

KAMPALA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

TITLE:

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FREE PRIMARY EDUCATION PROGRAM  
AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF KCPE IN PUBLIC PRIMARY  
SCHOOLS: CASE STUDY OF KIRITI REGION,  
NYANDARUA DISTRICT OF KENYA

BY

IGESA COSSAM

BED/21142/81/DF

SUPERVISED BY:

REV. ERICH KASIRYE

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## DECLARATION

**I, IGESA COSSAM BED/ 21142/81/DF**


Do declare that the information given in this research report is made by myself and has never been presented by any other person, for the award Bachelor of Education.

Signature:.....

Date:.....16/4/2010

## APPROVAL

This is to certify that IGESA COSSAM BED/21142/81/DF has successfully completed her/ his research report and now is ready for submission with my approval.

Signed:.....

REV. ERICH KASIRYE

KIU SUPERVISOR

DATE:.....

**DEDICATION:**

This report has been dedicated to my wife, Roselyn Nare Muhambe for her support and inspiration in all my academic endeavors. Most importantly also to my parents Aggrey Mmbaya and Edan Mmbaya, my brother Kenneth Asacha and my daughters valarie Midega, Vera Andia, Triza Kendi and Tracy Mugebe not forgetting Vihiga Primary School Staff for their cheer and encouragement during my studies at Kampala International University Uganda.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to thank the good Lord for giving me strength and courage to compile this research report. Without God, this research would not have seen the light of the day!

Special thanks go to my supervisor, Rev. Erich Kasirye who was a good mentor and advisor during the compilation of this work. My appreciation also goes out to the Administration of Kampala International University for their support during this exercise.

Lastly and most importantly, to my family members and friends who have been close to me and supportive in this noble work all for their enormous support while I studied far from home.

May the Good Lord reward them abundantly.

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### *Acronyms*

**KCPE**- Kenya Certificate of Primary Education, a national examination administered to standard eight pupils at the conclusion of their primary learning.

**KNEC** – Kenya National Examinations Council, a body mandated by the government of Kenya to administer national examinations.

**KNUT** – Kenya National Union of Teachers

**NCCK** – National Council of Churches of Kenya

### *Operational Definitions of Terms*

**Free Primary Education** – Programme by the government where parents are required not pay anything for children in public primary school in terms of fees and other levies.

**Performance** – the general grade attained by all pupils in public schools

**Cardinal** – Scientifically based research and rational thinking.

**Ordinal** – decisions based on intuition and expert opinion.

### *Abstract*

The study dwelled into the impact of free primary education on the academic performance of pupils in KCPE in public schools with the aim of determining the causes of poor performance, current learning conditions and the extent to which free primary education has affected the performance of pupils. The study was carried out in Kiriita location, Nyandarua District and it utilized the head teachers of the six schools in that location, 46 teachers and 124 pupils of the same schools. The findings of the study were sought to be beneficial to various people; policy makers, head teachers, education officers and the government.

The study based the work of other people which was in relation to the study.

The explanatory design was employed and a researcher-made questionnaire was administered to collect the intended information. The information attained from the field was analyzed using Microsoft Excel and presented in form tables and graphs. The study attained several findings; there was no significant relationship between free primary education and academic performance of pupils, there are decreasing levels of staffing, the administration is inefficient as a result of an overwhelming number of pupils and the resultant fatigue. The teacher to pupil's ratio also deteriorated over the same period to that effect and basing on the finding, the researcher had recommendations; Hire more teachers, especially younger staff to avoid a possible staffing crunch due to mass retirement, Improve infrastructure especially in rural schools to ease access for inspection by education officers, sufficient funding should be availed.

The researcher also suggested areas for further research like, Levels of Staffing in Free Primary Education and Academic Performance of Students, The Competence of Teacher in Free Primary Education and the Academic Performance of Students and Motivation of Teachers in Free Primary Education and Academic Performance of Students.

## Chapter One

### General Introduction

#### *Rationale of the study*

Since the inception of free primary education programme in 2003 by the Kenya government, there has been perpetual debate in the public forum among educationists, academic community, and political circles as to the quality of education rendered in public primary schools. In the forum, there are two schools of thought. The cardinal school of thought vehemently supports the free primary school program on the strength of its literacy utility. This camp in the political and academic divide believes that the programme is a milestone to substantially decreasing illiteracy in the country. Education is a powerful force that will spearhead economic growth and hence empowers social welfare.

The ordinal school of thought, nevertheless, opines that the programme is a dismal failure right from its inception. Free primary education is without any utility value other than that of diluting the academic aptitude for future performance in higher learning. Further, it is a sure recipe for failure among youths at their formative years that will lead to economic desperation and social chaos. This debacle, the opponents of the programme argue, emanate from poor planning and haphazard program implementation process.

From the rational vantage point, education at primary school level is fundamental

molded and influenced to perform well in school and at K.C.P.E. if right structures and facilities are in place. According to J. Sterling Livingston, young children are more malleable, have fewer fixed emotions about their abilities and have less well established reputations in the schools than in the upper grade levels, teachers' expectations seem to have little effect on children's intellectual growth, although they do affect their situation and attitude toward school," he wrote. What can be gleaned from the assertions of this writer is that primary level education is the backbone of future intellectual excellence of a child. It is therefore of fundamental necessity that any implementation of education policies by the government at this level or change of it with great care and tact. The welfare of the end user must be kept in mind at all phases of planning and implementation process--the beneficiary being the child.

A steady increase in public primary schools enrollment levels since the introduction of the programme notwithstanding, glaring questions in respect of its effectiveness as measured by K.C.P.E Examination results remain unanswered. A scan of the existing literature and personal enquiries reveal, superficially, that there has not been any substantial scientific inquiry and publication on the subject as of to date. This being an important question as it relates to economic, social and especially intellectually growth, it is of great interest to launch the study.

