

**CHALLENGES OF FREE PRIMARY EDUCATION IN
UGWERIZONE, EMBU
DISTRICT, KENYA**

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**A RESERCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO INSTITUTE OF OPEN
AND DISTANCE LEARNING IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR AWARD OF
A BACHELOR IN EDUCATION OF
KAMPALA INTERNATIONAL
UNIVERSITY**

AUGUST 2008

DECLARATION:

I, NYAGA SIMON NJERU 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.

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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 at Kampala International University.

Supervisor. 

MR.KAYINDU VINCENT

Date. 

DEDICATION.

My dedication goes to my wife Jane for her moral, emotional as well as financial support in my course of study.

My parents without whom I would not be this far, Jeremiah who encouraged me to pursue early childhood education.
and to all those who have helped me in one way or another within my period of study.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My gratitude goes to my supervisor Mr. KAYINDU VINCENT. for the advice and guidance while I was writing this project and also for providing useful references in order to improve the quality of this project.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

High controversy exists among experts in scholastic achievements as to factors that contribute either simply or jointly in determining students achievements. Notwithstanding this controversy it is fair to say that learners motivation, socio economic background. The institutional environment including infrastructure, resource, quality and motivation of teachers are some of the factors that influence achievement of learners.

1.1 Background To The Study

Most educational systems, particularly the education systems in the developing world give greater emphasis on the development of the youth because of the importance attached to them as future experts and manpower resources for economic growth. Consequently, educational plans and objectives are geared towards producing citizens who will not only be self-sufficient but will contribute intellectually and materially to the development of their immediate communities and nations as a whole.

It is because of the importance of training the youth that Kenya Education Commission report of 1976 recommended, among others;

- i) To make primary schools prepare boys and girls for agriculture, budgeting family/welfare and community development
- ii) To reduce the present trends of high primary school dropout rates in order to achieve and maintain universal primary education all parts of country.

Also there has for long public outcry in Kenya that regional inequalities of education opportunities exist and that educational standards vary from one region to another.

In view of this, the National Committee on Educational Objectives and policies appointed by the then president and headed by Gachathi in 1976 recommended the need for regular review of regional imbalances in education and find means and ways of reducing them.

This committee made a number of recommendations

- To reduce regional inequalities of educational opportunities raise indices of opportunities for disadvantaged areas
- Make extensive use of radio, television and forms of mass media to improve general education in rural area.
- Redress imbalances to wealth and income earning opportunities.

In compliance with these stated recommendations the development of education through the establishment of education for instance has been given great attention in Kenya. In this connection primary education for instance has expanded very drastically particularly after the inception of the free primary in 2003 as a way ensuring basic education for all.

However, from the time it was introduced, it has faced a number of challenges.

Besides funds allocated for the establishment of new primary schools, large sums of money are invested in primary education for training teachers

paying salaries for education personnel, providing the infrastructure for various schools.

To cope with the financial demand of education, the budget in education in Kenya has grown and it is only through the help of donors that the programme has been running. If such money is invested in education to the point where other competing aspects of national development are neglected then the outcomes, the outflows and returns from education should justify such human material and financial investments

Cost effectiveness from educational investment is easily judged from the outflows of education. Outflows involve the number of students being turned out from school systems, the examination results of graduating students and their employability index. If the turnover from the school can not justify the expenditure then there is something seriously wrong with the education systems.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Universal free primary education was started in Kenya in the year 2003. Despite this there still exists cases of school drop out which truly are not financially oriented. This calls for a thorough investigation of these challenges either environmental or personal that the students encounter and need to overcome.

These differences in educational standards between regions have become a matter of great concern not only to the educational authorities but to the pupils and parents as well.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to investigate the challenges facing free primary education in Kenya and Ugweri zone in particular.

1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To investigate the extent to which the government is funding the government aided primary schools.
- To examine the community's attitude towards free primary education
- To identify the rate of school drop out and retention after the introduction primary education.
- To investigate the challenges teachers, pupils and school administration Ugweri zone face.
-

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The investigation was hoped to be significant in the following ways:

The study was a source of information for both the learning institutions and their governing authorities which can use the data collected as a primary base to craft policies that will ensure and enhance efficiency and effectiveness in the running of these academic institutions.

