



Influence of Free Primary Education on Performance in KCPE in Chemundu Zone, Kapsabet Division in Nandi County, Kenya

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Abstract

This article investigated the influence of free primary education (FPE) on performance in KCPE in Chemundu Zone, Kapsabet Division in Nandi County, Kenya. The study was a cross sectional survey in which both quantitative and qualitative data was collected. The dependent and independent variables were FPE and performance respectively in KCPE. Purposive sampling technique was used to pick 30% of the total population (teachers and pupils) of the schools in the zone for the study. However, all schools in the zone participated. The data collection instruments were questionnaires, interview schedules and documentary analysis. The data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. The study revealed that FPE has attracted many students hence stretching teaching and learning resources, thus, compromising the quality and performance. The study recommended adequate and timely funding if the programme has to succeed. Further, it also recommended that infrastructure should be expanded to meet pupils rising enrolment.

Keywords: Pupils, Free Primary, Education, Performance, KCPE, Funding, Infrastructure, Nandi County, Kenya.

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INTRODUCTION

On January 6th 2003 the Kenya children started the day with new vigor and hopes. Primary education was free and all that was required was for every child regardless of age to walk to school next to where they live. Though the abolition of school levies increased the number of student attending primary school with it comes many challenges that the government continues to face. The issue of quality of education has been of great concern as the number of pupils to teacher ratio has increased. Some parents have since then remove their children from private school so as to benefit from this free education while others have left the public sector due to the poor quality of education and overcrowded classes. The challenge that faces educators in 21st century is shifting education from mere learning to effective and efficient management of learners by teachers (Unesco, 1995).

Taylor, (1970) said that as much as learning activities and resources has been integrated in the curriculum, most of them remain loosely coordinated within the curriculum. Hence the teacher retains a major role in the selection and organization of learning activities.

This study came almost five years after the implementation of FPE when the country is ready go to the polls again, it's reasonable time after ample time has been given to incorporate the lessons learnt so as to get a comparative report with the government end term report. Though the Kenyan government pledged to provide funds for purchasing of all the teaching and learning materials, reports of delayed or inadequate funding are common among most institution. As in many African nations that have implemented FPE, the question of sustaining it is still a big debate in Kenya. And what people can positively achieve is influenced by the economic opportunities political liberation social powers and the enabling conditions of good health basic education and the encouragement and cultivation of initiative persistence of poverty and other unfulfilled basic needs are factors that constrains the social, political and the economic opportunities available to Kenyans (SEN, A1999 p. 5).

Kenyan parents place a high premium on quality education as this is seen as the only opportunity to break away from poverty. This has further been reinforced by the governments adoption of the free primary education policy aimed at the provision of education and training for all Kenyan children as fundamental to the success of the government overall development strategy. While a lot has been written by the government on the success of the FPE in Kenya, implementation problems continue to be experienced at the grassroots level.

As Kenya went to the poll yet again on March 4th 2013 it is important to examine the FPE impact as the government is already pledging to fully sponsored free primary and secondary education. A shift in government may affect the current funding of FPE which is partly reliant on external donors. This research aimed to codify the impact of the FPE policy with the hope that the challenges and lessons learnt can be addressed so as to retain the focus on "Education for All" as a development strategy for the nation.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the introduction of free primary education to offer knowledge, skills and attitudes to all children, there are increasing concerns regarding the quality of education offered. The ratio of teacher to pupil and pupil, to textbooks as well as classrooms is strained (Chunk, 2009). There are many learners against few textbooks, teachers and classrooms. The above situation makes

teachers offer inferior quality education and hence dismal performance in KCPE (Daily Nation, 2012). In 2002, the Narc government introduced the above system of cost sharing. The idea was well thought of as it enable many less fortunate pupils to get the opportunity and access the corridors of classrooms. The Kenyan government alone cannot be able to sponsor the FPE program and as such, she has been soliciting support from donor countries and many western countries stepped in to support the program. Nevertheless, the monies factored in have been characterized by delays beside the fact that the amount is not enough. Cases of teachers threatening to go on strike because of money delay was a major factor (Chunk, 2009).

The above challenges have worsened due to the fact that the monies are not enough to meet all the demands of the system. Teachers are government employees who equally have to work to justify their salaries. This scenario makes the teachers to compromise the quality of education offered (Daily Nation, 2012). In 2011, , the candidates in Chemundu zone had a mean grade of 270/500 marks, with most public primary schools scoring less than 250 marks. It was against this background that the researcher felt the need to investigate the effect of FPE and its performance in KCPE in Chemundu Zone of Nandi County of Kenya.

Purpose of the Study

Education is the bedrock of development. The knowledge, skills and attitudes acquired will enable the young people spur education and the realization of Kenya's vision 2030. Education is paramount; there is no system or country that develops without education. The primary schools are the foundation upon which knowledge is conceived. The knowledge conceived will sets the basis upon which further understanding depends. As such, there is need to offer firm foundation to our children. To this end, this study attempted to fulfill the following objectives:

- To establish the relationship between student population in class and performance in KCPE;
- To establish the extent to which amount disbursed to schools influence performance in KCPE;
- To determine the influence of availability of instructional materials on performance in KCPE;
- To establish the influence of infrastructural status on performance in KCPE;
- To suggest appropriate strategies that would improve teaching and learning in primary schools to enhance performance in KCPE

Research Questions

The study attempted to answer the following questions:

- What is the relationship between student population in class and performance in KCPE?
- To what extent does the amount dispersed influenced performance in KCPE?
- What is the influence of availability instructional materials on performance in KCPE?
- How infrastructural status does influenced performance in KCPE?

- What are the appropriate strategies that would improve teaching and learning in primary schools and hence performance?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework and Conceptual Framework

This study will subscribe to the (Gerlack & Ely, 1978) theory of systematic approach to instruction. The theory states that before teaching takes place the teacher should specify the objective, content, entry behaviors allocation of space selection of resources determination of strategy and evaluation. The theory point out that if the resources in form of personnel, textbooks and space are not there learning will not take place well. The theory was deemed appropriate because the researcher felt that lack of the resources and space is a hurdle to teaching and learning in free primary education. The study subscribes to Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

The hierarchy of needs concept applied to classroom has it that for the teacher to teach well, basic needs should be provided as for humans they need food shelter and clothing to do the work. Basic classroom needs are:

- Space
- Instructional materials
- Teaching resources
- Learners
- Conducive environment

Space in this case refers to the classroom, buildings providing a place for learning. Instructional materials are books, teaching resources are the teachers and teacher support materials. Learners are students while conducive environment is the place which can facilitate learning. According to this concept, learning can take place well if all the above variables are provided. However, questions are emerging as to whether the above are provided under free primary education

Historical Development

A few countries in Africa have implemented the free education policy before Kenya with mixed cases of success, problems and challenges. Some countries have challenged the policy, with Nigerians labelling UPE in the 1980 as the Unfulfilled Promise Education (Csapo, 1983). Understanding the factors that lead them to adopt this policy will be an important aspect of this study. To review the impact of the policy in Kenya, it will be vital to look at the history of the education system, the government motivation towards the policy changes, the effects on funding, access to education and the quality of education.

