

Assessing the Role of Faith-Inspired Primary and Secondary Schools in Africa: Evidence from Multi-Purpose Surveys

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What is the share of students attending faith-inspired schools (FISs) in Africa? Do FISs reach the poor in priority? How much do they cost for households? And how do FISs compare with public schools and private secular schools in these areas? This article provides tentative answers to these questions using evidence from multi-purpose household surveys.¹

It is often stated that FISs (FISs) account for about half of all education (and health) services in sub-Saharan Africa. Examples of such statements include that of former World Bank President James Wolfensohn who suggested that “Half the work in education and health in sub-Saharan Africa is done by the church” (quoted by Kitchen 2002). Similarly, a UNFPA (2009) report states that that “there is clearly an important parallel faith-based universe of development, one which provides anywhere between 30-60 percent of healthcare and educational services in many developing countries.” Many other examples of such statements could be given. While there is some empirical basis for these statements, it is often weak and the statements are problematic as noted by Olivier and Wodon (2012) in the case of healthcare.

These statements about the market share of FISs appear to be at odds with administrative data collected from Ministries of Education by the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UNESCO, 2011). Administrative data suggest that on average the market share of all (faith-inspired and secular) private providers of primary education in African countries is in the 12-14 percent range, and at about 20 percent for secondary education. There is of course a lot of variance between countries in these market shares, but these are the average values across most countries

in sub-Saharan Africa for all private sector providers. Fifty years ago faith-inspired providers did account for a larger share of education services in many countries, but this share has dropped with the expansion of public facilities. Jimenez and Lockheed (1995) suggest that in East Africa, the market share of all private schools dropped from 53 percent in 1965 to 20 percent in 1985, while the drop was from 26 percent in West Africa in 1965 to 18 percent in 1985.

It is worth emphasizing at the outset that many private providers, and especially faith-inspired providers, do not necessarily aim to increase their market share. Some private providers, and especially FISs, tend to be driven more by altruistic motives, as opposed to size or profit making. What matters to at least some of those providers is to serve the population with good quality services, often with a preferential option for the poor (this is a Christian term, but it is also often a core priority for Islamic facilities). Yet it is important to discuss market shares, if only to get a basic idea of the scope of the activities of various types of providers, especially given that some statements about market share appear to be off-base.

Another common perception is that in education as well as healthcare FISs may primarily serve the poor or at least those who live in remote or rural areas. This is also not necessarily the case either, and it depends on the country. For example, Backiny-Yetna and Wodon (2009a, 2009b) suggest that in Sierra Leone, FISs do serve the poor more than other groups, while by contrast in Cameroon FISs tend to cater to a relatively better-off and mostly urban clientele. The ability of FISs to serve the poor depends on the cost and revenue structure of FISs. Even if special efforts are made by FISs to make their services affordable, and in some cases even free for the poor, cost recovery from households is needed through various types of fees especially when FISs do not benefit from public support, or benefit only from limited public support. Cost recovery may of course in turn affect the market share of FISs in the areas where they operate.

The issues of the market share, reach to the poor, and cost for households of FISs are clearly related. The purpose of this article is to provide new evidence on those issues using evidence from nationally representative multi-purpose household surveys (a fourth issue, that of the quality of the services provided and the satisfaction of parents with the schools, is discussed in separate articles in this special issue; see the articles by Gemignani et al. and by Wodon et al.).

In what follows here, we first outline the data used and the methodology adopted for the research. Second, we provide evidence on the market share of FISs in sub-Saharan Africa. Third, we discuss the extent to which FISs reach the poor. Finally, we examine data on the cost of FISs for households.

Data Sources

The analysis in this article is based on nationally representative multi-purpose household surveys with education modules in which the questions on the types of provider used by households for education enables the identification of faith-inspired providers separately from other (secular) private providers. This section provides basic information on these surveys and especially on how the questions are asked about the service providers in the questionnaires.

