

**THE IMPACT OF FREE PRIMARY EDUCATION ON ACADEMIC
PERFORMANCE OF PUPILS IN BOCHARIA ZONE,
RIGOMA DIVISION, MASABA NORTH DISTRICT,
KENYA**

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DECLARATION:

I declare that this research project is my original work and has never been submitted to any university for any award. Where the works of others have been cited acknowledgment has been made.

Signature.....



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Date.....

14/9/2010

APPROVAL

I certify that the work submitted by this candidate was under my supervision. His work is ready for submission, to be evaluated for the award of a Bachelor of Education(Arts) at Kampala International University.

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I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the large members of society who made my university studies a success. My supervisor Mr. Ssekajugo of K.I.U. May God Lord reward you abundantly.

DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to my wife Josephine Gekonge, my beloved children Brian, Borniventure and Behkam, to my parents, my brothers and sisters.

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ABSTRACT

Recent research statistics has shown that the free primary education introduced in the year 2003 had lead to a large influx of pupils into primary schools. Kenyans cannot afford to complacent about it, thus their arise an immediate need to conduct an investigation on the issue of academic performance on the influx of pupils.

The study adopted a Descriptive research design. This enhanced the researcher to obtain a better understanding of the impact of free primary education on academic performance of pupils. The method chosen allowed a collection of comprehensive and intensive data and provided an in-depth understanding of the topic under study.

Information collected was analyzed and edited to create consistency and completeness. After collecting the questionnaires they were edited for completeness and consistency across the respondents and to locate omissions. Information obtained from the research study was presented and analyzed using bar charts, narratives, and statistical figures.

This report provides suggestions for more effective practice in the field of free primary education and measures based on the lessons learned from practical experience of the programme. It is designed for policy makers, planners and stakeholders who have responsibilities in the education sector in the country.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

The aim of this research was to investigate the effects of free primary education on pupil's academic performance in Rigoma Division, Kenya. This is due to the high enrolment of pupils into primary schools leading to congestion which has in turn compromised on quality. This prompted the researcher to investigate the effects of that and how it can be corrected.

Before Kenyan's political independence most schools in Kenya were under the colonial government and missionaries. Emphasis was on provision of technical skills to indigenous Kenyans. However, after independence, the government focused on the development of skills by indigenous Kenyans to replace the expatriates and also made attempts to increase enrolment for Kenyan children.

This effort was due to the realization that provision of education and training to all Kenyans was fundamental to overall development because education and training is the key to wealth creation and self-esteem. It is through education that one learns to value Himself/herself and enhance the ability to preserve and utilize the environment for productive gain and sustainable livelihoods.

Having promised to eliminate poverty disease and ignorance at independence in 1963, and subsequently through Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965 on African Socialism and its Application to Planning in Kenya, the government invested and continues to invest heavily in education and training through various initiatives.

The Government of Kenya has had a commitment to expand the education system to enable greater access to the population. This has been in response to a number of concerns, among them the desire to combat ignorance, disease and poverty; and the belief that every Kenyan child has the right of access to basic welfare provisions, including education. Thus

the government undertook the obligation to provide its citizens with the educational opportunity in order to take part fully in the socio-economic and political development of the country and to attain a decent standard of living.

1.1 Background to the study

The policy of the Kenya government to achieve Universal Primary Education has to be seen within the wider international context. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted in 1948, states that "everyone has a right to education". The World Conference on Education for All held in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990, sparked off a new impetus towards basic education.

It noted, "That to serve the basic needs for all requires more than a recommitment to basic education as now exists. What is needed is an expanded vision that surpasses resource levels, institutional structures, curricula and conventional delivery systems, while building on the best in the practices".

The Amman Mid-Decade Review of Education for all (1996) reaffirmed the commitment to the Jomtien resolutions. It observed that the provision of basic education, especially for girls, has remained elusive in many less industrialized countries. This was said to be particularly so in Africa, where ethnic tensions and conflicts have displaced many households, thus denying children opportunities of going to school. The Dakar Conference of 2000 reviewed developments in achieving UPE in the African continent. It set as one of the EFA goals "eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015".

This was further endorsed by the Millennium Development Goals. Among other things they set targets "to ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling".