It will be necessary also to review experiences of countries already operating the new policy. The initial adjustment and revitalization of education in Kenya in early 1980s was due to internal and external forces. The World Bank and the international community wanted the government to cut expenditure and adhere to structural adjustments programs while the social

sector oriented professionals (including teachers) wanted allocation of more resources to make education more effective (IPAR, 1999). The world conference on EFA held in Jomtien, Thailand and the Dakar Conference, in Senegal (2000) have sparked a paradigm shift in the education sector. Education quality and gender disparity have been barriers to accessing education (Boyle et al., 2002). For every 100 boys out of school, there are 115 girls in the same situation (State of Worlds Children, 2006, p. 4).

UNICEF (2000) noted sadly that one out of every five girls in school is unable to complete primary education; moreover, countries charging fees tend to have the largest number of girls out of schools (Save the Children, 2005). The government argues that compulsory FPE is the first solution to ensuring an equal chance to boys and girls to attend schools.

UPE has, since 2000, been a goal for most countries worldwide. World Bank (2004) notes that when fees were abolished in Malawi (1994), enrolments went up by 51% and in Uganda they went up in by 70% in 1996. Cameroon (1999) saw an increase from 88% to 105% while in Tanzania (2001); rates soared from 57% to 85%. In Kenya, the rates went up by 90% after the new policy was introduced in 2003 (MOEST, 2005). Though the government continues to quote these success figures, dropouts' rates in public primary schools have increased due to unfriendly learning environments, poverty levels, child labour and impact of HIV/AIDS (Ayieke, 2005). Other factors affecting enrolment include limited number of schools within easy walking distance, absence of female teachers and failure to provide separate toilet for female students (World Bank, 2004). Limited numbers of schools offering the full cycle of primary education and perceived low returns for schooling in labour markets are other factors. The current FPE system suffers from high rates of wastage through dropouts and repetitions (GoK, 2005 p. 3). Lessons from massive expansions of primary schools in the 1980s and 1990s show that expanding rapidly can compromise quality, reflected in high enrolments but low achievements (WDR, 2007).

After the introduction of FPE in Kenya, an additional 1.5 million students were able to attend schools for the first time (MOEST, 2005). The World Bank emphasizes on improving the balance between expanding primary education enrolment and ensuring a minimum standard. While citing the cases of Morocco and Namibia, it stated that many of the large number of adolescents completing primary education do not know enough to be literate and numerate members of the society (WDR, 2007 p. 11). Congestion in classes, unbalanced PTR and poor infrastructure has affected the quality of education with some parents moving children to private schools. Some Kenyans believe that teachers who did not receive fees from parents did not feel as accountable for working hard (Tooley, 2004).

While the government continues to receive credit on the increase in enrolment and availability of textbooks in schools, with pupil to textbook ratio at 2:1 in some schools (MOEST, 2005), the EFA global monitor reports that the quality of education remains poor in most in sub-Saharan countries including Kenya. Nigeria has implemented FPE on and off since the 1950s and by 2003, literacy level was still at 55% (Ajetomobi & Anyanwale, 2005).

Many African countries including Kenya are heavily indebted, forcing them to devote huge portions of the tax receipts to payment of debts. This undermines their ability to finance vital investments in human capital and infrastructure. While the Kenyan government has increased the education budget since FPE to 36%, around 90% of the cost is spent on salaries and benefits, leaving very little for other essential inputs. On average, governments in low-income countries spent 34 times more on students in tertiary education than in primary education

(Glewwe& Kremer, 2005). In Kenya, there are complaints that FPE is getting more attention than universities where enrolment exceeds resources and in postgraduate centres where students do not receive research grants. As table 1 show, the government is already having financing gaps and will rely on donor funding for the next three years.

Table 1: Indicative Financing Gap (* KSH Million)

Net * GoK Recurrent	2005/06	2006/7	2007/8	2008/9	2009/10
Funding	86,792.0	91,131.6	95,688.2	99,515.7	103,496.4
GoK Development					
Funding (Net)	842.0	842.0	842.0	842.0	842.0
Total GoK Funding	87,634.0	91,973.6	96,530.2	100,357.7	104,338.4
Funding Available	94,613.1	985,20.1	101087.9	102,707.7	106,046.7
Total Proposed	96,544.9	105,338.0	112,628.5	113,343.0	100,102
Financing Gap	1,931.9	6,817.9	11,540.5	10,635.3	9,510.5

Source: Government of Kenya: MOEST, KSSP

Without additional investments, quality education is difficult to achieve and dropout rates and illiteracy are likely to increase (GoK., 2005, p. 2). In 2005, the majority of voters in Kenya rejected a draft constitution, which could have entrenched human rights GoK: Government of Kenya KSH: Kenya Shilling. At the time of the study, 1 US Dollar(\$) = 65 KSH guarantees including education.

While the previous government of Moi was targeted by aid cut offs and often because of corruption (State of the Right of Education Worldwide, 2006), it is impossible to tell whether this government will continue to receive external funding with its record. Previous school levies included, registration fees, textbooks, activity fee, caution money, payments for teachers /support staff hired by school committees, development funds, school trips, teachers tours and internal exam fees.

The new policy only covers textbooks and tuition fees. While it has discouraged schools from charging other expenses, school committees are having problems supplementing these other costs. Parents have refused to pay levies due to this notion of free education. The current education is not totally free. Kattan (2006) noted that fees continue to be collected (sometimes illegally) in a third of the countries with an official policy against fees. “Because public funding was/and is insufficient to cover for direct and indirect costs of schools [in Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia and Mauritania], the definition of free education was reduced to fee free” education (Tomasevski, 2006, p. 35). Kenya abolished school levies since 2003 and has seen an upsurge in GER as in the case of its neighbours; Uganda, Tanzania, Ethiopia and Rwanda. User fees negatively affect attendance rates in Kenyan schools with 31% of student’s absenteeism attributed to school fee related issues (Mukudi, 2004b).

The World Bank urges that abolishing fees should be part of a broader government commitment to attaining FPE.As a United Nations (UN) cluster lead agency in children’s affairs, UNICEF has engaged in all means of partnership to raise awareness and fundraise for education projects. These collaborative advocacy campaigns have led to the emergence of philanthropists including, soccer players like Didier Drogba (UNICEF Goodwill ambassadors), and actor Angelina Jollie (UNHCR goodwill ambassador) and renowned talk show host Oprah Winfrey. Though they contribute to the education sector, partnerships with governments would have

boosted the FPE kitty and had more impact on the new policy. Governments need complementary measures to cover costs of teachers' remunerations and recruitment, monitoring, policy training and supply of instructional materials. UNICEF Kenya earmarked 1.5 million USD in 2007 for education related expenses as part of the 2004- 2008 country framework cooperation (Humanitarian Report, 2007, pp. 71-73).

These reinforce the importance of education and take the challenge to the doorsteps of governments who are obligated to developing this important education sector. The Shanghai conference of 2004 on Primary Education for Poverty Reduction concurred that most government policies on FPE were political initiatives implemented hurriedly with little time for detailed planning.