By depicting and pin pointing various challenges encountered by learners in their quest to get knowledge this challenge was discussed and an amicable recommendation provided which was highly beneficial.

The study was a base for various scholars and researchers who might use the information gotten to add improve the existing knowledge as the primary

education is still a new phenomenon that brings about new challenges and draw backs.

The study was aimed at pin pointing challenges other than financial constrains that hinders and affect the academic performance of students.

1.6 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The research was conducted within Ugweri zone, Embu district; where Ndumari, Kathambaiconi, Matururi and Kangondi primary schools were targeted. Ugweri zone was considered a better site to conduct the research because of its cosmopolitan nature where by people from different economic background resides. The study was carried out between December 2007 and April 2008.

1.8LIMITATIONS 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 negative repercussions.
- Time and financial constraints were experienced as the researcher was involved in other different activities and also the research was entirely self sponsored thus it was really difficult for the researcher to cater for all dues that accrued solely

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter gave reference to what other scholars have written concerning socio-economic background and its impact on the performance of pupils in primary schools. The literature review in the study concerned the challenges of free primary education and its effect on performance of 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.

2.2 OVERVIEW OF EDUCATION IN KENYA

In order to operationalize the Sessional Paper through the sector wide approach (SWAP) 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 (ERS) and the sessional paper. Moreover, the implementation of KESSP is designed to be in line with the Medium Term Expenditure framework (MTEF) and annual budget cycle. It will, therefore, personalize 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, retention, quality and relevance of education for all Kenyans. The implementation of FPE is critical to the achievement of EFA, which is a key objective under the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The government must therefore continue to invest heavily and sustain FPE in order to provide an all inclusive education and training to all Kenyans irrespective of their region of origin, income status, gender, religion and other disparities. It must invest in people by expanding access to schooling, targeting the most needy and providing safety nets for the working poor, those unable to work and special vulnerable and marginalized groups.

2.3 GOVERNMENT FUNDING OF FREE PRIMARY EDUCATION

The government has recognized the strategic importance of improving the overall education level of Kenyans within the context of poverty reduction and economic growth. In this regard, education is not only a welfare indicator, but also a key determinant of earnings and, therefore, an important exit route from poverty. As a result, increased investment in education is one of the pillars of the governments overall economic recovery strategy.

Education is an investment in human capital. Empirical evidence based on endogenous growth models shows that human capital is a key determinant of economic growth. Indeed, sustainable development is only possible if there is a critical mass of skilled people. Studies on poverty in Kenya (for example,

Central Bureau of Statistics,2005) show that education is an important factor in poverty levels and outcomes in various parts of the country.

There is a strong positive relationship between human capital and earnings as well as the overall productivity, which is captured by measures of human capital returns. Recent studies on human capital returns in Kenya show that capital returns increase as the level of education goes higher. The data reveal that investment in education, particularly higher education and training has high private rates of return. Studies also show that individuals benefit a great deal from the education of others.

Education can reduce social and economic inequality. Today, Kenya is characterized by large inequalities with respect to income distribution and 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 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.

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 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 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, and guarantee sustainable development and hence ensure poverty reduction for the Kenyan people.

2.3.1 THE FREE PRIMARY EDUCATION INTITATIVE

In the investment programme for economic recovery strategy(IP-ERS) the Government has identified a three-pillar strategy to meet its strategic objectives over the medium term(Ministry of Planning and National Development,2004)

The second pillar puts emphasis on enhancing equity and reducing poverty among the Kenyan people. In order to address the issues of equity and poverty reduction, the government will continue to focus on providing an increasing share of its resources to education and health sectors. In the education sector, the government will continue to fund Free Primary Education Support Project(FPESP),while at the same time rehabilitating secondary school classrooms and laboratories and providing bursaries to poor bright students.

The FPESP addresses poor resource management in primary schools, inadequate in servicing of teachers, poor learning environment due to overcrowding. Inadequate facilities, poor heath and sanitation, gender insensitive environment, barriers for those with special needs including the girls, and inadequacies in quality assurance. Due to these factors, many children do not attend school.

This commitment by government is expected to lead to the achievement of Education For All (EFA) by 2015. Primary school Net Enrolment Rate (NER) is expected to increase from 86 percent in 2005 to 100 percent by 2015 and completion rate from 78 percent in 2005 to 100 percent by 2010. The government also expects to achieve gender primary, secondary and university levels by 2015.

