

Full Length Research Paper

Challenges in leadership and management of church sponsored secondary schools in Kenya: Examining the relationship between principals and sponsors

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The Kenya's Education Act 1968 and revised 1980 makes provision for the appointment of sponsors in school management and empowers them to participate in the management of schools or colleges that they sponsor. This article reports on the findings of a study conducted in Kenya. The study utilised a survey design which comprised 81 principals drawn from 81 secondary schools. The schools were purposively sampled. Data was collected through the use of questionnaires, both open and closed-ended and was analysed using Statistical package for social sciences resulting in descriptive statistics and were expressed as percentages. The study mainly focused on role of secondary school sponsors and their relationship with the principal. The study findings report that some school principals had excellent relationship with their sponsors, while some blamed sponsors on a number of areas: undue interference with the running of the schools, harassment and intimidation of the principals and also promoting unnecessary transfer of school principals. Other felt that some people nominated by sponsors to serve in the board of governor lacked necessary exposure, skills and knowledge. The sponsors also offered limited or no financial support to the schools they sponsored. It also emerged in the study that Seventh-day Adventist and Catholic Church were the main sponsors in the study.

Key words: Secondary school, Kenya, sponsors, principals, Education Act 1968 and 1980.

INTRODUCTION

Review of literature reveals two main divisions of education provision in the world, public/state and private (Onsomu et al., 2004) and the state happens to be the largest provision in a majority of the cases. State or government provision is simply funded and/or supported by the state, although in some cases students may be asked to contribute a portion through tuition fees. For instance, in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, among other countries, faith-based schools are fully funded by the state (Johnson, et al., 2000; Walford, 1995). Private provision on the other hand is simply funded and/or supported by the owner or entrepreneurs, trust, churches and organisation or other recognised bodies (Onsomu et al., 2004). The growth of private education provision is attributable to the decline in public funds, among other factors (Kitaev, 1999). Private educa-

tion provision falls within what Rose (2006) describes as non-state providers (NSPs). According to (Rose, 2006) non-state providers can play an important role in expanding access to children who are underserved by public provision. Similar views have been expressed by Batley (2006) and Nair (2011) arguing that NSPs have not only become substitute for government services in most developing countries but constitute a critical constituent in the larger civil society and that their duties or services have been institutionalised into development process. But Batley (2006) quickly points out that in many instances NSPs are largely absent from any dialogue with the governments. At times NSPs are exposed or subjected to forms of regulations that are largely repressive and effectively designed to protect established interests (Batley, 2006). The result is mistrust. In Kenya prior to independence, education provision involved a partnership between local communities, non-governmental agencies and church organisations (Kinuthia, 2009; Bandi, 2011). During that period, missio-

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naries played a key role in the development and maintenance of educational institutions they owned (Mabeya and Ndiku, 2010). After independence education was nationalised and schools that were established and managed by the missionaries and it remained under their sponsorship but was registered as public schools (Mabeya and Ndiku, 2010). The former managers of such schools became sponsors (Mabeya and Ndiku, 2010). The sponsors' role is also recognised by the Education Act 1968 (Revised 1980) (Republic of Kenya, 1980; Mabeya and Ndiku, 2010). Based on the Education Act 1968 (Revised 1980) the sponsor has some rights and responsibilities in the management of schools (see Mabeya and Ndiku, 2010; Republic of Kenya, 1980). However, serious concerns have been raised regarding the relationship between the sponsors and school principals, for instance, some sponsors have been accused of interfering with the schools' core businesses (Mabeya and Ndiku, 2010). This article reports and discusses on the findings of a study conducted to investigate the relationship between the sponsors and principals of church schools.

Church / Faith-based education provision

A case for the growing non-state providers (NSPs) education provision

The church-based education provision is one among other several non-state providers (NSPs) of education (Rose, 2006). Others include private and profit-making entrepreneurs, companies, trusts, community organisations and other organised bodies (Onsomu et al., 2004). One strong case for private education provision is that public funds for education are either stagnant or shrinking in real terms in both developed or developing countries (Kitaev, 1999) and therefore government efforts are considered insufficient to cope with the expansion of education. Kitaev (1999) further observes that, when public education is insufficient to guarantee access to schooling (no schools available in the neighbourhood or overcrowded classes) or good quality instruction (untrained teachers, lack of textbooks etc.), demand-driven private schools of all types normally fill the gap and offer services to households in return for certain amount of fees and contributions in kind or free labour.

Arguments in favour of private education provision include (Kitaev, 1999):

- It may make the government expenditure burden lighter.
- It may improve efficiency in the operation of schools.
- It may increase diversity and choice in terms of education provision.
- It may make schools more accountable to their clients.