Kenya, Malawi and Lesotho were cited as emergent multiparty democracies where FPE was a key election issue that propelled new governments into power. The Malawi president pushed for FPE despite opposition and suggestions that to implement it in phases. He claimed FPE would provide immediate political capital, regime legitimacy and was the surest route for the new government, which had inherited a bankrupt state to secure rapid extensive state-directed international support (Kendall, 2007). In Tanzania, zone workshops for elaboration of the poverty reduction strategy plans allowed Tanzanians a channel to express the importance of education and helped government make it a priority.

Tanzanians in earlier FPE trials in 1970s had labelled the UPE policy "Ualimu Pasipo Elimu" which means Teaching without Education (Wedgwood, 2007 pg 386)". This more recent participatory nature of decision-making in Tanzania has made parents more supportive of the system and reduced misconceptions. The Kenya government formed a stakeholder's forum, which later formed a task force that discussed/reviewed the FPE policy and reported to the government (Tomasevksi, 2006). UPE in Kenya was a political expediency rather than a planned education reform, as such; problems related to adequate funding allocations are being accommodated in an ad hoc manner (Mukudi, 2004a, p. 239). The Kenya FPE raises questions of sustainability due to its lack of appropriate planning, slowness to deliver, poor quality of education and the failure to incorporate the lessons learned in the past five years. Conflict has been a major obstacle to accessing education for children. Children caught in conflicts are killed, forcibly recruited or orphaned by the death of their parents forcing them to flee. They end up in separated families, camp situations and /or traumatized situation.

The first Global Consultation on Education in Emergencies was held in 2004 and was meant to provide guidelines to countries and agencies in conflict or post conflict. On 20 November 2007, UNICEF appointed Mr Ishmael Beah (a former child soldier) as the first advocate for children affected with war. His mission is to further strengthen the voice advocating for their rights.

Conflict in the Arid and Semi-Arid lands (ASAL) of North Eastern Kenya is widespread and often overlaps with extreme food insecurity. It is mainly triggered by competition for resources. There is clear evidence that despite government intentions, most pastoralists' children are not benefiting from FPE (CEMIRIDE, 2007). The government estimates 71,000 were out of schools in Turkana district, 25,000 in Samburu and 3,800 in Laikipia (IRIN, 2007). While some people view peace negotiations as priority over education to avoid wasting resources, there are questions as to "whether a standardized education system is beneficial to pastoralists and whether it would be necessary to provide pastoralists with education that suites their pastoral and

nomadic livelihood system (CEMIRIDE, 2007, p. 5)". Children affected by conflict "not only need ordinary schooling but the entire process of re- education.

They tend to be ignored by ministries of education and taken up by NGOs (UNESCO, 2006: p6). The World Bank has supported education for all by joining programmes accredited to enhancing equality and access to education including the Food For Education (FFE) programmes whose initial success were recorded between 1993 and 2000 (UNICEF, 2006). Through the FFE program, schools receive wheat grains, which are used in school feeding. FFE has increased GER, promoted attendance and retention in primary schools. Evidence suggests that retention in schools reduces early marriages. Borrowing from these successes, the Kenya government runs feeding programmes within the FPE in schools in ASAL and implements the Extended Feeding Program (EFP) to any region experiencing droughts, famine or needing assistance. Some critics argue that the government should focus on food security projects rather than school feeding programmes. They argue that feeding children in schools only creates a dependency and most of these children eventually dropout of schools when the feeding programmes are withdrawn.

Student Population in Class and Performance in KCPE

According to chuck, A. (2009) on disparities in the FPE system, the increase in enrolment as a result of FPE had huge consequences for schools. From 2003 to 2008, the population of students attending primary school expanded an additional 2.3 million pupils a national increase of 39%. This has put huge strains on the quality of education that schools are able to provide. First the influx of students created a massive teacher shortage. While the number of students increased, the number of teachers did not. The government reports that there are simply no more teachers to provision. As a result, teachers are overwhelmed and overworked. Classes were manageable at 40 to 50 students, but some classes have expanded to over 100 students. Especially in the case of rural areas, class size has tripled due to the number of older students that their education in 2003 who had missed the opportunity before. At rural schools, teachers have even resorted to multi-shifting structure because there are many students to handle. Some students come in the morning and a different group comes in for afternoon ones. Teachers are less able to address the needs of individual students; discipline children create opportunities for interactive learning. Teachers are also conducting classes in a lecture format, which does not hold the attention of young primary students. Less homework is being assigned due to the inability of teachers to mark over 100 papers every night. Quality of education suffered as teachers became overburdened and stopped being able to provide students with the attention they need and hence dismal results in KCPE.

Unless effective instructional and assessment conditions are identified and employed to implement instructional objectives, learner achievement will not increase (Romiszowski, 1988). According to Simiyu, (1997), the role of the teacher is dynamic as the society in which he/she lives. He said that for the teacher to be effective, he she should have conducive environment endowed with resources. Research conducted by (Baker & Schutz, 1967) provides background and experience support for the utility of the overall quality teaching. Education quality has recently received a lot of attention in Kenya. The government's main document in this effort, the Kenya Education Sector Support Programme for 2005–2010, established the National Assessment Centre (NAC) to monitor learning achievement. In 2010, the NAC released the results of its first assessment.

In 2009, in collaboration with the NAC, Uwezo Kenya conducted an assessment of the basic literacy and numeracy skills of children ages 6–16. The Annual Learning Assessment (ALA) reached villages in 70 out of 158 districts in Kenya and assessed nearly 70,000 children in their homes. The ALA was set at a Standard 2 level, which is the level where students are supposed to achieve basic competency in reading English and Kiswahili and complete simple arithmetic problems. The chart below shows the percent of children who could not read a Standard 2 level paragraph or solve Standard 2 level subtraction problem.

Table 2: Percent of Children who could not Read

Level of Children Assessed	Cannot Read English Paragraph	Cannot Read Swahili Paragraph	Cannot Do Subtraction
Standard 2	85%	81%	79%
Standard 5	27%	23%	30%
Standard 8	4%	4%	10%

Key findings about education in Kenya based on the results of the Uwezo 2009 assessment

Literacy levels are low, and are substantially lower in certain regions. Girls tend to perform better in reading English and Kiswahili, while boys tend to perform better in math. Literacy levels are lower in public schools than private schools.

Most children can solve real world, “ethno-mathematics” problems, while fewer can solve similar math problems in an abstract, pencil and paper format. 5% of children are not enrolled in school, but the problem is far worse in particular regions. About half of children are enrolled in pre-school. Many children are older than expected for their class level, including 40% of children in class 2, and 60% of children in class 7. North Eastern Province and arid districts in Rift Valley and Eastern Provinces have particularly low performance; and many older children, especially girls, are not attending school. Many families pay for extra tuition, which focuses heavily on drilling and exam preparation. Schools struggle to plan their budgets because they receive funds at unpredictable times. Children, whose mothers are educated, particularly beyond primary school, tend to have much higher rates of literacy and numeracy. About 15% of students are absent on a given day, with much higher absenteeism in certain districts. There is a severe shortage of teachers, estimated at 4 teachers per school.

