly, better lesson quality appeared to be associated with higher learning outcomes. Within the small sample it was evident that where lesson quality was lower, there was a higher proportion of girls (a higher GPI).

Two further aspects of lesson quality were subject knowledge and the teacher's linguistic capability in English and Kiswahili. Teachers' subject knowledge (as judged in observations of lessons) was generally weaker in the Turkana schools, where teachers were observed passing on incorrect information:

'The letter X is for Christmas, X is for Christmas' (Standard 2 English lesson, teaching of the alphabet, at T1).

Girls with more confidence in their academic achievements and progress had more confidence about their future and their ability to stay in school

Teachers in Turkana were also less capable and confident in their use of English and Kiswahili. They mostly used Turkana as their language of instruction. This disadvantaged the upper primary children in particular, as they had very limited exposure to the two languages they were examined in at KCPE, English and Kiswahili.

Nairobi

In Nairobi, teacher absenteeism was found to be lower. Only in one school, N6, were three of the six teachers absent on one day. Interestingly, this was the school with by far the lowest mean KCPE score. In the other schools all staff were present on the day of the research visits. The teachers were also present in class and completed the full lesson, rather than leaving after introducing the topic and setting a task (as in Turkana). Furthermore, in schools that scored higher on the orderliness rating, teachers were generally observed to be following the timetable in all of the eight Nairobi schools. When visiting the school, lessons were usually taking place as they were meant to: if the observer was late, the teacher had already begun. However, much like in Turkana, only a small minority of the teachers in Nairobi said the school used life skills lessons. They were timetabled, but often would not take place.

Teachers in Nairobi appeared to exhibit a similar degree of pastoral care towards girls as in Turkana. The schools where the girls described having at least one teacher they could confide in or get support from also had higher GPIs. Again, the teacher mentioned was not necessarily the guidance and counselling teacher. At N1 the GPI was 1.1 and the girls spoke enthusiastically about the good relationships they had with staff. Similarly, at N6, where the GPI was also high at 1.1, the girls and teachers alike described supportive relationships.

'Teachers really help you here; they give you individual attention and you can just go to the staff room. Teachers help you solve your problems here.'
(Girl at N1)

'I am confident about my future because my teachers help with my mistakes.'
(Girl at N1)

'If there is one thing I did here, it is to make friendships with them [girls]. I found it is hard for the girls because there aren't so many female teachers here and sometimes the female teachers are loud and shout their problems around. With me, I offer to help, I visit their homes – I care, I want to help. So now the number of girls is increasing because I am sensitising their homes about educating girls.' (Male teacher at N6)

Schools where girls did not have the support of or positive relationships with teachers had lower GPIs. N5 had a GPI of 0.9, one of the lowest in the sample of Nairobi schools. When asked how the teachers helped and supported them, one girl from N5 replied:

'They [teachers] are too harsh and they look abusive to you. If you have a problem they look at you like this [superior look] and they think they are better than us. They beat us. They don't understand even if you tell them, they just don't listen to what you're saying.' (Girl at N5)

Schools where girls did not have the support of or positive relationships with teachers had lower GPIs

Similarly, in N7, which also has one of the lowest GPIs (0.7), there were weak relationships between teachers and girls in the school:

'I don't like it when teachers don't listen... Like you cannot do your homework because you are doing chores and having stresses, then you come in the morning with no homework and they beat you. Or if you have not slept because you have been doing the homework late at night and you are beaten for sleeping in class.' (Girl at N7)

As in Turkana, the gender of the teacher the girls received support from did not seem to matter; sometimes male teachers were more popular than females.

'We don't mind, we can get support from a male or female teacher. Sometimes, in fact, the female teachers are more harsh on you.' (Girl at N2)

Similarly to Turkana, there appeared to be limited support for pregnant girls. Only in one school, N4, did the girls report positive relationships with the teachers, as well as more support for girls facing challenges such as pregnancy. The researcher was told a story about a girl who had become pregnant.

