The Status of Implementation of Non-Formal Curricular (NFC) Activities in Secondary Schools in Kakamega County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

The study sought to find out about the status of the implementation of the non-formal curriculum in secondary schools in Kakamega County, Kenya. It employed a descriptive survey design. A total of 2550 respondents were involved, segregated as 1935 learners, 430 teachers, 43 Non-Formal Curriculum Activities (NFCAs) departmental heads, 43 principals, 86 parents, and 13 Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (QASOs). Questionnaires were used to collect quantitative data, while structured interviews, document analysis, and observations were employed to collect qualitative data. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to generate analyses for the quantitative data using frequencies, means, modes, and standard deviations tables that displayed the distribution of observations against the options provided on different variables, including the display of their deviations from the mean value. Narratives were used to describe the qualitative data. From the analysis, it was discovered that finances for NFCAs were insufficient and disbursement of the same to schools was delayed. NFCAs offered in schools could not fully support the large learner populations, and schools lacked sufficient orientation programmes for new learners. The existing policies on the implementation of the NFC did not give schools clear directions for engagement in NFCAs. The study therefore recommends that, to improve learner involvement in NFCAs, the government should increase the allocation of funds and improve the timing of disbursement. Schools should consider introducing a wide range of NFCAs and also advocate for the development of a clearer and more comprehensive policy for the implementation of the NFC.

Keywords: Curriculum Implementation, Non-Formal Curriculum (NFC), Non-Formal Curriculum Activities (NFCAs), Resources, Secondary Schools

I. INTRODUCTION

The objective of this study was to assess the status of implementation of the Non-Formal Curriculum (NFC) in secondary schools in Kakamega County, Kenya. Non-formal curriculum is one of the main dimensions of the curriculum (Oluoch, 2011) that is realized through learner participation in NFCAs. Schools in Kenya fall into the following broad categories: national schools, extra-county schools, county schools, sub-county schools, private schools, and special schools (Nyangweso et al., 2019). All these schools strive to implement NFC with variations in the range of activities offered between one school and another, the availability of the activities in the schools, and the and the policy and school culture guiding the activities selected to participate in. Implementation is also guided by the scheduling of the activities by the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the school's adherence to the time schedules set for the activities (Odhiambo, 2017).

A survey of schools in Kakamega showed that NFCAs were available in secondary schools. The government policy that directs the framework in which the activities are performed was available. This framework was in accordance with the broad goals of education, which in part are that education should foster nationalism and promote national unity, promote individual development and self-fulfillment, and promote respect for and development of Kenya's rich and varied cultures (GOK, 1964).The MoE guides schools in their participation in NFC by providing timelines for the activities that are to be performed in Terms 1, 2, 2 and 3 of the school calendar.

Quality Assurance and Standards is one of the directorates of the MoE charged with the responsibility of providing advisory services and ensuring an integrated and collaborative approach to improving basic education quality and relevance (UNESCO, 2004). The QASOs make routine visits to monitor the quality of education offered in

schools. They balance their supervision on the formal, informal, and non-formal curricular activities and stress that learners need to be actively involved in NFCAs at the school level. They also encourage schools to participate in the zonal, sub-county, county, regional, and national competitions. Conventionally, these activities are scheduled in such a way that, in term one, learners participate in drama and film, athletics, swimming, and ball games 1, while activities for term two are music and ball games II (MOE, 2020).

NFCAs are also referred to as co-curricular activities, extra-curricular activities, or out-of-class activities. Studies on the status of the implementation of NFC have been carried out, and findings have been recorded. In the United States, games and school sports are regarded as integral components of education, serving as both instructional fixtures and entertainment enterprises that foster student discipline (Pierce, 2016). In India, co-curricular activities (CCAs) facilitate the transmission of overarching social values, hence fostering the development of character, a robust work ethic, and effective teamwork skills among individuals (Joshi, 2010). In a correlation study by Yacoob and Haron (2013), the relationship between teacher mentorship and student involvement in co-curricular activities was examined. The study used a sample of 310 teachers from vocational institutions. The findings indicated that professors who served as mentors to students played a significant role in enhancing the degree of student engagement in co-curricular activities.

A study conducted by Ismaat and Saleem (2009) in India observed that the level of teachers' engagement in co-curricular activities was influenced by how they viewed the activities. Negative perceptions held by numerous educators showed that there was a preference for academic pursuits over extracurricular activities, which were often regarded as unproductive endeavors. Consequently, learner engagement in non-formal curriculum (NFC) was negatively impacted.

Abera and Mekuri (2022), in their study that investigated co-curricular activities in secondary schools in the East Hararghe Zone of Ethiopia, utilized a sample size of 412 participants and employed both qualitative and quantitative research approaches. The study found that there was a policy direction in NFCAs. The activities lacked a stable structure, and the involvement of both teachers and learners was minimal. Though there was participation in NFCAs, they lacked adequate support, as there was no system to monitor, regulate, and boost participation in co-curricular activities across the education system. There was also an inadequate budget for Co-Curricular Activities (CCAs). Teacher attitudes were negative because the CCAs were outside the class and therefore not part of their responsibility. The workload was also high, and hence teachers were not interested in taking on other responsibilities.

According to Hansen and Larson (2007), students tend to establish a connection between their involvement and engagement in extracurricular activities and an enhanced probability of gaining admission to a prominent university of their preference. Hence, both educational institutions and parents must collaborate to enhance students' access to extracurricular activities and adapt their degrees of engagement to facilitate students' participation and personal growth.

In Tanzania, the Education and Training Policy (ETP) 2014 emphasized the need to identify and support bright and gifted students (HakiElimu, 2014). However, there was a lack of substantial initiatives aimed at creating conducive educational environments that enabled learners to showcase their latent abilities (Lazaro & Anney, 2016).

The extent of students' engagement in extracurricular activities may be influenced by external factors, including but not limited to age, gender, cultural heritage, and familial circumstances. The sole intrinsic element that influences students' levels of engagement in extracurricular activities, as well as their academic and non-academic achievements, is the type of activity. Numerous studies have established a correlation between students' engagement in various activities and their overall growth. These studies have demonstrated that different activities can yield distinct academic or non-academic benefits for students (Hansen et al., 2003; Larson et al., 2006; Martinez et al.,, 2016).

In Kenya, Muthike (2017) carried out a study on the influence of school policies on student participation in co-curricular activities in the Aberdare, Central Region, whose purpose was to provide empirical evidence on school policies and student participation in co-curricular activities. The study utilized a descriptive survey design and had a sample size of 365 participants. It was concluded from the results analysis that there was a positive relationship between support by the school administration and student participation in co-curricular activities. In the same study, however, there was no significant relationship between school policies and student participation in co-curricular activities. It was further suggested in the same study that the MoE had unequivocally stated that schools must offer co-curricular activities in their curricula, but there are incidents of infraction against this rule on the basis that the activities are non-examinable.

Odhiambo (2017), in his study Stakeholder Perceptions on Co-Curricular Activities Effectiveness and Challenges in Enhancing Student Discipline in Public Secondary Schools in Awendo-Rongo-UUriri Sub-County, Kenya, employed a descriptive survey design. The sample included 3 sub-county QASOs, 56 principals, 56 deputy

principals, 56 game teachers, 56 patrons of clubs and societies, 204 game and sports team captains, and 204 club and society officials. Based on a mean rating of 3.74 and a standard deviation of 3.50, the survey found that stakeholders considered games and sports, as well as clubs and organizations, to be beneficial in fostering student discipline. The research found that extracurricular activities were widely seen as helpful in improving students' conduct in public secondary schools. Nonetheless, students' ranked the difficulty of improving classroom discipline via extracurricular activities.

