

**AN ASSESSMENT OF EQUITY IN THE ALLOCATION OF SECONDARY SCHOOL  
BURSARIES IN NZAUI SUB-COUNTY, MAKUENI COUNTY**

**MICHAEL NTHIW'A WANYUMU**

**MED-24824/2013**

**A RESEARCH PROJECT REPORT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT FOR  
THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE AWARD OF MASTER OF EDUCATION DEGREE IN  
ECONOMICS OF EDUCATION OF  
MOUNT KENYA UNIVERSITY**

**JULY 2015**

## ABSTRACT

The secondary school cycle of education is vital in preparing individuals for vocational and industrial education and training in post-secondary institutions. The secondary school bursary scheme was introduced as a safety net in the education sector in Kenya in the 1993/1994 financial year. Despite government efforts to monitor the implementation of the scheme, it has not been clear the extent to which the exercise has been marred by common ills in society. The purpose of this study was to assess the extent to which equity was considered in the allocation of secondary school bursaries in Nzau sub-County. The study used a mixed methodology and adopted a triangulation design. The target population was 4621 subjects from which purposive sampling, simple random sampling and stratified sampling were employed to select 369 respondents consisting of 351 students, 9 principals, 6 Chiefs and 3 Constituency Bursary Committee (CBC) members. The researcher used questionnaires to collect data from students and principals while interviews were used to collect data from CBC members and Chiefs. Document analysis was used to collect data on bursary allocations from the constituency bursary office. Data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 21. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages while qualitative data was analyzed using narrative analysis. Results of data analysis were presented using frequency tables, pie charts and bar charts. The study findings revealed that equity in the allocation of secondary school bursaries in Nzau sub-County was achieved to a significant extent despite some challenges. The socio-economic background of students was a consideration especially with regard to parental status in which case total orphans were given very high priority in the allocation of bursaries. It was however observed that some students with both parents alive could be needier financially than some orphans who could be enjoying support from rich relatives or inheritance from their late parents. Only 14.44% of applicants in 2012 received the bursary. In 2013 the percentage was 31.18% while only 28.51% of the applicants in 2014 benefited. This showed a mismatch between the poverty levels and the percentage of recipients in the sub-County. The findings further revealed that there was little or no consideration of gender in bursary allocation. This insensitivity had worked to the disadvantage of the boy-child in Nzau sub-County with huge disparities noted in favour of the girls albeit by chance. To a very great extent, the disability of students was considered in the allocation of secondary school bursaries with close to 90% of disabled applicants benefiting. Finally, pertaining to the geographical location of students, a reasonable consideration was made to ensure proportionate allocation of bursaries to applicants from each Division. The study recommends that government funding to the bursary scheme be increased, needy students be assured of continuous funding once identified and a need to probe further to establish the degree of need by students irrespective of parental status. The government should also consider decentralizing the disbursement of the bursary to Location level for better targeting.