



Amref Ethics and Scientific Review Committee (ESRC)

STUDY CLOSE-OUT REPORT TEMPLATE

Instructions

- *The close-out report should be submitted on completion of a study*
- *Ensure all sections are completed*
- *Report should be a maximum of 3 pages*

PART 1: PROTOCOL AND INVESTIGATOR DETAILS

Title of the study	Understanding the effects of COVID –19 Pandemic on Low-Cost Private School Markets in Nairobi, Kenya
ESRC Proposal number	P1006/2021
Date of last ESRC approval	July 30, 2021
Principal Investigator details (name, phone number, email, organization)	Dr. Moses Ngware Phone Number: +2547222575742; Email: mngware@aphrc.org African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC)
List of co-investigators and institution affiliations	John Muchira, Catherine Asego, Francis Kiroro, Maurice Mutisya, Vollan Ochieng, Caroline Thiongo and Olivier Habimana All from African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC)



PART 2: BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY

Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the education sector further exacerbating already existing inequalities. Low-Cost Private Schools (LCPS) faced serious challenges that led to the closure of some despite their role in serving the poor in urban informal settlements. This study sought to examine the economic shocks created by the COVID-19 pandemic on households' demand for education and school choice; private school markets in low-resourced urban contexts; and knock-on effects on public schools. The study was conducted in four of Nairobi's informal settlements namely Korogocho, Viwandani, Mathare, and Kibera. All APBETs and public schools within the four areas. The study adopted a multi-stage sampling procedure. We used both quantitative and qualitative research approaches in data collection and analyses. From the study findings, it is evident that the pandemic affected the school operations resulting from the loss of school fees during school closure, increased default on school fees, and a significant reduction in enrolment when schools reopened. This resulted in the permanent closure of some institutions. LCPS plays a vital role in expanding education opportunities for the less fortunate children in the urban poor settlements. The government ought to extend capitation grants to children who attend these schools for them to enjoy their right to education. Policy-driven decisions requiring attention from relevant educational stakeholders are needed to ensure all learners will continue accessing education and measures for mitigating adverse effects of schooling in the ongoing pandemic, as well as related future disruptions, are identified.

PART 3: EXPERIENCES DURING THE STUDY

The protocol and research tools were submitted for ethical approvals to the APHRC ethical review committee, the Ethics and Scientific Review Committee (ESRC) at AMREF, and the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI), and the relevant research permits were issued for fieldwork. Data collection commenced in July 2021. The project team met and engaged with various stakeholders from the communities in Kibera, Korogocho, Viwandani, and Mathare. Engagements were both during data collection and validation of study results. Among key stakeholders were; the local administration officers comprising the District County Commissioners (DCC), and their assistants, village elders, representatives of the APBET association, head teachers from APBETs as well public schools, sub-county education directors, the Quality Assurance and Standards Officer (QASO) at the regional level as well as representatives of the County Government, Ministry of Education, and Civil Society Organizations. All the stakeholders participated in the inception meeting where the study was presented and their insights and feedback were sought and incorporated into the protocol. Data was collected using tablets loaded with SurveyCTO and uploaded for storage and retrieval in



secure APHRC servers, cleaned, and analyzed using STATA 17. We targeted 883 households and we managed to reach all of them.

For institutions that were operating at the time of the study, we targeted all (486) basic education institutions located within the target slums and at the periphery of the slums (within 1km) from which we achieved 96.9% (471 schools). For the permanently closed schools, we targeted all permanently closed schools within and around the four slums. Using a snowballing approach, we identified 24 permanently closed schools and collected data from them.

The data collection teams observed the ministries of education, and health protocols on the COVID-19 infection prevention. Masks and sanitizers were provided to both the research assistants as well as the respondents who were urged to keep the masks on through the interview sessions and when in public places. No adverse events were reported throughout the project cycle.

In summary, some of the notable **achievements** included reaching all the targeted households (883) and 96.9% (471) of the schools during data collection, and convening inception and validation meetings to engage and solicit inputs and views of the LCPS/APBET stakeholders. Those in attendance (and actively participated) included the various stakeholders from the Ministry of Education, local administrative officers, schools, (both public and LCPS) Civil Society Organizations, and local community members. A study report and a policy brief have been drafted – though still work in progress.