Table 1 provides the list of the surveys used and their sample size. Table 2 provides information on the way in which questions are asked on the types of education providers in the surveys. All of the modalities that can be chosen by the respondent are assigned to one of three categories: public facilities, faith-inspired facilities, and private secular facilities. Different surveys ask these questions in different ways, which is often necessary in order to take into account the peculiarities of each country's education system. In most countries only one question is asked about the type of facility used, with the question combining the type of facility used and

the type of provider (say public versus private religious). But in some countries, two questions are asked in which case households are asked first about the type of facility they use and next whether the facility is public, private-religious, or private non-religious, or some version of this.

Table 1: Multi-purpose Household Surveys Used for Cross-country Comparisons

Country	Year	Survey Name	Number of households
Burkina Faso	2007	Enquête Annuelle sur les conditions de vie des ménages (EACVM-QUIBB)	8496
Burundi	2006	Enquête Questionnaire des Indicateurs de Base du Bien être (QUIBB)	7046
Cameroon	2007	Enquête sur les Conditions des Ménages Camerounais II (ECAM)	11391
Chad	2003/04	Deuxième Enquête sur la Consommation et le Secteur Informel au Tchad (ECOSIT)	6697
Dem. Rep. of Congo	2004/05	Enquête 1-2-3 (123 survey)	12098
Ghana	2003	Core Welfare Indicators Questionnaire Survey (CWIQ)	49003
Ghana	2005/06	Ghana Living Standards Survey, Fifth round (GLSS)	8687
Kenya	2005	Kenya Integrated Household Budget Survey (KIHBS)	13158
Malawi	2004	Malawi Integrated Household Survey (HIS)	11280
Mali	2006	Enquête Légère. Intégrée auprès des Ménages (ELIM)	4494
Niger	2007	Enquête nationale sur le budget et la consommation des ménages (ENBC)	4000
Nigeria	2003/04	Nigeria Living Standards Survey (LMS)	19158
Republic of Congo	2005	Enquête Congolaise auprès des Ménages pour l'évaluation de la pauvreté (ECOM)	5002
Senegal	2005	Enquête de Suivi de la Pauvreté au Sénégal (ESPS)	13568
Sierra Leone	2003	Sierra Leone Integrated Household Survey (SLIHS)	3720
Swaziland	2009	Swaziland Household Income and Expenditure Survey (SHIES)	3167
Uganda	2010	Uganda National Household Survey (UNHS)	6775
Zambia	2004	Zambia Living Conditions Monitoring Survey (LCMS)	19315

Source: Authors.

Two comments are important to make. First, in many cases, NGOs have been included together with faith-inspired providers. This is because in several countries, NGOs are lumped together with FISs in the way questions are asked in the surveys. To keep the data consistent, where NGOs are identified separately, they have then also been considered as FISs. However, typically the market share of NGOs is much smaller than that of FISs in surveys where the two types of organizations can be assessed separately, so this does not lead to any major bias in the results. In addition, at least some NGOs tend to be faith-inspired.

Second, because of the way questions are asked in the surveys, the identification of FISs in some countries may be better than in others, and it is difficult to make a precise country-level assessment of the quality of the identification. However, as discussed in the next section, a cross-check with the data from the UNESCO Institute of Statistics on private sector provision suggests that the data obtained from the surveys reflect relatively well the administrative data.