In a descriptive study conducted by Njoroge (2017), the significance of family in the development of athletic skills and performance was examined. The study focused on 247 runners who participated in the regional championships held in Iten, Elgeyo Marakwet, and Nandi. The study established that parents were major influencers of their children's participation in sports. Yet another study that aimed to investigate the factors that influenced student participation in co-curricular activities within public secondary schools in Lamu County, Kenya, showed that teacher and parent stakeholders were integral to the implementation of NFC. The study suggested that, to cultivate a personalized environment, teachers needed to assume a more extensive role. In this enlarged capacity, teachers endeavored to exert influence and provide assistance to learners in order to facilitate their academic achievements within the educational institution. According to Kisango (2014), teachers fostered pleasant and respectful relationships with learners, providing assistance with their personal challenges in NFCAs.

According to Wangai (2014), the involvement of parents and other family members in schools can facilitate the development of co-curricular talents among students of all age groups. The involvement of parents should be perceived as a continuous process rather than a collection of separate occurrences. Ongoing and interactive communication between parents and schools was essential, and it required committed leadership to enable continuous parental involvement.

Ogoch et al. (2013) sought to evaluate the effectiveness of co-curricular policy in developing talents among the youth in secondary schools in Trans Mara West Sub-County, Kenya. The objective of the study was to assess the level of awareness of co-curricular policy among stakeholders. The study adopted a mixed-methods approach. A sample size of 369 correspondents was utilized, with 9 head teachers, 90 teachers, and 270 students. The findings revealed that there was inadequate time allocated for co-curricular activities and that most schools did not take co-curricular activities seriously. Most respondents were not aware of the co-curricular policy. There was also a need for schools to expose their teachers to structured training to empower them with the necessary skills and techniques needed to develop talent among the youth.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The value of NFC dates to a time when education and life were intertwined (Sifuna, 1994). The introduction of Western education brought about an elitist education system that supported a formal curriculum, relegating the importance of non-formal curricula. The cognitive domain of learning became distinct from the psychomotor and affective domains. The non-formal curriculum is crucial for the holistic development of learners (Njoroge, 2017). Participation in non-formal curriculum activities (NFCAs) enables children to acquire abilities beyond the classroom, including life skills, soft skills, emotional intelligence, communication skills, time management, and teamwork.

Amutabi (2019) indicates that emphasis on the formal curriculum relegates NFCA programs, and time meant for NFCAs is used to prolong official learning programs, such as syllabus coverage and remedial work. This is done for schools to attain high mean grades, allow more learners to get into institutions of higher learning, and ultimately fit into the competitive labor market. The problem is the overreliance on certification, believed to help graduates and school leavers get jobs, but employers now appreciate more than just the certification (World Bank Group, 2017). They require life skills embodied in emotional intelligence. Informed by the aforementioned, this study's goal was to establish the status of the implementation of NFC and offer recommendations that would provide insights on how to maximize the implementation of non-formal curricular activities.

1.2 Objective of the Study

The objective of this study was to establish the status of implementation of Non-Formal Curriculum in secondary schools in Kakamega County, Kenya.

II. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

A descriptive survey research design was used in the study. Both qualitative and quantitative analyses were used to describe the findings. Questionnaires for school principals, heads of departments, teachers, learners, and parents provided quantitative data. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the QASOs to generate the qualitative data. Participant observations were also conducted to learn more about the resources that encouraged involvement in NFCAs. Content analysis was also done for timetables, certifications, and the daily schedules of the schools under study.

2.2 Study Population

The table below summarizes the population of the study.

Table 1

The Study Population

Description	**Total**
CQASOs	13
Secondary School Principals	414
Heads of the Department of Non-Formal Curricular Activities	414
Teachers	10151
Learners	116363
Total	**127355**

Source: Kakamega County Office (2018)

2.3 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

Gay (2006) suggests a minimum sample size of 10% of the total population when dealing with large populations in descriptive research. It is on this basis that this study adopted a sample size of 10% of the total population. To ensure the representation of the different school categories in the sample, a stratified random sampling technique was used. The size was then proportionately assigned to give the final sample figure used in the study. The categories of schools sampled for the study were: private schools, national schools, extra-county schools, and county schools. Out of the 414 schools, 43 were selected. The Kakamega County school strata and sample are as displayed in Table 2 below.

Table 2

Strata of Schools in Kakamega County

School Type	**No. of Schools**	**Sampling technique**	**Selected No. of Schools**
National	2	saturated	2
Extra County	30	random	3
County	64	random	6
Sub-County	298	random	30
Private	20	random	2
Total	**414**		**43**

To obtain the respondents that were to be interviewed for the study, a sample of 2550 was obtained and distributed in the different categories of schools, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3
Sample Size

Stakeholders	National Schools	Extra-County Schools	County Schools	Sub-County Schools	Private Schools	Total
Principals	2	3	6	30	2	**43**
Teachers	20	30	60	300	20	**430**
Learners	90	135	270	1350	90	**1935**
Parents	2	3	6	30	2	**86**
	114	171	**342**	**1710**	**114**	**2550**

2.4 Data Collection methods

When collecting data, both primary and secondary data were taken into account. Primary data was gathered through questionnaires, interview guides, and observations, while secondary data was obtained from content analysis. Published materials such as the school timetable, school procedures, and participation certificates were analyzed as part of secondary data for the study.

III. FINDINGS

3.1 The Status of Implementation of NFC in Secondary Schools in Kakamega County

The objective of the study was to establish the status of the implementation of NFC in secondary schools in Kakamega County, Kenya. The results were as follows:

On the range of NFCAs, Figure 1 gives a summary of the broad range of NFCAs in Kakamega County schools.

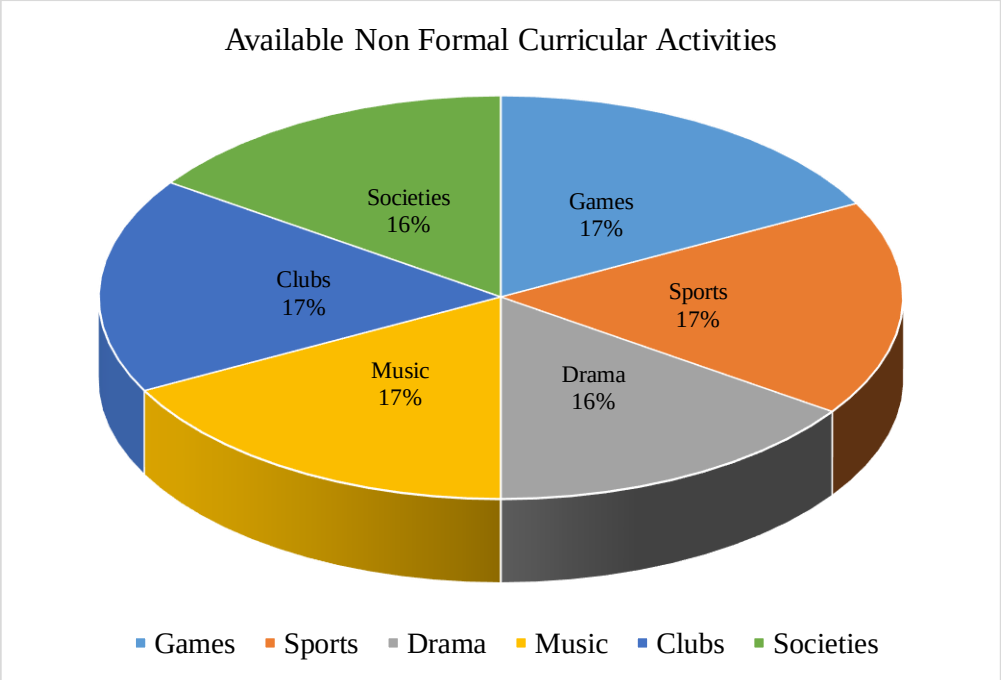

Figure 1
The Range of available Non-Formal Curricular Activities

Analysis indicates that the range of NFCAs was sports (17%%, games (17 %, drama (16%%, music (17%%, clubs (17%), and societies (16%). The NFCAs had ratings of more or else similar percentages, i.e., combined sports and games at 34%, while clubs and societies combined at 33%. Participation rates were influenced by gender, for example, as all boys' schools and only 30% of the girls' schools offered football, according to the observations. Netball was common in all-girls schools and unpopular in boy's schools. Schools' choice of games and sports over