Within this broad policy framework, the expansion of learning institutions has been one of the greatest achievements in the education sector since independence in 1963,. Kenya has achieved an impressive increase in adult literacy. The achievements in literacy have reflected the country's impressive progress in expanding access to education during the last four decades largely by establishing a comprehensive network of schools throughout the country. The substantial expansion of education has generally resulted in an increased participation by groups that previously had little or no access to schooling. Enrolment of a greater percentage of girls and indeed the attainment of Universal Primary Education has been the long-term objective in the primary education sub-sector, since 1974 when the first Free Primary Education program was announced by the government. However, numerous problems have bedeviled various interventions over the years.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Since 1963, education and training in Kenya has expanded considerably. However, the determination to provide education and training to all Kenyans has over the years experienced some challenges. These challenges have been addressed through establishment of commissions, committees and task forces.

In the year 2003, universal primary education in Kenya was introduced and since then, pupil enrolment in schools has increased tremendously. This has unfortunately led to declining standards, hence the need to carryout the study.

1.3General objective

The purpose of the study was to investigate the impact of free primary education on academic performance of pupils in Rigoma division, Masaba North district , Kenya.

1.4 Objectives of the study

- To determine whether the facilities offered by the Government and the policies they draft on the implementation of free primary education are satisfactory and

proves to be efficient and effective in guarantying fair if not good students performance.

- To determine the impact and response of both the parents and pupils on the implementation of free primary education.
- To find out other factors affecting academic performance within Rigoma division

1.5 Research questions

- Are the facilities offered by the Government and the policies they draft on the implementation of free primary education are satisfactory and proves to be efficient and effective in guarantying fair if not good students performance?
- What are the impact and response of both the parents and pupils on the implementation of free primary education.
- What other factors affect academic performance within Rigoma division

1.6 Significance of the study

The study was a source of information for both the learning institutions and their governing authorities which will use the data collected as a primary base to craft policies that will ensure effective implementation of policies governing the implementation of Free Primary Education.

By depicting and pin pointing various challenges encountered by the both the government and students in their pursuit to implement and enjoy the benefits of FPE, these challenges were discussed and an amicable recommendation provided which will be highly beneficial of both parties.

The study was a base for various scholars and researchers who might use the information that was got to add and improve the existing knowledge on how to successfully accrue to the benefits of FPE.

1.7 Scope of the study

The research was carried out between December 2008 and April 2009. The main purpose was to investigate the impact of free primary education on pupil's academic performance. The research was carried out in Rigoma division of Masaba North district Kenya. The respondents to the research were pupils as well as the teachers of the sampled schools who were the target respondents.

The division under study was considered attractive for the study as the region concentrates most of the public schools around North Eastern province. More to it, the region was also considered convenience to the researcher.

1.8 Limitations of the study

In conducting this study, a number of challenges were encountered, including:

- Attitudes towards the exercise – Some respondents were unwilling to freely share the information (especially negative information). This was mainly true at the local level because of fear of not knowing whether the information could go to their superiors with repercussions.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

This chapter gave reference to what other scholars have written concerning free primary education and their impact on the academic performance in schools. The literature review in the study concerned free primary education and academic performance of the pupils. The literature review helped the researcher with data compilation, statistics analysis as well as in understanding the problem. The materials used in the review included books, magazines and journals on free primary education, newspapers articles and education related websites over the internet.

2.1 theoretical framework

Universal primary enrolment mainly focuses on teaching basic skills: reading, writing and arithmetic. That involves 4 to 6 or 7 years of education depending on the conditions where it takes place. The Dakar goals go beyond basic skills education, aiming at a basic quality education for all.

Basic education means ensuring that everybody leaves the education system with all the skills they need to live in tomorrow's society. The United Nations organizations have identified three major categories of target skills considered in Monitoring Learning Assessment namely: skills relating to the learning language, mathematical skills required for social and working life, social skills including elements of general knowledge, basic science, and awareness of environmental, education, health and citizenship issues, Kimuyu, Wagacha, and Okwach, (1999)

Those skills are considered the minimum basis required for adjusting to social and working life and upon which lifelong education can be built. Major international institutions tend to

agree that basic education in an increasingly complex society requires approximately nine years of schooling.

Quality education is education that, in addition to creating the conditions that promote learning and the child's harmonious development, ensures command of the three target skills, Kamau, J. R. (2005).

