

A Study on Involvement of Stakeholders in the Implementation of Safety Guidelines in Public Secondary Schools in Nairobi West Region, Kenya

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Abstract

Implementation of government policies becomes effective or possible where all stakeholders give maximum support to the implementation process. This is because the broadened educational goals and objectives as a result of changes in socio-economic development have necessitated the involvement of several minds from a wide range of stakeholders. Therefore the researcher conducted a study to ascertain stakeholders' involvement in the implementation of Safety guidelines in Public Secondary Schools in Nairobi West Region. The study targeted 25 Public secondary schools in the study area, their headteachers, teachers and Students. District Education Officers (DEOs) and District Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (DQASOs) were also targeted. The study used mixed methods design where both qualitative and quantitative approaches were employed. Stratified random sampling was used to arrive at a sample of 15 schools and their headteachers, 43 teachers and 240 students. All DEOs and DQASOs were purposively included in the sample. Data collection instrument used were questionnaires for the headteachers, teachers and students whereas interview guides were used to gather information from DEOs and DQASOs. Document analysis and observation guides were also used to compliment other instruments. The study questions addressed the extent to which the following stakeholders were involved in the implementation of safety guidelines in the schools under study; Students, Parents, Teachers and headteachers. As shown in the discussion of results, the study established that stakeholders were not adequately involved in the implementation of safety guidelines in schools under study.

Keywords: Safety, Guidelines, Implementation, Stakeholders, Involvement

Introduction

The school governing bodies, principals and educators are obliged to ensure learners' safety while in learning institutions. This is premised on the educators' authority and duty of care towards the learner (Prinsloo, 2005). The role of both school governing bodies and of educators illustrates the importance of collaborative efforts regarding ensuring of a safe school environment. Bucher and Manning (2003), puts emphasis on the fact that for safety measures at school to be effectively implemented; all stakeholders need to be involved so as to create ownership and pride. Thompkins (2000) and Burnes (2004) advocate for participatory planning which involves people who would be affected by the planned programmes. They assert that, willing participants contribute significantly to the success of any programme. MOEST, (2003) also emphasizes the importance of SWAP by involving learners, teachers, BOG and PTA members among other stakeholders in the formulation of school guidelines and planning school activities basing on MOE policy guidelines on implementation of educational programmes. With the government commitment to enhance safety in schools, there is a need to involve stakeholders in the implementation of policies in schools (Waudu, 2009) hence the importance of the study.

Literature Review

According to the Ministry of Education Science & Technology (MOEST) hand book on school management (2003), management of school's physical facilities can be done effectively if headteachers involve all the stakeholders and delegate some responsibilities to other staff members. The headteacher should supervise and coordinate implementation of programmes in a school. According to Nair (2003), BOG and PTA members should have in place a development plan of their schools to ensure thoughtful and purposeful future plan as need and availability of land demand. Syvertsen, (2002) asserts that all stakeholders should be involved in planning schools that more adequately address the needs of the whole learning community. Burnes (2004) and Sallis (2002) indicates that rational attitude towards any educational programme is conveyed in the chances availed for the members of the school community to participate in the implementation process. Therefore, to promote safety of the school environment, all stakeholders in various parts of the world as explained in the subsequent paragraphs greatly participate in the entire process of safety guidelines implementation.

In the United States of America, School wide policies and practices are effected by all stakeholders in education to systematically address needs of students, school personnel, the community and the physical plant of the school. The United States Department of Education (U.S.D.E) requires safety policies on physical infrastructure in schools to be strictly enforced in view of the threats posed by terrorism, drug related violence,

proliferation of firearms and natural disasters like typhoons floods and hurricanes. Most American schools have Zero tolerance policies on activities that are likely to compromise safety. A School Survey on Crime and Safety (S.S.O.C.S) report states that in the 1996/1997 school year, many schools implemented a number of approaches to enhance safety and security, they included; visitors signing in before entering into the school plant, closed school policy prohibiting students from leaving.

