

# **Primary school performance within the public and private sectors: The Kenyan experience**

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**Abstract:** *Kenya has made significant gains in both primary and secondary schools' enrollment in recent years and literacy levels have increased considerably from 10 percent in 1960 to 60 percent in 1998 for women and from 30 percent to 82 percent for men. Demand for private provision of education has also increased at all levels. At the primary level, this can be attributed to population growth, the fiscal constraints faced by the public sector and the high individual test scores on school examinations. The choice between a private and a public school is one of the main decisions that families and individuals have to make in Kenya today. Parents and students consider many factors in making these choices such as tuition cost, discipline, racial mix and the religious and moral values of the school. However, the first concern is the effectiveness of the school in producing academic achievements (Sifuna, 2003). Developing countries have been quite successful at expanding enrollments in education, especially at the primary school level. But, for schools to produce all round students, increased enrollments require increased resources. If these resources are not forthcoming, the increase in educational quantity may come at the expense of quality. Based on this background, this paper undertakes an evaluation of public and private primary school achievement in Kenya drawing on data from the national examinations.*