Church/ faith-based education provision in Kenya prior to independence

Prior to the coming of the European missionaries, indigenous and/or informal education system existed in the Kenyan societies (Makori, 2005; Dosunmu, 1984) whose purpose was to transmit traditional values, customs, specific skills and knowledge from one generation to the next as well as socialising children through their communities (Makori, 2005). Indigenous education system had neither classrooms nor specialised teachers and thus members of the community were involved in the education of the children (Makori, 2005). Critics claim that the coming of the western education system either destroyed or diluted the indigenous education system (Mackenzie, 1993; Makori, 2005). It is observed that "western formal education came at the expense of African indigenous education which quickly faced the risk of becoming corrupted or extinct". Formal and western type of education was introduced in Kenya by the missionaries and in collaboration with the colonial administration (Dosunmu, 1984; Kinuthia, 2009). Mabeya and Ndiku's (2010) and Tan (1997) reports on the nature of partnership observing that the colonial government provided land and financial aid (grant), while the missionaries built new schools, partly financed them, recruited and trained teachers, oversaw the implementation of the curriculum, taught catechism and approved new teaching approaches. Tan (1997) observes further that the Partnership between the missionaries and the colonial government in the provision of education in colonies was anchored on a number of reasons: the financial assistance from the government which allowed the missionaries to expand and strengthen their education system thereby creating a network for religious conversion; lightening the government's administrative burden; in exchange for qualified graduates from church schools to meet the manpower needs of the colonial administration and the colonial economy; because of the church's dominant position in the field of education and also allowed the government to maintain a kind of indirect rule on the denominational schools through financial pressure to maintain or improve educational standards and more especially to ensure that missionaries and their lay colleagues provided education rather than proselytising. In terms of manpower the colonial government, for instance, wanted court messengers or court clerks or people who could read and write, among others (Mackenzie, 1993). Also in a number of colonies the church and the colonial government shared the workload in the colonial education system through the co-existence of church schools and secular government schools (Tan, 1997). So they operated a dual system of education provision. In Kenya, this cooperation was strengthened by the Phelps-Stokes Commission of 1924 (Mabeya and Ndiku, 2010). Consequently the colonial government let

religious initiated schools in the hands of the Church and the clergy became managers (Mabeya and Ndiku, 2010). The missionaries' pioneering role in introducing western education in the colonial territories is also supported by Baldwin (2011) who reports that "until the late colonial period the colonial government provided almost no education themselves". Also "until mid-20th Century opportunities available for western education were provided by missionaries". Their participation in education was underpinned by the belief that teaching basic literacy was part of their vocation as it was important for converts to read and understand the Bible and for this reason their schools became important in terms of attracting converts (Baldwin, 2011). Also in mid-nineteenth Century the European Christian missionaries introduced formal teacher education in Kenya (Kafu, 2011). So it can be argued rightly that the missionaries laid the foundation for the modern education system in Kenya and other former colonial territories. However it is regrettable that through the influence of the Fraser commission of 1909, the colonial government promoted stratified education policy in schools. The policy provided for discrimination and segregation of pupils on racial lines (Makori, 2005; Mabeya and Ndiku, 2010), such that Europeans, Indians and Asians and as well as Africans had each different curriculum (Makori, 2005). Africans were required to attend technical schools in order to serve the demands of European elite (Bandi, 2011). Africans were regarded as inferior race. It is rather sad to note that the missionaries cooperated with the colonial government in the implementation of the racial discrimination policy by also creating racially segregated schools, instead of challenging the policy. The failure to draw attention to and stand against a violation of the dignity and equality of all human persons going against a fundamental principle of Christian faith and education may be viewed as one of the ways in which the missionary failed to witness to the fullness of life for all, or which they intended to be witnesses. So at independence the Kenya government inherited an education system that was racially differentiated with different types of curricula for the various races (Europeans, Asians, and Africans) (Cheruto and Kyalo, 2010). Besides Bogonko (1992) as cited in Cheruto and Kyalo (2010) reports that "before 1960 free universal primary education had not been extended to African children in any of the East African British colonies, racial discrimination in primary and secondary education was intact". It can be argued that racial segregation was a much widespread and institutionalised practice in the education system within the British colonial territory. The segregation system persisted until Kenya's independence in 1963 (Makori, 2005).