Challenges experienced

In the quest to find the head teachers of the permanently closed schools, most of them had gone upcountry and were not reachable. However, we worked with the landlords of the rented premises who helped us with alternative phone contacts to reach the managers of the permanently closed schools.

At the data analysis stage, we had intended to merge/link the institutional data with that of the sampled learners but this was not possible because only 43% of schools could be linked to the learners. This was because we targeted all schools within the slums and a kilometer radius at the periphery of the slums, and some of the sampled learners attend schools that are far more than 1km outside the slums, as well as some attending schools outside Nairobi county. No amendments were made to the protocol, and the time scheduled for field work, as well as the budgetary allocation.

PART 4: STUDY FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Key findings based on each of the specific objectives

Under objective 1, the study found that the COVID-19 pandemic affected the income of households in the informal settlements with at least 69% of the working-age population losing their jobs. As a coping strategy, when schools reopened, some of the parents opted to move their children to no fee-paying Government schools. An estimated 72% of the LCPS schools registered a reduced enrollment rate, while some permanently closed their doors. The lack of income from fee payment during the COVID-19 related school closures affected the school operations of LCPS. The movement of learners from the LCPS to public schools further put a strain in public schools in the informal settlements.

Under objective 2, results show that the loss of household income affected parents' ability to afford fees for their children. In an attempt to reduce expenses during the COVID-19 disruptions, parents who could not afford fees charged in the LCPS transferred their children to other cheaper LCPS or to government schools that receive capitation grants. The proportion of transfers was highest at the primary school level and lowest at the secondary school level indicating that LCPS offering primary education were more affected by the loss of learners.

Under objective 3, as a coping mechanism for the schools, some reduced school expenses, with approximately 8% of the LCPS hiring untrained teachers, whose salaries are estimated at 50% less than what a trained teacher should earn. This could subsequently affect the quality of education.

Under objective 4, a higher dropout rate was reported in households that had very limited resources (most poor households). Some parents (28% of the respondent) indicated their preference for schools that are better performing regardless of the distance.

In conclusion and way forward, LCPS schools play an important role in expanding education opportunities for learners from poor informal settlements given the inadequate public school supply. With over 60% of learners in Nairobi informal settlements attending LCPS, the Government must plan for these children given the ever-growing demand for education services. The majority of learners who attend LCPS seek enrolment in these schools because of the lack of available spaces in public schools (Ngware & Mutisya, 2021). The Government needs to put in place plans to build more public schools, and strategize on how to support learners to benefit from the adjacent public schools that have lower enrolments in the neighboring settlements, for instance, introduce buses to ferry learners to and from these schools. The other viable option is for the Government to provide capitation grants to children attending LCPS. In the short run, there is a need for the private sector to create an affordable recovery fund for LCPS, especially those that were severely hit and could not reopen (or are struggling to survive) due to incapacity to meet operational costs.

PART 5: DISSEMINATION PLAN

The findings were disseminated at a policy engagement forum organized in Nairobi on July 14, 2022. This meeting brought together representatives from the parents in the four



study sites, teachers from both public and LCPS schools (those in operation and those that closed permanently), directors of education at the County and Sub County levels, and representatives from the Nairobi City County Education department, the Quality Assurance and standard office, local leaders, and Civil Society Organizations. The panel discussion provided an opportunity to hear from the various groups on whether the findings mirrored the true picture, as well as sharing first-hand experience.

We had two presentations during the 2022 CIES titled: 1) Determinants of school type choices: What did parents from urban poor areas consider upon reopening during COVID-19? And 2) Effect of COVID-19 on low-cost private school markets .

The report and policy brief will be shared through APHRC mailing list as well as uploaded to the APHRC website for access by the general public.

List of publications relating to the study findings

1. Policy brief Survival of Low-Cost Private Schools is crucial for access and quality of education (*a complete draft has been developed and will be made available online*)
2. The working paper titled “Exploring the effects of the COVID –19 pandemic on low-cost private school markets in Nairobi, Kenya” (*a complete draft has been developed and will be made available online*)
3. Blog titled “[How is the Pandemic Affecting Low-Cost Private Schools? Evidence from Nairobi](#)”