This study therefore seeks to find preliminary answers to these lingering questions in an empirical fashion. Nevertheless, the study does not purport to pronounce generalities on the basis of the study findings. These limitations aside, the perspectives and concepts of free primary education relative to the capacity to deliver quality education in public primary schools will be discussed as well.

The two points of contention are of great interest. They present advocacy for the young minds with limited capacity to discern discrepancies and perhaps disparities in delivery of educational services. A factual finding as what camp is right in pointing out anomalies, if any, in the free primary education programme is of fundamental importance. Children's cognitive performance in primary schools is interplay among a series of factors. To foster excellence in K.C.P.E before the advent of programme is indeed a perfect choreography of all the ingredients of intellectual good. This must be done with precision and professional prudence it deserves.

The social and economic intentions of the government to ensure no child in Kenya is left behind as the education bus zooms by cannot be divorced merely by theorists and politicians in the ordinal camp as misguided effort in futility. A deliberate, systematic, and unbiased fact gathering can lead to scientific verdict and hence embrace a good and safe ground upon which education policy direction on free primary education can be based.

## *Objectives*

### *General Objectives*

To determine whether the free primary education has an effect on the academic performance of pupils in KCPE

### *Specific Objectives*

1. To determine the extent to which free primary education affects the academic performance of pupils in KCPE.
2. To find out the current learning conditions under the existing free primary education.
3. To determine the causes of the declining KCPE performance in KCPE examination.
4. To recommend possible solutions to the problem leading to declining KCPE performance.

### *Statement of the null hypothesis*

There is no significant relationship between free primary education and the academic performance of students in KCPE.

### *Significance of the study*

In any event the findings of this study will be meaningful and useful to the following people;

1. Researchers in education can be guided by the findings of this research to carry out a larger study on national context. Such a study will lead to a more scientific generalization on the problem identified in this study. Such generalization and recommendations can then help education policy makers in setting sound, viable, and sustainable policy direction for the current free primary education programme in Kenya.
2. In respect of primary school head teachers, the findings of this study can assist them to rethink their current education strategy and the objectivity of primary learning under the existing and future ambience of learning within their respective schools. Having recognized and appreciated the problem areas, they can mobilize the existing resources within their disposal and perhaps request for additional resources and necessary support from the government to achieve a better outcome at KCPE examinations.
3. Education officers can utilize the findings of this study to better supervise the schools under their belt and provide better support system to teachers and head teachers for better quality learning.
4. Government will be able to assess the requirements of the school in terms of physical infrastructure and the staffing levels.

Based on this analogy, educationists, policy makers and researchers will pay a great attention to the findings of this research. Educationists and policy makers



will be able to factually establish a brewing trend and the direction of education at primary level under the auspices of free primary learning. At the outset, it will set stage for dialogue in motion in the public forum based on these preliminary facts and in effect provide some insight on how to better handle the situation. The career researchers will be curious based on the findings to dig further on the facts unearthed by this study.

## Chapter Two

### Literature review

In the past several years, there has been a wave of formulation and implementation of free learning programme at both secondary and primary school levels by African governments. Based on deliberate strategy to alleviate poverty, destitute, and hopelessness ubiquitous among the vast majority of African nations, the respectful governments view education as a formidable weapon against such social- economic ills. Whether this is a prudent and viable trend with desirable results in the long run is yet to be seen. In any case it is only rational to embrace education as the hallmark of economic growth and social welfare. Fierce critics of free primary learning see this trend as risky with serious implications on learning integrity. Surely the framers of education system did not envisage education as merely a human right to be provided in mass, but the quality rather than the quantity of it is useful and fundamental to social, economic, and political harmony.

Within the context of the Kenyan education system, a great deal of policy changes and twists can be observed in the course of post-independence era. Virtually in each and every region since independence we can point to an amendment to education system, and introduction of new policy, or change of the education system in it's totality. All these reforms are founded on the quest to finding the best way of delivering educational services to the masses in Kenya

without compromising the ethos and integrity of learning. Naturally good education improves the quality of life and the standard of living in a society. Social settings with poor levels of formal education are practically wrought with all kinds of social and economic upheavals. This is why any government that has the interest of its people in mind has shown a deep propensity to improving the education system and trying to provide this unparalleled gift to the majority if not all of its citizenry.

In respect of the foregoing, documentary evidence indicates that the Kenya government has shown a fair amount of interest in improving education system across time. Of great interest as the establishment of commissions from time to time to investigate on the viability and applicability of the existing education system at any given time and suggest improvements or give recommendations on how to enhance and validate the education system in Kenya. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century quite a number of commissions were established to develop and improve the education standards in line with the job market and other needs of national concern. The objective was to come up with the best education system that would fit the needs of Kenya as a nation.

Such commissions include but not limited to:-

- Ominde Commission of 1963.
- Gachathi Report of 1976
- Mackay Commission of 1981

- Kamunge Commission of 1988

At independence the Kenya government inherited the 7-4-2-3 system from the colonial masters - the British system. In this system, one had to sit for three examinations before qualifying for university entry. Primary education took seven years - four years in secondary and 2 years in high school upon which qualification one could take up university education for a three-year period. Over time, it became apparent that this education system was not the best within the Kenyan context.

It was observed that technical subjects were not offered at lower level of learning and yet technically oriented disciplines were taught at higher level of learning like universities and polytechnics.

Consequently, the Mackay commission of 1981 gave birth to 8-4-4 system of education, replacing the former 7-4-2-3 system. The aim of this system was to introduce technical subjects to be taught right from lower level of learning through higher level of education. The primary and secondary level curriculum was completely overhauled and reformed to fit young people with necessary knowledge and skills to engage in self-employment by starting their own small businesses. This was because astronomical level of unemployment that was increasing at an alarming rate has dogged the Kenyan job market.

After independence it became self-evident that the adopted education system hardly met the social, economic, and political needs of a sovereign Kenya. In effect, the Kenya government implemented the first post-independence system of education that could cater for the needs of a developing nation. Indeed the system gave some level or relevance to a developing nation in many fronts, at least from the theoretical point of view.

