

**THE INFLUENCE OF SELECTED SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS ON
PRINCIPALS' PERCEPTION ON THE ROLE OF NON GOVERNMENTAL
ORGANISATIONS IN ENHANCING ACCESS TO SECONDARY EDUCATION IN
LAIKIPIA COUNTY, KENYA**

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ABSTRACT

Kenya's 2010 constitution provides that every child has a right to free and compulsory basic education. In view of the fact that secondary education is a critical sector of basic education in Kenya, the Government introduced Free Secondary Education (FSE) in January 2008. While access to state schooling improved with the introduction of FSE, some disadvantaged children, especially girls, street children, children from pastoralist communities, those with disabilities, orphans and other vulnerable children, continue to be excluded from this learning opportunity. This has resulted in large regional and gender disparities and low Gross Enrolment Ratios (GERs) in the provision of secondary education in the country. To arrest this situation, the government has continuously encouraged non-governmental organizations to come on board in regard to provision of secondary education in the country. However the extent to which NGOs are playing their role expectation in enhancing secondary education in Laikipia County has not been documented. This is what informed the study. The purpose of this study, therefore was to explore principals' perception on the role of NGOs in enhancing access to secondary education in Laikipia county Kenya and the extent to which these perceptions could be influenced by selected school characteristics. Using *ex-post facto* research design, data was collected from a sample of 63 principals in the county. The principals were selected through simple random sampling technique from a total population of 75 public secondary schools principals in the county. Data was collected through a self-delivered questionnaire whose validation was done by two experts (supervisors) in the department of Curriculum and Educational Management, Laikipia University. Using Cronbach's alpha, the instruments reliability stood at .940. Collected data was analysed through frequency counts and percentages with respect to nominal scale data while hypotheses were tested using ANOVA and the t - test statistics at .05 level of significance with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) programme version 20.0. The study established that NGOs in Laikipia County were concentrating their efforts towards students' empowerment and lowering of financial burden of secondary education to parents. NGOs also appeared to be paying more attention to boarding schools, county schools and schools located in urban areas. The study recommends that NGOs should pay more attention to capacity building in schools. The study further recommends that NGOs should pay increased attention to day schools and district schools to benefit the local community.