The church and/or faith-based organisation sponsorship role in Kenya

Prior to independence education provision in Kenya, in

both primary and secondary was delivered through a partnership involving local communities, non-governmental agencies and church organisations (Kinuthia, 2009; Bandi, 2011). Partnership in the provision is also evident after independence, for instance, Onsongo (2007) reports that private universities falls into three categories, chartered, registered and those operating on letters of interim authority. In 2007, 7 out of the 8 chartered and all registered universities are sponsored and managed by Christian organisations (Onsongo, 2007). During the pre-independence period, missionaries played a key role in the development and maintenance of educational institutions they owned (Mabeya and Ndiku, 2010). In that capacity they developed facilities and provided most of the essential learning resources, which gave them significant roles in the management of schools (Mabeya and Ndiku, 2010). After independence although education was nationalised, the government recognised the important role the missionaries played in the provision of education and the need for support from the Christian Churches in sharing the cost of running schools. Therefore partnership in education provision continued and consequently the schools that were established by the Church remained under their sponsorship but registered as public schools (Mabeya and Ndiku, 2010). Therefore the Churches/ faith-based organisation in a way surrendered the many schools they founded to the government but took the role of sponsors. This was achieved through the enacting of two important pieces of legislation namely, The Teacher Service Commission Act 1967 and The Education Act 1968 (Revised in 1980) which not only defined the status of education but provided general framework for the provision of education by the then new Kenyan government. Consequently, through the Teacher Service Commission Act, the Teacher service Commission was created in 1967 and became the employer of all teachers in Kenya including all Church/faith-based teachers as the schools became public schools. Also through the Education Act the management of both primary and secondary schools whether Church/faith-based or government sponsored (public schools), was transferred to the school management committees (SMC) and board of governors (BOG) respectively. Also the managers of church/ faith-based schools became sponsors, subject to the approval of the local community to continue having the Church's influence in the schools (Mabeya and Ndiku, 2010) or their religious tradition respected (Republic of Kenya, 1980). The Education Act 1968 (Revised 1980) also makes reference to sponsor in relation to schools which were previously managed by churches (Republic of Kenya, 1980; Mabeya and Ndiku, 2010). Specifically the Kenya Education Act Cap211 (1968) Revised (1980) provides for an agreement to be made between the Ministry of Education and the sponsoring Churches in relations to the rights and responsibilities of the Church sponsor in the management of schools in the country

(Mabeya and Ndiku, 2010). The Education Act also empowers the local authority to appoint the former Church school manager as sponsor subject to the community's approval, as mentioned earlier (Republic of Kenya, 1980; Mabeya and Ndiku, 2010). Also based on the Education Act, the sponsor has some rights and responsibilities (Republic of Kenya, 1980; Mabeya and Ndiku, 2010):

- Appointment of the principals and teachers to be made in agreement with the sponsor;
- The sponsor has a right in consultation with head teacher to use the building of the school during 'out of school hours free of charge. Should any damage occur in that period the sponsor would be required to undertake the cost of repairs. The sponsor shall also be responsible for any additional expenses;
- "Religious instruction shall be given at the school in conformity with a syllabus prepared or approved under regulations made under section 19 after consultation with the sponsor" (Republic of Kenya, 1980);
- The sponsor to prepare and recommend for approval by the Minister the learning resources for religious education in sponsored schools;
- The composition of the members of a school committee to include persons to represent the local authority, the community served by the school and a sponsor (where a sponsor to the school has been appointed under section 8;
- A school sponsor has a right to nominate four (4) of the thirteen(13) members of the school board of governors and to propose the chairman who should be ratified by Ministry of Education;
- The sponsors together with then BOGs have the responsibility to maintain the religious tradition of the school;
- The sponsor will have the right to enter the school for the purpose of religious instruction and supervision thereof, and for pastoral work among the teachers and pupils; It is therefore evident from the foregone high lights of rights and responsibilities that the sponsor is a key figure in the management of church sponsored schools. Mabeya and Ndiku (2010) view the school as a social system with a series of sub-systems within it which interact with each other and the environment. Such school sub-systems include sponsors, teachers, head teachers, BOG, PTA, students and support staff. They argue that for the school to achieve its goals and objectives effectively, the subsystems should interact harmoniously. However widespread concerns have been raised regarding the role and relationship of the sponsors with the principals, which include (Mabeya and Ndiku, 2010; Republic of Kenya, 1999; Wichenje et al., 2012): sponsors contribute very little moral and financial support to the development of church sponsored schools; problematic relationship between sponsors and head teachers (principals), for instance, sponsors interfering with the schools' core businesses; rejecting or

evicting head teachers posted by TSC; causing divisions in schools by peddling falsehoods against head teachers they do not like; the sponsors' interference or influence results in ineffective board of governor and issues with curriculum implementation and student admission; sponsors inciting students and parents to reject the head teachers they do not want; undermining head teachers openly, thus creating a difficult relationship between the head teachers and also sponsors in collaboration with the community and politicians interfere with the school-based selection and recruitment exercise thus posing serious challenges to the principals. The concerns raised highlight the degree and nature of tensions and conflicts that characterise the relationship between the principals and sponsors of church schools. According to Koech report's recommendations (Republic of Kenya, 1999; Mabeya and Ndiku, 2010) the sponsor's role should be redefined so as to take active part in spiritual, financial and infrastructural development of schools in order to maintain the sponsors' status. Besides, sponsors can contribute positively towards better learning environment by ensuring that adequate/appropriate security measures are in place in schools by reinforcing the employment of enough security personnel as well as providing appropriate fencing of the school compound. They can also contribute towards maintaining discipline in schools (Mabeya and Ndiku, 2010).