Mastering them means not only acquiring the ability to replicate the knowledge and skills taught, but also learning how to take initiative, in other words, drawing upon that knowledge and those skills to cope with a specific situation. The aim, then, is to surpass the level of mere reproduction to achieve a level where children can solve problems that they will be faced with in the future. Ministry of Education(2003)

Quality education for all means enabling all children to master the basic skills required for living in society (fitting in to society and pursuing their development there) and ensuring that those who can and want to continue their education may do so. This means that education system managers and teachers must be attentive to all children regardless of gender or social, geographical, ethnic, religious or other background. That requires focusing special attention on children with the greatest learning difficulties.

2.2 Overview of free primary education

Universal primary enrolment and quality basic education for all give countries the challenge of combining and balancing: effectiveness (the effective command of target skills);efficiency (a reasonable ratio between results and investment);equity (reducing the gap between children with fewer or greater advantages).As this research tries to show, that challenge is far from being met, especially the effectiveness of the structure of the education system has also come under increased scrutiny in the last decade due to a decline in enrolments, particularly at the primary and secondary school levels, Kimuyu, Wagacha and Okwach, (1999).

2.3 The government and the free primary education

However, the Government has demonstrated some commitment to the Education For All. In order to operationalize the Sessional Paper through the Sector Wide Approach process, the Ministry of Education, with development partners and other stakeholders in education, have developed the Kenya Education Sector Support Programme (KESSP), which was launched in July 2005. The KESSP fits within the broader national policy framework as set out in the Economic Recovery Strategy and the Sessional Paper. Moreover, the implementation of KESSP is designed to be in line with the Medium Term Expenditure Framework and annual budget cycle. It will, therefore operationalize the budget for prioritized programmes which, when accomplished, will ensure that the goals and objectives as spelt out in the policy documents are attained in the next five years.

Focusing on one “road map” for the development of the education sector will significantly reduce duplication and inefficient use of resources, which often occurs when many projects and programmes are implemented without a clear long-term sector-wide development strategy. It will also ensure that resources are invested in programmes that have the greatest impact on improving access, equity, retention, quality and relevance of education for all Kenyans. The implementation of Free Primary Education is critical to the achievement of Education For All, which is a key objective under the Millennium Development Goals.

The government must therefore continue to invest heavily and sustain Free Primary Education in order to provide an all inclusive education and training to all Kenyans irrespective of their region of origin, income status, gender, religion and any other disparities, Araujo Caridad, Francisco Ferreira, and Norbert Schady (2004). It must invest in people by expanding access to schooling, targeting the neediest and providing safety nets for the working poor, those unable to work and special vulnerable and marginalized groups.

Education can reduce social and economic inequality. Today, Kenya is characterized by large inequalities with respect to income distribution and this has constrained economic growth. As such, investment in education is an important strategy to address such inequalities, and thus facilitate faster economic growth.

Government involvement in education and training is, therefore, justified on the basis that human capital development has large social returns, and because the market can fail to provide socially optimal returns. Ministry of Education(2003)

For Kenya to achieve the desired economic growth targets and social development, a high priority needs to be placed on the development of human capital through education and training by promoting technical and vocational training, as well as the teaching of sciences and information technology.

Not only will the growth of the education and training sector contribute to economic growth and social returns, but it will also increase demand for more equitable education attainment, which is an important human welfare indicator by itself. Notwithstanding the challenges the sector is facing, the Ministry of Education is determined to improve access, equity, quality and relevance of education through better management of service delivery to all learners. Achievements in this sector will, therefore, enhance economic growth, create more employment, guarantee sustainable development and hence ensure poverty reduction for the Kenyan people.

2.4 Factors affecting academic performance

However, the inequalities in education as discussed in this Chapter will require some urgent strategies in order to reverse the current trend of inequality. In particular, there is need for the Ministry in partnership with other stakeholders in education to address the following issues:

According to Kimuyu, Wagacha&Okwach (1999), in some parts of the country, children with special needs and those from poor households are not enrolled in ECDE. There is need therefore to develop and implement appropriate ECDE programmes for children with special needs, including the vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, in order to enhance access.

In order to attract and retain children in school within the famine-prone areas, there is need to expand the current school-feeding programme. This initiative will improve both access and retention and therefore lead to better performance in examinations, especially among the socio-economically disadvantaged and nutritionally vulnerable children. Girls in pre-primary and primary schools in targeted Arid and semi-arid areas and slums in Nairobi can greatly benefit from such a programme, Ministry of Education (2005).

Through this programme, there has been substantial increase in enrolment by 184 percent in the areas covered (from 357,464 children in 1999 to 1,017,317 children in 2004). In addition, there has been reduced hunger, improved attention and cognitive ability of the children and enhanced enrolment of the girl child and orphans.