'Two years ago a girl got pregnant. She never left. She was sitting her first exam and this is when the labour pains came. I had to struggle hard to help her – the examiners agreed to stand near her then she could sit the exam afterwards. At 4pm she gave birth to a boy. Then I carried the baby and she did the first exam after that. I told the parent "she will stay near the school for those 3 days of exams so we can help her." She managed; she got 278 as her mean score and she is now in form 3 [secondary school]. Even the exams officer was so happy they followed the story and bought her a trunk for school. Her mother helps her; she has the baby now.' (Teacher at N4)

As in Turkana, our sample showed that lesson quality was important. Overall, lessons in Nairobi schools were generally graded higher than those observed in Turkana (although just as in Turkana, no lessons were graded as high quality). Only in one school in Nairobi were all four observed lessons graded as low quality. Again, as in Turkana, schools in which the quality of lessons was graded higher had better learning outcomes. In the three schools with medium-quality lessons, the average KCPE score for 2013 was 294. For the five schools that had at least some low-quality lessons, the average KCPE score was much lower (220).

Two further aspects were subject knowledge and the teacher's linguistic capability in English and Kiswahili. Overall, teachers' subject knowledge was good in Nairobi and no misconceptions were seen being taught. English or Kiswahili were also spoken throughout the day (they are the languages of Nairobi). Given that the KCPE is administered in these languages, it follows that girls and boys schooled in Nairobi score higher on the exam.

Discussion

Overall teacher professionalism was low in the Turkana schools. Absence was common, and teachers were typically not present for the full lesson time and did not follow the timetable. These behaviours affected the productive learning time available to both girls and boys. The situation was better in Nairobi.

Overall, lessons in Nairobi schools were generally graded higher than those observed in Turkana

The girls who participated in this study valued and seemed to be supported by good relationships with teachers in their schools. They associated this with confidence and ongoing commitment to school.

Also it was interesting that the girls said this relationship could be with a female or male teacher, especially since Huisman and Smits,⁵² findings from 30 countries illustrated the importance of female teachers in reducing barriers that prevent girls from attending school. Furthermore, several studies⁵³ have reported that the presence of female teachers is one way of improving equity for girls in education. In the small sample involved in this study, it is interesting to note that the GPI was slightly higher in schools with more female teachers.

No schools or teacher appeared to be supportive of girls who had fallen pregnant. Only one school in Turkana and one in Nairobi seemed to be accepting of such situations. Contrary to national policy, the girls and teachers in this study reported that pregnant girls are not being encouraged to remain in school.

In terms of teacher skill, there appeared to be a correlation between the grading of lessons as medium quality and better pupil outcomes. Lessons observed in Nairobi schools were generally graded higher than those observed in Turkana.

No schools or teacher appeared to be supportive of girls who had fallen pregnant

Leadership and management

Another important theme that emerged from the data was the role of leadership and management in determining girls' participation and learning outcomes.

Turkana

Continuity and consistency of leadership was weak in the Turkana schools. Five of the eight headteachers in the sample had been in post for less than one year. They had all been transferred by the government. It was interesting to note that the three schools where the headteachers had been in place for longer than one year all scored above 250 in their 2013 mean KCPE scores. By comparison, in all but one of the schools with newly transferred headteachers the average 2013 KCPE scores were low, at about 230.

The headteacher was present for both days of the research visits in only three of the eight schools visited in the area. In the other five, two of headteachers were away on business and were never met, and three were only present for one of the days. Headteacher absence was found in both the low- and better-performing schools. These high levels of absence can be partially explained. In sparsely populated areas like Turkana, with poor communication, headteachers often have to spend several days away from their schools in order to conduct official school business, for example visits to the district education offices. However, the high level of headteacher absenteeism observed may also reflect a lack of professionalism, particularly where high levels of teacher absenteeism are also apparent.

The headteachers who participated were fulfilling their basic duties. One was actively seeking a transfer and did not seem committed to the school.