other NFCAs was influenced by the cost associated with the establishment of the same. For instance, the costs of setting up clubs and societies were minimal; hence, they were common as compared to setting up systems and structures for games that require a field or space and the procurement of balls.

For the less endowed schools, balls were improvised by the learners themselves; however, it was established that all learners must purchase game kits on admission into the schools. A closer investigation established that not all learners could afford to buy the game kits. In extreme cases where learners were limited financially, it was established that schools allowed them to purchase t-shirts for use during game time. It was at the inter-school competition levels that games and sports required standard uniforms. Some schools purchased them or solicited them from sponsors and well-wishers on behalf of the learners. Some schools in Kakamega County have indeed benefited from donations and well-wishers such as Brookside Milk Company, Cleophas Malala donation, and Kakamega Governor Barasas' kitty, among other donors. The figure below summarizes the specific activities in which schools participated in Kakamega County.

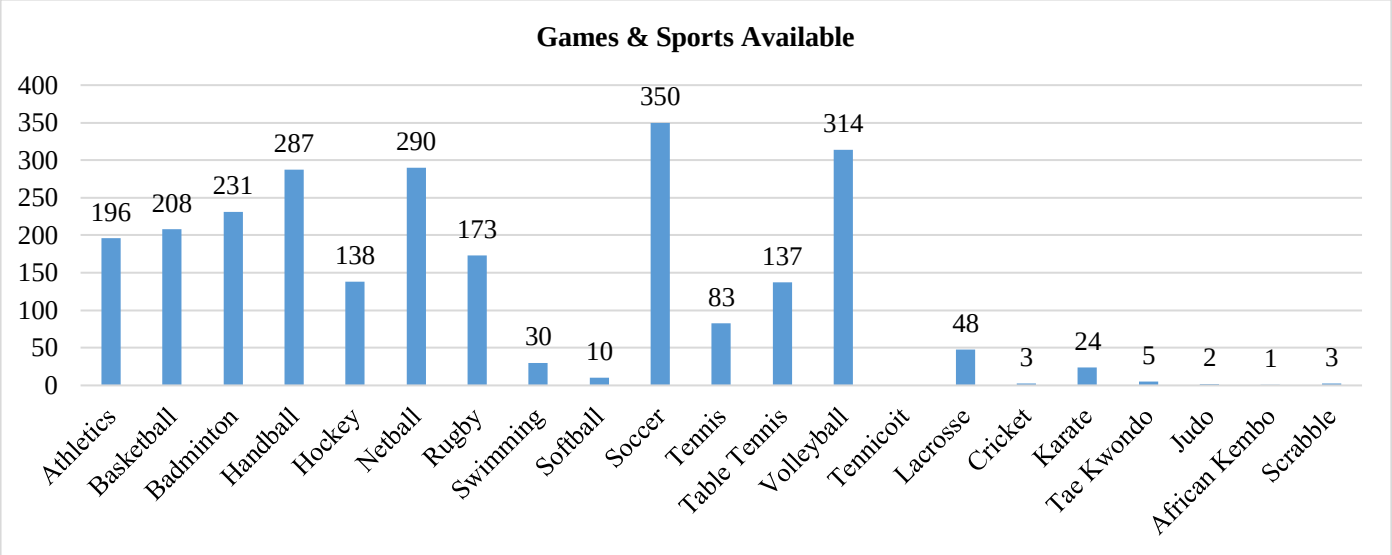

Figure 2
Games and Sports Available in Secondary Schools in Kakamega County

In addition, clubs require minimal funding as the learners pay membership fees on their own. Debates were found to be compulsory and happening in all the schools for all the learners. Some of the clubs were income-generating, and so the burden of funding them was lifted from the school to the learners. Young Farmers was an example of such a club, and the proceeds from the club were shared between the club members. Societies such as Christian Union (CU), Young Catholic Students (YCS), and Islamic Religious Education Club (IREC) were dominant in schools and merely required just space for worship, which in most instances was a classroom, open space, chapel, or mosque depending on the school sponsorship. Drama was rated as the most expensive activity as it required infrastructure, rostrums, decor, and costumes, which cost such colossal amounts of money that schools got discouraged from participating in them. It was because of the high costs that many schools opted out and instead are now participating in less expensive music activities.

Soccer was rated as the most highly available game in secondary schools in the county, according to the results of questionnaires administered to teachers and learners. This was supported by the participant's observations. Volleyball, netball, and handball were next in popularity after soccer. Lacrosse was a newer game introduced in some of the schools. Other newer games included Tae-Kwondo, Karate, cricket, and indoor games such as Scrabble. The introduction of new games has provided wider choices for NFCAs, which learners can select depending on their interests and talents. Learners participated in the games informally without any set rules during game time, but when competitions were at stake, formalities would set in to organize the learners for participation. The schools then would select the best players for the different games; for instance, 11 players for football, 7 for netball, 15 for basketball, and 7 and 15 aside teams for rugby. The given numbers constituted the main team, and if other teams were formed, they were done so for substitution purposes. At most one to four substitute teams were accommodated in any given school. To allow for opportunities for the accommodation of many inclusivities, schools in Kakamega County have

innovatively developed and expanded the scope of games. Given that games are based on talent, only a few were selected into the teams to represent the school in competitions, and the rest of the learners then joined either clubs or performing arts as alternatives. This then prevented several learners from participating in certain games and sports. This was also the case for athletics, in which only the best were selected to join the athletic team.

The fact that sports were the most popular NFCAs for learners agreed with the findings by Jian (2017), who in his study established that the most popular activities by 2006 were art and academic clubs, but later learners began to value hobbies and vocational clubs. Martinez et al. (2016) found that both arts and academic clubs became the two most attractive activities in schools over games and sports. These findings also agreed with those of Chege (2012), who opined that there were many varieties of NFCAs in schools that included sports, games, clubs, societies, drama, and dance.

3.2 Clubs and Societies in Schools in Kakamega County

Figure 3, derived from the learner perspective, shows the distribution of learner participation in clubs and societies in secondary schools in Kakamega County. The popular clubs were journalism and debate, whereas the most popular societies were the Christian Union and Young Christian Association. The fact that the Islamic Club and other societies were in existence in secondary schools shows that schools have allowed the exercise of religious freedom. Learners of all faiths were allowed to participate independently in their societies to strengthen their respective faiths. The clubs that did not have a large participation were the Red Cross, St. Johns Clubs, Straight Talk, Art, and Business clubs.