Christian/ faith-based education provision in other jurisdictions

The role of the church or religious organisations in the provision of education at various levels internationally has been widely documented (Watson, 2010; Nzwili, 2011; Kombo and Gogo, 2004; McNamara & Norman, 2010; Ball & Troyna, 1987; Chadwick, 2012; Donnelly, 2000; Hughes, 2011; Pike & Telhaj, 2008); Arthur, 1993; Francis and Lankshear, 1990, 2001; Wright, 1992; Morris, 2009; Johnson, 2003). Lovat et al. (2010) report on the positive effects on student learning and well-being in faith schools. In the UK, the Church of England has played a crucial role in the establishment of national network of schools in England and Wales since long before the 1870 Education Act which outlined the mechanism for building non-denominational schools. The Church of England's success is attributable to the National Society which was founded in 1811 (Francis and Lankshear, 1990). Also, Watson (2010) observes that "in nearly every society, before the state began to take responsibility for educational provision during the past Century and a half the earliest form of schooling was religious". Watson (2010) further notes that "most modern education systems have been shaped by the interaction between religion (included here are Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism as well as Christianity) and the State". For instance, in Italy, Spain and Latin America, Christianity

has significantly influenced the shaping of school and university system, while in Saudi Arabia and Iran Islam has influenced schools (Watson, 2010). In Thailand though largely a Buddhist country religious schools exist alongside state one. This was possible through the influence of the King who is a defender of all faiths (Watson, 2010). It is therefore clear from the foregoing illustrations that the Church or religious organisations have not only played a crucial role in the provision of education but a leading role also. Further review of literature reveals that the Church or religious organisation involvement in the provision of education has resulted in dual systems of education, i.e. church/ faith schools and state schools. For instance, in the Netherlands about 69 per cent of primary schools and 73 per cent of secondary school pupils attend privately constituted schools that are funded by the state (Walford, 1995). The Dutch faith-based schools are supported by the state the same way as the state schools and that two-thirds of all primary and secondary pupils are taught within private, a very important feature of the Dutch education system (Walford, 1995). The Dutch arrangement of funding is a long standing one dating back to 1917 (Walford, 1995). It is also important to highlight that within the Dutch system, any group of parents or citizens may propose the establishment of a private school which if certain criteria are met, will receive state funding (Walford, 1995). The vast majority of these schools are of religious foundation (Walford, 1995). Another important point to underscore about the Netherland system of education is that there are state schools organised by the state municipalities, Roman Catholic and protestant Christian schools, Islam, Hindu and Jewish schools. Besides, there are several private – secular schools which promote particular educational philosophies such as Montessori, Dalton, Jeneplan and Freinet Schools (Walford, 1995). Dual and state funded system of education are not limited to the Netherlands alone, but also exist in a number of other countries, for instance, in Denmark any 28 parents can form a private religious school at the expense of the government; the Germany federal government also encourages the establishment of private religious schools and makes financial support for certain recurrent costs. A similar system prevails in Belgium (Watson, 2010). Also in the Republic of Ireland over 300 out of 3200 primary schools and 450 out of 720 second level schools are owned and managed by Catholic Church but fully funded by the state (McNamara & Norman, 2010). The rest of the schools are owned and managed by the state and other minority Churches (McNamara & Norman, 2010). The Church schools in the English system have benefited from a long history of state funding (Johnson et al., 2000). The current dual system of Church voluntary aided and state maintained have a clear origin in the grant made in 1833 (Johnson et al., 2000). Some of the Churches or religious schools that have benefited from the English state funding system include Methodist,