Amount Dispersed to Schools and Child Right to Education

The Kenyan government spends about 30% of its income on education. Beside that Kenya receives donation from various countries which is channeled to FPE. 47.5 billion Kenya shillings has been dispersed to 18, 346 primary schools to date (Chunk, 2009). The government has provided Kenya shillings 1020 to each child to gather for tuition. Despite this, the programme faces many challenges.

The amount dispersed sometimes delays and is not enough to gather for all the learner needs. Head teachers also lack knowledge on financial management (Daily Nation, 2012). Kenya has policies for all the children to school. “... A child means every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier” (Article

1: CRC, 1990). Kenya recognizes a child as anyone less than eighteen years of age (Children Act, 2001).

The UN General Assembly proclaims the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) as a common standard of achievements for all peoples and all nations, to the end that each individual or nation shall keep the declaration constantly in mind and strive to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and to secure their effective recognition and observance (UDHR, 1948). The Kenya law relating to education and children compliments the basic principles of the UDHR.

According to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Kenya is signatory to the following legal instruments relating to the rights of the child; the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), ratified in July 1990 International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), ratified in 1972 and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), ratified 1972.

The Committee of the CRC report on Kenya (June 2007) acknowledges Kenya is also a signatory to the International Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Racial Discrimination (ICEAD), in 2001; the ILO Convention NO.182 Concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour, in 2001; Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, 2002 and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking,

Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transitional organized Crime, in 2005. The common understanding within all the covenants and basic guideline while working with children is the basic principle that “in all actions concerning children, the best interest of the child shall be a primary consideration (CRC, Article 3)”. While all major conventions have sections regarding the rights and obligations to children, the CRC is entirely dedicated to children rights. In most societies, children are considered as the most important members of the family.

The family is considered as the basic/natural fundamental group unit of society and governments are obliged to offer support, protection and assistance (ICESCR, article 10; ICCPR article 23 and 24). Education is the key to preparing the child to an individual life, mental and social development. Per the CRC, children have a right to free and compulsory primary education (article 13) including the mentally or physically disabled (article 23). The CRC is the most ratified covenant with only two countries left to sign it. It covers issues such as the definitions of who is a child, parent’s responsibilities, right to nationality, names, education, health, legal protection and social development to protection against exploitation, and forced military enlistment/ recruitments. It emphasizes on the dissemination of information and cooperation among agencies working with children.

In the region, Kenya was a signatory to the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, in July 2000. It established the National Council of Children Services in 2000, the Sexual Offences Act and the Refugee Act in 2006. The Committee on the Convention on the Rights of Children (CRC) commended these actions in its forty-fourth session as major steps towards protection of children’s rights.

To achieve the rights of the children, UN member countries are currently committed (from targets set in 1990) to reducing poverty, promoting education, gender equality, child mortality, maternal health and reduce AIDS and other diseases through the MDG. The second goal of the MDG is to ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary education.

The MDGs are commitments (through global partnership) that reinforce the stipulations in the regional and international conventions. While poor countries have promised to govern better, the rich have promised to support them through aid, debt relief and fair trade. The UN Secretary General believes that the goals are achievable through working together. The Dakar Framework for Action, conceptualized in Senegal in 2000, sets regional goals for countries including EFA by 2005 and UPE by 2015.

Through regional dialogue, countries having similar problems are able to come up with solutions and strategies in their own context to enhance their commitment to preserving children's rights and promoting their development. The Education Act Cap 211 of 1968 (Revised in 1970/1980) is the main legal document in Kenya governing education. It covers administration issues, management and curriculum development. The Teachers Service Commission (TSC) Act Cap 212 of 1967 not only covers remuneration and other admin issues but stresses on professional conduct. This act protects children from all forms of exploitation including sexual harassment. The KNEC Act Cap 225a of 1980 stipulates the conduct during public examinations, certification of schools and offers instructions on how to file complains.

Related to review examinations adjudications among other students' rights after attaining independence in 1963, the prioritization of the education policies in Kenya was driven by the manpower needs of the nation. The government identified ignorance and illiteracy as major problems and education was meant to tackle this area. This meant access to primary education.

Individuals who had completed secondary education secured many government positions and were considered to be among the Kenyan elite (Oketch & Rollestone, 2007). The immediate emphasis on developing secondary and tertiary level institutions to meet the manpower needs led to the need for more primary schools. Access to primary schools was limited by the colonial government and completion further hampered by the policies and compulsory national examinations as early as grade four. To gain legitimacy and as a political move to reassure the people of its authority, primary education was open to all by the new government and the grade four examinations abolished. Since then, policies have been pursued to facilitate rapid access for those who had been excluded. Independence was the first catalyst which triggered a commitment towards UPE in Kenya (Oketch & Rollestone, 2007 p. 14).

The overall goal of FPE is to build the human capital capacity through investing in children at an early age. Basic skills not only help individuals but also have an impact on the income, growth potential, population and public sector performance. In Nigeria in the 1970s, FPE was driven by the need to produce skilled manpower (Kelly, 1983). The government realizes that education and training will contribute to national development.

Economic difficulties have denied many Kenyan children education. The poor economic performance in Kenya has led to rising poverty levels which impact negatively on education performance indicators. By offering FPE the government is making a link between education and economic development. Everyone has a right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory (UDHR, 1948: Article 26)

The MOEST gives guidelines on FPE policies, which are channeled down to the School Management Committees (SMC). MOEST also advises on teachers, parents and students roles. The District Education Officer (DEO) is in charge of education matters in the district and is assisted by the Area Education Officers (AEO) in the various divisions in the district. The Teacher Advisory Committee (TAC) has been set up to play an advisory role to the teachers and

the SMC. Under FPE policy, the teachers' role is curriculum implementation as per the approved syllabus. Teachers also support school management through membership in the SMC. Parents are regarded as stakeholders in the new policy. Parents are to assist in school management through PTA meetings and the board membership; they are to assist in providing physical infrastructure, which is not offered by government under FPE. Parents are also called upon to help in counseling and instilling discipline to the pupils. The SMC is responsible for managing funds, settling disputes in the school or making recommendations to the DEO, conducting tendering interviews/approvals for supplies and receiving school supplies.

The MOEST gives guidelines on recommended textbooks under the approved syllabus. The DEO receives monthly enrolment figures from schools, which are then used to determine funding. Under FPE, each school receives Kenya shillings (KSH) 1,020 (USD 15.7 at current exchange) per child enrolled, per school year. The funds are distributed in two deposits per year, usually, six months apart. Under MOEST instructions, the area education offices have helped schools open two accounts.

Account I: Instructional Materials Account. Funds in the account cater for textbooks, pens, exercise books, charts and writing chalk among other supplies.

Account II: General Purpose Account, which caters for the wages for supporting staff, repairs and maintenance, phone bills, electricity bills, garbage collection, postage and general expenses.

Account I receives 650 KSH per pupil enrolled (63.7%) and

Account II receives 370 KSH (36.3%) per pupil. The SMC are responsible with the management of FPE funds. SMC is composed of:

- Head Teacher- Chair person
- Deputy Head Teacher – Secretary
- The Chairperson of the PTA
- Two parents (non-members of PTA) elected by parents
- One teacher to represent each school grade class.