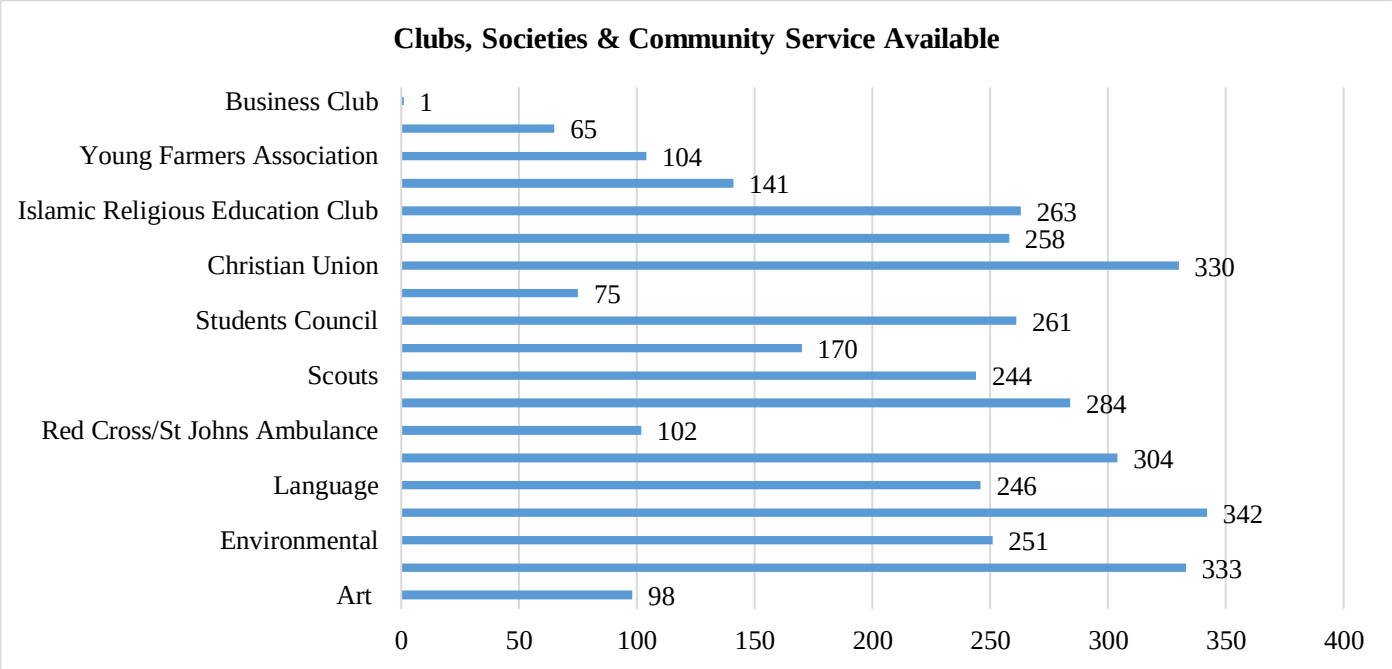

Figure 3
Clubs and Societies in Schools in Kakamega County

3.3 Performing Arts

From the learners' perspective, the most popular performing arts were drama, music, choir, and dance, respectively. Brass bands were noted to be popular in schools that could afford brass pieces, which are expensive to purchase. The national schools were noted to have school bands that performed at school functions and could be hired out. This trend was catching up in the county schools, and there was no discrimination as to which gender played the brass pieces as both the girl and boy schools trained learners for the school band. Martial arts were also being introduced in school as defensive sports and had gained great popularity. Figure 4 below summarizes the findings.

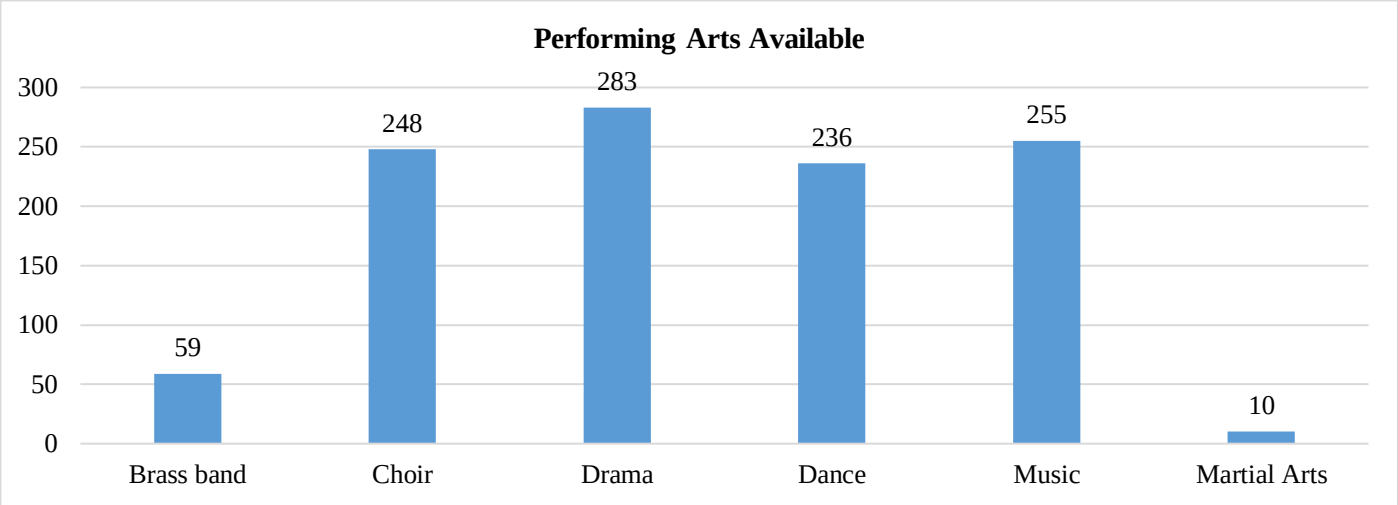

Figure 4
Performing Arts Available in Schools in Kakamega County

3.4 Distribution of NFCAS in Schools in Kakamega County

Figure 5 shows the parental perspective of the distribution of NFCAs available in schools for the learners to participate in. The highest participation was in sports and games at 47%, followed by performing arts at 30%, and then clubs and societies at 23%. The distribution of sports and games at the highest percentage agreed with the learners' perspective. The parents went ahead to propose new varieties of NFCAs, as shown in Figure 6 below.