⁵² Huisman and Smits, 2009. ⁵³ Herz and Sperling, 2004; Rugh 2000; World Bank, 2001; Nilsson, 2003; Rihani, 2006; Roby et al, 2009).

'I cannot say I like it here. In fact this year I was planning to request a transfer but the director told me to wait until next year. This is not a good place to live.' (Headteacher of T5)

Two headteachers stood out as having higher aspirations for their pupils and a greater understanding of and empathy for the challenges that girls face. In particular, the head of T1 seemed to be supportive of the girls. Here the researchers met one girl who was being looked after by the school, as she had run away from home to avoid marriage. In this school the overall KCPE results were low, but compared to the other schools visited, there was limited disparity between the boys' and girls' results.

'My parents have no money and were discouraging me from going back to school this term. They wanted me married. No other family member supports me, but the headteacher does. He gives me books and encourages me.' (Girl at T1)

Nairobi

The continuity and consistency of leadership observed and described in the Nairobi schools was encouraging. First, most of the headteachers had been in post for several years or had founded the schools themselves. Second, all eight headteachers were present for every day of the research, except for two who had to leave for meetings during an afternoon of the research visit. Six of the eight schools in Nairobi were low-cost private schools, and so the headteachers were not subject to transfer by the Teaching Service Commission.⁵⁴ These headteachers may have been more invested in their schools as founding head and potential financial beneficiaries if the school was successful. Even at the two government schools in the sample, the heads had been in post for several years (the head at N2 had been in post for 11 years) and both were also present for the two days the team attended.

Most of the heads in Nairobi seemed to be doing more than fulfilling their basic duties. In all the schools visited the headteachers displayed in their comments and behaviours a genuine interest in the performance of their school. Nairobi cannot be considered a hardship area like Turkana, but the slums where these schools were located presented significant challenges. In one school these two comments summed up the support offered by headteachers to girls in Nairobi slum schools.

'The head is encouraging me not to be stressed when I do my KCPE. When I lost my mother she tried to help me to be strong. She tells me I can get 350 and be sponsored. She loves me like other pupils.' (Girl at N8)

'The girls are all very loved and cared for here.' (Girl at N8)

Two of the headteachers stood out as having value-driven leadership approaches. One was the head of N1, the highest-performing school in KCPE in the entire sample of schools. This school also had a GPI of 1.1. The headteacher at this school was actively supporting girls affected by dimensions of marginalisation. He ran extra classes himself and made sure girls could catch up with their homework during lunch breaks if they had been unable to do it the previous evening due to family demands on their time.

The continuity and consistency of leadership observed and described in the Nairobi schools was encouraging

⁵⁴ Teacher and headteacher deployment in government schools is managed by the TSC.

'Girls are not secure in their life... and if they lack food in the morning they can get food by enticement and you find our society is really good at that [prostitution]. That's why in the PTA meetings we don't end it without discussing girl issues.' (Headteacher at N1)

The study team learned that the head of N1 had worked hard to engage parents and the community himself. He seemed to have a genuine aspiration for the girls and boys to achieve equally, and understood the critical need for parents and the community to stand behind the school.

'We believed there is excellence in everybody and that we would identify it and exploit it to create excellence in the future. We called the community and told them and they really accepted it.' (Headteacher of N1)

'Parent involvement began when we started. We cannot work in isolation; we have to have the parents involved.' (Teacher at N1)

'Mainly women come [to the Parent Teacher Committee], but men as well... Many mothers have interest in their children. The father tends to be busy. What I tell them... in fact we write letters, typed not even handwritten to their employers that say "please allow permission for father to come to the meeting" and the fathers take this letter to their boss.' (Headteacher at N1)

This head recognised the value of having hardworking teachers. He valued them and made efforts to motivate them and engage them in decision making.