The drive to achieve UPE is a positive indicator of the nation's commitment to human rights in conformity with the adopted conventions. The current education curriculum in Kenya has been formulated to enhance national unity, social, economic and cultural aspirations of Kenyans (MOEST, 2005). Parents and citizens have in the past blamed the government for lack of control on the education system, which was getting very expensive, with schools charging fees as they pleased.

FPE is aimed at easing the burden from the parents by abolishing school levies and ensuring equity and accessibility to schools. Through FPE, government has strategically placed itself as an important stakeholder in the education sector and hope that this will create a better relation between government representatives, SMC and parents. While launching the Kenya FPE policy (January, 2003), the Minister of Education stated that: Both the government and the parents have financial obligations to meet. The government is charged with mobilization of resources, recruitment of teachers and training, paying tuition fees, development of the school curriculum and provision of the infrastructure and instructional materials. Parents on the other hand provide basic needs for the children, school uniforms and other scholastic materials FPE was introduced in recognition of its importance as a basic right of all Kenyan children as

articulated in the Children's Act (2001). Through FPE, Kenya aims to attain UPE by the year 2015. One of the greatest challenges of the government will be to help the parents and communities understand the FPE policies and what it entails. The perceptions of the FPE have differed in many communities.

The policy having been initiated as a campaign pledge meant that it was not well introduced to Kenyans. FPE is interpreted by many people to mean; total exemption or a free pass to all education expenses (Nyamute, 2006). The right to education is one of the basic human rights stipulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948. In Kenya, this right has recently been lived through the launch of the Free Primary Education program (hence FPE) by the newly elected NARC government. The FPE program is faced with major challenges that range from lack of facilities, few teachers, over-age children, street children, no books, lack of finances and socio-cultural impediments such as HIV-AIDs. The FPE has been received with mixed feelings from different sections of the society. While some have expressed feelings of discontentment, failure, betrayal among others, many low income members of the population view it as a God sent opportunity. While a lot of concern has been raised, little has been advanced concerning the propagation of the actual learning itself.

Availability of Resources and Instructional Materials and Performance in KCPE

The ministry of education receives meager amount that is not enough to buy enough textbooks, teacher guides, dusters, pieces of chalks etc. Therefore the number of textbooks per student still stands high at 4:1, compared to international standards of 2 to 1. Most of the materials bought tend to get lost within a short period hence making the learners not to use it. The teachers are also few with on average 50:1 compared with the international standards of 40:1 (Chunk, 2009). Apart from finding the money to pay for extra teachers, the government also has to persuade them to take posts in "less desirable" areas. There has been a lot of resistance from teachers and head teachers to change. Moreover, many poor schools are understaffed because teachers are reluctant to go to areas where parents cannot afford to pay for private tuition after normal school hours.

In the affluent areas, the same teachers could expect to earn an extra kshs.10,000 (US \$130) per month on top of their salary of kshs.10,000. Teachers often refuse to work in slum areas, citing security concerns. One school in the Mukuru slum area of Nairobi has just been assigned three new teachers since the introduction of free education, two of whom have refused to accept the post. Poor areas have been used as dumping grounds for 'bad' teachers - it was seen as a demotion. Poor schools were inclined to get less good staff. While 232,000 teachers in Kenya are currently employed, many more need to be recruited to ease the burden. The government is currently gathering statistics on how many trained teachers are unemployed and how many are needed nationwide. Then it has to entice them to move to unfavorable areas. The government has to think of incentives for teachers in order to spread them out evenly.

As Kenya's economy has crumbled over the last few years, many families, forced to live on incomes of about kshs. 3,000 per month, simply cannot manage the costs. In Nairobi this resulted in 48 percent of children between the ages of 6 and 13 years not attending school. Only 47 percent of those who were attending completed their primary education, while the remaining 53 percent dropped out. Since the mid-1980s there was no regulation of private schools. The situation got out of hand. Teachers were even refusing to teach children during normal school

hours, whose parents could not pay for private tuition after school. Over-age and Street Children The tens of thousands of "over-age" children - including street children, or those who dropped out of school to work and who now wish to return to finish their primary education need to be catered for urgently. While statistics on their numbers are not yet available, preliminary figures show them to be enormous. In the Mukuru slum area of Nairobi, only about 500 of the 5,000 new pupils who enrolled in schools since the beginning of the year were of "normal" school-going age. It becomes tricky to handle them and so they had to be segregated from the younger children. Street children, who number about 250,000 in Kenya, also pose a problem. Placing children with patchy educational backgrounds, short attention spans, dysfunctional backgrounds and glue-sniffing addictions, in a classroom of 50 or 60 "normal" children, will arguably lower standards for everyone. They need smaller classes, interesting and interactive programs, and teachers who can cope with them. On top of this, many have serious linguistic difficulties as they speak "sheng" - a blend of local languages, Kiswahili, and English.

Meanwhile, many other marginalized children are not even making it near a classroom. Some do not even get past the school gate as they are chased away by the guards. While some schools are genuinely full, others simply do not want to accept children who do not have the correct uniform, look untidy, or have the 'wrong' background. Lack of facilities is a further headache. While some rural areas have adequate school buildings, there are many others, particularly in urban areas with large slum populations, with none at all. Many rural schools also lack even the most basic amenities such as toilets and running water.

Status of Infrastructure and Performance in KCPE

Chunk (2009) said that enrolment under FPE has overloaded school facilities. When the programme was started student population increased but the number of classrooms has not increased corresponding to the increased in students. Classrooms that were built for 30 students to sit comfortably are now packed with three times the number of students. The shortage of desks forces two or sometimes three students to squeeze onto a small bench.

The learning environment has become uncomfortable, encouraging students to become distracted. In some cases, the number of classrooms is not enough, so classes need to be held on the field while teachers conduct them with megaphones. Offices and other schoolrooms have been converted to classrooms for the children. Facilities have been much more difficult to maintain and have led to deterioration. The status of the classrooms is poorly structured with the government proposing to build a model primary school in every district. The paintings are peeling off and buildings are too old with majority not having windows. The above make the learners have very difficult time during rainy season and can't do morning preps well. A survey at the buildings of most schools revealed that they were built along time ago using donations from haram bees or church sponsorship. The government does not provide for the buildings because it will be too costly to the tax payer. As such the government gathers for the payment of the teachers' salaries. The number of the learners per classroom is supposed to be 40; however we have classes of even 100 learners. The overcrowding in class make most learners not to concentrate hence the scores on charts in KCPE is wanting.

Further, the government issued notice for all children to go back to school. This means that admission is not restricted. The unrestricted admission means that every child can enroll; hence the classes swell which eventually affect performance in KCPE

Appropriate Remedies Under FPE

FPE has increased enrolment, but many students' learning remains inadequate. A recent nationwide survey comprising over a 100,000 students aged between 3 and 16 in over 2,000 schools, found that only 33% of children in class 2 can read a paragraph at their level. The survey further found that a third cannot read a word and 25% of class 5 students cannot read a class 2 paragraph (Uwezo, 2010).