In South Africa, levels of school violence are extremely high. Shaw (2002), in a paper on International experiences and actions in promoting school safety states that, there are regular reports of serious violence, gang activities, rape and sexual assaults on girls in schools. Current approaches on enhancing school safety include exemplary programmes such as “Tiisa Thuto”, “Crisp” and “Cass”. Non-governmental organizations such as the Independent Project Trust (I.P.T) and Business against Crime also play a role. “Tiisa Thuto” involves developing partnership between schools, parents, local business and community organizations in implementing model programmes that address the needs of individual schools. The “Crisp” project organizes school safety teams to link parents, schools, local organizations and police. In 1990s, I.P.T. developed a policy which provided conflict resolution training to students, teachers and school governing bodies. However, continued safety problems led to the realizations that a more fundamental approach was required. Thus, the “Cass” programme was consequently initiated. This is a comprehensive model involving local community partners, national government development guidelines and support materials for school manager, educators, and safety committees

In a research paper addressing school safety in Uganda, Lulua (2008) states that, development partners like the national and district governments, communities, parents and private sector partners have tried to respond to the infrastructural aspect of educational quality Uganda has implemented the Safe School Contract (S.S.C) as one of the identified interventions which strengthen the role of teachers, pupils, parents and their involvement in children’s education. Thompkins (2000) and Burnes (2004) advocate for participatory planning which involves people who would be affected by the planned programs. They assert that, willing participants contribute significantly to the success of any programs. In recognition of stakeholders’ role in enhancing safety and other initiatives in schools, MOEST, (2003) emphasizes the importance of Sector Wide Approach Planning (SWAP) by involving learners, teachers, BOG and PTA members among other stakeholders in the formulation of school guidelines and planning school activities basing on MOEST policy guidelines on implementation of educational programs. With the Kenya government commitment to enhance safety in schools, there is a need to involve stakeholders in the implementation of policies in schools as stated in a study conducted by Waudo (2009). Further, Nthenya, (2010) in her study stated that although school board and administrators set the climate of safety within schools, teachers must also be directly involved, trained and supported in all stages of developing and implementing programs that accomplish safer physical infrastructure in schools. Consequently, Maoulidi (2008) indicated that school safety should be addressed through a comprehensive approach that focuses on prevention, intervention and response planning. Similar views were raised by Magdla, (2006) in a study on safety of schools in informal settlement in South Africa. Therefore, it follows that safety of school environment require planning and constant vigilance and has to be everyone’s responsibility. Based on the foregoing, it was necessary to conduct a study on the stakeholders’ involvement in the implementation of safety guidelines in Nairobi West Region, Kenya.

Objective of the Study

To establish Stakeholders’ Involvement in the Implementation of Safety Guidelines in Public Secondary Schools in Nairobi West Region, Nairobi County

Research Methodology

The study used a mixed methods approach and it was undertaken in Nairobi West region which comprises of three districts; Langata, Dagoretti and Westlands. The residents of this area are of different social, economic, religious and political backgrounds whose main economic activities include small scale traders, farmers and large scale traders. The study targeted all 25 public secondary schools, 25 headteachers, 816 teachers, 16,065 students, all 3 Quality Assurance & Standards Officers and all 3 District Education Officers in Nairobi West Region. Headteachers were targeted in the study since they play an integral part in the implementation of government policies in schools. Teachers were included in the study since they are important parts of the entire school system and their adequate involvement in the implementation of educational programs in their schools leads to greater achievement of the set goals. Students were included in the study given the pivotal role they play in school management. DEOs were targeted in the study because they oversee implementation of educational programs in the schools under their jurisdiction and have substantial knowledge of the current situation regarding safety of physical infrastructure in schools found in their districts. DQASOs were targeted in the study for they continuously assess implementation process of government policies in schools to establish the progress. Stratified random sampling was used to arrive at a representative sample where schools were placed according to three administrative districts, type and category, the sample included; 15 headteachers from the selected 15 out