In order to achieve the above targets, there should be increased enrolment in urban slums, Arid and Semi Lands (ASALs) and areas that have above than average poverty levels. Some of the indicators have been partially achieved after the FPE initiative in 2003; for Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) at primary school level has increased from 88 percent in 2002 to 93 percent in 2005 whereas Net Enrolment Rate (NER) increased from 69 percent in 1999 to 86 percent in 2005.

However, in order to enhance access and equity and at the same time improve quality and relevance, the Ministry of Education must undertake the following programmes to guarantee the achievement of the outputs (Ministry of Education, 2005):

- ❖ Address primary school infrastructure with the aim of having all children access school with walking distance and achieve maximum class size of 50 in all schools.
- ❖ Expand school health, nutrition and feeding to cover more children;
- ❖ Improve provision of school instructional material to attain a textbook: pupil ratio of 1:1;
- ❖ Increase grants to non-formal schools;
- ❖ Enhance the provision of bursaries to students from poor households;
- ❖ Improve quality and internal efficiency through teacher training and redeployment;



- ❖ Rationalize the curriculum of focus on skills; and,
- ❖ Build capacity for primary schools management accounting systems, among others,

2.4 COMMUNITY'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS FREE PRIMARY EDUCATION

The introduction of FPE in January 2003 following the passing of the Children's Act in 2001 has led to significant educational achievements. Through the FPE initiative, there has been an upsurge in enrolment at primary school level, which is already putting pressure on textbooks, other instructional materials as well as the infrastructure.(Teachers Image, Volume 14,2007)

Enrolment at both public and private primary schools increased by 23 percent from 6.2 million in 2002 before FPE, to 7.6 million in 2005 (7.3 million in public schools and 0.3 million in private schools) with 350,000 in non-formal schools.

The success of FPE in increasing enrolment has raised Gross Enrollment Rate (GER) to 93 percent(girls 43% and boys 50%) compared to 76 percent in 2002. the NER stood at 82.5 percent in 2004(girls 82.2% and boys 82.2%).

However, about 1.5 million children of school age are not in the formal school system. An estimated one million of these children live in ASALs and urban slums. Many of these children may opt not to enroll in formal primary schools for various reasons. Therefore, it is imperative to provide more alternative learning opportunities for the out of school children as well as create a strong linkage with the formal education systems in this regard, the ministry of education has extended FPE grants to non-formal schools.

The provision of FPE grants has also enabled schools to procure learning and teaching materials. Over 9 million textbooks were purchased for the five major subjects in primary schools in 2003. most of these textbooks were purchased after the schools received grants for free primary Education.

As a result of improved of textbooks, evidence from early studies show that students retention and attendance as improved as teachers find it easier to teach, convey skills and knowledge more quickly and can give home work assignment. The performed indicators relating to examination results in the core subjects have also improved.

The school instructional management book account (SIMBA) and the general purpose account (GPA) have enabled head teachers, school management committees (SMCs) and school instructional materials committees (SIMCs) to identify and procure needs based material and improved on some infrastructure, thereby raising the quality of education. The management of these two accounts has also stimulated local decisions-making and capacity building (Oxfam and ANCEFA, 2005)

The implementation of FPE, however, poses a major challenge to the financing of education in Kenya. The government and development partners have sustained the programme through FPESP in the disbursement of the FPE grants to schools twice a year since the year 2003.

2.5 CHALLENGES TEACHERS, PUPILS AND THE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION ARE FACING.

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 text book ratios.

Other 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.

2.6 FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO PUPILS' DROPPING OUT OF SCHOOL

Until 1945 the problem of social class in education was seen social investigators and policy makers alike primary as a “barrier to opportunity” (Olive Banks, 1976). However, factors of considerable importance which have been seen for many years as a serious handicap to good school progress among the children from disadvantage backgrounds.

One of these factors adversely affecting school attendance of children is poverty. Poverty may be due to low wages, unemployment, large family or the loss of family breadwinner. There are many ways in which extreme might be expected to exert an influence on school attendance.

Malnutrition and poor living conditions are bound to have an influence on the health of the child and so directly or indirectly affect his ability to learn. Pre-natal damage may occur in the child as a result of inadequate pre-natal care, limited incomes among lower class families have been found to restrict the provision of school books, building funds and other necessary materials to ensure good performance and attend at school, (Kinyanjui, 1999).