These poor performance and learning indicators may be driven by the following: *Increased pressure on available inputs*—With the advent of FPE, enrolment increased in the classes in the lower grades were often are very large, and the children arrived with wide-ranging levels of preparedness. These large and heterogeneous classes can challenge pedagogy. For example, at the beginning of 2005, the average first-grade class in some areas in Western Province was 83 students, and in 28 percent of the classes it was more than 100.

Reduced learning, as indicated lower test scores—Large and heterogeneous classes, possibly driven by the influx of poorly prepared first-generation learners, has led to a slight decline in test scores (Lucas & Mbiti, 2010).

The low levels of reading proficiency found in the Uwezo survey suggest that learning has been compromised in primary schools.

Increased stratification—Students from richer households increasingly enroll in private school. This stratification becomes all the more important given the continued (perceived) dominance of private schools in the KCPE. Data from the KNEC shows that between 2003 and 2007, private schools have consistently outperformed public schools in the KCPE by about 50 points on average. This has raised concerns about the rising disparity in quality and achievement between private and public schools.

Potential solutions: *Tailoring Teaching to Meet the Needs of Students*—A study of a program that provided textbooks in Western Province found that, while the average child did not benefit from textbooks, students who were already proficient did benefit. A possible explanation for this, the authors conclude, could be that many students had fallen behind the level of the textbook (and possibly the curriculum). Support for children who have fallen behind, including remedial education, could provide children who have fallen behind the basic skills that they need to learn effectively (Glewwe et al., 2008).

One possibility is to reorganize the classroom to allow teachers to tailor their lessons to pupils' level of preparation. A study in Western Province suggests that this can allow students to benefit from being taught in more homogenous peer groups. Such groups have greater homogeneity which can allow teachers to tailor their teaching to what the students do not know. The study finds that the group of students who were less prepared seemed to gain the most in the easier competencies and to gain the least in the hardest competencies (Duflo et al., 2009). Other possibilities include changing the teaching methods. More research is needed however to determine the most effective teaching methods given the large and heterogeneous classes that are common in most developing countries. Another possibility is increasing the flexibility in the way classes are structured. Given the heterogeneous achievement level in the classes, should the grade structures be more flexible so that some children can take different subjects with different peer groups, taking math with one group and reading with another? Some school systems group students into different classrooms for certain subjects depending on their achievement in that subject. Research by Duflo et al. (2009) suggests that these approaches can boost performance,

although more research is needed to examine the effectiveness of subject specific grouping as described above.

Reforming the Teaching Workforce—The largest share of the national education budget already goes to teacher compensation. There is scope for reforming the teacher workforce to increase learning. Possibilities include: *Teacher Unemployment*—The shortage of teachers that leads to overcrowding is not because there are not enough teachers but that there is not enough money to employ teachers graduating from the national system of teacher-training colleges. A possible way to circumvent this is to hire teachers in two steps. Teachers graduating from the teaching colleges get a probationary contract, possibly locally managed, contract.

These teachers would be paid less than the civil service teachers. This would put more teachers into schools at a lower cost. These teachers are likely to work hard as these contracts are probationary and will only lead to a TSC contract, if they perform well. See Duflo et al. (2009). Evidence suggests that such a program would be even more effective if these probationary short-term teachers were managed by local school committees. However, this necessitates sufficient training for members of the school committee and community.

Teacher Incentives—On paper the teachers already have all the incentives they need. A great number of teachers are indeed professional. They come to work and they teach when they are at work and they are dedicated to the success of their students, even if they sometimes endure very difficult working conditions such as large classrooms. But there is still unacceptably high chronic absence, especially in remote areas. A possible way to address this is to introduce performance/attendance-based pay. A study by Glewwe, Ilias and Kremer (2008) in Western Province found that a program that gave teachers prizes based on student performance increased exam scores while the program was in place. A study by Muralidharan and Sundararaman(2009) found that linking student test performance to teacher pay significantly improves learning outcomes for students in government schools in Andhra Pradesh, India. Other studies in Israel by (2002, 2009) have also shown that student performance-based pay can increase test scores. A study by Duflo, Hanna and Ryan (2010) shows that linking teacher pay to attendance increased both attendance and test scores.

But there are some potential issues. In linking teacher salaries to student test scores, one worry is that teachers may focus on activities which improve exam scores but may not improve learning in the long run or the underlying competencies targeted by the curriculum. Another worry, given the varying level of preparedness among students, is that the pay-for-performance scheme may penalize teachers whose pupils are less prepared at the start. For example, pupils from poorer socioeconomic backgrounds tend to be less prepared than richer students, perhaps because their parents are not educated or because they did not go to preschool or benefit from other early education programs. Teachers assigned to schools with proportionally more of these students, for example teachers in rural areas, may be penalized compared to their counterparts in schools with more advantaged children. For attendance-based pay, the worry is the cost of measuring attendance, which requires adequate monitoring.

Some headmasters may feel pressure from teachers that makes monitoring teachers difficult. . The difficulty of monitoring teachers was the reason that the program linking pay to attendance in India that was studied by Duflo, Hanna, and Ryan (2010) used cameras to record teacher presence. Another approach would be incentivizing headmasters.

Engaging parents—Recent work in France examined a program that encouraged parents to participate more in their child's school and found very positive results (Avvisati et al., 2010).

The program emphasized the importance of parents' involvement in their children's education. It also provided parents with better information on the school system, including information on the roles and responsibilities of various personnel and school offices. While the results were very encouraging, this approach has not been tested in a context where the average education of parents is lower.

Merit Scholarships—Incentives for students such as cash prizes and bursaries can be effective at increasing performance. Research has shown that merit scholarships can induce more effort from students trying to earn the award. A merit scholarship program for girls in Western Kenya provided Standard 6 girls who scored in the top 15 percent in their district exam a two-year scholarship that covered school fees and school supplies for the remaining two years of primary school. The scholarship program resulted in increases in test scores, not just among the top students who had hope for the scholarship, but even the lower students and the boys. A possible explanation is that the students demanded more time from the teachers and the teachers increased time for all students (Kremer, Miguel & Thornton, 2008).

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study adopted an exploratory approach using descriptive survey design to investigate the influence of free primary education on performance in the Kenya certificate of primary education (KCPE). Nandi County comprises of five districts namely, Nandi central, Nandi East, Tinderet, Nandi North and Nandi South. Descriptive survey designs are used in preliminary and exploration studies to allow researcher to gather information, summarizes, present and interpret for the purpose of clarification (Orodho, 2002)

Target Population

Nandi County (Chemundu Zone) has about 20 primary schools. Purposive sampling technique was used to pick 30% of the teachers and learners. This is because some schools are doing well; others were average while some are doing poorly. Those targeted were informed and their permission sought prior to the collection of data. Once were selected, their head teachers were given formal letters.

Sample and Sampling Procedure

All the schools in the zone were picked for the study since the schools were few in the zone. 30% of the teachers and pupils in every school were picked for the study. The schools that participated were informed through formal letter. Their identities were kept confidential. Teachers from upper, middle and lower classes filled the questionnaires. The above criteria were equally applied to learners.