Nevertheless, this new system was not without its dose of problems. The implementation of the programme was in dire lack foresight in respect of financing, provision of educational facilities and necessary staffing to ensure the system's success. The government appeared to be amazed and stunned at the financial ramifications in relation to the newly installed system. The government could simply not afford to finance the new crop of education system effectively. Under the curriculum workshops, libraries, laboratories and home science rooms were to be erected and well equipped. Good intention, but money was the devil. The result was shocking mass failures in science and vocational subjects.

According to an article in the daily nation of 15<sup>th</sup> June 1991, the National Council of churches of Kenya (NCCCK) claimed that financial constraints and lack of educational material had led to poor performance in the subjects in question. This insinuates that the government failed to carry out thorough and systematic

research and development before implementing the programme. Sound and potentially productive projects failed due to absence of pertinent information, poor planning, defective implementation, and lack of evaluation and monitoring. In this case, it is apparent that the government did not do its homework before installing the new system.

As per Daily Nation of 26<sup>th</sup> Sep, 1996, allocation of more time for examination papers would be necessary to boost performance. The argument is that the main objective of the examination is to test knowledge and not how fast a candidate goes through an examination paper. Mr. Kalonzo Musyoka, the minister for education and manpower development, called for cooperation between parents and teachers towards improvement of education in lower learning. He stated that there was no need to point fingers at teachers and education officers for poor examination results. He instead advised them to go back to the drawing board and find out where they might have gone wrong. This is a clear indication that things had in fact gone awry with the 8-4-4 system of education in terms of monitoring and control to ensure things were in line with the original plan. The minister's remarks reveal that the situation had gone out of control and could not be saved by merely rectifying the offending factors in the system but to redraw the plan all together from the basics.

Further, there was commonplace argument among educationist community that the 8-4-4 curricula had contributed significantly to the poor performance in national examinations. The educationists suggested that the primary school curriculum be revised and the number of examinable subjects be reduced to a maximum of four. This suggestion was widely supported by World Bank.

It was during this hullabaloo the National Rainbow Coalition came to power in December 2002. The previous regime had not helped the 8-4-4 curriculum upheavals, as the treasury had been literally raided by openly corrupt government officials. The economy was in shambles and in the blink of collapse. An unprecedented number of school-age children had dropped out of school and had resorted to crime and other hopeless activities like begging on the streets. It was during this period of economic despair the word 'chokora' (street children) was coined which carried as heavy stigma on such children. Parents had abandoned their parental responsibilities and a significant number of children had become 'economic orphans.'

When President Mwai Kibaki came to power on NARC ticket, he saw the only way to save this misery that had gripped children in Kenya was to declare primary education free -- to be totally financed by the government. This was one of his political agenda during his campaign for presidency that saw NARC sweep to power in a landslide victory over KANU (Kenyan African National Union) that had

ruled Kenya since independence. This was a welcome gesture that was embraced by the majority of Kenyans.

Upon the implementation of free primary education programme, the president gave a stern warning against parents who would be found not taking their children to school. This resulted in an influx of children into public primary schools in droves. The educational facilities were stretched to their limits. Staffing problems and other related shortfalls became the order of the day. The reality of the programme's failure to meet academic standards became manifest at K.C.P.E exam results. At this point the party was over relative to the practical applicability of the programme.

In reference to a study dubbed "Effects of Free Primary Education on the Quality of Education in Kenya" as quoted in the Daily Nation of January 25th 2007, "on average a teacher handles a class of 55 pupils. The low level of staff recruitment in the advent of school communities' involvement in local staff recruitment and remuneration explain the seriousness of the staffing situation in primary schools." According to the analysis of this report by the Daily Nation, although the Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT) has been pushing for recruitment of 60,000 extra teachers, the government had instead frozen recruitment of teachers and resorted to replacing those who leave service. Due to high enrolment in public primary schools, parents were forced to move their children



to private schools where they could have a chance of getting better quality of education. Further complicating the programme is unintended admission of adult pupils into regular schools.

"This has caused social-cultural shock due to wide age gaps amongst pupils- there are attendant disciplinary problems between old pupils and young teachers and disharmony in the pace of learning needed by old vis-à-vis young ones," the report is quoted as saying in the Daily Nation. Although rise in enrollment is in line with world requirements for children's right to education, the programme will continue to weaken the quality of learning if urgent measures are not taken.

According to the report, there are 7.7 million children enrolled in the country's 18,000 public schools up from 5.9 million children in 2002, an increase of about 31% in a 4-7 year period.

In Uganda, Kenya's neighboring country to the west, universal free primary education was introduced several years ago and the country is now poised to provide free education at secondary level as well. "Buoyed by the success of free universal primary education programme the governments enlisted around 1,000 schools to provide free secondary education to 250,000 students who otherwise headed for jobs as laborers or street vendors", (Daily Nation, February 22, 2000). However, teachers complain that the surge of enrollments has strained classrooms to capacity. Although the parents are ecstatic about the free

primary education programme in Uganda, educationists argue that the quality of learning has been compromised due to overstretched capacity. It is practically impossible for teachers to attend to individual cases of pupils in need of special attention.

As observed by Professor Daniel N Sifuna in his article "The Illusion of Universal Free Primary Education in Kenya," the government and the people of Kenya have taken deliberate and bold steps in their commitment to expanding the education system to enable greater participation. The free primary education intervention of 2003 is not an exception to this commitment. The NARC government made the provision of free primary education part of its election manifesto. Fees and levies for tuition in primary education were abolished as the government and development partners were to meet the cost of basic teaching and learning materials as well as wages for critical non-teaching staff and co-curricula activities. The government and development partners were to pay Ksh 1,020 for each primary child in that year," professor Sifuna wrote.

Although this writer views the policy intervention as commendable due to its cushioning effect of children from socio-economic backgrounds, he uses interesting statistics on which he bases his criticism of the programme. Since NARC intervention in January 2003, the Net Enrolment ratios rose from 6,314,726 to 7,614,326 by the end of the year. This represented an increase of

22.35% on national level during that first year of intervention alone.