of 25 public secondary schools, 43 out of 816 teachers, 241 out of 16,065 students, all (3) District Quality and Standards Officers (DQASOs) and all (3) District Education Officers (DEOs). In order to carry out this study, the following instruments were developed, pilot-tested, revised and then administered to collect data from the respondents. Interview guide were used to obtain information from District Education and District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer. Questionnaires were administered to the headteachers, teachers and students. Observation schedule was also used to compliment other instruments. The analysis of data was based on research questions. Data were analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative procedures. The researcher categorized the instruments into their homogenous groups, coded the quantitative information and summarized them into frequencies and percentages with the help of SPSS windows version 13.0.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Involvement of Students

Table 1: Students' involvement in the Implementation of Safety Guidelines

Item	Student		Teachers		H/Teachers	DEOs	DQASOs
	F	%	F	%	F	F	F
Students were in safety committees	20	10	5	2.5	2	-	-
Students were provided with proper safety reporting systems	30	15	6	15	4	1	1
Students were effectively carrying Out safety campaigns	80	40	10	25	9	1	2

As indicated in Table 1, few respondents, 20 (10%) students, 5 (2.5%) teachers, two (2) headteachers and none of the Education Officer indicated that students were involved in schools' safety sub committees. This could have negative impact on the Ministry of Education safety guidelines implementation since students are directly affected by presence or lack of safety in schools. Majority of the participants stated that most schools had not constituted safety committees to address safety concerns in schools irrespective of the fact that safety committees are crucial since they identify the safety needs of the school with a view of taking necessary action, mobilize resources required by the school to ensure a safe, secure and caring environment for learners, staff and parents and to monitor and evaluate the various aspects of school safety with a view to enhancing school safety. Regarding provision of proper safety reporting systems to students, few respondents, 30 (15%) students, 15 (6%) teachers, four (4) headteachers and two (2) Education officers felt that students were adequately enabled to report any safety concern in the school. They cited presence of school assemblies, class meetings and open forums as ways provided for reporting any safety issue. However, overwhelming number of respondents stated that most schools had not established proper safety reporting systems for students because the available ones were inadequate and could allow intimidation from their colleagues. They further reported that most schools did not have suggestion boxes to facilitate reporting of unsafe situations in schools. Where suggestion boxes were present, they were inappropriately located in the full view of school administration and other people. This hindered effective use of these facilities. Eighty (40%) students, 10 (25%) teachers, nine (9) headteachers and three (3) Education Officers indicated that students carried out safety campaigns effectively. This could enhance implementation of safety guidelines in schools. However, overwhelming number of students, 120 (60%) and teachers, 30 (75%), nine (9) teachers and three (3) Education officers felt that students were not conducting safety campaigns in their schools as expected. They indicated that most school administrators had not designed creative ways for students to campaign against unsafe situation in schools, this could include; classroom posters, bookmarks, calendars and even videos regarding school safety. The study established that majority of the schools had not constituted safety sub committees. In few schools where safety committees existed, students had not been involved. Proper safety reporting systems had not been established in most schools and students were not conducting adequate campaign to promote safety of physical infrastructure in their schools.

Parents' Involvement

Table 2: Parents' Involvement in the Implementation of MOE Safety Guidelines

Item	Student		Teachers		H/Teachers	DEOs	DQASOs
	F	%	F	%	F	F	F
Understand schools' Safety policies	160	80	32	80	12	3	3
Be aware of school's rules and regulations	180	90	38	95	13	3	3
Understand schools' safety protocol	90	45	20	50	10	2	2
Encourage positive commitment of their Children	150	75	39	97.5	15	3	3
To monitor their children's activities	80	40	35	87.5	14	3	3