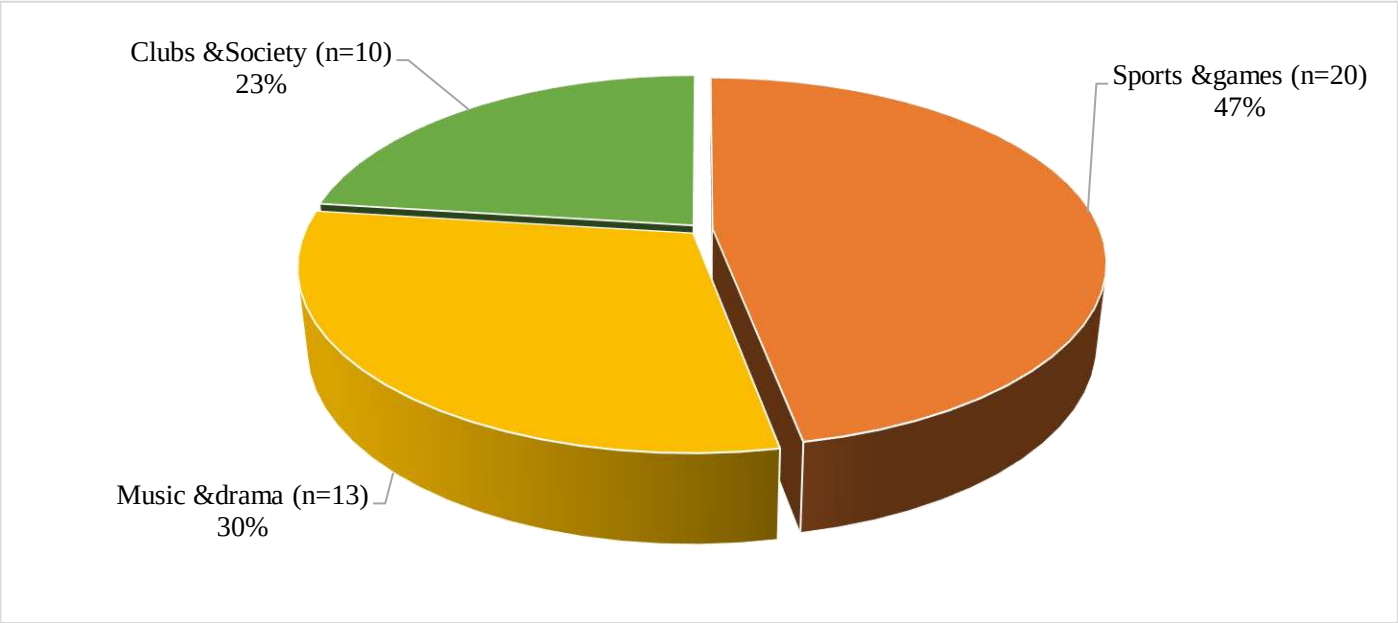

Figure 5
Distribution of NFCAS in Schools in Kakamega County

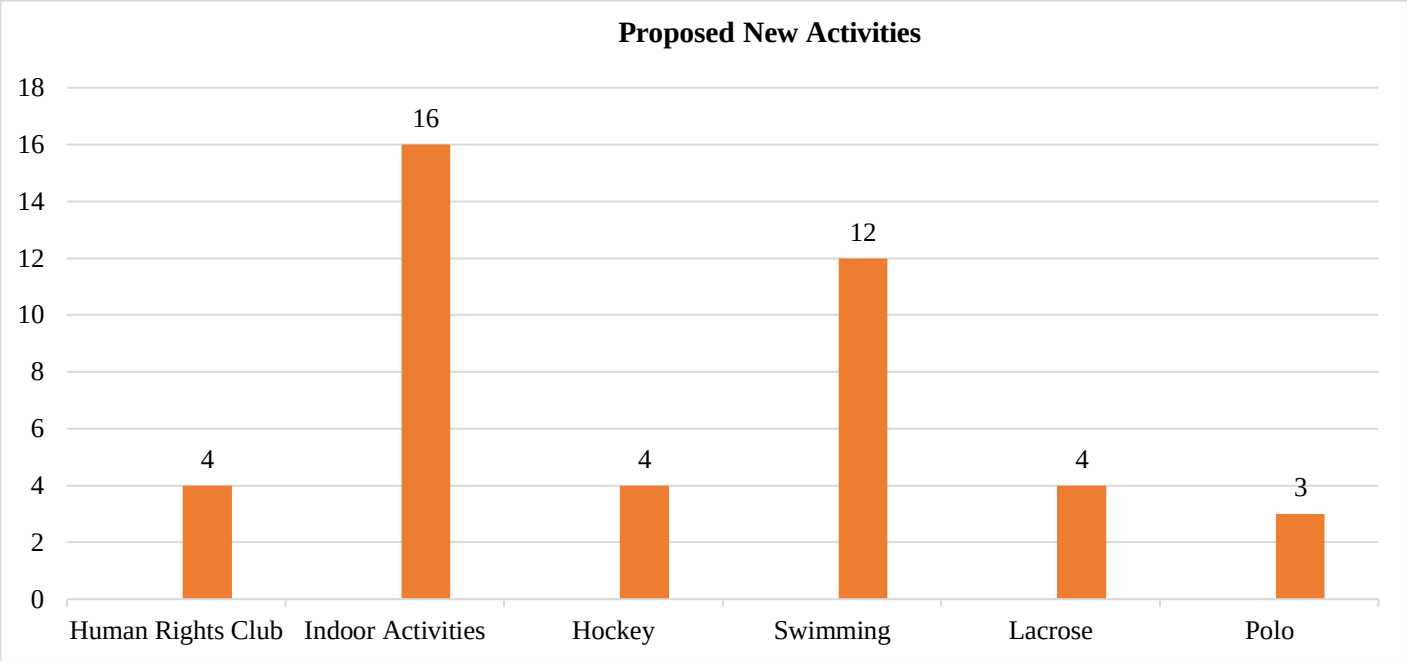

Figure 6
New NFCAs Proposed by Parents

The additional NFCAs that parents proposed that they would wish their children to participate in include human rights clubs and indoor activities such as hockey, swimming, lacrosse, and polo. The fact that parents are at the center of proposing new clubs implies that they are interested in NFCAs and wish to have these activities expanded to provide more benefits to their children. If taken up by the schools, these activities would strengthen ties between schools and communities, as some of the activities were beyond the school's ability to introduce, so there would be a need to outsource or share resources, such as swimming pools, with the members of the communities.

3.5 Distribution by Mean, Median, Mod and Standard Deviation

A mean of 182 and a standard deviation of 116 in performing arts agree with Figure 4, which shows performing arts are available in the secondary schools in Kakamega County. The scenario is, however, different for clubs and societies, whose analysis has shown a large disparity between the mean and the standard deviation, implying that clubs and societies are areas that were not sufficiently attended to in many schools. The teachers, HODs, and learners were consistent in ensuring that NFCAs were evenly spread. They felt that learners should be allowed to take part in a variety of NFCAs and that the activities should be expanded to accommodate large learner populations. Table 4 below summarizes these observations.

Table 4
Descriptive Statistics Showing the Availability of NFCAs

	Mean	Median	Mode	Standard deviation
Games and Sports	120.62	110	350	249.11
Clubs and Societies	204	246	1	105
Performing Arts	182	242	10	116

Some types of activities were, however, dominant in certain regions. For example, in the dance genre, the eshikuti dance was popular among the Idakho in Kakamega County. The schools that were within that community presented dances for the drama festival. It was important to emphasize the participation of all learners in NFCAs at the school level, even though they could not make it for competitions beyond school.