2.5 Parents and students response toward implementation of FPE

In most schools, pupil attendance has improved with a reduction in school dropouts.

In some disadvantaged and marginalized areas, day schools are inappropriate because children have to travel long distances. Under such circumstances, it is important to improve and provide targeted boarding school in Arid and Semi Arid Lands and other deserving areas, especially for girls in order to retain children in schools.

Parents play an important role in ensuring children attend school. At the same time, the school environment could encourage or discourage children from attending school. In order to address these concerns, there is need to sensitize parents and communities to discard socio-cultural practices that prohibit effective participation of girls and boys in education, enforce legislation against the violation of the Children's Rights and make school environment gender sensitive, Kamau,(2005).

Often, nomadic communities have to move from one place to another in search of pasture. In order to ensure children get education within these communities, it is important to develop and enhance use of alternative modes of provision of education, such as mobile schools among nomadic communities, whenever appropriate. The Amman Mid-Decade Review of Education for all (1996)

Good health of children plays a critical role in their performance in school. Therefore, there is need to provide support to school health through improved child health, sanitation, HIV/Aids education, and enhance the current school nutrition programme.

In order to achieve Education For All in the primary education sub-sector and also address the challenges within the secondary sub-sector, there is need to increase the enrolment of girls at all levels of the education system by improving retention, completion rates, and examination performance for girls, especially in mathematics and sciences.

Within the management of education and training in Kenya, there are few women managers as compared to men. In order to address this imbalance, there is need to enhance gender parity and balance at the management level.

The public response to Free Primary Education was overwhelming and created *access shock*. Enrollments jumped by 22 percent in Kenya. This led to overcrowded classrooms; double and triple shifts; and shortages of teachers, textbooks, and materials. Many enrolled are over-age pupils who should have been taking adult education.

High dropout and poor completion rates need to be addressed, and improving quality throughout remains a major challenge. Surveys have found a variety of reasons for high dropout rates including school costs, the need for labor, pregnancy or early marriage, disability or illness, or a lack of interest in attending school. Complementary or alternative basic education is needed to reach marginalized groups. Kamau, (2005)

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This section entailed the methods used to collect the data necessary to answer the research. It is divided into;

3.1 Research design

The study used descriptive research design. This enhanced the researcher to obtain a better understanding of the impact of Free Primary Education on academic performance of pupils. The method chosen allowed a collection of comprehensive intensive data and provided an in-depth study of the topic understudy.

3.2 Population of study

The respondents to the research were pupils as well as the teachers and head teachers of the sampled school as well as the parents.

3.3 Study sample

With regard to above the study shall employ stratified sampling,

Sampling as follows: -

- For pupils- a total of 60 were taken as a sample, getting 10 from each school.
- Teachers-4 teachers from each school.
- Parents-4 teachers from each school.
- Head teachers- the head teacher from each school.

3.4 Research instruments

➤ QUESTIONNAIRE

Primary data was collected by use of questionnaires and oral interviews, filled by relevant parties to obtain ideas on Free Primary Education and their effects on academic

performance. These were designed in both open and closed ended form. The method ensured high proportion of responses and higher returns rate.

➤ **INTERVIEW**

This took face-to-face interactions with the representative of the pupils and staff member of the schools.

3.5 Data analysis and interpretation

The information collected was analyzed and edited to create consistency and completeness. After collecting the questionnaires they were edited for completeness and consistency across the respondents to locate omissions. Information obtained from the research study was presented and analyzed using tables.

3.6 Research procedure

The researcher had an introductory letter from the University and presented it to the area authority to obtain permission for study. This gave directive to the local administrators at grass root level for acceptance. After acceptance by the authorities the major task of collecting data begun immediately.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

4.0 Introduction

In this chapter an attempt is made to interpret and explain the findings. Also key information enables to relate to the specific objectives and give a clear picture of the results.

