

# *Decentralization in Education: Overcoming challenges and achieving success The Kenyan experience National Policy seminar*

## **Decentralization: a promising policy, a challenging reality - Introduction to the seminar**

IIEP/UNESCO

Nairobi  
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# **Decentralization: Clarifying a complex reality**



# What do we mean by “decentralization”?

- Decentralization is the transfer of authority and/or responsibilities from the central level to other actors
- These actors are:
  - Political and administrative levels: national level, provinces, regions, districts, local elected authorities, schools
  - Education experts or not

# Decentralization: one single word for different schemes

- Deconcentration:

- Transfer to lower administrative levels

- Devolution:

- Transfer to local elected authorities

- School-based management:

- transfer to the school level (education experts and/or elected representatives)

# Diversity within and between countries

- In one country, decentralization can be a mix of these different schemes
- Diversity between countries: importance of the context



# **Decentralization: Benefits and risks**



# The main benefits of decentralization

- More democratic
- More relevant
- Accountability of local actors
- Greater resources mobilisation
- Less bureaucracy
- More efficient

# Some risks of decentralization

- Fear for national unity
- Economies of scale
- Too heavy a burden
- Hijacking by local elites
- Inequities
- Fear of abandonment by the State





# **An intensive research programme on decentralization**



# Why doing research on decentralization?

- A popular policy, considered a core step towards implementing EFA
- But ... we know little about
  - The actual roles of local level actors in this context
  - The challenges they face in fulfilling their new responsibilities
  - Innovative strategies on the ground

# How did we work on decentralization?

- Research coordinated by IIEP, implemented with technical and financial support of UNICEF, and in collaboration with partners:
  - Ministries of Education
  - National research institutions
- Regional research programmes: Africa and South-East Asia
- Focus on :
  - Two actors: District Education Offices (DEOs) and schools
  - One policy: school grants
- Qualitative research, to learn from the experiences of local level actors

# How did we work on decentralization in Kenya?

- Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (2008-2012): Kenya, Lesotho, Uganda
- Kenya:
  - DEOs (2008-2009) and school grants (2011-2012)
  - In collaboration with the Ministry of Education, IPAR, Kenyatta University, and UNICEF
  - Discussion and dissemination of the research findings at regional and national levels



# **Objectives and programme of the policy seminar**



# Objectives

- To discuss the main challenges faced in the implementation of decentralization of education in Kenya
- To identify strategies for successful implementation of the decentralization policy

# Programme

## Monday 26 November:

- Implementing a policy of decentralization: main challenges : lessons learnt from the research in Kenya
  - DEOs
  - Free-Primary Education policy and school grants
  - Debate: what challenges are faced by the actors at central level?
- Group discussions

# Programme

Tuesday 27 November

- Successfully implementing a policy of decentralization in Kenya
  - Group discussions
  - Transforming the DEO into a key actor
  - Improving the implementation of the FPE grant policy
  - Strengthening the central level
- Identifying follow-up strategies