Data Collection Instruments

The researcher collected data using questionnaires, interviews schedules and documentary analysis. Both open and closed ended questionnaires were prepared. Then respondents filled answers in written forms. The interview and observation schedule was filled by the researcher; the instruments were distributed by the researcher and research assistants. The instruments were administered and collected within a period of one week.

Validity and Reliability

Data will be made reliable by ensuring that the degree to which indicators or measures of theoretical concept are stable or consistent across two or more attempts to measure the theoretical concept, particular measuring procedure gives similar results over a number of repeated trials. Thus test- retest will be carried out with reliability co-efficient of 80% taken. Lecturers within the proximity of the researcher and other valuable persons were asked to carry out audit of the document and make recommendations for improvement. Later the content validity was ascertained by consulting supervisor.

Piloting

The researcher carried out the testing of the research instrument in Kericho County. This is because it would not make the respondents to change their responds because of knowing what is needed. A co- efficient of 80% was accepted as reliable.

Data Analysis

An analysis of data was being done using statistical packages for social science (SPSS).Data was analyzed through coding, tabulation and then drawing statistical inference. Large amount of field data was eventually condensed into few managed groups and tables for analysis. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used. Under descriptive analysis measures of central tendencies such as mean, mode and median was calculated. The researcher grouped data from closed ended questionnaire items, open ended interviews schedules and document analysis under broad themes and convert them into frequency counts. All data were analyzed at level of significance of 95% < or 0.05

Ethical Issues

The researcher got authority from the MOE concern to conduct the research thereafter all those who participated were informed and they were requested to participate at their own convenient time. The identities of participant we're not disclosed. All information given by respondent was kept confidential.

RESULTS

Preliminary: Presentation of the findings based on gender, schools which was studied and teacher participants

There were about 336 pupils who sat KCPE in 2011. Male were 170 and female 166.

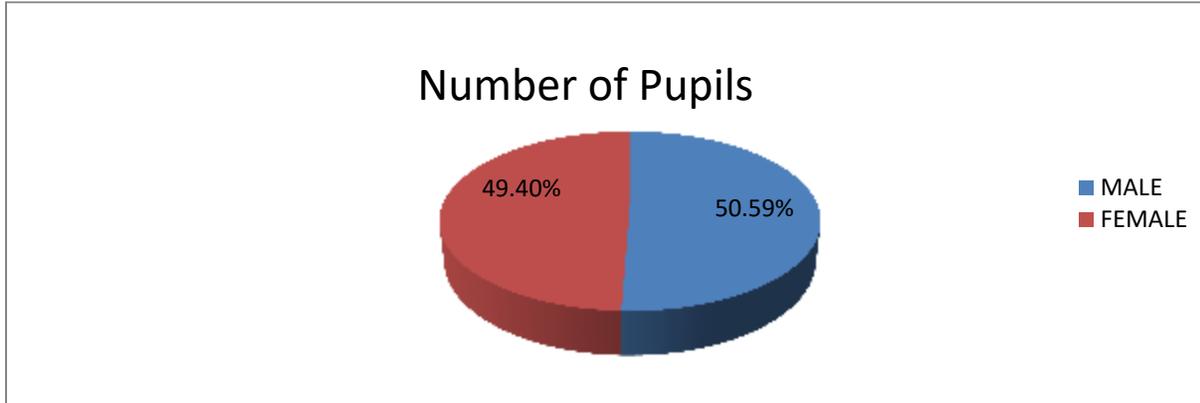


Figure1: Pie chart showing the mean mark of the pupils in 2011 in Chemundu zone.

Table 2: Summary of Teachers who participated in the study

Code	Number	Highest Qualification	Teaching Experience	Post
1	29	Pi	Over 5 Years	Teacher
2	13	Ats4	Over 5 Years	Teacher
3	8	Ats3	Over 5 Years	Head teachers
4	5	Ats2	Over 5 Years	Head teachers

Table 3: The Schools under Study

Code	Name of the Primary School	Mean Mark in KCPE 2011
1	Samoo	252
2.	Kapkechui	248
3.	Berur Academy	334
4.	Baraton	250
5.	Tilalwo	242
6.	Mogoon	235
7.	Kapkobis	241
8.	Baraton Academy	322
9.	Sumbeiywo Academy	325
10.	Baraton Aic	280
11.	Kaptiltil	245
12.	Nandi Flame Academy	324
13.	Fr. Boyle	330
14.	Masaba Chepsokor	229
15.	Chepkober	221
16.	Kapyagan	225

Presentation of Result Based on the First Objective

The first objective was to establish the relationship between free primary education and performance in KCPE. The objective was gauged by analyzing the number of teachers and the pupils per primary school and performance in KCPE in the zone. The finding shows that in all the schools, there was a shortfall of about one teacher.

Table 4: A table showing required number of teachers and available number of teachers

Number of teachers require in the zone	128	Percentage (shortfall)
Number of teachers available	112	12.5

It was noted that the above shortfall impacted on the performance as the mean mark was down. The schools that performed better were those who are academies, otherwise, public schools performed extremely poorly as demonstrated by the mean marks on preliminary presentations. This concurs with educationists have been calling for all along. Educationists have said that the monies are too little and should be increased to enable the learners get all they need. The information above was represented using a pie chart.

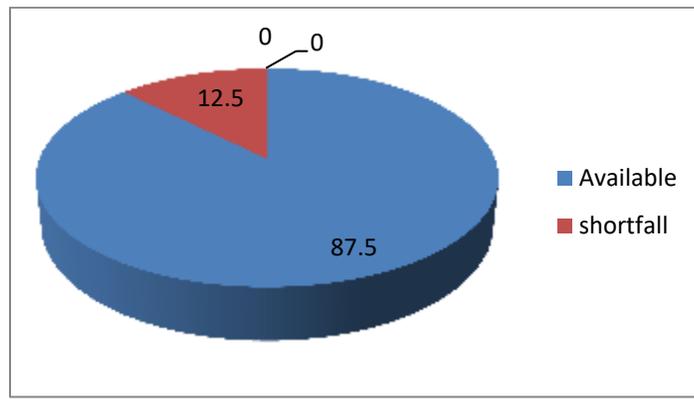


Figure 2: Showing the number of teachers required against number of teachers available

Results of the Second Objective

The second objective sought to find out to what extend the amount disbursed influenced performance. From the findings, it was noted that there has not been any improvement on performance based on the amount disbursed. However, the new books in the school were highlighted as the major achievement. The books are not enough for the learners although they have been purchased. There were new buildings in some schools erected from constituency development funds. The money for free primary education could not be dressed in terms of new infrastructure in the schools. The performance index in KCPE in most public primary schools could be seen to have gone down as witnessed by the scores in 2011 exams. Teachers therefore call upon the government to increase the funding of FPE. About whether the programme was

good, most of them said that it was a good idea except that it needs adequate funding. Head teachers were for the point that the parents should not be completely detached from the schools. They equally need to make contributions tailored towards bettering the performance of the child education in primary schools.