4.1 Data analysis and processing

RESPONSE RATE

Table 1: 4.1.1 Table 1 response rate

Planned no of response	114	100%
Actual response	82	72%
Non Response	32	28%

$$\text{Response Rate} = \frac{\text{Actual response} \times 100}{\text{Planned No of response}}$$

$$82/114 \times 100 = 72 \%$$



A response rate of 72% was reported and it was deemed sufficient to conduct the study. A breakdown of the above is shown in the tables below:-

Table 2: 4.1.2 Response on the type of response

Type of response	Planned Response	Actual Response	Non- Response
Head teachers	6	6	0
Parents	24	16	8
Teachers	24	18	6
Pupils	60	42	18
Total	114	82	32

Source; primary data (2010)

Table 3: 4.1.3 The school representation

School	Teachers response	Parents response	Head teachers response	Pupils response
Kegogi PAG	4	3	1	9
Bocharia	2	1	1	5
Biticha	1	2	1	6
Machenwa	3	4	1	7
Nyanchonoria	4	3	1	6
Total	18	16	6	42

Source; primary data(2010)

4.2 Teachers bio-data**Age of respondents**

According to study, 11% of the teachers who responded were below 30 years of age. This implies that they formed the minority within the teaching staff. 45% of the respondents were between 31-35 years of age, 22% of the respondent's were between 36-45 years, 22% of the respondents were above 46years. This shows that the respondents cut across all the age groups.

Table 4: 4.2.1 Distributions of staff by age

Categories	Number	Percentage
Below 30 years	2	11%
Between 31-35 years	8	45%
Between 36-45 years	4	22%
Above 46 years	4	22%
Total	18	100%

Source: primary data(2010)

DISTRIBUTION OF STAFF BY GENDER

Majority of respondents represented by males with 56% this shows more than half of the respondents were men while female respondents were 44%.

Table 5: 4.2.2 Distributions of staff by gender

Category	Number	Percentage
Male	8	44%
Female	10	56%
	18	100

Source: primary data (2010)

4.2.1 Staff experience

From the research findings we can establish that 11% of the teachers have been teachers for less than 2 years, 39% of the teachers have been in the profession for 3-5 years, and 28% have worked for 6-10 years.22% have been in the profession for 11-15 years.

This shows that most of the teachers in school understood the challenges concerning free primary education since they had gained some experience in the teaching profession. Hence the information obtained was highly credible.

Table 6: 4.2.1.1 Length of staff experience

Categories	Number	Percentage
0-2 years	2	11%
3-5 years	7	39%
6-10 years	5	28%
11-15 years	4	22%
Total	18	100%

Source: primary data (2010)

4.3 Pupils bio-data

Out of the 60 target pupils, only 42 responded. The researcher deemed this as adequate and sufficient for the purpose of data analysis since it represented 70%.

4.3.1 GENDER

Table 7: 4.3.1.1 Respondents gender

GENDER	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Female	32	55
Male	26	45

Source; primary data (2010)

From the field of study we realized that male pupils alike their female counterparts are aware of the need for equity and quality of the free primary education.

4.3.2 Age of Respondents

The results of the field study on age respondent from the selected schools where 58 pupils responded revealed that 39% (ii) of the respondents were 18 years and above, while 39% of respondents were between 16-17 years, while 22% were between 14-15%.

The table below shows % age distribution in years.

Table 8: 4.3.2.1 Respondent's age

AGE	Frequency	% Age	Cumulative % age
10-11	15	26	22
12-13	24	41	39
14-above	19	33	39
TOTAL	58	100	100

Source; primary data (2010)

4.4 Parents bio-data

Out of the 100 target pupils, only 58 responded. The researcher deemed this as adequate and sufficient for the purpose of data analysis since it represented 58%.

4.4.1 GENDER

Table 9: 4.4.1.1 Respondents gender

GENDER	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Female	32	55
Male	26	45

Source; primary data (2010)

From the field of study we realized that male pupils alike their female counterparts are aware of the need for equity and quality of the free primary education.

4.4.2 Age of Respondents

The results of the field study on age respondent from the selected schools where 58 pupils responded revealed that 39% (ii) of the respondents were 18 years and above, while 39% of respondents were between 16-17 years, while 22% were between 14-15%. The table below shows % age distribution in years.

Table 10: 4. 4.2.1 Respondents age

AGE	Frequency	% Age	Cumulative % age
10-11	15	26	22
12-13	24	41	39
14-above	19	33	39
TOTAL	58	100	100

Source; primary data (2010)

TEACHERS ANALYSIS

4.5 Responses to whether there are challenges faced by learners on introduction of Free Primary Education.

Out of the 20 respondents 60 percent said that learners were faced with many challenges after introduction of the free primary education while, 40 percent said there were no challenges.

Table 11: 4.5.1 learners on introduction of Free Primary Education.