Table 2: Identification of the Various Types of Education Facilities

	Public	Faith-inspired	Private secular
		Private Catholic school, Private Protestant school, Franco-Arab school, Church	Private non-religious
Burkina Faso	Public		
Burundi	Government, Community	Mission (day), Mission (evening)	Private, Other
Cameroon	Public, Community school		Lay private (day), Lay private (evening), Courses by correspondence or internet
Democratic Rep. of Congo	Public without convention	Public with convention	Private
Ghana, 2003	Government, Community	Religious	Other Private, Other (specify)
Ghana, 2005-06	Public	Organization/Church	Private non-religious
Kenya	Government, Community	Private religious	Private other, Other
Malawi – primary	Lea/Government	Private church, Private Muslim	
Malawi – secondary	Government	Church/mission school, Islamic school	Private non-religious, Other primary
Mali	(conventional), Community day (cdss)	Church/mission school, Islamic school	Night school, Other secondary
Niger	Government, Community	Religious organization	Private, Other
Nigeria	Government, Community	Religious organization	Private, Other
Republic of Congo	Federal Government, State Government, Local Government	Religious Body	Industrial, Private, Other
Senegal	Government, Community	Church	Private, Other
Sierra Leone	French public, Community	Franco-Arab school, Private Catholic school	Private secular, Other
Swaziland	Government, Local Government	Mission/Religious Body, Non-Govt. Organization	Private, Other (specify)
Uganda	Government	Mission	Private
Zambia	Central government, Local government	NGO/religious organization	Private, Other
		Mission/religious	Industrial, Private, Other (specify)

Source: Authors.

Administrative Data on Market Share

Administrative data are available from the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) on the role of the private sector in education in Africa. A recent UIS publication provides estimates of the share of enrollment in private schools at both the primary and secondary levels circa 1999 and 2009 (UNESCO, 2011). In the UIS report, private schools are defined as those schools that are controlled and managed by a private body such as a non-governmental organization, a religious body, a special interest group, a foundation, or a business enterprise. Both non-profit and for-profit schools are considered. Thus, what defines the public/private status of a school is who controls and manages the school, not who funds the school. Privately managed or controlled schools that are funded by the government are considered as private.

The data are reproduced in Table 3. The share of students in private schools is based on enrollment in those schools divided by total enrollment at the education level being considered. The reference period is the academic year ending in 2009 or the most recent year available between 2006 and 2009 (the same logic applies for the 1999 estimates). The data are obtained through the UIS Annual Education Survey sent by UNESCO to its member states. The UIS study notes that changes in reporting may occur between years, for example if community schools are classified as public schools in one year, and as private schools in another. Such changes may affect trends over time, but in most countries they should be minor. In 2009, out of the 45 countries listed, data on private market shares at the primary level are missing for 10 countries: the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Gabon, Guinea-Bissau, Lesotho, Malawi, Sierra Leone, Somalia, and Swaziland, Togo, and Zimbabwe (for four of these—the DRC, Malawi, Sierra Leone, and Swaziland—this study provides household survey-based estimates)

Of the remaining 35 countries, the market share of private schools is below five percent in 11 countries and above 15 percent in nine. The average market share for all countries with

data in 2009 is 12.8 percent (simple average not weighted by country populations). For the countries with data in 1999, the average private market share is 16.6 percent, but this is driven up by Zimbabwe (without Zimbabwe, the average private market share is 14.3 percent).

At the secondary level, the average private market share in 2009 for the countries with data is at 20.0 percent, while it was at 25.0 percent for the year 1999, but this is again due in large part to data available for Zimbabwe in 1999, but not in 2009. As noted in the UIS report, when looking at the countries where data are available for both years, one observes a growing market share for private schools in most of the countries, especially at the secondary level. This could perhaps be interpreted as a sign of limited satisfaction on the part of parents with existing public schools, and it could well be that many of those who have been able to rely more on private schools because they have the means to do so come from more privileged backgrounds.