'They are committed and I just love them. They really work hard and I just love them.' (Headteacher at N1 talking about the teachers at his school)

'I thank God because for our case that we don't lose our teachers. I think it is the working environment: they understand the projects [school] as theirs, they feel that it is theirs, they really work hard without being pushed; and that is why, in the morning they are here early and late at night – at 8pm they are here. I asked one of them "why do you think people don't leave?" and he said "it is the way we work". There is one who tried going and we welcomed him back and said "how was it out there?" ... We involve them in all the decisions.' (Headteacher of N1)

Three of the eight Nairobi schools had classrooms dispersed around an area of their slum. This meant that the school lacked a centre or hub (where assemblies could take place, for instance). Split sites made it difficult for the headteachers to assert a strong presence. In N5 in particular the headteacher was noticeably absent in different parts of the school, as he tended to stay in his office which was located in the nursery or Early Childhood Development area. This head's lack of presence seemed to be reflected in the behaviour of some of the teachers who were observed acting in an unprofessional manner on occasion.

Discussion

Overall it appeared that the Turkana schools experienced headteacher absenteeism, some of which can be explained by the local geography. In addition there was a high level of headteacher transition, and several of those who participated in this study did not like working in such a hardship area.

Three of the eight Nairobi schools had classrooms dispersed around an area of their slum

By comparison, this was not a significant issue in Nairobi, where heads were found to have longer tenures and to be more present in school. However, in Nairobi the physical spread of some school classrooms and sites around slums meant there was some dilution of leadership presence on a day-to-day basis. Importantly, only one of the 16 schools in the area provided an example of strong leadership with a focus on girls' education and this was in Nairobi.

Collectively, the low-cost private schools in Nairobi had higher 2013 KCPE results (mean of 251) than either of the two government schools in Nairobi (at 240 and 236) or any of the eight government schools in Turkana (mean score of 245). This is likely to be the result of numerous interacting factors, but it is worth considering the role of leadership and autonomy in running a school. While it is beyond the scope of this study, the connections between leadership approaches, tenure of school leaders, better outcomes, and low-cost private schools and government-run schools are worthy of further consideration. It may be that girls' education can be better supported in schools where headteachers have longer tenure and greater autonomy to make decisions about teacher appointments and continued employment.

Hidden girls

Other factors that affect girls' participation and success in education that cannot be ignored are HIV, long-term illness and disability. Often these dimensions of marginalisation mean that girls are hidden. In both Turkana and Nairobi, the headteachers, teachers and the girls themselves remained relatively quiet about girls with HIV or disabilities. During the focus groups, the girls were asked about these dimensions of marginalisation.

Turkana

In Turkana the vast majority of girls in the focus groups reported that they did not know any girls with HIV or disabilities. If they did know girls with HIV, they were clearly unwilling to talk about it with our research team. Indeed, HIV may be a significant taboo for girls to discuss at all. They talked little about girls with disabilities, and during the school visits the team only met two girls with visible physical disabilities. One had a bad leg and used a crutch, and the other had Down's syndrome.

Nairobi

In Nairobi the girls shared more information about girls with HIV or disabilities, and explained that girls with these problems 'are ashamed and hidden' or 'they did not have fees to come to school'.

'Yes, we have a boy like this in the school [there is a boy in a wheelchair in the school] but no girls. [Why?] Because they think people will laugh at them; they are embarrassed. ...Some girls are hidden away, or maybe their parents are too poor for them to go to school.' (Girl at N2)

'I know a girl who had to drop out because she got an infection in a broken leg and it got worse, then she was in a wheelchair and it is hard to come to school

Other factors that affect girls' participation and success in education that cannot be ignored are HIV, long-term illness and disability

in a wheelchair with too many bumps on the paths and ditches... There are more disabled boys because maybe they can defend themselves more. Parents might be afraid of letting a disabled girl out in case she gets abused – so they are left in the house.’ (Girl at N3)

‘They [disabled girls] are just neglected because people say “they are not like others”.’ (Girl at N4)

‘A blind girl: her parents have just disowned her; they have left her to beg.’ (Girl at N4)