Nevertheless, an estimated 3 million children were yet to be enrolled in school.

The increase in enrolment levels is widely importunate to availability of teaching facilities leading to classroom congestion and poor teacher-pupils ratios. This situation obviously does not sit well with the quality of education delivered.

Amy Ann and Jonathan in their article entitled '*Kenya: free primary education brings over 1 million into school*,' also points to similar problems haunting the free primary learning in Kenya. "It is true that there are significant challenges presented by the elimination of school fees. These arise from the larger number of children in school, and include the possibilities of overcrowding in classrooms, shortages of desks, and other equipment and supplies, and most importantly a dearth of trained teachers," the authors observe. In spite of elimination of school fees, many children still cannot afford to go to school due to associated costs like school fees and transport. The challenges and complexities associated with the policy intervention are in fact real and need close attention before the situation goes out of hand.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Research methodology**

#### **Research Design**

This study was basically exploratory in nature and form. This means that the study was based on the views of different people; politicians, educationalists, government. The study was explanatory in nature.

#### **Research Environment**

The research study was conducted in Kiriita location, Nyandarua district-Kenya. The locality included six schools which are found in close proximity to Nyahururu town, about five kilometers from the town – an outcast of Mairo-inya shopping center.

#### **Research Respondents**

The target population was all public primary schools where the subjects were school head teachers, teachers, and standard eight pupils. The standard eight were selected rather than all primary pupils for practicability purpose and the researcher was of the view that the subjects have a better understanding of the system having spent at least seven years in it.

### **Sample Size Determination**

For the purposes of this study, a sample of six primary schools selected at the snap-of-the-moment was used. The sampling technique utilized was non-probability sampling. All the head teacher in all the school were employed, 86 teachers from ail the schools and 124 students out 359 were utilized in the study

### **Research Instrument**

The study utilized a researcher made questionnaire. The questionnaire was tripartite in form; the first one coded K1 was administered to all head teachers, the second coded K2 was for all teachers, and third one coded K8 was administered randomly to selected standard eight pupils. This procedure was followed in each and every school within the sample frame. The instrument was drawn and administered by the researcher himself. The researcher hand-delivered the questionnaires, supervised their completion and physically collected them at the end of the exercise at each school. The researcher administered all the questionnaire to the head teachers and students apart from the teachers who were supposed to be 85 and only 46 were employed. This was because the rest of the teachers were absent because of several reasons.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

The researcher forwarded a letter to the different schools from which permission was granted. The data culled from the field was then analyzed, interpreted and presented by the use of tables and appropriate graphs as reflected in the analysis section of this study

### **Statistical Treatment of Data**

For a useful and meaningful analysis that can be easily understood by the researcher, Excel computer programme was used.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The validity of the findings of the study were affected in the following ways;

1. The researcher being a college lecturer-cum-accounting private practitioner, the head teachers had personal interests to discuss with him on personal matters rather than only responding to the questionnaire. Therefore, the researcher could not get exact information that was needed for the study and hence affected the validity of the research finding.
2. Some schools teachers were influencing the pupils' opinion in answering some questions.
3. Despite the fact that the researcher had a sample size of 85 for the teachers only 46 were able to answer the questionnaire which might have affected the findings of the study.

## Chapter Four

### Data Analysis and Interpretation

The specific purpose of the research instrument employed in this study was to gather relevant data on the following problem issues as delineated in the theoretical framework and hypothesis: -

1. Staffing levels with effect from the implementation of the free primary education programme.
2. Educational facilities relative to enrollment changes across time since 2003 – the time of the policy intervention.
3. Indiscipline cases due to adult pupils gaining access to primary education as well as lack of capacity to instill discipline.
4. KCPE performance trends over the years with effect from the year of the policy intervention.
5. Other data considered pertinent by the researcher

#### **Head teacher responses and analysis:**

Of the six teachers in the six primary schools surveyed, 100% responded. Five of the six respondents were males and one was female. 83% were at least 45 years of age with an experience of at least five years as head teachers. The respondents within this range also said that they had served for at least two years in the capacity in their respective schools at the time of the survey.

As for the number of classrooms in each of the schools, there was a general spread across the board, as this was a relative question that would depend on the enrollment levels in each of the schools. It however ranged from less than 5 classrooms to more than 29. It was more interesting when it comes to the number of pupils that occupy each classroom. Although 67% of the respondents said the classrooms are built to standard, 83% said that at least 40 pupils occupy each classrooms compared to the recommended 35. In fact 34% said the classroom population is 49 or more. Interestingly though, 83% said there are enough text books for the curriculum whereas 27% said there are not enough textbooks pointing to a possible inequity and irrational allocation of educational resources.



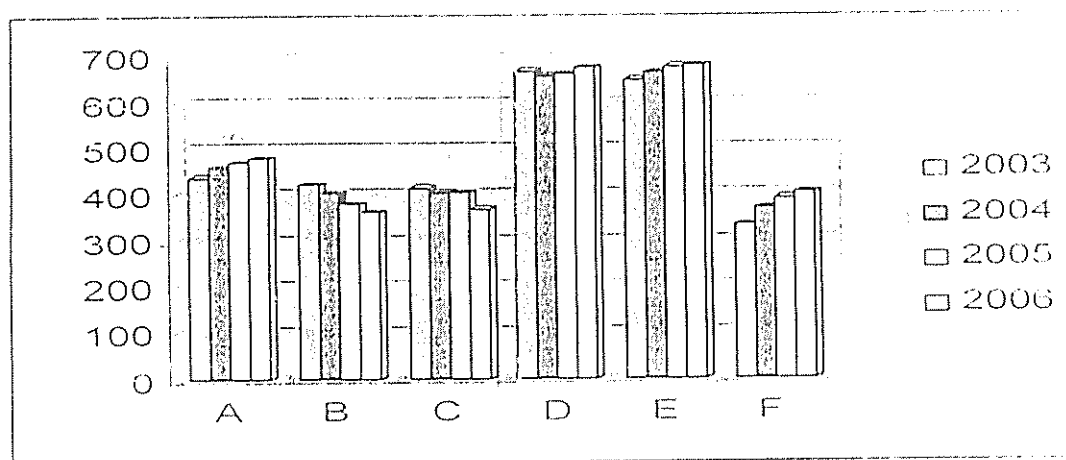
### Enrolment, staffing, and KCPE performance trends 2003 – 2006