On the other hand lower class families have been lower aspiration for their children than upper class families due to opportunity cost of the child according to (Michael Todaro, 1997). Some of the studies have concluded that the intellectual stimulation that reinforces the schooling experience is less likely to be present in lower income families; and that socio-economic background contributes to absenteeism and dropout rates (Kinyanjui, 1997).

Rural studies in the United States of America provided valuable insight that appeared to provide a most important factor governing the school attendance. McIntire, 1918 in effects of agricultural employment upon school attendance; and (Folk 1920) reported a strong influence of seasonal farm demands on pupils; attendance.

In Kenya the roles of boys and girls before and after school during harvest to influence their attendance at schools. Over 80% of the people in Kenya live

in the rural areas and derive their income from farming. It has therefore been observed that poor families who cannot afford to employ casual labourers during land preparations, ploughing and harvesting draw their children from school to work on the family farm or look after cattle (Raju B, 1973).

Studies in Tanzania by Mbilunji, 1974 and others on the school community and class found that regional and locational effects are less important than set up of the child's family background, traditional social structures and stratification among peasant and traders in rural areas. Sharma and Sapra(1971) in their Indian study, found dropout and non dropout to differ in their attendance rates. Pupils with less than 60% attendance to fluctuate with the farming calendar in rural areas.

According to researches done(e.g. Dentler 1965); the attributes that are considered as a disadvantage leading to dropout are only aspects of a general pattern of stratification but are circular statements of what is involved in school withdrawal. They pointed out that socio-economic disadvantage is the equivalent of an educational disinterest and which in turn is productive of poor school performance, repetition, disinterest and even withdrawal.

The concept of social class is useful because it refers to more than just the effect of parental education, occupation, incomes or any of a number of correlated variables that are used to measure socio-economic status.

Kohu, Melum,1963 in his contribution on "social class and parental-child relationship has pointed out that "members of different social classes by virtue of enjoying(or suffering) different conditions of life, come to see the

world differently and to develop different conceptions of social reality, different aspirations, hopes and fears and different t conceptions of desirable”.

The definition of social reality and its concomitant aspirations may be the root to explaining the barriers which operate to reduce educational participation of children from lower class origins relative to those from higher ones. Levin,h.m;1976 concluded that there are those barriers that are within the school structure. Levin pointed out that the external barriers may include family expectation, limited incomes.

The lower class family may have lower expectations for its children with respect to education. Similarly, lower incomes may restrict provision of funds for tuition, books uniforms other charges for special courses or examinations the barrier within the school structure includes the systematic differences in educational resources between school registering different students clienteles. For instance better teacher's better facilities and other educational facilities are available to children from higher social class origins compared to those of low class background.

Several studies on the causes of absenteeism and dropout have been undertaken in developed countries(Beirn et al 1972). Miller,1964) their limited focus to those countries reduces their activities for purposes of educational planning in developing countries. For a poor country like Kenya where a large amount of its GNP is spent in education, incidences of absenteeism and dropout rates can be seen as wastage of national resources. This is a major concern among academic and official circles and has been

referred to once and again in many previous researches and official reports for example(Raju,2003). Mutua,(2005).

In Kenya an investigation on effects of the social-economic determinants of repetition and early school withdrawal at the primary level and their implications for Educational planning was conducted by Nkinyangi(1977). His study revealed that the socio-economic background of a family influenced the rate of drop out and attendance throughout the educational levels. He concluded that because of the interaction between school fees and school attendance on one hand, and performance on other, it may be that repeaters are more likely to be from families which can not best provide the necessary tuition, additional books, private coaching and other necessary preparations to ensure selection to a secondary school.

CHAPTER THREE

2.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This section entailed the methods used to collect the data relevant to the study. It is divided into;

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

The study used Descriptive research design. This enhanced the researcher to obtain a better understanding of the challenges encountered by pupils as they enjoy the benefits of free primary education. The method chosen allowed a collection of comprehensive intensive data and provided an in-depth understanding of the topic under study.

3.3 TARGETED POPULATION

The schools chosen for study included Ndumari, Kathambaiconi, Matururi and Kangondi primary schools in Embu District of Eastern province. 138 pupils were selected in such a way as they reflected a cross-section of the social stratification that has been discussed along the dimensions of economic and educational development. Although Embu district is not a very large district, it however consists of broad geographical differences whose climatic and topographical conditions influence the people's activities and consequently economic status of the people.