8 RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Yes	12	60
No	8	40
Total	20	100

Source; primary data (2010)

4.6 Response on the community's attitude towards free primary education.

Majority of response represented by 80 percent indicated that the whole community had embraced the free primary education. While 20 percent indicated that there was a negative attitude from some members of the community.

Table 12: 4.6.1 Community's attitude towards free primary education.

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
YES	16	80
NO	4	20
Total	20	100

Source: primary data (2010)

4.7 Response on whether the Ministry of Education is doing enough to remedy the challenges to free primary education

60% of the respondents said that the Ministry of Education was not doing enough to remedy the situation, while 40% of the respondents said the Ministry of Education was trying to remedy the situation.

Table 13: 4.7.1 Challenges to free primary education

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
YES	8	40
NO	12	60
Total	20	100

Source: primary data (2010)

PUPIL'S ANALYSIS

Response on whether there are challenges experienced by learners on introduction of free primary education.

Majority of response represented by 76 percent indicated that most pupils encountered challenges on introduction of free primary education. While 24 percent indicated that there were no major challenges on introduction of free primary education.

This is shown below;

Table 14: 4.7.2 Responses to the community's attitude to free primary education

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
NO	14	24
YES	44	76
Total	58	100

Source: primary data (2010)

4.8 Responses to the community's attitude to free primary education

Out of the 58 respondents, 66 percent said that they were not satisfied with the quality of education offered on introduction of free primary education while, 34percent said they were comfortable with the quality of education being offered.

This is represented below;

Table 15: 4.8.1 Education is doing anything to remedy the challenges

8 RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Yes	38	66
No	20	34
Total	58	100

Source: primary data (2010)

4.9 Response on whether the Ministry of Education is doing anything to remedy the challenges

Majority of response represented by 83 percent indicated that most pupils were not satisfied with the efforts by the Ministry of Education to remedy the challenges encountered. While 17 percent did see the Ministry of Education as doing enough.

This is represented here below;

Table 16: 4.9.1 Ministry is acting to improve quality of education.

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
NO	48	83
YES	10	17
Total	58	100

Source: primary data (2010)

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

In this chapter an attempt is made to discuss the findings and come up with conclusions and the recommendations there to.

5.1 Discussion and conclusions

One of the main outcomes of the study is the confirmation it has provided that there are challenges in the educational sector. Academic economists and international development agencies claim that an educated population is essential for economic growth and, more generally, for a higher quality of life (Lucas, 1988; Barro, 1991; Mankiw, Romer and Weil, 1992; UNDP, 2003; World Bank, 2000).

One of the eight Millennium Development Goals is that by 2015 all children in developing countries should finish primary school. Yet according to Glewwe and Kremer (2005) developing country pupils who finish primary school often perform poorly on academic tests and the value of a “low quality” education may be low. This raises the question: What can developing countries do to promote learning in their schools?

Another finding of this study is that free primary education was impacting on the quality of education. This finding is contrary to what Mingat, A., Jee-Peng T. and Ramahatra R. (2002) found out in Mali that in the study three quarters of the pupils said the FPE strategy had been successful and that they had achieved an improvement in their work. Staff confirmed that they had seen improvement in 62% of the pupils.

In our findings 62% of the pupil sample attributed the causes of failure to attend school to matters outside their control; that is they blamed the government policies and other socio-economic factors.

Further 75% of the pupil sample estimated their academic potential as being much greater than their exam results or the teachers' assessments would suggest to themselves, e.g. "because you can help yourself", whereas the less able boys tended to blame external factors, over which they had no control, for example, "the paper was more difficult than usual". The degree to which pupils felt external factors were important obviously influenced the extent to which they felt they had control over their own academic performance. This was particularly significant in the context of two other factors Which is consistent with results from Pakistan by Alderman, et al.,(2001) and the Philippines.

Within the school all pupils interviewed felt they were making progress, 80% felt valued as individuals by the FPE program and the school and 75% had a positive attitude to the school and their own work. The FPE program was trying to establish a culture of achievement where academic and non-academic achievement was valued.

The pupils in this research all had a positive approach to school attendance, in terms of gender stereotypes. All the pupils stated that it was OK to attend, not necessarily because one had no hindrances, but was ok. This was rather different to the findings of Mac a Ghail (1994). In the present study, 50% of the pupils said that they thought that socio-economic factors made a difference to how important or acceptable attendance to school would be. However, this referred mostly to a strongly held view that it was important to perform well in school even when attendance was hindered.