Jewish, Muslims, Sikh and Seventh Day Adventist schools (Johnson et al., 2000). The Church and state partnership in the provision of education received protection from the 1944 Education Act (Francis and Lankshear, 1990; 2001). The Education Act also gave the Church/ Faith school some degree of independence in terms of appointment of staff and children admission policy. However not everybody is comfortable with the notion of Church/Faith-based schools and/or Church/faith –state relationships in terms of provision of education. First and foremost, for instance, in England it took long for the Church of England and Catholic schools to be included in the state system (Johnson et al., 2000). Then there are those who seem to have issues with the spiritual nature of Church or faith schools. For instance, according to Johnson et al. (2000) “it is the religious and spiritual role of these schools that has been and remains currently controversial”. This is perhaps due to the wave of secularisation going through society (Johnson et al., 2000). Others of the like of Rowlands (1989) as cited in Watson (2010) argue that Church/ Faith schools are socially divisive, narrow-minded, only teach about creationism and suffer from poor quality teaching. Also others in the media have argued that the curriculum is exceedingly narrow, that they are too fundamental and pupils who have gone through these schools are too protected and are unable to cope with the pressures of modern secular life (Watson, 2010; 319). But research by Lambers (1994), MacKenzie (1994), Britton (2002), Green (2009) cited in Watson (2010) dismiss these criticism arguing that they are based on hearsay and prejudice. Also a research by Theos and Stapleford Centre (2009) as cited in Watson (2010; 319) shows that pupils who have attended schools with strong Christian ethos achieve higher academic standards and are more emotionally and spiritually balanced than those who attend normal state schools. Also most pupils from these schools are remarkably mature and well-rounded (Watson, 2010). It is also evident that all early African leaders who received education during the colonial period did so through the mission education system. For instance, a number of them who benefited from missionary education system, e.g. Hastings Banda (Church of Scotland’s Livingstonia mission school in the 1910s); Leopold Senghor (Father of the Holy Spirit’s Ngasabail school between 1916 and 1922); Kwame Nkrumah (Roman Catholic mission schools in Ghana in the 1920s); Kenneth Kaunda (Lubwa mission school in the 1930s) and Nelson Mandela (Wesleyan mission schools in 1930s) (Baldwin, 2011). Also students who received mission education in the 1920s and 1930s managed to get better civil servant positions during the Africanisation process after World War II (Badwin, 2011).

The role of head teachers in a church/ faith-based systems

Regardless public or church/faith-based schools, the role

of head teacher is very crucial in the development and effectiveness of a school. It is an area or subject that has attracted much discussion and empirical research (Johnson, 2003). Southworth (1995) as cited in Johnson (2003) observes that headship is not simply a technical matter but it also borders areas such as social, moral and educational beliefs. Nias et al., (1992) as cited in Johnson et al., (2000) note that: "there is a view, that culture of the school starts with the beliefs and values of the head, and then seeks to promote the same values and beliefs in the staff". The values and beliefs that the head teacher is interested in sharing are what Leithwood (1994) as cited in Johnson et al., (2000) describes as: "enduring beliefs about the desirability of some means and once internalized becomes standard or criteria for guiding one's action and thoughts, for influencing the actions and thoughts of others". Therefore the head teacher according to Sullivan (1991) as cited in Morris (2000) is expected to be the prime agent articulating, embodying and implementing the school's mission and ethos. However, Johnson (2003) observes that the role of the head teacher has changed such that: Once the head teacher was regarded as leading profession and leading by personal example is now a proactive manager, who builds a positive, achieving whole school culture that permeates the classroom and supports the teaching and learning going on with it. Consequently, the head teacher has become more answerable to and accountable to what Balls (1994) as cited in Johnson (2003) describes as 'new audiences' comprising governors, central government agencies such as Ofsted and parental demands. The role of the head teacher of a Church/ faith-based school is much more linked to the mission, ethos, aims, Church identity and expectations. However, all these depends whether the Church is strictly committed to its identity or not. For instance, according to Johnson (2003), the Church of England is open to 'all-comers' both in terms of staff and pupils. The pupils are drawn from diverse cultural backgrounds some Christians, some not. The head teachers and teachers are not expected to be practising Anglican or even practising Christians (Johnson, 2003; Grace, 2009). However, Church of England and Catholic primary head teachers in multi-cultural South London saw their role in terms of (Johnson, 2003)

- Developing their children's spirituality;
- Maintaining a school culture consistent with the moral values of their declared belief system.

Johnson (2003) also reflecting on the role of the Church of England head teacher, comments thus:

The Church of England head teachers operated within an ambivalent faith tradition that allowed him or her to be more aware of the local contexts, particular needs and so be more immediately responsive. However, things are different with the Catholic Church. The aim of the Catholic Church is (Johnson, 2003). The Church's role is especially evident in Catholic schools. It is the special