The selection of Ugweri zone was based upon considerations of its accessibility and the socio-economic status of the people of the area. For the purposes of this study, the pupils were divided into three socio-economic zones.

The purpose of this was to see the performance progress trend and the influence of this socio-economic status of people on the examination results.

No pretence was made at random sampling of the respondents since this was beyond the scope in terms of time and funds, and since the importance of the study was to understand the factors influencing attendance of pupils from different levels of economic and education development. If enough funds and time available, more schools and other regions could have been included in the survey.

Notwithstanding this limitation, it can be said that most rural schools in Kenya are near homogenous in the kind of clientele they for and any noticeable differences in school quality can be explain the education process that pupils go through.

But to the extent that the sample size was chosen represented the extremities in economic and educational development. Any finding from the study can be easily generalized to other regions and districts of Kenya at similar in economic and educational development.

3.4SAMPLING METHOD

A sample of 136 respondents was selected in a simple random sampling technique. From each school,25 pupils were picked in a simple random sampling. This was meant to ensure that the entire school was represented. The selected sample was considered adequate to make a concrete conclusion about the population as it comprised 100 respondent. For teachers 9 teachers

were selected from each school totaling g to the target sample of 36 respondents.

Type of response	Planned response	Actual response	Non-response
Teachers	36	20	16
Pupils	100	58	42
Total	136	78	58

3.4 RESEARCH INSUMENTS

➤ QUESTIONNAIRE

primary data was collected by use of questionnaire and interviews, filled relevant parties to obtain data on universal primary education and the challenges it faced these were designed in both open and closed ended form. the method ensured high proportion of responses and higher returns rate.

➤ INTERVIEW METHOD

This took face-face interactions with the representative of the management of schools. Secondary data was obtained from the ministry of education magazines, annual report records and other researches done. This gave the other information required in the research

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS

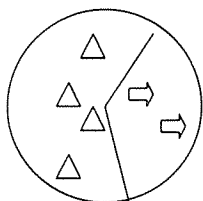
The information collected was analyzed and edited to create consistency and completeness. After collecting the questionnaires they were edited for completeness and consistency across the respondents and to locate

omissions. Information obtained from the research study was presented and analyzed using pie charts and tables; that is in this chapter the findings are interpreted as follows;

RESPONSE RATE

4.1 TABLE 1

Planned no of response	136	100%
Actual response	78	57%
Non response	58	43%



Key

△ Actual response

▭ Non response

- 1) Descriptive statistics: was used to measure variability and relationship between variables. It included proportions and percentage
- 2) Summary statistics: was used in the presentation of analysis. It included use of percentages and summarized tabulations.

3.6 RESEARCH PROCEDURE

the researcher had 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.

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CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter findings of the study are given as follows

4.1.1 The extent to which the government is funding the government primary schools.

According to the information got from header teachers, the government is funding the government aided primary schools through is two accounts.

Account 1 also known as SIMBA (school instructional material bank account) funds for course textbooks ,supplementary readers, exercise books and writing materials for both teachers and pupils. course books supplied i.e. the 2 2;1 (one books among two children in upper classes(4-8), and 3;1(one books among three children) in lower classes(class 1-3). five children are supposed to have one supplementary books each child gets five ruled exercise books and 2 squared ones. each child gets a pen, a pencil a rubber(eraser) for classes.

account 11 also known as the General Purpose Account(GPA), provides funds for repair and maintenance of school materials, payment of electricity and water bills, postage charges, transportation costs and seminars among other expenses incurred in daily running of the school programmes

In 2006 government contributed 5,00 for repair and maintenance per school 10,000 for toilets and 20,000 for water catchments system yanks.

Most head teachers and teachers interviewed held this money was not enough. They could for example digging and bulling a pit latrine would cost approximately Ksh 30,000 which building a water tank would cost around Ksh 50,000 there.

4.1.2 Community's attitude towards free primary education (F.P.E)

Out of the 58 respondent, 66% said that they were not satisfied with the quality of education offered on introduction of F.P.E while 34% said they were comfortable with the quality of education being offered.