3.6 Quality Assurance and Standards Officers Interviews Findings

The interviews for QASOs confirmed that all schools participated in at least one area of NFCAs. In the visits to schools, the QASOs inquired to know whether schools were active in games, sports drama, music, clubs, and societies. Schools had to provide documentary evidence, such as departmental meetings minutes of participation in NFCAs. They also had to show invitations to other schools for friendly meetings. Trophies and certificates were also to be produced as evidence of performance or excellence in any of the NFCAs the school took part in. For sports, there had to be evidence of equipment, balls, uniforms, sports shoes or boots, kneecaps, and an inventory of the same to show that they were active in games and sports. One of the QASOs pointed out that the number of activities that a school participates in depends on the school typology and the funds that the school raises. Day schools seem to have fewer learners whose parents were committed to paying fees, so they participated in basic sports, clubs, and societies. Principals of mixed schools argued that it felt like running two schools in one and offering NFCAs posed a challenge as they had to offer separate activities for boys and girls. Larger schools tend to be 'everywhere' because they participate in as many NFCAs as possible, provided the resources allow. Such types of schools receive a larger capitation from the government and have learners whose parents are supportive of fee payment. (SQ 10, personal interview, September 2, 2021)

3.7 Descriptive Statistics on Policy Guidelines

The question on policy elicited a standard deviation of 43. The disparity between the mean and the mode was an indicator that the policy needed to be reworked if schools in Kakamega County were to optimize participation in NFCAs. The central question is that: Is it the lack of clear policy at the school level that was influencing the lack of a strong national policy on the implementation of NFC or is it the weak monitoring system by the QASO? The analysis from the study found out that, the weak monitoring system by QASOs was a contributing factor as the officers made visitation to schools once in a term and sometimes in a year or two years. The situation was no better when the school principals were left at their discretion to influence the participation and management of NFCAs in their schools. As a result, there was no uniformity in the implementation of NFC as some schools concentrated on academics while others chose only a few activities from the range of activities that were possibly available. The findings of the study differ with those of Wango (2019) and Chege (2012) who both opined that, yes there could be a policy direction however, with minimal involvement of both teachers and learners there would be no significant relationship between school policies and learner participation in NFCAs. Table 5 below summarizes these findings.

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics Showing Policy Guidelines

Mean	20
Median	2
Mode	1
Std. Deviation	43

One QASO stressed the fact that '*there was a policy in place for guiding participation in NFCAs, however, things are different on the ground '*implying that there is a policy that is not fully implemented in the secondary schools in the county (SQ 9, personal interview, 3rd September ,2021)

3.8 School Policy on Implementation of NFC

Implementation of the NFC is enhanced through a national policy, which translates into a school policy lending itself to a school culture. It was the duty of school principals to ensure that their schools enforced the available national policy. There was no clear national policy guiding the implementation of NFC. This was clearly demonstrated when the learners were asked whether there was a policy guiding participation in NFCAs. Majority (61%) of them indicated that schools lacked a policy on participation in NFCAs. Their responses were as summarized in Figure 7 below.

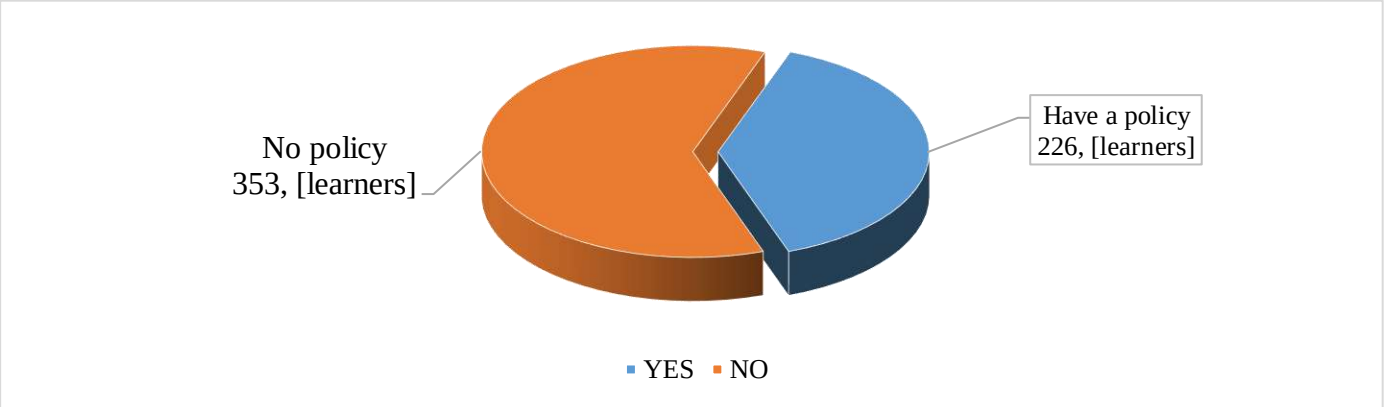

Figure 7
Learner' Responses on Whether Their Schools Had a Policy for Participation in NFCAs

Most schools lacked clearly stipulated guidelines that guide learners' engagement in NFCAs. From the participant observations, however, it was apparent that all schools in the county had scheduled NFCAs in the school routine, which was available and visible in the principal's office, staffrooms, departmental offices, classes, and on the school notice boards. These conditions were that: all learners must belong to at least two clubs and one sport; they must pay a registration fee of fifty shillings to join a club; and they must be in their game kits every Tuesday and Thursday after classes. To be in the journalism club, learners were required to read the news on parade, and the condition for participating in basketball was a height of at least 5.8 feet. Other guidelines for societies were that the learners must belong to either CU, YCS, or IREC. Some of these guidelines appeared discriminatory and could discourage learners from participating in NFCAs. For example, the height requirement in basketball was very limiting and discouraged the shorter learners from participating in the game. Yet, there were situations in which even short learners excelled in basketball for as long as they mastered the requisite skills in basketball, such as dribbling, jumping, and defending the opponents from scoring. Other conditions were not suitable for learners subscribing to C.U. and YCS when they were Muslims.

Whether that routine was adhered to or not was in contention. Figure 8 below summarizes some of the guidelines in schools regarding NFCAs.

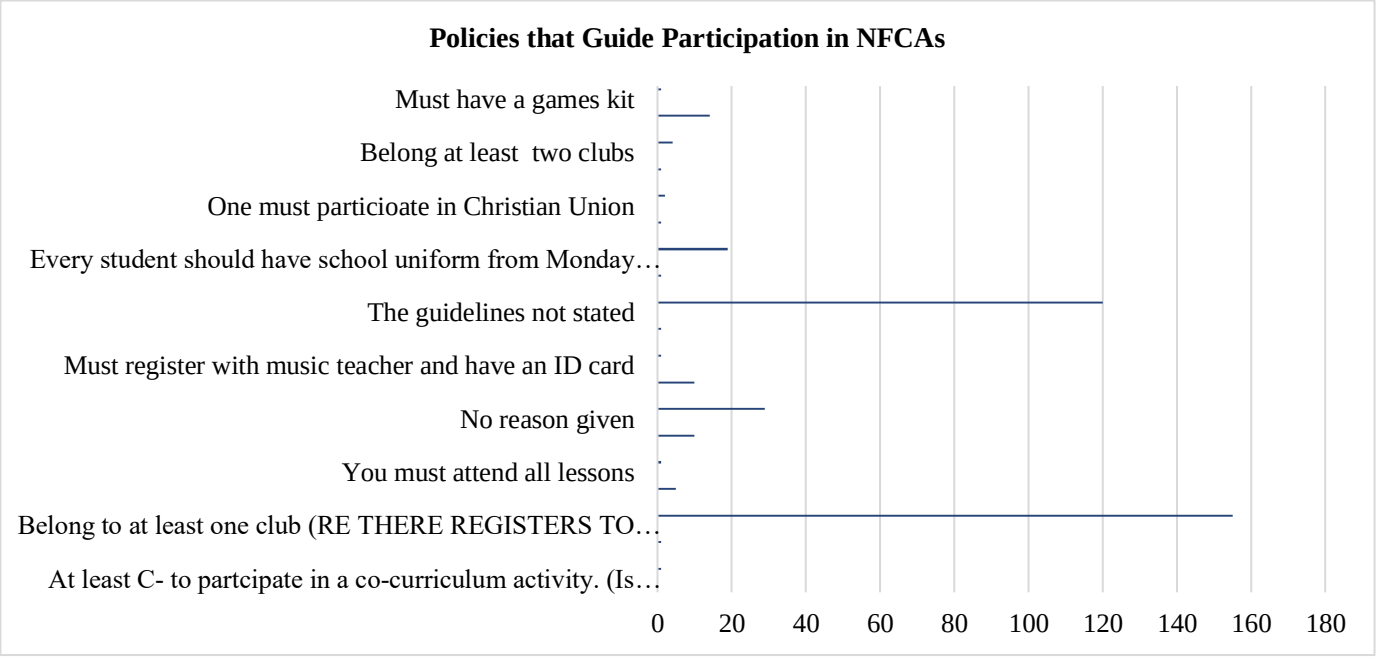

Figure 8
Guidelines for Participation in NFCAs in Secondary Schools

It is evident that, participation in NFCAS is hinged on existing policy guidelines. Policies help a school establish rules and procedures and create standards of quality for learning, safety, expectations, and accountability. When learners were asked about policy that governed the implementation of NFC, they understood it to mean guidelines guarding implementation of NFCAs, hence the varied responses given in Fig.8.