function of the Catholic school to develop in the school an atmosphere animated by a spirit of liberty and charity based on the gospel. Therefore a Catholic school head teacher is expected to embody Catholic values in his her behaviour as an example to the school as a whole (Johnson, 2003). The expectation is that they imitate Christ, not only by word but also by every facet of their behaviour (Arthur, 1995) as cited in Johnson (2003). The other expectation is that teachers in Catholic schools should themselves be Catholics (Johnson, 2003). Head teachers in a study made it clear that a Catholic school is fully part of the Catholic Church (Johnson, 2003). It can therefore be argued that a church/ faith-based head teacher has a dual role in the school that of ensuring that pupils or students achieve academically and spiritually. However, conflicts and tensions between the Church leadership and head teachers have been reported, for instance, a study involving head teachers and governors drawn from Oxfordshire in the UK reveal conflictual relationship between head teachers and parish priests which tended to produce specific disagreements (Arthur, 1993). In one school, for instance, there had been much conflict with two parish priests over the preparation of the first communion and the head teacher had to accommodate the differing views of both priests (Arthur, 1993). There were also tensions linked to parish payment for school repairs. One priest, for instance, refused to contribute the full amount requested on the ground that the school did not have many of his parishioners even when it had a number of non-Catholics from his parish (Arthur, 1993). There were also issues between schools and diocesan schools commission and especially in relationship to capital expenditure. Two head teachers in the study claimed that the diocesan schools commission would appoint architects without consulting the schools governors (Arthur, 1993). Also one head teacher in the study strongly objected to the practice of priests meeting as an area committee to advice the Archbishop on educational matters (Arthur, 1993). Tan (1997) also reports about Church – State conflict which he describes as 'ideological conflicts'.

STUDY CONTEXT

Based on the new constitution (2010), the provincial administration that comprised of the province, district, division, location and sub-location have been restructured such that the eight provinces (Central, Coast, Eastern, Nairobi, North Eastern, Nyanza, Rift valley and Western) have been replaced by 47 counties. The county constitutes the second level governance after the national. The numbers of counties are based on the number of districts created under the Provinces and Districts Act of 1992. Therefore according to Wikipedia (2012), counties of Kenya are geographical units for devolved government based on the 2010 constitution of

Table 1. Showing school sponsorship.

Sponsors	Number of schools	(%, n=81)
Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) Church	27	33
Catholic Church	24	30
Church of God (COG)	4	5
Pentecostal Assemblies of God (PAG)	4	5
District Education Board (DEB)	3	3.7
Lutheran	2	2.5
African Inland Church (AIC)	2	2.5
Public schools (Not sponsored)	15	18.5

Kenya. Nyamira County therefore is located in Nyanza and constitute 3 constituents (KitutuMasaba, West Mugirango and North MugirangoBorabu). The county is also made up of three districts namely, Manga, Nyamira and Borabu (Kenya Open Data project, 2011). After next years (2013) general election a county government will replace the provincial and local government administration system which has been in existence since independence (Omari, 2011). Nyamira district, part of Nyamira County has been noted for its poor performance in mathematics (Yara and Wanjohi, 2011). They observed that a student's performance in mathematics is underpinned by the type of school he or she attends because some schools have qualified and experienced mathematics teachers and good learning environment than others. And this is true for other subjects as well. There are 143 schools in Nyamira County with a student population of 49,800.

METHODOLOGY

The main aim of the research was to gain an understanding of the nature of the relationship between sponsors and principals of church schools. Consequently, the study adopted a quantitative research approach in order to understand the extent of the phenomenon. The sample comprised of 81 secondary school principals who were purposely selected from the schools within the county. The county was also purposely selected. The composition of the sample was male (70%, n=81) and female (30%, n=81). Such a predominance of male raises concerns about female representation in education administration positions. The participants had a wide range of headship period, from less than 5 years to over ten years. Two-fifths of the participants were in their first headship, some in their second and others in third and beyond. The participants also worked in schools with diverse background, for instance, 83 % (n=81) worked in rural settings, 64% (n=81) district schools, 89 % (n=81) public schools and 68% (n=81) church schools. Each participant was contacted and provided a written explanation of the main purpose of the research. They were also assured of confidentiality. All those who agreed

to participate in the study were asked to sign and return informed consent declaration form. Questionnaires were then delivered to one hundred school principals but only 81 of them completed and returned questionnaires, representing a response rate of 81%. Each survey questionnaire consisted of 61 items which were closed, open-ended/ free response and rating scale in nature. This was necessary to diversify responses and also reduces what Watson and Coombes (2009) in Onderi and Makori (2012) calls 'question fatigue'. The open – ended or free response section or items offered the respondents an opportunity to make comments, expand or clarify information on their responses and thus help the researchers to gain some insight of the principals views regarding the challenges their roles and responsibilities in educational institutions. Comments and open-ended responses resulted in qualitative data. The first part of the questionnaire collected demographic or background information including gender, years in headship, headship whether first, second or third, school size, school setting whether rural or urban, whether mixed or single sex, denominational affiliation, secondary school tier whether national, provincial or district schools, among others. Besides background information questions or items, this paper examined information from only 4 of the 61 questions that looked at the sponsors and how the participants perceived them. Therefore the four questions that underpin this research survey include:

- Is your school sponsored?
- Who is your sponsor?
- How can you describe your relationship with the sponsor?
- What would you consider to be the most serious problems with the sponsor?