While most of the respondents were happy with the government funding the F.P.E they doubted the quality of education offered. In most overcrowded classes. they complained overcrowded classes which led to poor teacher/pupil ratio .Those who were happy with the policy raised the following reasons. They felt the government had given their children an opportunity to access primary education. Otherwise they could not have afforded due to poverty.

Others felt they had been relived a great burden of struggling to look for funds to keep their children in school They also said children were spending most of their time in school unlike before when they were always on the streets for money. They refer expect better results the overcrowding in classes

This is represented below

TABLE 1

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE	RESONS
SATISFIED	20	34	NOT PAYING FUNDS
UNSATISFIED	38	66	OVER CROWDED CLASSES
TOTAL	58	100	POOR TEACHER/PUPIL

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4.1.3 Ratio of school drop out retention after the introduction of free primary education.

The rate of school drop-out has gone down since introduction of FPE as reputed by the head teachers of Matururi, Ndumari, Kathambaiconi and Kangondi primary schools

Out of 92boys and 146 girls enrolment of Kangondi primary school in 2006, 6 boys dropped out of the school by the end of the year representing about 6.52% and 11 girls representing about 7.53% of the boys and 252 girls enrolled in Kathambaiconi primary school the same year(2006). Only 11 boys had dropped by the end of the year representing about 5.5 dropout, and 22girls representing 8.73%

In Matururi primary school 10.34% boys of 87 boys and 7.69% 10 girls out of 130 girls enrolled dropped out of school in 2006

12 out of 196 boys and 22 girls out of 22 girls enrolled in 2006 dropped out of Ndumari primary school this translates to about 6.12% and 9.82% dropout for boys and girls respectively

This is represented in the table below

TABLE

SCHOOL	ENROLMENT(BOYS AND GIRLS	NO OF DROPOUT	%DROPOUT
Kangondi	92 BOYS	6 BOYS	6.52
	146 GIRLS	11 GIRLS	7.53
Kathambaiconi	260 BOYS	11 BOYS	5.50
	252 GIRLS	22 GIRLS	8.73
Matururi	87 BOYS	9 BOYS	10.34
	130 GIRLS	10 GIRLS	7.69
Ndumari	196 BOYS	12 BOYS	6.12
	224 GIRLS	22 GIRLS	9.82
Totals	1327	103	7.76

4.1.4 CHALLENGES FACED BY TEACHERS

Although most of the interviewed teachers embraced the introduction of FPE they mentioned several hindrance to their effective delivery these were;

Over enrolment in class which made it difficult then is cater for individual learners problems. In Ndumari primary school for e.g. there were 80 pupils in by 1 teacher and 72 pupils in a class 2 also handled by one teacher. this contradicts the M.O.E ratio of 1;55(i.e. teacher to 55 pupils

Lack of enough setting facilities in many schools due to over enrolment. An example was sited in Ndumari primary school where 9 pupils were sitting on one form and 25 pupils sharing a table. This affects the learners attention thus hindering teachers delivery.

High enrolment of pupils has led to acute shortage of teachers in most public schools in Kenya. An example was sited in Matururi primary school where 6 teachers are handling 217pupils from class 1-8, and Ndumari primary school where 7 teachers are handling 418 pupils from class 1-8. This has led to over working of teacher at inadequate time to prepare for lessons .

Teachers receive half-baked pupils from previous classes. Due to overcrowded classes and heavy workload, It becomes hard to cover the syllables content of a particular class. Learners are thus promoted to the next class when they are not fully conversant with content of the previous class. this makes it hard for teachers to achieve the set educational objective and goals.

Since parents are supposed to pay for Early childhood education, some have opted to take their children straight to class one. this has made it difficult for primary school teachers to impart essential skills the learners ought to have acquired in their early childhood classes.

Due to lack of adequate classrooms and teachers, some teachers have been forced to teach classes in shifts, for example in Matururi primary school, classes 2 and 3 share one room and are taught by one teacher. Class 2

therefore attends lessons from 8am to 12pm, and class 3 come from 1pm to 5pm. This overworks the teacher.

4.1.5. CHALLENGES FACED BY PUPILS High enrolment rates in public primary school of Ugweri zone brought with them several challenges is the pupils as studies

Overcrowding denying children a chance to have a personal interaction with the teacher this has robbed them a chance to have their personal needs and individual interest catered for by the teacher.