3.9 Preparation of Learners towards Participation in NFCAs

The Heads of the Department of NFCAs were asked to respond to statements concerning learner preparation in undertaking NFCAs. Their responses are as summarized in Table 6 below.

Table 6

HOD's Responses to on How Learners Are Prepared to Undertake NFCAs

		SD	D	UD	A	SA
All new learners undergo orientation about NFCAs in the school	f	0	0	0	12	25
	%	0	0	0	32.4	67.6
Learners select at least one activity area in games	f	0	0	0	22	15
	%	0	0	0	59.5	40.5
Learners are expected to participate in a sport	f	0	0	0	3	34
	%	0	0	0	8.1	91.9
Learners are expected to participate in drama	f	0	0	0	20	17
	%	0	0	0	54.1	45.9
Learners are expected to participate in music	f	0	0	10	18	9
	%	0	0	27.0	48.6	24.3
Learners are expected to participate in clubs	f	0	0	0	22	15
	%	0	0	0	59.5	40.5
Learners are expected to participate in societies	f	0	0	0	15	22
	%	0	0	0	40.5	59.5
Talents and potentials among learners are rewarded	f	0	0	0	13	24
	%	0	0	0	35.1	64.9

All Heads of Department either agreed (32.4%) or strongly agreed (67.6%) that new learners were prepared to undertake NFCAs through an orientation programme during which the schools' expectations of the learners was spelled out. This finding is important as it assisted in establishing whether schools had a way of initiating newcomers to the school into NFCAs. Learners whose talent is tapped from the onset allowed their placement into NFCAs of their choice would be futuristic as it would go beyond the school level to colleges or universities leading to talent-based employment. Arising from this, there should be no problem with learners participating in NFCAs. However, what happens after identifying talent is a worrying trend because no follow-up is made by teachers. The teachers on duty and HODs would therefore need to ensure that learners' momentum was not lost after Form One. From Table 6 above, it is evident that all new learners had to select at least one activity in sports and games, drama or music. They were also expected to be in clubs and societies. Capps and Miller (2006) opine that the orientation of new students helped them transit smoothly into the new institutional culture.

Respondents further agreed (35.1%) or strongly agreed (64.9%) that talents and potentials among learners were rewarded. Reward systems for learners who excel in NFCAs are very important for reinforcement purposes. At the close of the National ball game competitions held in Kakamega in August 2023, the Cabinet Minister, Youth Affairs, Arts and Sports pointed out that *'...in the same way we reward teachers who post good results in academic subjects, we must also reward our teachers who train these gems to excel in their arts'* (Cabinet Secretary Ababa Namwamba, 11th August 2023).

According to Tredinnick et al. (2015) reward and recognition are fundamental in the student's journey to build self-efficacy in whichever activities they are to undertake in the school. However, reward schemes appear to be more common in academic programmes than in NFCAs. Kapoor (2018) agreed that rewarding good performance motivated students to study and improve their academic performance. Though non-examinable, non-formal curriculum activities also require a reward system to encourage learner participation.

It was observed that the MoE time from time communicates to schools pre-defined special dates dedicated to NFCAs such as, sports days and cultural days however it was also noted sometimes the notices to schools to produce

teams were very short hampering effective delivery on such days. In many cases, learners are not adequately prepared for such occasions, as schools are expected to submit names of teams to sub-county offices on short notice, and yet the schools have not prepared them. The result indicates that learners are hurriedly taken through practice which has seen some develop complications during the competition such as muscle cramps.

Table 7

School Events Dedicated to NFCAs

The school has a sports day.	**f**	0	3	3	12	19
	%	0	8.1	8.1	32.4	51.4

According to one SQASO, NFCAs are more effectively undertaken if entrenched within the school routine. The teacher on duty can follow them up and enforce them to ensure they are done. If not entrenched in the school routine they are easily forgotten. Some schools also have special days dedicated to NFCAs, such as sports days and cultural days **(**SQ 5, personal interview and cultural days, September 23rd, 2021).

3.10 Stakeholders Supporting NFCAs

Generally, the school principals, HoDs, teachers, learners, and parents supported NFCAs in almost equal measure i.e. 13%, 14%, 13%, 16%, and 13% respectively. The MoE support of NFCAs was immense standing at 29%. The reason for this could be that MoE was directly responsible for policymaking and ensuring that policies are put into practice through the implementation of NFC by advocating for participation in NFC. Through the routine visits to the schools by the quality assurance and standards officers, the MoE can establish the level of implementation of the policies by a school to ensure wholesome curriculum coverage. The study was able to establish evidence of this information from the inspection manuals that QASO have for the different schools in Kakamega County. Figure 9 below summarizes these findings.

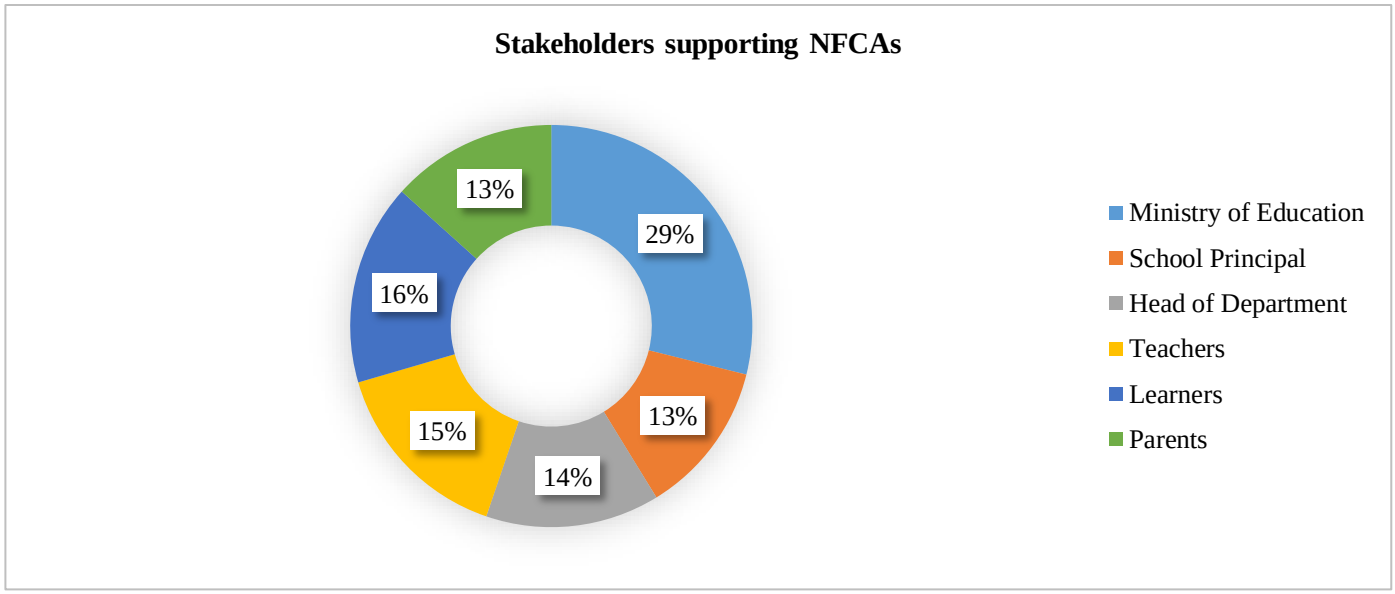

Figure 9

Stakeholders who Support NFCAs

In this study, learners were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement on various statements relating to support of NFC activities by the school administration and the Ministry of Education. Findings were as summarized as shown in Table 8 below.