Table 3: Market Share Estimates from UIS Administrative Data, Education (%)

	Primary schools (ISCED1)		Secondary schools (ISCED 2-3)	
	1999	2009	1999	2009
Angola	NA	2.0 ⁻¹	NA	NA
Benin	7.2	9.1 ⁻¹	18.3	NA
Botswana	4.7	5.0 ⁻²	4.1	3.0 ⁻¹
Burkina Faso	10.8	14.2	33.1	42.0
Burundi	1.3 ⁺²	1.1	NA	8.8
Cameroon	27.7	22.8	31.6	22.2
Cape Verde	NA	0.4	NA	12.5
Central African Republic	35.5	13.8	NA	9.7
Chad	25.0	8.6	14.0	NA
Comoros	12.4	14.8 ⁻¹	46.2	NA
(Republic of) Congo	10.0	35.4	8.7	NA
Cote d'Ivoire	11.6	10.7	36.2	NA
Democratic Republic of Congo	NA	NA	NA	NA
Equatorial Guinea	32.8	47.1	23.2	NA
Eritrea	11.1	9.0	6.5	5.2
Ethiopia	NA	6.0	NA	8.7
Gabon	17.2	NA	29.3	NA
Gambia	13.7	19.5 ⁻¹	26.1	26.7 ⁻¹
Ghana	13.3	18.0	7.1	14.9
Guinea	14.7	26.3 ⁻¹	NA	23.3 ⁻¹
Guinea-Bissau	19.4	NA	12.8 ⁺¹	NA
Kenya	NA	10.6	NA	12.7
Lesotho	0.1	NA	NA	NA

	Primary schools (ISCED1)		Secondary schools (ISCED 2-3)	
	1999	2009	1999	2009
Liberia	38.4	29.8 ⁻¹	37.2	57.6 ⁻¹
Madagascar	21.9	18.0	51.4 ⁺¹	40.3
Malawi	NA	NA	NA	NA
Mali	21.9	39.7	NA	32.3
Mauritius	23.8	27.2	73.5	55.8
Mozambique	NA	1.7	NA	11.5
Namibia	4.1	4.8	4.4	5.1
Niger	4.0	3.9	16.4	20.0
Nigeria	6.5 ⁺¹	5.4 ⁻²	28.9	13.7 ⁻²
Rwanda	NA	2.5	42.5	31.9
Sao Tom & Pr.	NA	0.3	NA	1.8
Senegal	12.1	13.5	26.3 ⁺¹	19.8 ⁻¹
Seychelles	4.7	8.2	3.2	7.1
Sierra Leone	1.1 ⁺¹	NA	1.9 ⁺²	6.9 ⁻²
Somalia	NA	NA	NA	NA
South Africa	1.7	2.5 ⁻²	2.3	NA
Swaziland	NA	NA	NA	NA
Togo	35.6	NA	17.7	NA
Uganda	NA	13.4	NA	51.5 ⁻¹
United Republic of Tanzania	0.2	1.5	NA	11.1
Zambia	NA	2.3	NA	2.6
Zimbabwe	88.1	NA	71.7	NA
Average (all countries, incl. Zimbabwe in 1999)	16.6	12.8	25.0	20.0

Source: UNESCO (2011).

Note: In the International Standard Classification of Education, ISCED-1 represents primary education, ISCED-2 lower secondary school, and ISCED-3 upper secondary schools. The upper scripts in the table indicate when the education system in a country differs from ISCED norms.

Household Survey Data on Market Share

Consider now estimates based on multi-purpose household surveys for primary and secondary education in Table 4. The market shares for FISs range from 1.2 percent in Mali to 69.8 percent in the DRC for primary schools. The high market share in the DRC (and Sierra Leone) relates in part to the impact of conflict that led to state failure and an inability for public schools to function properly, but also to historical factors. Beyond these two countries, the highest market share for FISs is at 25.7 percent in Swaziland. The average market share for FISs is at 14.0 percent, versus 12.3 percent for secular private schools.