The data from these factors can be analyzed as follows: -

**Table 1.1: Enrollment levels 2003 – 2006**

School/Year	2003	2004	2005	2006
A	440	460	470	480
B	423	405	381	361
C	416	407	405	368
D	668	659	661	676
E	651	667	678	680
F	333	371	392	405
Totals	2931	2969	2987	2970
Average	499	495	498	495

**Figure 1.1: Enrolment levels**

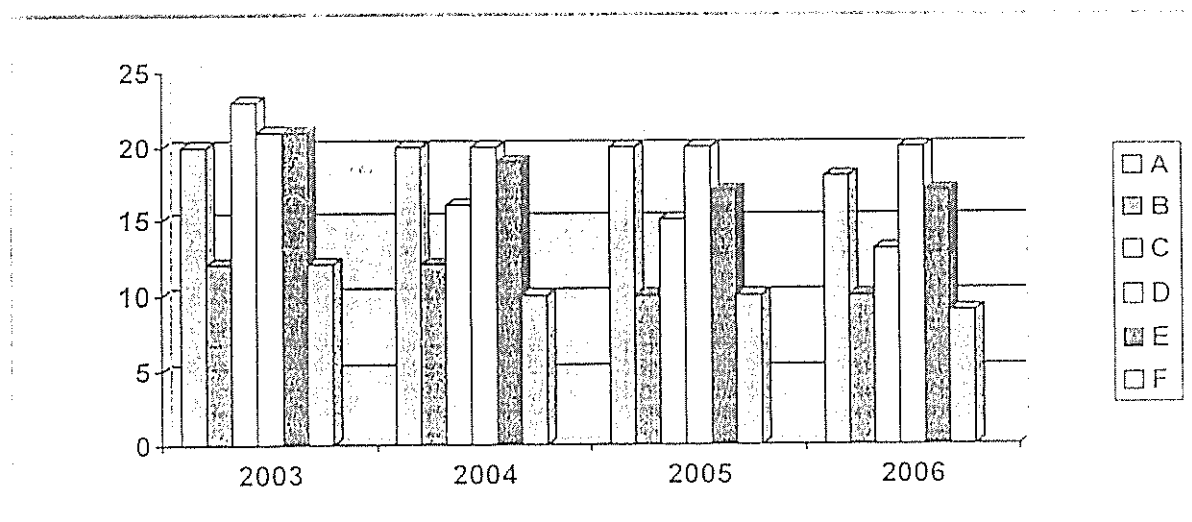


Source: Private Data Source, 2007

Table 1.2: Staffing levels 2003 – 2004

SCHOOL/YEAR	2003	2004	2005	2006
A	20	20	20	18
B	12	12	10	10
C	23	16	15	13
D	21	20	20	20
E	21	19	17	17
F	12	10	10	9
Total	109	97	92	87
Average	19	17	16	15

Figure 1.2: Time Series Bar Graph – Staffing levels



Source: Private Data Source, 2007

Table

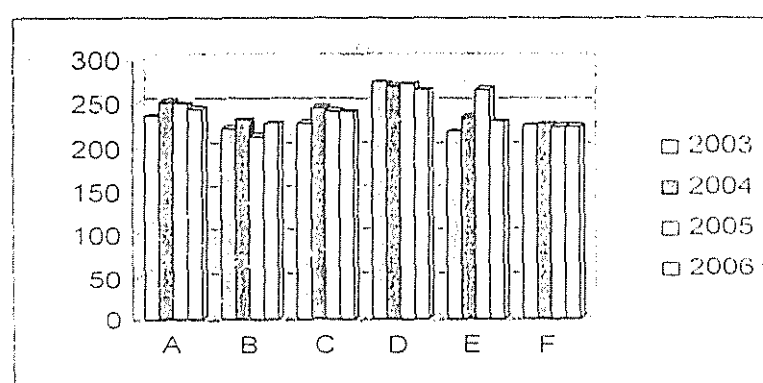
### 1.3: Teacher: pupils' ratio 2003 – 2006 in Kiriita location

Year	2003	2004	2005	2006
Ratio	1:27	1:31	1:33	1:35

Table 1.4: KCPE Average Scores 2003- 2006

SCHOOL/YEAR	2003	2004	2005	2006
A	236.27	253.02	249.35	244.26
B	221.24	231.77	212.27	227.25
C	228.56	245.60	241.74	240.42
D	273.98	270.34	271.34	265.46
E	217.78	235.44	265.67	229.86
F	224.35	227.25	223.25	223.25
Average	233.53	243.74	243.94	238.42

Figure1.3: KCPE Average Scores 2003- 2006



Source: Private Data Source

The statistical data represented in tables 1.1 through 1.4 as well as figure 1.1 to 1.3 are meant to show facts in respect of enrollment levels in relation to staffing and performance in KCPE exams over the past 4 years - since the introduction of free primary education pronounced by NARC government in December 2002 and effected in January 2003.

Table 1.1 reflects a minimal change in enrollment levels over the four-year period as represented by the total number of pupils and their averages within the region. Individual cases like schools A, E and F show a general increment in enrollment whereas other individual cases like school B and C shows a general decrease. The number of teaching staff, however, shows a disturbing steady decrease over the four years and this trend is likely to continue unless an intervention policy is implemented in the near future. The totals and averages testify to this fact. Individual cases like school A and D show a near – constant number of teachers over the past four years.