Table 2 shows that, 160 (80%) students, 32 (80%) teachers, twelve (12) headteachers and all (6) Education

officers felt that there was a need for parents to understand school safety policies. This knowledge could assist them to promote safe and healthy behavior among students. One hundred and eighty (90%) students, 38 (95%) teachers, thirteen (13) headteachers and all (6) Education Officers maintained that parents who are aware of schools' rules and regulations assist in the implementation of safety guidelines in schools. According to Table 2, It can be deduced that less than half, 90 (45%) of the students, half, 20 (50%) of the teachers, ten (10) headteachers and four (4) Education Officers felt that parents should understand schools' safety protocol. Headteachers and teachers indicated that some parents were not aware or simply ignored school's safety protocol, this was demonstrated by the fact that some parents refused to stop at the gate for security checks, and others did not sign visitors' book and those who did failed to give all the details required. In some cases parents allowed students to carry illegal items to schools while others could walk straight to classrooms or other areas to see their children without passing through the office. This posed great security lapse since criminals could easily take advantage and harm students. One District Quality Assurance and Standards Officers said that "parents, just like any other person should be briefed about safety protocol in the school and should be willing to adhere to them in order to enhance school safety". Overwhelming number of respondents, 150 (75%) students, 39 (97.5%) teachers, all (15) headteachers and all (6) Education Officers were of the view that parents encouraging positive commitment of their children towards school safety. They stated that such practice would help in the implementation of safety guidelines in schools since students would be willing to listen. One District Education Officer remarked that "parents, through discussion of school's safety concerns with their children always ask help from schools' administrators if there are on-going problems". Fewer number of students, 80 (40%) as compared to teachers, 35 (87.5%), headteachers, fourteen (14) and all (6) Education Officers indicated that parents should monitor their children's activities. This could be due to the fact that students thought they were able to take control of their lives without their parents' supervision while other respondents felt otherwise.

Teachers and Support Staff Involvement

Table 3 Teachers' and support staffs' Involvement in the implementation of safety Guidelines

Item	Student		Teachers		H/Teachers	DEOs	DQASOs
	F	%	F	%	F	F	F
Clearly spelling out safety rules and regulations	120	60	34	85	12	3	2
Being alert all through	100	50	38	95	14	3	3
Getting more involved In students' affair	160	80	35	87.5	13	3	3
Identify warning signs	90	45	36	18	12	2	3
Dealing with safety related cases cautiously	190	95	30	75	13	3	3
Being good role models	170	85	25	62.5	10	3	2

According to 120 (60%) students, 34 (85%) teachers, twelve (12) headteachers and five (5) Education Officers, teachers and support staff could be involved in the implementation of safety guidelines by clearly spelling out safety rules and regulations to guide students' behavior. They further stated that District Education Officer commented that "when students are constantly reminded to follow safety rules in which . Half, 100 (50%) of the students, 38 (95%) teachers, fourteen (14) teachers and all (6) Education Officers indicated that as a way of being involved in the implementation of safety guidelines in schools, it was important for teachers and support staff to keep their eyes and eyes open all the time. By doing this they would be able notice any unbecoming behavior among students that can result to damage of school property or even loss of lives. In line with this, one District Education Officer remarked that "intermingling with students when they are settling down in classes or elsewhere could lead to finding out problems such as bullying, vandalism, planned fights and much more". Majority of the respondents, 160 (80%) students, 35 (87.5%) teachers, thirteen (13) headteachers and all (6) Education Officers felt that in order to ensure safety, teachers and support staff needed to be more involved in students affairs. They stated that being with students during trips, in their clubs and societies, in welfare associations and other areas will enable teachers and staff to know what is going on in school. Another way of involving teachers and support staff in the implementation of MOE safety guidelines in schools included identifying warning signs. This was stated by 90 (45%) students, 36 (95%) teachers, twelve (12) headteachers and five (5) Education Officers. They felt that if teachers and support staff are able to identify warning signs like restlessness, laxity and general non response to school routines among students, they can easily intervene before unsafe situation could materialize. Overwhelming number of students, 190 (95%), teachers, 30 (75%), headteachers, thirteen (13) and Education Officers (6) stated that teachers and staff are required to deal with safety related cases cautiously so that they do not cultivate bad feelings among students which can easily trigger a strike in school. Similarly, a large number of students, 170 (85%), teachers, 25 (62.5%), ten (10) headteachers and five (5) Education Officers indicated that the best way for teachers and support staff to be involved in the implementation of safety guidelines was for them to be positive role models to students. This could have positive impact on students since they were likely to emulate them. Other ways of involving teachers and support staff in the implementation of safety guidelines that were mentioned included; providing guidance to students and