Analysis of data occurred at a number of stages, quantitative (data from closed-ended questionnaires) and qualitative (data from open- ended). Quantitative data was coded and analysed using the statistical package for social science (SPSS) yielding descriptive data. Qualitative data underwent four stages identified by Marshall and Rossman (1999): Organisation of findings, constructing of categories and themes and association between them. The resulting data was presented on tables.

Table 2.1. Showing issues (undue interference) and their distribution among sponsors

Sponsors	Number of	A	B
Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) Church	3	3.7	10
Catholic Church	2	2.5	6.7
Church of God (COG)	2	2.5	6.7
Pentecostal Assemblies of God	2	2.5	6.7
Lutheran	1	1.2	3.3

KEY: A = (% , n=81) B = (% , n=30)

Table 2.2. Showing issues (harassment and intimidation) and their distribution among sponsors

Sponsors	Number of Principals	A	B
Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) Church	2	2.5	6.7
Catholic Church	2	2.5	6.7
District Education Board (DEB)	1	1.2	3.3

KEY: A = (% , n=81) B = (% , n=30)

RESULTS

Participants' characteristics

Table 1 above shows that Catholic Church and Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) Church are the major sponsors of secondary schools in this study. They constitute 3/5 of the sponsored schools in the study.

Issues emerging from the study

Among the issues that have been cited in this study includes: undue interference with the day today running of the school; Harassment and intimidation, and promoting of unnecessary transfer of school principals. Further analysis reveals that ten principals reported undue interference with the day today running of the school; five principals reported harassment and intimidation and fifteen reported promoting or encouraging unnecessary transfers of principals. These issues are distributed among various sponsors as illustrated on Tables 2.1- 2.5 below:

Overall Seventh Day Adventist church leads in the issues of undue interference. Table 2.1 shows column A and B (%) for each sponsor, for instance, 3.7% and 10% for SDA Church, illustrating a proportion between the total sample (81) and the total amount of comments (30) made on issues affecting principals. The percentages are small but still raise concerns regarding the issues cited. Table 2.2 reveal that SDA church and Catholic Church sponsors have been associated with the issues of harassment and intimidation. Seventh-Day Adventist Church and Catholic Church sponsors have been cited in all three issues, District Education Board (DEB) in two, while Church of God (COG), Lutheran and African Inland

Church (AIC) have each been cited in one. Additional five negative comments were made which highlighted other issues such as lack or limited financial support for the development of physical facilities; their influence in the nomination of Board of governors (BOG) members, which result in board members who are not competent; sponsor's availability and faith issues: One comment made by a Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) church sponsored school principal: "Do not provide any financial support for physical development of the school". Another one was made by a Church of God (COG) sponsored school principal: "Some members nominated to BOG are not well exposed, skilful and knowledgeable". Three by a Catholic Church sponsored school principals: "Limited sponsorship in provision of physical facilities"; "Not always available" and "Very erratic depending on which priest is in charge of the parish. Some pressure because of lack of affiliation to the same faith". Further analysis revealed that only one comment was made by those who described their relationship with the sponsor as poor. There were five comments made by those who described the relationship as excellent. Three of those were positive while two were negative. Those who described their relationship with the sponsor as average made eleven comments and all of them were negative. While those who described their relationship with the sponsor as good made twenty-one comments, twenty negative and one positive. The negative comments have been analysed and illustrated on Table 2.1 – 2.5 below.

DISCUSSION

Non-State providers (NSPs) have been recognised in the literature for their significant contribution towards the provision of education in both developing and developed

Table 2.3. Showing issues (promotion of unnecessary transfers of principals) and their distribution among sponsors

Sponsors	Number of Principals	A	B
Seventh Day (SDA) Church	7	8.6	23.3
Catholic Church	6	7.4	20
African Inland Church (AIC)	1	1.2	3.3
District Education Board (DEB)	1	1.2	3.3

KEY: A = (% , n=81) B = (% , n=30)

Table 2.4. Showing the issues and the church sponsors (% , n=81).

Sponsors	Undue Interference	Harassment and Intimidation	Transfers of principals*
Seventh Day (SDA) Church	3.7	2.5	8.6
Catholic Church	2.5	2.5	7.4
Church of God (COG)	2.5	0	0
Pentecostal Assemblies of God (PAG)	2.5	0	0
District Education Board (DEB)	0	1.2	1.2
Lutheran	1.2	0	0
African Inland Church (AIC)	0	0	1.2
Public schools (Not sponsored)	0	0	0

*promotion of unnecessary transfers of principals.

Table 2.5. Showing issues and church sponsors (% , n=30).