‘I know a girl who went for a [HIV] test, then when her parents saw that they didn’t think there was any point for her to go to school. They said their background was too poor and there was no need for her to go. She was really bright and really wanted to go. She is not happy now; she is just stressed at home.’ (Girl at N5)

‘I know a girl who doesn’t have good manners; she dropped out of school and started being with boys and now she has HIV. She does not want to come to school, perhaps she is ashamed.’ (Girl at N2)

I know a girl who went for a [HIV] test, then when her parents saw that they didn’t think there was any point for her to go to school

Discussion

It is likely that girls with HIV or disabilities are even less likely to access education. These issues were part of this study but not its primary focus. It is, however, interesting to note the lack of information forthcoming on this topic compared to others. It is also noteworthy that the research participants were more likely to talk a little more openly about HIV and disability in Nairobi than in Turkana.

Chapter 5

Conclusions



This research aimed to identify in-school factors that might positively or negatively affect the participation and learning of marginalised girls in ASAL and slum areas.

Three promising aspects were observed which reportedly improved marginalised girls' access to education, and the quality of that education:

1. It is not just the fees that can make education difficult, but also the methods and approaches used to collect those fees. Where fees were high, but a headteacher had a sensitive attitude towards collecting the fees, girls expressed feelings of confidence and said they were less likely to drop out. These schools gave the girls time to find payments and allowed them to continue studying or take exams in the meantime.

2. The relationships that girls built with at least one teacher supported their continued enrolment in school and their educational achievement. The girls explained that positive relationships with teachers empowered and uplifted them. Their confidence and commitment to staying in school was associated with how these individuals responded to them.

3. Leadership continuity, presence and skills were also important. Slum schools appeared to have greater leadership continuity and presence than those in the ASALs. The head with the most committed approach to leadership and girls' education was found in a low-cost private slum school. Girls and teachers remarked that his leadership characteristics influenced girls' confidence and commitment to their education, and improved their learning outcomes across the school.

There were also five common barriers in many ASAL and slum schools that appeared to negatively impact girls' participation and learning:

1. The most critical barrier identified for girls was high school fees and schools that were unsupportive, or even aggressive, in collecting the fees. Girls frequently said this made them consider dropping out and explained that it had caused other girls to drop out.

2. Weak teacher professionalism and skill was seen in both ASAL and slum schools. Teacher absenteeism, timetables not being followed, and lessons not being taught for their full time slot meant girls and boys, particularly in the ASALs, appeared to receive less learning time. Furthermore, teacher skills or lesson quality and subject knowledge also appeared to be low in the ASALs and may have impeded girls' and boys' learning.

3. Limited time for learning and a limited number of quality learning opportunities were particularly acute issues for girls, mainly in the ASALs. This seemed to be a significant source of gender inequality, and many girls in the ASALs reported that they were unable to access additional classes. The cost of additional

The girls explained that positive relationships with teachers empowered and uplifted them

classes, the school's unwillingness to allow girls to stay overnight (while boys were permitted to do so), and girls' fear of commuting to and from school in the dark were all reported to be barriers to their accessing additional learning time. Chores at home further limited girls' ability to attend additional classes and do their homework, and affected their ability to concentrate in class due to tiredness.

4. In a small number of cases it was apparent that teachers had low expectations of girls, which reduced their confidence and desire to remain in school. This was most clearly demonstrated in schools where teachers reportedly verbally abused the girls.

5. It was apparent that schools have not yet recognised or responded to issues related to the most marginalised girls who seem to be neglected or invisible: those with HIV and/or disabilities. It was notable that there was limited discussion of such girls, and therefore limited recognition of their educational needs.

This report suggests that schools should adjust how they collect fees, build positive relationships between female pupils and teachers, and encourage active and present leadership in order to build better learning environments in which girls are more likely to complete schooling and do well. Schools also need to continue to address quality issues and maximise learning time during the school day, and ensure that girls are not inadvertently excluded from additional learning opportunities offered outside the school day.



In a small number of cases it was apparent that teachers had low expectations of girls





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