How do the UIS statistics compare with the estimates from household surveys used in this study? For the countries where estimates are available from both the surveys and the UIS

data, the average difference in the estimates of private market share is only 3.9 percent. The average private market share observed in the surveys is higher than the average share reported to the UIS by Ministries of Education, and this is what one would expect. Indeed, it is likely that some schools that do provide services to households are not recorded by Ministries of Education, because they operate without any official recognition. In some of the countries, the correspondence between the surveys and the UIS data is good. In a few countries, the differences are large, especially for Mali and Niger. In such cases, it is likely that the differences are due to a lack of comparability in the classifications used for the surveys and the administrative data. In the case of Mali, the article by Boyle in this special issue confirms that the market share of FISs is higher than suggested in Table 4.

What about secondary education? Mali is again the country with the smallest market share, and the highest market share is obtained for the DRC. The average market share for FISs is at 11.2 percent, versus 16.2 percent for private secular schools. For the countries where estimates are available from both the surveys and the UIS data, the average difference in the estimates of private market share is only 0.8 percent, but this hides large differences for some countries. The average private market share observed in the surveys is again higher than the average share reported to the UIS by Ministries of Education.

Table 4: Market Share Estimates from Multi-purpose Surveys, Education (%)

	Public Sector	Faith- inspired	Other private	Total private (1)	UIS Estimate (2)	Difference with UIS (1)-(2)
Primary Education						
Burkina Faso, 2007	88.9	4.9	6.3	11.2	14.2	-3.1
Burundi, 2006	96.2	2.1	1.7	3.8	1.1	2.7
Cameroon, 2007	74.1	12.6	13.3	25.9	22.8	3.1
Democratic Rep. of Congo, 2005	18.4	69.8	11.8	81.6	-	-
Ghana, 2003	73.8	4.7	21.5	26.2	18.0	8.2
Ghana, 2005/06	73.3	7.4	19.3	26.7	18.0	8.7
Kenya, 2005	90.2	2.3	7.5	9.8	10.6	-0.8

Malawi, 2004	81.0	17.2	1.9	19.0	-	-
Mali, 2006	85.0	1.2	13.8	15.0	39.7	-24.7
Niger, 2007	70.0	8.7	21.3	30.0	3.9	26.1
Nigeria 2003/04	77.2	2.5	20.3	22.8	5.4	17.4
Republic of Congo, 2005	73.3	3.1	23.6	26.7	35.4	-8.7
Senegal, 2005	86.1	7.0	7.0	13.9	8.2	5.7
Sierra Leone, 2003/04	37.3	54.9	7.7	62.7	-	-
Swaziland, 2009/10	65.5	25.7	8.9	34.6	-	-
Uganda, 2010	75.0	2.4	22.7	25.0	13.4	11.6
Zambia, 2004	88.7	2.8	8.4	11.3	2.3	9.0
Average (using Ghana average)	73.8	14.0	12.3	26.2	14.6	3.9
Secondary Education						
Burkina Faso, 2007	66.9	8.7	24.4	33.1	42.0	-8.9
Burundi, 2006	83.7	3.2	13.1	16.3	8.8	7.5
Cameroon, 2007	73.5	5.7	20.8	26.5	22.2	4.3
Democratic Rep. of Congo, 2005	21.5	66.0	12.5	78.5	-	-
Ghana, 2003	84.7	3.2	12.1	15.3	14.9	0.4
Ghana, 2005/06	78.1	6.5	15.4	21.9	14.9	7.0
Kenya, 2005	81.0	6.2	12.8	19.0	12.7	6.3
Malawi, 2004	70.2	6.4	23.4	29.9	-	-
Mali, 2006	89.4	0.2	10.3	10.6	32.3	-21.7
Niger, 2007	81.8	0.8	17.4	18.2	20.0	-1.8
Nigeria 2003/04	84.0	1.2	14.7	16.0	13.7	2.3
Republic of Congo, 2005	77.4	1.1	21.5	22.6	8.7	13.9
Senegal, 2005	82.0	5.7	12.3	18.1	19.8	-1.8
Sierra Leone, 2003/04	54.9	41.6	3.6	45.2	-	-
Swaziland, 2009/10	74.0	19.6	6.4	26.0	-	-
Uganda, 2010	47.5	3.5	49.0	52.5	51.5	0.9
Zambia, 2004	92.5	3.8	3.7	7.5	2.6	4.9
Average (using Ghana average)	72.6	11.2	16.2	27.4	20.8	0.8

Source: Authors.