Quite to the contrary, school C shows a sharp decrease in the number of pupils during the same period as better illustrated by figure 1.1. Table 1.3 illustrates number of pupils per teacher in ratio form over a four-year period. The ratios represent a strong case of teach overload that is worsening year after year since 2003. In 2003, this ratio was 1:27 and deteriorated over the years to 1:35 in 2006 pointing to a worsening trend in the coming years.

KCPE performance as measured by average scores during the past four years is represented by table 1.3 and the accompanying bar graph. The mean scores show a general poor performance as 5 of the 6 schools scored less than 250 in the past 4 years except school A which managed a score 253.02 in 2004 and school E scoring 265.65 in 2005 and then falling back to 229.86 in 2006. The only relatively good performer in this location is school D which maintained an average score of more than 270 except in 2006 when it back peddled to 265.46. The staffing levels in this school as well as the pupil population remained near constant over the past 4 years. The teacher to pupils ratio remained relatively better at 1:33 compared to the chronic poor performer – school E whose ratio had deteriorated considerably to 1:45 in 2006. Although the location mean shows a general increase over the years, the performance is conclusively poor as it is far less than a mean score of 250 over the same period.

The general impression of the head teachers is that KCPE performance in the next five years will decrease due to poor staffing. 50% of the respondents said the number of teachers is not enough while 83% felt the programme is either satisfactory or fair.

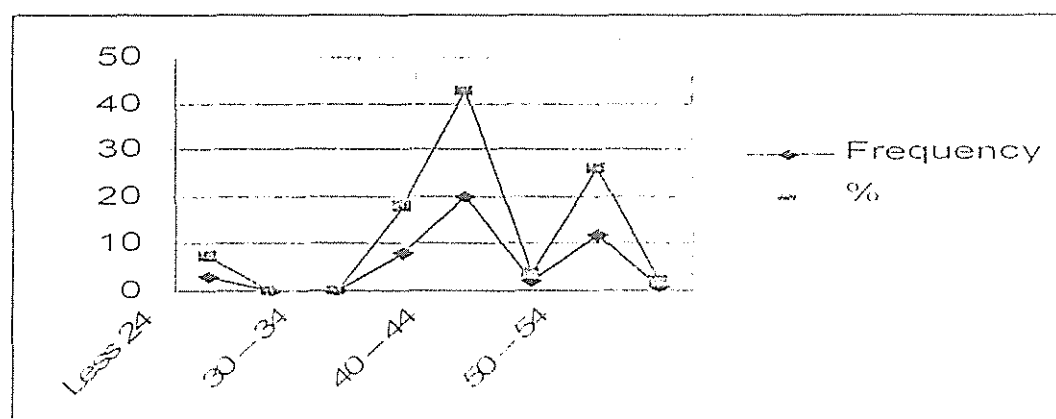
## Teacher responses and analysis

Of the 85 teachers surveyed, 46 responded which is 54% response rate. Out of these respondents 24% were male and 76% were female teachers.

Table 2.1: Age frequency

Age	Frequency	%
Less 24	3	7
25 – 29	0	0
30 – 34	0	0
35 – 39	8	18
40 – 44	20	43
45 – 49	2	4
50 – 54	12	26
Over 54	1	2
Total	46	100

Figure 2.1: Age Frequency Polygon



Source: Private Data Source, 2007

The table and the frequency polygon show that 75% of the teachers are 40 years or more. A vast majority are within the range of 40 – 44 representing 43%. Only 7% are young teachers less than 24 years old while 25% are less than 40 years or more than 24. This indicates the teaching force in the location is aging but with good teaching experience. This is enforced by the fact that 93% of the respondents said they have more than 7 years of teaching experience.

The vast majority of respondents were P1 teachers representing 65%. The rest were technical or approved teachers. Although the teachers are trained with many years of teaching experience, they are generally overloaded. 41 out of the 46 teachers who responded to the questionnaire said that they handle more than 30 lessons per week while 33 of them said they teach 5 or more subjects.

## Comparison between lessons taught and number of subjects per week

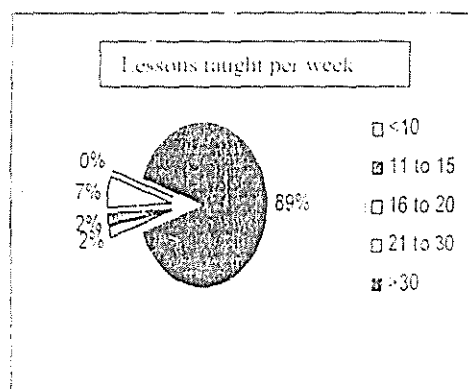


Figure 2.2

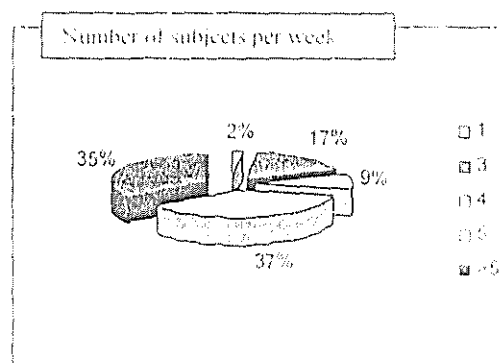


Figure 2.3

On the part of availability of textbooks for the curriculum, all the respondents said that they have one or more textbooks for each subject taught. This is an indication there is not shortage of textbooks experienced among the schools surveyed.

Although 78% and 65% said they give assignments and mark them respectively, 35% said the classes are too large, and had no time to give and mark assignments. On motivational levels since the policy intervention by the NARC government, 15% said their motivation is above average while 61% said it is just average. When the teachers were asked whether the trend in KCPE performance will improve, remain the same or decline in the next 5 years, 74% said it will improve and 22% felt it will decline and only 2% saying it will remain



unchanged. This gives an impression that the teachers feel confident that the government will review the programme and make necessary adjustments that will strengthen and sustain the quality of education in the next 5 years.