It has made it difficult to identify and nurture pupils special abilities and talents. This has helped kill them instead.

Overcrowded classes have proved a conducive environment for spread of contagious diseases like smallpox. Tuberculosis(T.B) ringworms and influenza among others. a case was witnessed in Matururi primary school where 4grils from class 6 had to go due to smallpox infection.

In Kangondi primary school teachers noted many children in class 1 and 2 had ringworms in their heads. a factor he attributed to body contact during class work in overcrowded classrooms.

Developing of poor handwriting and bad sitting habits due to inadequate writing space and sitting facilities. For example class 3 teacher of

Kathambaiconi primary school has 65pupils sitting 4 per desk complained of poor handwriting from most of the pupils.

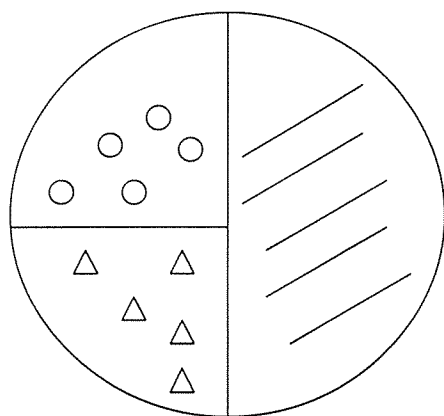
Inadequate reading materials textbooks as pupils are expected to share. since pupils are gifted and talented differently, some pupils will want to turn a page before the others have finished leading to conflicts.

Where people are taught in shifts due to understaffing and lack of enough classrooms. Pupils who come in the afternoon are usually disadvantaged, by time the teacher is exhausted. Weather may also be unfavorable at certain times of the day e.g. raining in the morning or afternoon hindering effective learning .A suitable example in this case is Matururi primary whose class 2 and 3 share the some room and same teacher, and the class 2 come from 8am-12pm and 3 from 1pm to 5pm.

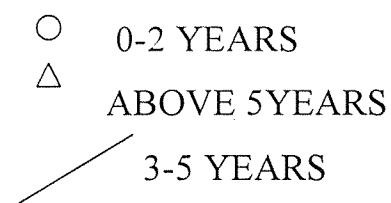
4.1 .6 CHALLENGES FACED BY SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

Most of the head teachers interviewed had served for more than two years as heads. Only 25% of them had served for 2two years and below.50% had been in leadership for over 3 years while the other25% had been in charge for over 5 years. This shows they were conversant with the challenges facing FPE due to their long experience in the system.





KEY



When interviewed, the school administrators from the 4 primary school(Kangondi, Kathambaiconi, Matururi and Ndumari had these general problems since implementation of FPE.

Rise in indiscipline and truancy cases due to rise pupils population.

Inadequate funding which has led to inadequate supply of leading materials and other essential school stationery.

Inadequate classroom sanitation facilities, lack of funds for repair and maintenance of school facilities among others. This has highly been contributed to the fact that parents took it as wholly the government responsibility to provide funds for the school yet governments funds are insufficient.

Due to inadequate teachers it has been hard for them to achieve the set academic standards and goals.

Sometimes government delays in sending school funds thus hindering/ delaying school activities for example in the year 2008, funds for 1st term which were supposed to be in respective such accounts by January were sent in April. This hindered the school; administrators in carrying out various school duties.

Government does not provide funds for motivating teachers and pupils. This has contributed to poor academic standards in most public schools always pointed on school administers blaming them for lack of competence and some times even loosing their posts.

To cater for individual learners differences and interests government should improve the textbooks per pupils to 1;1 i.e. one book per child both in upper and lower classes. funding for exercise books and writing materials should be constant throughout the materials should be constant through this because they constantly need changing and replacing.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

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

5.1.2 DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

One of the main out comes of the study is the confirmation it has provide 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 higher quality of life (Lucas,1988;Barro,1991; Mankiw, Romer and Weil, 1992; UNDP, 2003; World Bank2000) .

One of eight millennium development goals (MDG) is that by 2015 all children in developing countries should finish primary school. yet according to Glewwe and Kremer (2005) developing county pupils who finish primary school often perform poorer on academic testes 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 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 pupils sample attributed the causes of failure to attend school to matters outside their control; that is they blamed the government policies and their 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 more 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 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 finding of Mac a Ghail (1994). In the present study, 50% of the pupils said they thought that socio-economic factors made a difference to how important or acceptable attendance to school would be.