Once a pupil had an understanding of the factors to which he attributed success and failure it was possible to help him change to more positive ways of thinking. 62% of the pupil sample attributed lack of success to external socio-economic factors. This suggested that the pupils in this sample felt they lacked control over their own learning process and reflected the complex unit of issues that impact on teaching and learning. The mentoring

process was used to encourage the boys to take responsibility for their own contribution to their learning and in so doing improve their academic performance.

5.2 Conclusions

Despite the good performance described above, primary education is experiencing a number of challenges such as overstretched facilities, overcrowding in schools - especially those in urban slums, high pupil-teacher ratios (PTRs) in densely populated areas, and high pupil to textbook ratios.

Others challenges include high cost of special equipment for children with special needs, diminished support by communities following the misconstrued understanding of their role vis-à-vis that of the government under FPE initiative, gender and regional disparities, increased number of orphans in and out of school as a result of HIV/AIDS, and poor management and internal inefficiency that negatively impacts on access, equity and quality.

The introduction of FPE has put pressure on teachers as some class sizes have increased to over 100 pupils and sometimes 120 in schools in urban slums. The national PTR is 43:1, indicating that there are also some very small class sizes.

Teachers need to be properly deployed to redress the imbalances because large class size and lack of space and teaching facilities impact negatively on quality of education. Teachers are key to improving learning in schools and, therefore, it is important to implement a more rigorous system of pre- and in-service teacher development in order to strengthen teacher quality.

The role of parents and communities in primary education is central and needs to be clarified. Prior to the introduction of FPE, it was the responsibility of parents to contribute to school building and maintenance, but most parents are currently under the impression that it is the government's exclusive responsibility to provide all the necessary resources to support the primary education sub-sector.

This misunderstanding needs to be addressed by undertaking certain actions, such as media campaign to highlight continuing household obligations.

Many studies have attempted to estimate the impact of free primary school on pupils attendance, yet most have serious estimation problems that cast doubt on their results (Glewwe, 2002, and Glewwe and Kremer, 2006). Almost all existing studies are “retrospective,” that is based on data collected from schools as they currently exist (in contrast to data collected from a randomized trial). Yet even the best retrospective studies offer only limited guidance due to their estimation problems, the most serious being omitted variable bias (unobserved school, household and child characteristics that are correlated with observed school variables), and measurement error in school data. This has led to wide variation in the estimated impacts of key variables.

One of the eight Millennium Development Goals is that all children in developing countries should complete primary education. Much progress has been made toward this goal, but completing primary school does not ensure that students have attained basic literacy and numeracy skills. Indeed, there is ample evidence that many children in developing countries are not learning these skills despite years of school attendance. This raises the question: What can schools and communities do to increase the learning that takes place in schools? Kenya exemplifies these issues. It has achieved universal primary completion, but many Kenyan primary school students perform poorly on academic tests.

5.3 Recommendations

The provision of an improved water supply ensures water for drinking is safe from potential chemical pollutants that could easily interfere with the development of children’s brains and eventually affect academic performance.

Girls require sanitary facilities that give them privacy and dignity. Lack of sanitation facilities causes girls to drop out of schools, due to the embarrassment of sharing toilets with boys, especially when they reach puberty.

Absenteeism is one of the causes of poor academic performance and girls are more likely to be regularly absent from school due to poor, or lack of, sanitary facilities in schools. Culturally, children and particularly girls are supposed to help their mothers with water collection and other domestic chores. This means they are not able to attend school and are denied an opportunity to enjoy their right to education.

Inequalities in access to safe water especially in rural areas, forces young girls to spend hours daily fetching water, causing an enormous drain on their energy, productive potential and health. This disrupts their academic activities. Installing separate toilets for girls and boys at school can help bring teenage girls into the classroom and ensure regular attendance.

Providing water and sanitation at school is one of the best ways of bringing equal opportunity to children born into a world of disparities, particularly girls. Making water and sanitation facilities accessible means girls have more time for their studies and as a result concentrate on improving their academic performance.

Improving water and sanitation in schools enables girls at puberty, who have special sanitary needs, to practice proper personal hygiene thus reducing the incidence of water-related diseases. Retention and recruitment of teachers is problematic where schools lack adequate water and sanitation facilities especially in arid and semi-arid regions.