Reach to the Poor

While it is common to state that FISs provide a large share of education services in sub-Saharan Africa, it is also often suggested that they provide services in priority for the poor and vulnerable, especially in rural areas, or at least that they try to do so. The evidence to back such statements is mostly anecdotal, but household surveys can help in looking at this question.

The issue of whether FISs reach the poor and vulnerable is probably more important than that of their market share. For a Ministry of Education, being able to reach the poor and vulnerable, especially in remote areas, is important to ensure universal service. If in some areas FISs may be able to contribute to this goal, and possibly more so than existing public schools, this would be a major comparative advantage for FISs which would appear to warrant public support, instead of duplicating efforts by locating new public schools in those areas if FISs already serve the population. Even more importantly, for the FISs themselves, the ability to reach the poor and vulnerable is fundamental, given that some form of preferential option for the poor is often a core component of their ethos. But what does it mean exactly to reach the poor, and how can household survey data help in assessing whether FISs indeed reach the poor? At least four different interpretations of “reaching the poor and vulnerable” can be considered.

A first question is whether in their own clientele, FISs serve the poor—as traditionally defined on the basis of consumption or wealth—more than other population groups. This type of question is typically addressed through benefit incidence analysis, for example by estimating the share of students in FISs that belong to various quintiles of well-being. In the case of post-primary education, it is doubtful that FISs will reach the poor in this specific way, simply because the cost of education tends to be high for the poor, resulting in lower demand among them than among the better-off. Thus, most post-primary schools, whether public, faith-inspired,

or private secular, will often not reach the poor more than other groups in absolute terms. The case of primary education is a bit different, especially now that it is often free in public (and publicly funded) schools, at least in terms of direct fees (not in terms of other expenditures or opportunity costs). If better off households send their children to private secular schools, when a country reaches high levels of primary school enrolment, public schools may reach the poor more than the better off in absolute terms. Where FISs do too depends on their characteristics—in some cases FISs may reach the poor more than other groups in absolute terms, while in others they may not, depending in part on their cost for households. But the reach to the poor of FISs is often lower at the secondary than at the primary level, as for other education providers.

A second question is whether FISs serve the poor more than public and private secular schools. This is a relative benefit incidence analysis question, which means that instead of simply comparing the shares of students enrolled by quintile for one provider, the objective is rather to see if some providers tend to have more students from certain quintiles than others. Even if FISs do not reach the poor more than other groups in absolute terms, they may reach the poor more than other providers. This would be the case if as a share of the student body, the poor were better represented in FISs than in other schools. Clearly, because many private secular schools cater to the better off, one would expect that FISs would reach the poor more than private secular providers. But whether they do better than public schools is an open question. Even if FISs would like to focus on the poor, this may not be feasible if they do not benefit from support from governments or donors. Providing services of good quality is not cheap, and in the absence of external support FISs may not be able to remain financially sustainable without cost recovery. A lower level of financial support for FISs may require a higher level of cost recovery from parents, which may drive the poor away from FISs. Also, even when FISs benefit from public

funding when integrated within national education systems, they may still be funded only partially, and they may not be able to cross-subsidize the poor by charging more to the better off. While it is difficult to analyse the many factors that may lead FISs to be able (or not) to serve the poor more than other providers, simply measuring whether they do so (or not) is straightforward with household surveys.

A third and more difficult question is whether FISs make special efforts to reach the poor. This is the question that is probably closest in spirit to the concept of the preferential option for the poor in Catholic social thought, but it will not be considered here, because this requires detailed econometric work that is beyond the scope of this paper. Finally, a fourth question is whether FISs succeed in serving others in need who may not be defined as poor in the traditional sense, but are vulnerable, such as orphans. This is also not discussed here, essentially for the same reason.