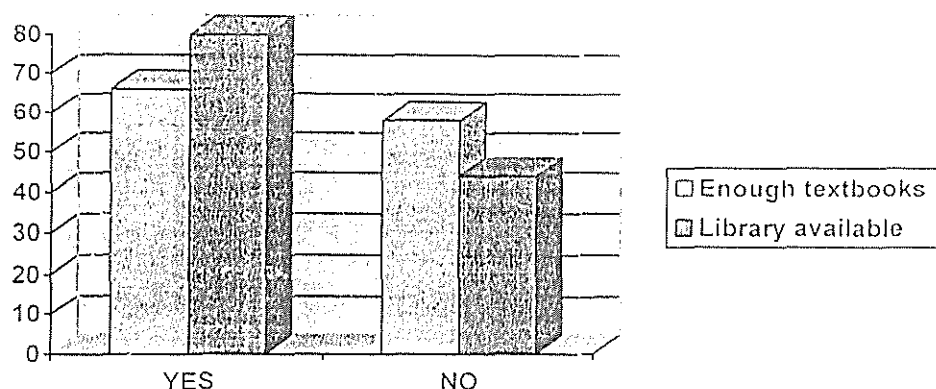
### **Standard 8 responses and analysis**

The total number of standard 8 pupils in all the 6 primary schools sampled was 359 of which number 124 responded. The first question in this questionnaire was intended to gather data on age of the pupils. This was necessary because of the claim that free primary education has attracted adult pupils leading to increased cases of indiscipline. 77% of the respondents are 12 – 15 years old and 22% reported as being over 15 years of age. Although it cannot be established the exact ages of those who said they are more than 15 years, the majority of the students are within the normal primary school age.

**Table 3.1 Adequacy of textbooks and library in sample**

	YES	NO	TOTAL
Enough textbooks	66	58	124
Library available	80	44	124
Average	73	51	124

**Figure 3.1: Text books and Library Availability**



Source: Private Data Source, 2007

An average of 73 subjects said there are enough textbooks and a library in their respective schools while 27 said the textbooks were not enough and had no library. 92% of the respondents said they are taught 5 – 10 lessons per day and that they complete their assignments. On the viability of the programme, 54%, 27%, and 19% said the programme should be controlled as is, improved or better financed respectful. The majority of the respondents were optimistic about KCPE performance in the coming 5 years with 93% saying the performance will be better.

In this case, 82% of the respondents said they would perform either excellent or good with only 7% having low expectation in the examination this year.

Contrary to the staffing levels as provided by the head teachers, 65% of the standard 8 pupils who responded said there are enough teachers in their respectful schools while 26% said there are not enough teachers. This disparity

may have been caused by administrative arrangements by respectful school where enough teachers would be scheduled to teach standard eight classes in preparation for the national examinations.

## Chapter Five

### Summary of Findings, Conclusion, Recommendations and Areas for Further Research

#### Research Finding

The study had the following findings;

1. The average staffing levels within the sample schools generally indicated a steady decrease while the average total number of pupils remained the same over the same period.
2. There was no significant relationship between free primary education and the academic performance of pupils.
3. The teacher to pupil's ratio also deteriorated over the same period to that effect.
4. The administration is inefficient as a result of overwhelming number of pupils and the resultant fatigue. This indicator that the infusion of pupils into public primary schools is tapering is even more unsettling as this may mean the pupils are either migrating to private schools or dropping out of the system altogether. On the strength of these facts arising from the data classification and analysis, the hypothesis is rejected. Although this study is not scientific enough for the reasons delineated in this report, the facts culled suffices to say that free primary education has indeed influenced the poor performance in KCPE examination in the past four years following its implementation.

## **Conclusion**

The implementation of free primary education by the NARC government, based on the data collected and subsequent analysis coupled with the review of existing literature, appears to have been more politically motivated than not. It is safe to make this observation as there are indisputable pointers to this fact. Yes, it is true that the programme has helped in cushioning children from poor social economic backgrounds, more particularly girls failing to enroll for primary education or dropping out of school altogether due to inability to pay school fees and other associated costs.

First there was no well thought-out plan of action founded on good situation analysis. Second, there was no foresight as to the possible future ramifications of the education reform prior to its implementation. This is reflected in surge of enrollment without proportionate extra hiring of teachers to harmonize the situation. Third, it appears hiring was instead frozen as reflected by aging teaching as reflected by the statistics in the foregoing analysis. Fourth, the NARC government came to power in December 2002 and the same government in January of 2003 made the free primary education pronouncement. There was practically no sufficient time to study the existing structures and make necessary adjustments in sync with the education reform.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the finding of the study, the following is recommended;

1. A systematic study and current situation analysis be carried out by competent research professional on a national scale.
2. Total and deliberate overhaul of current primary education system be carried out.
3. To achieve the universality of primary education sufficient funding should be availed to eliminate the offending factors like lack of transportation and uniforms.
4. Hire more teachers, especially younger staff to avoid a possible staffing crunch due to mass retirement. This should be done inline with the needs analysis of individual schools to avoid inadvertent overstaffing in some schools at the expense of understaffing others.
5. Improve infrastructure especially in rural schools to ease access for inspection by education officers.
6. Build more classrooms to normalize class capacity for teachers to be able to pay attention to individual cases of pupils.