When teachers fall sick from water- and sanitation-related diseases, they are more likely to be absent from school, and this will consequently affect performance of students. Water- and sanitation-related diseases are some of the major opportunistic infections common among people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWA), which has resulted in the deaths of many teachers leaving many schools with a shortage of teachers.

Improved water and sanitation facilities reduces water and sanitation related morbidity hence teachers are less likely to be absent from school and therefore are able to devote more time and concentrate on teaching.

A majority of female teachers have to set up time for domestic duties including water collection. Providing safe water and sanitation facilities to households leaves teachers with time to concentrate on their work. The government should strengthen the implementation of school health activities with emphasis on water, sanitation and hygiene through appropriate policy support.

The government should prioritize resource allocation for water, sanitation and hygiene in the health sector in general and school health in particular. The government should incorporate into the teacher training curriculum, basic training and refresher courses related to sanitation and hygiene.

There is a need to develop and implement cost effective and sustainable models for promoting hygiene and sanitation in schools and informal settings.

5.4 Areas of further research

More research on the accessibility of primary school education should be carried out. A starting point should be an examination of the academic performance of pupils under free primary education.

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APPENDIX I

Budget

NO.	ACTIVITY	COSTS	
		Kshs	Ushs
1.	STATIONARY	5,000	125,000
2.	TYPING AND PRINTING	2,500	62,500
3.	TRANSPORT	1,500	35,000
4.	MEALS	2,000	50,000
5.	PHOTOCOPY	1,000	25,000
6.	INTERNET AND AIRTIME	1,000	25,000
7.	MISCELLANEOUS	5,000	125,000
TOTAL		18,000	432,500

APPENDIX II

Time frame

ACTIVITY	PERIOD	OUTPUT
Proposal writing	12/12/2009	Proposal submission for approval
Field customization	January 2010	initial information collection
Developing instruments	February 2010	Developing of instruments
Data collection	March 2010	Coding and entering of data
Data analysis	March 2010	Analyzing and interpretation of data
Preparation of report	August 2010	Submission of dissertation

APPENDIX III

Questionnaires

My name is **CHARLES G. SIMBA**, a student from Kampala International University,
Institute of Open and Distance Learning.

Am collecting data in relation to the impact of free primary education on academic
performance of pupils in Rigoma division .I request for your cooperation and I promise not
to take much of your time.

TICK WHERE APPROPRIATE

PART ONE: BIO-DATA FOR RESPONDENTS

A) SEX

☐

Male

☐

Female

B) AGE

Age bracket	Tick where appropriate
11-16 years	
18-25 years	
26-30 years	
31-35 years	
36-40 years	
41-45 years	
46 years and above	

C) Education level

Please indicate your educational level

Educational/professional level	Tick where appropriate
Primary education	
Secondary education	
Tertiary/college level	
University level	

PART TWO; TEACHERS QUESTIONNAIRE

You are kindly requested to tick or fill as accurately and appropriately as possible.

The information will only be used for academic purposes and will be kept confidentially by the researcher. No name or any personal particulars are required.

1) Do you attend school always?

YES [☐]

NO [☐]

2) What is the total time you spend in school in a given term?

7 days [☐]

14 days [☐]

1 month [☐]

2 months [☐]

Whole term [☐]

3) Is the education free?

YES [☐]

NO [☐]

4) Have your pupils benefited from free primary education?

YES [☐]

NO [☐]

6) If yes, what are the challenges experienced by teachers and school administration on introduction of free primary education?

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7) What is the community's attitude towards free primary education?

.....

.....

8) Has the free primary education changed your life/created development?

.....

.....

9) What challenges do you experience manage the programme?

.....

.....

10) Is the government doing enough to ensure pupils do not drop-out or fail to attend school?

.....

.....

.....

THANK YOU

PART THREE; PUPILS QUESTIONNAIRE

You are kindly requested to tick or fill as accurately and appropriately as possible. The information will only be used for academic purposes and will be kept confidentially by the researcher. No name or any personal particulars are required.

1) Do you attend school always?

YES []

NO []

2) What is the total time you spend in school in a given term?

7 days []

14 days []

1 month []

2 months []

Whole term []

3) Is the education free?

YES []

NO []

4) Have you benefited from free primary education?

YES []

NO []

6) What is the response of the community towards free primary education?

.....

.....

.....

7) What challenges do pupils face on introduction of free primary education?

.....

.....

8) Is the government doing enough to ensure pupils do not drop-out or fail to attend school?

THANK YOU