In Table 5, data are provided on the share of the users of the services provided by FISs by quintiles of well-being (the sum of the five estimates in each row is equal to 100 percent).² Although poverty estimates vary between countries, in most countries the bottom two or three quintiles can be considered as representing the poor. The evidence from the 16 countries suggests that on average FISs do not serve the poor more than wealthier groups in absolute terms, and that they may also not reach the poor proportionately more than public facilities.

For primary education, on average 16.0 percent of students in FISs belong to the bottom quintile, versus 25.3 percent in the top quintile (in computing these averages across the countries in the sample, the two survey data points for Ghana are themselves averaged). Note that some of the country estimates by quintile may have large standard errors, especially when the market share of FISs is small. But even if one takes out from the regional average the countries where

the market share is very low, the results remain qualitatively the same. For secondary education, the differences are as expected even larger between quintiles, with 10.4 percent of students in FISs belonging to the bottom quintile, versus 34.9 percent in the top quintile. Table 5 also suggests that the benefit incidence by quintile for FISs is less pro-poor than for public facilities for both primary and secondary schools. For example, at the secondary level, only 10.4 percent of students in FISs are in the bottom quintile, and a similar proportion is in the second quintile. For public schools, the corresponding shares are 12.3 percent and 15.7 percent. But as expected, the services provided by FISs are less tilted towards better off children than is the case for private secular schools, for which 43.9 percent of the students in primary schools and 54.9 percent of the students in secondary schools come from households belonging to the top quintile.

Table 5: Average Benefit Incidence by Quintile of Providers of Education, Africa (%)

Table 3: Average Defect Incidence by Quintile of Providers of Education, Africa (%)						
	Welfare quintiles					All quintiles
	Quintile 1 (Poorest)	Quintile 2	Quintile 3	Quintile 4	Quintile 5 (Richest)	
Primary Schools						
Public	21.7	21.8	21.6	19.9	15.0	100.0
Faith-inspired	16.0	17.7	19.5	21.5	25.3	100.0
Private secular	8.5	11.8	14.2	21.6	43.9	100.0
Total	20.0	20.7	20.8	20.3	18.2	100.0
Secondary Schools						
Public	12.3	15.7	19.0	23.8	29.2	100.0
Faith-inspired	10.4	10.9	20.7	23.1	34.9	100.0
Private secular	4.5	8.2	13.2	19.1	54.9	100.0
Total	11.2	14.6	18.1	23.3	32.8	100.0

Source: Authors.

It is important to emphasize that the limited reach of FISs to the poor in comparison to public schools does not imply that FISs do not try to serve the poor as best they can. As already noted, serving the poor is often part of the ethos of FISs and their workers, but FISs operate within budget constraints as do other schools. Ideally, an assessment of whether FISs do try to serve the poor as best they can would rely on some experiment as to whether they are using their available resources to do so. An example of such an experiment is documented by Reinikka and

Svensson (2010) in their work on faith-inspired healthcare providers in Uganda. The authors use a change in financing of not-for-profit healthcare providers through untied government grants to test two theories of organizational behavior. The first theory postulates that not-for-profit providers are intrinsically motivated to serve the poor and will therefore use new resources to expand their services or cut the cost of these services. The second theory postulates that not-for-profit providers are captured by their managers or workers and behave like for-profit actors. Although they may not appropriate profits, they would tend to use untied grants to raise the salaries of their staff or provide them with other benefits that would not directly serve the poor. The authors' empirical results suggest that the first altruistic theory is validated by the data, and that the results matter in the sense that this altruistic behavior makes a difference for the poor. We do not have similar data for FISs, but the same type of behavior might well be at work.