educating them on the importance of taking care of the school physical infrastructure, encouraging the students to take care of the school facilities and being responsible by rewarding those who maintained the facilities, inspecting infrastructure and repair of the broken properties. Identifying security challenges and reporting them to authority. Removing obstacles from the school grounds such as solid walls, shrubs and trees, ensuring clear visibility of main entrance, locating parking areas so that they are visible, keeping unused building and doors securely locked, demarcating “out of bounds” areas, eliminating blind spots provided by doorways, fences, buildings and landscaping and access control.

Headteachers’ Involvement

Table 4: Headteachers’ Involvement in the implementation of safety Guidelines

Item	Student		Teachers		H/Teachers	DEOs	DQASOs
	F	%	F	%	F	F	F
Placing school safety on the educational agenda	120	60	25	62.5	11	3	3
Maintaining crime reporting and record keeping system	140	70	36	95	12	3	2
Providing safety related rules and regulations	180	90	35	87.5	13	3	3
Design conflict resolution programmes	110	55	30	75	10	2	3

As shown in Table 4: Most respondents, 120 (60%) students, 25 (62.5%) teachers, eleven (11) headteachers and all (6) Education Officers indicated that although headteachers were playing important role in the implementation of government policies in schools, majority of them were not placing school safety as a priority in their educational agenda. This could hamper effective implementation of safety guidelines. Further, one District Education stated that “headteacher’s commitment to safety in school provides the basis for the enhancement of existing strategies and the development of new ones to achieve this goal”. One hundred and forty (70%) students, 36 (95%) students, twelve (12) headteachers and five (5) Education Officers felt that headteachers could be involved in the implementation of safety guidelines by maintaining crime-reporting and record keeping system. This could help them and the entire school community to know specifically what crimes are being committed in their schools, when and where the crimes are committed and who is involved. Most respondents, 180 (90%) students, 35 (87.5%) teachers, thirteen (13) headteachers and all (6) Education Officers maintained that providing user friendly safety related rules and regulations by the schools’ headteachers to school leadership and security personnel could ensure consistency of students’ supervision and management. Other safety related regulations cited by the respondents included; development of comprehensive school safety plan, school safety training programmes, crises response plan, safety annual review, selection of new employees and comprehensive locker policy. One hundred and ten (55%) students, 30 (75%) teachers, ten (10) headteachers and five (5) Education Officers indicated that headteachers could enhance safety guidelines implementation by designing conflict resolution programmes. Such programmes should stress the unique worth and contribution of every person or group by engaging them in the safe school planning process. Recognizing the impact of cultural influences on a school community’s ability to create safe, secure and peaceful schools for all students is critical for those designing safe school plans. This was stressed by one District Education Officer who asserted that “cultural influences can directly affect the information, strategies and resources that are used to plan, create and promote a safe and peaceful school as well as to prevent a school crisis”. The researcher observed that in most of the schools safety related rules and regulations had not been spelt out clearly as evidenced by the few cases where school rules and regulations had been displayed. This could hinder effective implementation of safety guidelines in schools.

Summary

The findings on involvement of stakeholders in the implementation of Ministry of Education safety guidelines indicated that stakeholders were not involved adequately in the implementation of safety guidelines in the schools under study, however, The Ministry’s provisions were clear on the need of involving learners, teachers and BOG members among other stakeholders in the formulation of school guidelines and planning school activities basing on MOE policy guidelines on implementation of educational programmes (MOEST, 2003). In the same vein, the MOEST hand book on school management (2003) explains that ensuring safe school environment can be done effectively if head teachers involve all the stakeholders and delegate some responsibilities to other staff members.

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