#### **Areas for Further Research**

1. Levels of Staffing in Free Primary Education and Academic Performance of Students
2. The Competence of Teacher in Free Primary Education and the Academic Performance of Students
3. Motivation of Teachers in Free Primary Education and Academic Performance of Students

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**APPEDIX A**  
**QUESTIONNAIRE - HEADTEACHERS (K1)**

***Instructions:***

- Please do not write your name anywhere on this paper
- Answer all questions independently
- Mark the squares representing your appropriate response
- Fill the blanks as appropriate
- Select only one response among choices given in any item

1. What is your gender?

- ☐ Male  
☐ Female

2. Please state your age

- ☐ Less than 24  
☐ 25-29 years  
☐ 30-34 years  
☐ 35-39 years  
☐ 40-44 years  
☐ 45-49 years  
☐ 50-54 years  
☐ Over 54 years

3. For how long have you been a primary school head teacher?

- ☐ Less than five years  
☐ 5-9 years  
☐ 10-14 years  
☐ Over 15 years

4. For how long have you been the head teacher of this primary school?

- ☐ Less than 2 years  
☐ 2-4 years  
☐ 5-8 years  
☐ Over 8 years

5. Give the average total enrolment levels of pupils in the following years at this school.

2003 \_\_\_\_\_ 2004 \_\_\_\_\_ 2005 \_\_\_\_\_ 2006 \_\_\_\_\_

6. Give the total teaching staff population as per staff register in the following years.

2003 \_\_\_\_\_ 2004 \_\_\_\_\_ 2005 \_\_\_\_\_ 2006 \_\_\_\_\_

7. How many classrooms does your school have?

- ☐ Less than 5 classrooms  
☐ 5-9 class rooms  
☐ 10-14 classrooms



- ☐ 15-19 classrooms
- ☐ 20-25 classrooms
- ☐ 25-29 classrooms
- ☐ More than 29 classrooms

8. How many pupils occupy each classroom?

- ☐ Less than 30
- ☐ 30-39
- ☐ 40-49
- ☐ Over 49

9. Are all the classrooms built to standard size?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

10. Do you have enough text books within the curriculum?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

11. What was the average score at KCPE by your school in the following years?

2003 \_\_\_\_\_ 2004 \_\_\_\_\_ 2005 \_\_\_\_\_ 2006 \_\_\_\_\_

12. Since the implementation of free primary education programme, do you think the performance in KCPE has generally decreased?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

13. If yes to (12) above, what do you think has contributed to the decrease?

- ☐ Inadequate facilities
- ☐ High absenteeism
- ☐ Understaffing
- ☐ High percentage of untrained teachers
- ☐ Lack of text books
- ☐ Indiscipline of pupils
- ☐ Government interference

14. The free primary school education programme has been

- ☐ Excellent
- ☐ Satisfactory
- ☐ Unsatisfactory
- ☐ Fair
- ☐ Poor

## APPENDIX B

### QUESTIONNAIRE - TEACHERS (K2)

#### *Instructions:*

- Please do not write your name anywhere on this paper
- Answer all questions independently
- Mark the squares representing your appropriate response
- Fill the blanks as appropriate
- Select only one response among the choices given in any item

1. What is your gender?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

2. What is your age?

- ☐ Less than 24
- ☐ 25-29 years
- ☐ 30-34 years
- ☐ 35-39 years
- ☐ 40-44 years
- ☐ 45-49 years
- ☐ 50-54 years
- ☐ Over 54

3. For how long have you been a primary school teacher?

- ☐ Less than 2 years
- ☐ 2-4 years
- ☐ 5-7 years
- ☐ Over 7 years

4. Which of the following accurately describes your qualification?

- ☐ P1 teacher
- ☐ P2 teacher
- ☐ P3 teacher
- ☐ ATS Status
- ☐ Technical teacher
- ☐ Untrained teacher

5. What is your weekly teaching workload?

- ☐ Less 10 lessons
- ☐ 11-15 lessons
- ☐ 16-20 lessons
- ☐ 21-30 lessons
- ☐ Over 30 lessons

6. How many different subjects do you teach?

- ☐ One subject
- ☐ Two subjects
- ☐ Three subjects
- ☐ Four subjects
- ☐ Five subjects
- ☐ Over five subjects
- ☐ I don't know

7. The number of text books I use for each subject is

- ☐ One
- ☐ Three
- ☐ Four
- ☐ None

8. Do you give homework at the end of each lesson?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

9. If yes to (8) above, do you mark each home work?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

10. If no to (9) above, why?

- ☐ Lack of time
- ☐ Too large class sizes
- ☐ Too many co-curricula activities
- ☐ Too many duties for salary level

11. Appropriately rate your performance as a teacher since the implementation of free primary education programme.

- ☐ Above average
- ☐ Average
- ☐ Satisfactory
- ☐ Unsatisfactory

12. The trend in KCPE performance in the next five years is likely to

- ☐ Improve
- ☐ Remain the same
- ☐ Decline

## APPENDIX C

### QUESTIONNAIRE – PUPILS (K6)

#### *Instructions:*

- Please do not write your name anywhere on this paper
- Answer all questions independently
- Mark the squares representing your appropriate response
- Select only one response among choices given in any item

1. What is your age?
  - ☐ Below 12 years
  - ☐ 12-15 years
  - ☐ Over 15 years
2. Do you have all the text books for each subject you study in school?
  - ☐ Yes
  - ☐ No
3. Is there a library in your school?
  - ☐ Yes
  - ☐ No
4. How many lessons are you taught each day?
  - ☐ Below 5 lessons
  - ☐ 5-10 lessons
  - ☐ Over 10 lessons
5. Do you complete your homework at home each day a teacher assigns one?
  - ☐ Yes
  - ☐ No
6. Do you study when you are not in school?
  - ☐ Every time
  - ☐ Often
  - ☐ Rarely
  - ☐ Never
7. In this year's KCPE exam, I expect to do:
  - ☐ Excellent
  - ☐ Good
  - ☐ Satisfactory
  - ☐ Fairly well
  - ☐ Poorly
8. In my school there are:
  - ☐ Enough teachers
  - ☐ Not enough teachers
  - ☐ Teachers who come and go
  - ☐ No teachers
9. Since the implementation of free primary education programme my school has been doing \_\_\_\_\_ in KCPE exams.
  - ☐ Better
  - ☐ Worse
10. I want free primary education programme
  - ☐ Dropped
  - ☐ Continued as is
  - ☐ Improved
  - ☐ Better financed
  - ☐ Financing reduced