

**STRATEGIES HEADTEACHERS HAVE ADOPTED TO
COUNTER GIRL CHILD DROPOUT FROM PUBLIC
PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THIKA MUNICIPALITY, KIAMBU
COUNTY-KENYA**

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ABSTRACT

Key component of the development of a nation is the education of its citizens. Yet the achievements of gender equality in education has been a very elusive goal. To achieve this, the government of Kenya through the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology has continuously instituted various measures to help achieve gender equality in education. The main objective of this study was to identify steps headteachers take to reduce dropout rate of girl child from public primary schools in Thika Municipality, Kiambu County-Kenya. There are some intervention measures towards reducing dropout. Some of them which the government through the Ministry of Education and other concerned parties like UNICEF, UNESCO, UNDF, UNGEI, FAWE, ANGEL, Civil Society, WHO and others are trying campaigns to sensitize parents and communities about the importance of girls' education, advocating for cultural transformation in broad national policies and introducing Family Life Education in schools to reduce the incidence of adolescence pregnancies and HIV and AIDS infections. The government is trying to deal with sexual harassment or abuse offenders because the act threatens girls and they may be forced out of schools. Poverty is the main constraint against the demand for girls' education but the government, NGOs, churches and other organizations are trying to assist with bursary/scholarship schemes. The government is investing a lot in Early Childhood Education Programmes in preparation for early school life. Some of the intervention measures carried out in member countries since Mauritius (1994) are addressing poverty through bursary schemes, addressing HIV and AIDS in schools, introducing boarding facilities for girls, allowing girls re-admission after absence from school. Addressing sexual harassment and deal with culprits accordingly (Kenya Ministry of Education, 1996). Provision of guidance and counseling be offered to the affected parties. The study comprised of teachers, pupils, parents and the Municipal Education Officer. These stakeholders were interviewed on retention of girl child in public primary schools in Thika Municipality, Kiambu County. Headteachers were interviewed on the strategies they have adopted to counter girl child dropout from the schools they head in the Municipality. Structured questionnaires and interview schedule were the main instruments of data collection. The collected data were subject to qualitative and quantitative analysis. The significance of this study is that women are all round persons and promising in whatever responsibilities they are assigned to, developers in mind and builders of nations globally. The results indicated that poverty eradication is necessary, sensitization of parents, community and girl child very necessary. Guidance and counseling body for both parents and girl child be availed. Headteachers to lay their strategies well and make the schools girl child friendly. It is hoped that having been acquainted with the contents, all stakeholders and other development minded partners will have better perspective of gender issues affecting the girl child and the education process.