Cost for Households

As suggested by the example of healthcare in Uganda just mentioned, the question of the extent to which FISs reach the poor is closely related to the cost for households of their services in comparison to other schools, which itself depends on the resources available to FISs. In some cases, FISs may benefit from special resources to make services more affordable for the poor, for example when they get support from congregations, whether these are based locally or abroad. They may also benefit from support from government agencies. But in the absence of such support, subsidies granted to the poor may require charging better off patients more for the same or similar services, or relying on staffs that are willing to work at below market wages.

The household surveys do not provide information on cross-subsidies but a subset of the surveys have information on the cost paid by households for education. Summary statistics for

the average costs per pupil by type of provider are provided in Table 6 for eight countries where that information is available. These are yearly costs for primary and secondary schooling in US\$. These are not the total costs paid by households—for example transport costs are not included, nor are costs for uniforms and textbooks, but these are the costs paid to schools for the services received. On the other hand, apart from fees, PTA (Parent-Teacher Associations) dues are also included, as these tend to fund operating expenses.

There is a clear ranking in costs between providers both in the aggregate and in the country-level data (not shown in the table). For both primary and secondary schooling, in all but one country (Sierra Leone), public schools are cheaper than FISs (in Swaziland, there is a virtual tie). Private secular schools are more expensive than both public and FISs in all countries at the primary level, and in all but one country (Cameroon) at the secondary level. There are also large differences in costs between areas, with costs being higher in urban than in rural areas. In addition, costs are higher for students in the top quintiles as compared to lower quintiles. This is not surprising given that the costs paid are influenced by the ability to pay of households—wealthier households will tend to put their children in better and more expensive schools.

Table 6: Private Cost of Schooling per Child for Households, US\$

Table 6.1 Private Cost of Schooling per Child for Households, US\$						
	Welfare quintiles					All
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	
	Primary schools					
Public	4	5	6	9	18	7
Faith-inspired	8	14	17	28	54	26
Secular	16	27	39	50	144	84
Total	5	7	10	17	56	16
	Secondary schools					
Public	26	35	45	60	95	55
Faith-inspired	64	64	53	91	141	94
Private secular	39	58	105	104	227	168
Total	27	41	52	70	133	74

Source: Authors.

Conclusion

The purpose of this article was to assess the market share of FISs as compared to other public and private secular schools in Africa. It is often suggested that FISs provide close to half of all education services in the region. Household surveys suggest a market share for FISs for primary education of about 14 percent on average in the countries where information has been collected for this study, and 11 percent for secondary education (these averages mask large differences between countries). When factoring in the role of private secular schools, the household survey data are broadly consistent with estimates obtained from administrative data collected by Ministries of Education for the UNESCO Institute of Statistics.

There is also a widespread perception that FISs reach the poor in priority, or at least try to do so. Different interpretations of what ‘reaching the poor’ may mean can be proposed. A first interpretation would suggest that FISs serve the poor more than other household groups in absolute terms. This does not seem to be the case, but it is not surprising given that education implies (direct or opportunity) costs for households, and the ability to pay is lower among the poor. A second interpretation would be to say that FISs serve the poor more than other schools, and especially public schools since it is known that on average private secular schools serve the better off more. It turns out that on average (across the 16 countries) FISs serve the poor slightly less than public schools. This is probably in large part because FISs, while less expensive to attend than private secular schools, tend to be more expensive for households than public schools. In other words, to the extent that FISs often do not have the same resources as public schools, the fact that they do not reach the poor proportionately more does not imply that within their budget constraints they are not trying to make their services affordable for the poor.

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¹ This article is based in part on a World Bank study (Wodon 2014). The opinions expressed in this article are those of the authors only and need not represent those of the World Bank, its Executive Directors or the countries they represent.

² Depending on the survey, the quintiles are based either on measures of consumption per capita or per equivalent adult taking into account differences in the cost of living between areas, or on an index of wealth obtained using factorial analysis when consumption data is not available.