Sponsors	Undue Interference	Harassment and Intimidation	Transfers of principals
Seventh Day (SDA) Church	10	6.7	23.3
Catholic Church	6.7	6.7	20
Church of God (COG)	2.5	0	0
Pentecostal Assemblies of God (PAG)	6.7	0	0
District Education Board (DEB)	0	3.3	3.3
Lutheran	3.3	0	0
African Inland Church (AIC)	0	0	3.3
Public schools (Not sponsored)	0	0	0

*promotion of unnecessary transfers of principals.

countries. Batley (2006) views NSPs as a substitute for government services in most developing countries. Nair (2011) shares similar views arguing that NSPs constitute a critical constituent of the larger civil society and that activities have been institutionalised into the development process. In Kenya the church's support or involvement in education dates back to the colonial era when missionaries owned and managed schools. After independence, the school managers became sponsors. The growing importance of NSPs is underpinned by the fact that the States' effort alone is insufficient to cope with the expansion and growth of education (Rose, 2006; Batley, 2006; Kitaev,1999). The states' inability is associated with the decline in public funds, which is a common phenomenon in both developing and developed countries, although the former are most likely to be affected than the latter. The decline in public funds is attributable to a number of factors such as, growing needs in other sectors such as health services among others, decline in government revenue and rising inflation

(Kitaev,1999). All the foregoing factors make a strong case for the growing involvement of NSPs e.g. churches, among others, in the provision of education. In the UK, for instance, the Catholic Church and the Church of England are critical constituents in the provision of education, they sponsor and own schools. They have also recently been involved in the setting up and running of academies. Therefore a number of academies have 'faith-based' organisations as sponsors (Pike, 2010). In Northern Ireland, the Catholic Church is the key player in the provision of education, while the Protestants are a minority. In Hong Kong, the Roman Catholic Church is the denomination with largest number of sponsored schools. In the Netherlands, the Dutch faith-based schools are supported and funded by the state. Similar arrangements occur in Hong Kong, Germany, among others. It is a dual kind of provision. This study set out to investigate the relationship between the sponsors of Church/ faith-based institutions and head teachers or principals of secondary schools in a county in Kenya and

the study findings reveal a very polarised relationship between the principals and sponsors characterised by undue interference with the day today running of the school by the sponsor; the sponsor influencing unnecessary transfer of head teachers or principals, and harassment and intimidation of principals by sponsors. The findings also reveals, for instance, that those who described their relationship with the sponsor as excellent, good and average were asked to make comments; they made more negative comments than even those who described their relationship with the sponsor as poor. For instance, those who describe their relationship as excellent, made five comments, three positive and two negative; those who described their relationship as good made twenty one comments and twenty of them were negative and those who described their relationship as average made eleven comments and all of them were negative. For details of analysis their comments see **Table 2.1 – 2.5**. Some of the elements identified in this study, for instance interference with the operation of the school and unnecessary transfer of principals are consistent with the findings of Mabeya and Ndiku (2010). Such a relationship is unproductive and tends to undermine the effectiveness of the teaching- learning process of the school. It also undermines working relationship and trust. Mabeya and Ndiku (2010) view school as a social system with a series of sub-system within it which interact with each other and the environment. They however argue that for positive educational results, the sub-systems should interact harmoniously. Undue interference, unnecessary interference, harassment and intimidation, among others by the sponsors are both unhealthy and unprofessional and may result in conflicts and tensions. All this undermines effective education provision. Issues with the sponsor are attributable to lack of clear definition of roles and responsibilities. Onderi and Makori (2013) observe that lack definitions of roles and responsibilities often result in tensions and conflicts, which in turn undermine the smooth running of institutions. Depending on the degree of the issues identified, they may seriously or negatively undermine the effectiveness of NSPs as partners in the provision of education. While there is a strong case for NSPs and their role in education, the relationships between the sponsors and principals have been identified in the study as problematic and may undermine their contribution towards education.

CONCLUSION

It is clear in this article that the church/ faith-based organisations continue to be the key constituents in the provision of education in Kenya and other parts of the world. However, conflictual relationship between the sponsors and principals undermine positive outcomes of the teaching and learning process. It is interesting to note

that those who rated their relationship with the sponsor favourably made more negative comments than those who rated them less favourable. For instance, those who rated their relationship with the sponsor as good made twenty-one comments and twenty of them negative ones. Those who describe their relationship as excellent made five comments, two negative ones and those describe their relationship as average made eleven comments and all of them negative. The negative ones include, undue interference with the day today running of the school and unnecessary transfer of principals, harassment and intimidation, lack or limited financial support by the sponsor, among others. While SDA church and Catholic Church were identified as major sponsors of schools in the study, they were also associated with the issues of intimidation and harassment, undue inference, unnecessary transfers of principals and lack or limited financial support.

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