However, this refers 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 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 contributions to their learning and in so doing improve the academic performance.

5.1.3 CONCLUSIONS

Despite the good performance described above, primary education is experiencing a number of challenges such as overstretched facilities, overcrowding in school - especially those in urban slums, high pupil-teacher ratios(PTRs) in densely populated areas, and high pupil to textbook ratios. Other challenges include high cost of special equipment for children with special needs, diminished support by communities following the misconstrued understanding of their role vis-a-vis that of the government under FPE initiative, gender and regional disparities, increased a number of orphans in and out of school as a result of HIV/AIDS, and poor management and internal inefficiency that negatively impacts of access, equity and quality.

The introduction of FPE has put pressure on teachers as some class sizes have increased to over 100 pupils and same times 120 in school 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 reduce the imbalances because large class size and lack of space teaching facilities impacted 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 necessarily recourses 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 education on pupils attendance, yet most have serious estimated problems that cast doubt of their results (Glewwe,2002 and Glewwe and Kremer, 2006) almost 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), the

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 being that all children in developing countries should complete primary education. Much progress has been made towards this goal, but completing primary school does not ensure that a student has 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

5.1.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Inadequate funding is one of the major challenges facing effective implementation of FPE programmes. government should there fore allocate sufficient funds is cater for various school needs the government should regularly review its funding according to the current economy of the time Since teachers are key to improve leaning in schools. The government should employ more teachers to improve the teacher/pupil ratio, to at least 1:40 i.e. one teacher to 40 pupils. This will improve the teacher/pupil contact and ensure a more effective teaching/lea lining process.

Existing teachers needs to be properly deployed to redress the existing imbalances. Some urban schools are overstaffed with excess teachers when most rural schools are seriously in short of teachers. This will also help the

government to know the existing deficits, and guide on number of teachers needed.

Delay in sending funds being one of the challenges facing FPE, government should ensure funds are sent to specific school accounts before the beginning of each academic term.

Since introduction of FPE, government has laid more emphasis on funding of reading materials and resources. It should consider building more classes to cater for growing population in most schools therefore improve the existing school facilities for effective teacher/ learning to take place e.g. sitting facilities .

Government should implement tough policies to ensure all those who attain the school going age go to school. parents whose children do not go to school should face tough legal action. This will help curb illiteracy in our country, which is one of the major hindrances to a country's economic growth.

Government should consider improving its education funding pocket to include early childhood education. It should also set up policies compelling all children to first attend early childhood classes before joining primary school .this will ensure learners acquire from educational foundation which will enable them reach higher levels of education.

To create the spirit of competition among learners, and to encourage them to work hard government should allocate funds for rewarding the best pupils. it

should also consider rewarding teachers who produce exceptionally good results to motivate them.

Government should regularly organize and fund in-service courses for teachers to equip them with modern trends and emerging issues in the education sector. They should also equip them with modern technology methods of teaching and learning e.g. computer technology to make them compliant to the ever changing world.

The role of parents and community in primary education is central. Before the introduction of FPE, it was the responsibility of parents to contribute to building and maintenance of schools. Today, most parents have the impression that it is the government's exclusive responsibility to provide all the necessary resources to support the primary education sub-sector. The government should devise ways to continue involving parents in some school activities. This may include adding some classes within the FPE policies which allow parents and the community as a whole to raise funds or to volunteer to solve some urgent emerging issues with the schools which may take longer for government to accomplish. The media can also highlight continuing household obligations in schools.

5.1.4 AREAS OF FURTHER RESEARCH

More research on the accessibility of primary school education should be carried out to ascertain the impact of free primary education on the learning environment.

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APPENDIX III

QUESTIONNAIRES

My name is, NYAGA SIMON NJERU a student from Kampala International University (K.I.U.), Institute Open and Distance Learning. Am collecting data in relation to the challenges of Free Primary Education in Ugweri zone, 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	

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 ☐

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

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

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



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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 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?

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

.....
.....
.....

6) What is the community’s attitude towards Free Primary Education?

.....

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

.....
.....

8) What challenges do you experience manage the programme?

.....
.....

9) 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.

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Yes []

No []

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

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

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