Table 8

Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Learners' Levels of Agreement on Statements about the Administration's Support of NFC

		SD	D	UD	A	SA
The Ministry of Education encourages school participation in NFCAs and so our school has a variety of activities.	f	95	58	51	184	191
	%	16.4	10	8.8	31.8	33
The school principal has little support for NFCAs.	f	284	170	41	43	41
	%	49.1	29.4	7.1	7.4	7.1
The HOD does not follow up the participation in NFCAs	f	297	165	54	52	11
	%	51.3	28.5	9.3	9	1.9

The majority (31.8% agreed and 33%) agreed that they had a wide variety of NFCAs because of the support from the MoE. Again, participation in NFCAs thrived best when there was maximum support from the school administration. The school principals are the ones on the ground who can oversee the requirements of the MoE and put them into practice. From the learners, viewpoint, the principals support was evident through encouragement of learners in participating in NFCAs. Principals were also responsible for funding the activities and engaging coaches/trainers in preparation of learners in NFCAs. The learners' rated the principals support at 51.9%.The percentage is almost equal to the percentage of 48.1 % of learners who indicated they did not support feel the support of principals towards NFCAs. Figure 10 below summarizes the results described.

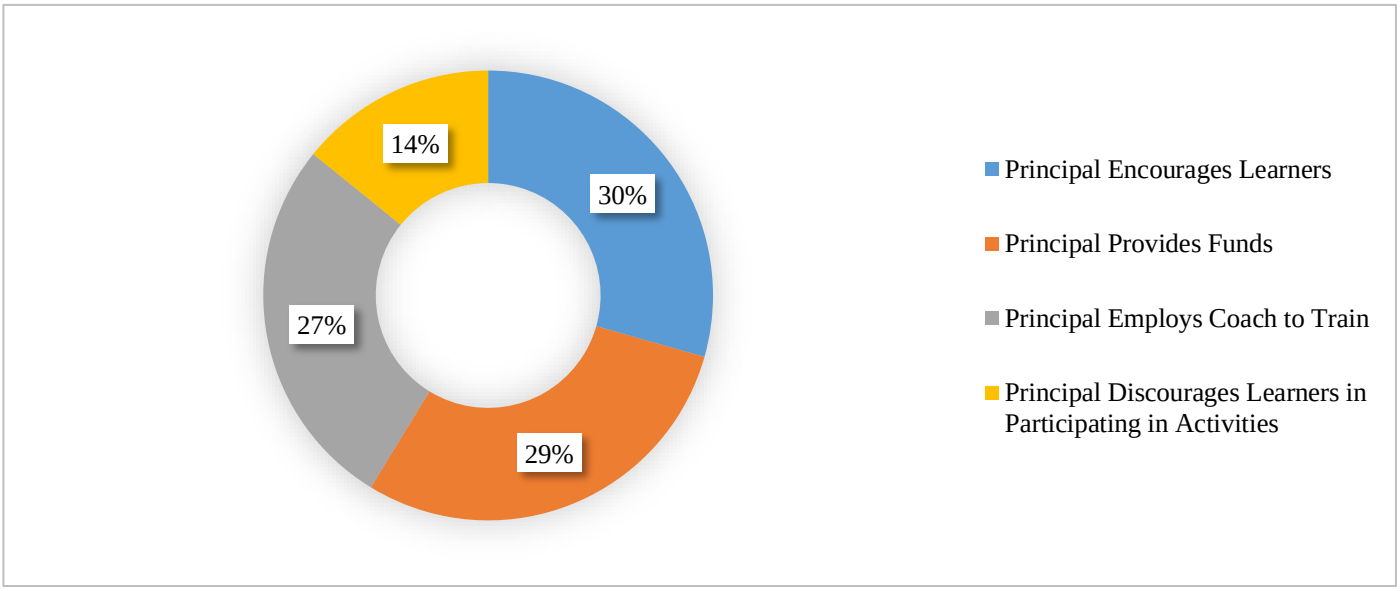

Figure 10

Principals Support of NFCAs

A school principal is a very important determinant of learners' participation in NFCAs and it was apparent that they determined the little regard that was accorded to participation in NFCAs in a number of schools in Kakamega County. Furthermore, Figure 10 summarizes the specific manner in which the principals supported the NFCAs. It is evident that there was an almost equal support for NFCAs as lack of it by the school Principals. A support of 51% against 49% fails to give a large disparity. Learners specifically pointed out the nature of support given by the principals as that of providing funds, and engaging coaches to train them in the various activities. Few learners agreed that the school principals discouraged them from participating in the activities. Other studies that have been undertaken that support this finding are that of Noman et al., (2018) who concluded that a strong support for co-curricular activities was one of the vital constituents of successful leadership among Malaysian school principals. This was further supported by Ndunguri et al. (2017) who reported a positive response between the support of the school and the learner participation. Yohannes (2019) had a contrary opinion when he reported that NFCAs in secondary schools lacked a stable structure. Though there was participation they lacked adequate support, as there was no system to monitor regulate and boost the participation in co-curricular activities across the education system. Teacher attitudes were negative because the CCAs were outside the class and therefore not part of their responsibility.

Van den Berg, et al. (2017), however, differed on the principal's support of physical activity programmes summing up as, *"It's a battle… you want to do it, but how will you get it done?"* Many principals prefer to spend money on academic programmes perceived to have visible results for the school. Muema (2012) supported Van den Berg, et al., (2017), when he indicated that most teachers were not supported by the school administration to promote NFCAs and this had an adverse effect on the implementation of NFC.

IV. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Conclusions

Learner participation in NFCAs was notable. Schools, however, lacked the capacity to adequately provide NFCAs for the entire school population. Participation was mainly confined to the school level. The competitive levels drew from the more talented learners who competed at the sub-county, county, regional, national, and East African levels. The higher the level of participation, the fewer the learners. Some learners did not participate in NFCAs at all, both at the school level and beyond the school level of participation. Enhanced policy and guidelines on participation in NFCAs would play a crucial role in guaranteeing that all learners were accounted for and that NFCAs were included in regular school activities. Rewarding both the teachers and learners also encouraged learner participation in NFCAs.

4.2 Recommendations

Schools should consider introducing a wide range of NFCAs and providing opportunities for learners to engage in activities aligned with their interests, talents, potentials, and strengths. Schools should also advocate for clearer and more comprehensive guidelines for the implementation of NFCAs. Getting everyone involved in NFCAs should be compulsory, and the QASO, school principals, and teachers should monitor the learners in participation in NFCAs.

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