Analysis of Instructional Materials and Status of Infrastructure

The third and fourth objective sought to find out the position of the instructional materials. The objective was ascertained by looking at the classrooms and the number of the learners in each of the classrooms. The findings were as follows:

Table 5: Table showing average number of learners per classroom against recommended number

	N.	%
Average number of the learners per classroom	46	15
Recommended number	40	

Table 5 shows the average number of learners per classroom against the recommended number. The researcher also looked at the infrastructure physically and it was observed that there were on average shortfall of two classrooms per school (table 6).

Table 6: Classrooms Available and Required

	N.	%
Classrooms available per school	10	16.66
Classrooms required per school	12	

The ratio of text books to the pupils was analyzed and it revealed the information presented in table 7

Table 7: A table showing textbooks and the number of pupils

	%	Recommended	Recommended percentage
Textbooks 4	25%	1	50
Pupils 1	75%	2	100

Table 8: Ratio between number of pupils and teachers recommended

Number of pupils	40
Teachers	1

The researcher went further to analyze infrastructural materials like desks; learners' writing materials and textbooks used by teachers. The finding shows that about 3 pupils were sharing desks fit for one learner. The above information was presented as follows

Table 9: A table showing the recommended number of pupils per teacher

Number of desks	Three pupils sharing a desk
Number of exercise books	Enough
Teachers teaching materials (resources)	Available but not adequate
Learners feeding program	Not available
Availability of learner resource centre / resource room.	Not available

Recommendations

The following strategies were suggested by teachers to improve teaching and learning with regards to objective number 4.

Table 10: A table showing suggestion and recommendations made by teachers

	Recommended by teachers
Number of teachers	Should be increased so that teacher , student ratio be 40:1
Textbooks	Ratio should be increased to 2:1
Classrooms	New classrooms be constructed so as to have 40:1
Feeding program	Feeding be started especially for the candidates
Learning resource centres (resource rooms)	Resource rooms be strengthen (libraries) in primary schools.
In service training for teachers	Teachers be given time to review their learning by taking in service courses.
Teaching	Remedial teaching be made compulsory for slow learners
Amount disbursed	The teachers said the amount be increased so as to enable schools to buy tuition infrastructure
Admission	Admission to public primary schools be based on availability of vacancies.
Cost sharing	The teachers recommended cost sharing to enable schools meet some of the requirements
Boarding facilities for upper classes	Class seven and eight should board for teachers to give them remedial teaching

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

This chapter discusses the findings of the research. The findings were discussed based on the research objectives. The first objective was to establish the relationship between free primary education and performance in K.C.P.E. There were about 336 pupils who sat KCPE in 2011. Male were 170 representing 54.673% while the female were 166 representing 45.326%. The information shows that the number of male candidates in primary schools sitting for Kenya Certificate of Primary Education are more compared to their female counterparts. The above information concurs with what Education Minister Prof. Sam Ongeri said when he was releasing exams results KCPE 2011. He called upon the society of Kenya to still ensure that the girl child is supported so that she may access education. The researcher noted that there were many factors which impede the way for the girl child. The factors range from early child marriage to lack of sanitary towels hence missing school during some days of the month.

In the zone the researcher felt also from observation that the society values education of the boy child at the expense of the girl child. About performance the pupils had an average of 270 representing 54.0%. Male had an average of 274 representing 54.8% while female had an average of 266% representing 53.2%. From the above information, there is still need to improve on the performance of the pupils in the zone. The zone had only two pupils scoring more than 400 marks representing 0.54%. The above findings above findings were used to compare with the instructional materials and resources. The researcher realized that there were 112 teachers in the zone as compared with 128 required. The shortfall represents 12.5%. This means that the teachers need an extra 16 teachers to do its work effectively. This kind of situation equally affects the performance of the teachers as they are carrying an extra load which makes them tired and being unable to give individual attention to the weak slow and average learners. For the learners to do well, the teachers called for an increase in the number of the teachers in the primary schools. Further the above information shows that the teachers available represent 87.5%.

The second objective was to establish the extent to which the amount disbursed influence free primary education performance in KCPE. It was noted from the findings the amount disbursed was too small to make learners make remarkable improvement in terms of performance in KCPE. There were no new buildings constructed from free primary education funds. From the above findings, it shows that the classes are swollen and supersedes the required number. The ration of the pupils to the classroom was observed and it was found that free education have increased the enrollment of the learners. A research carried out by (Chuch, 2009) on disparities in FPE in Kenya concurs with this.

The third and fourth objective was to determine the position of instructional materials, resources and infrastructure. The findings show that there were 46 pupils on average per one teacher, instead of 40. The above represents 15%. About textbooks 4 pupils were sharing a textbook instead of the recommended 2:1. The above represents 20%. FPE has provided textbooks for all core subjects: Kiswahili, English, Math, Science, Social Studies and Religious studies. The policy provision of textbooks is widely regarded as one of the policy's major achievement. The program has aimed at achieving 1:1 textbook ratios with every student, but loss of books has prevented this from happening at certain schools. For schools whose parents would afford to buy textbooks prior to FPE, this program has little effect. Academy schools like Berur, Baraton, Kapkobis could afford the books.

The teachers called upon the Ministry of Education to increase the funding to enable schools have the capacity to increase the number of textbooks per pupils in the schools. The resource teacher also need to be increased to enable the recommended ratio 40:1 be attained. All schools studied reported an increase in learning materials at their schools as a result of FPE (things like maps, charts, posters).

Suggestions and Recommendations

The fifth objective aimed at suggesting appropriate strategies that would improve teaching and learning in primary schools. The following were suggested in order to improve teaching and learning:

- The performance in K.C.P.E can be enhanced if funding for the resources are enhanced in FPE;
- The number of teachers should be increased to the recommended ratio 40:1;
- The instructional materials such as textbooks, number of classrooms, desks, and chairs should be increased;
- Remedial teaching should be offered to weak and slow learners;
- E –learning can be used in order to address teacher shortage;
- Teaching and learning should be learner centered;
- Textbooks should be made affordable to the learners so that many learners may buy;
- The number of lessons taught by a teacher should be reduced to reasonable number to enable teachers not to strain;
- The parents and guardians should be asked to partly pay for tuition of the learners;
- The government should ask for external support in order to support the free primary education.

Other Findings

Theoretical Mechanisms at Work under FPE

Three channels linking FPE to student performance:

1. Increased funding (perhaps)

- Increased government funding;
- Ambiguous net effect on infrastructure and learning resources which will enhance results in KCPE.

2. Changes in the pool of students

- Fees are abolished so more children can access education;
- Of course, these children may be different from existing students in terms of socio-economic background, age, ability, etc.

3. Increased centralization = loss of local accountability

- Community no longer raises funds for the school, thus their governance power is undermined;
- Parents no longer pay for the school, so may lose sense of ownership;
- Authority over hiring and firing, etc. is held by Ministry, with little information on school management.

CONCLUSIONS

Theoretical Mechanisms at Work under FPE

Three channels linking FPE to student performance:

1. Increased funding (perhaps)
 - Increased government funding
 - Improvement in KCPE result.
2. Changes in the pool of students
 - Fees are abolished so more children can access education.
 - Of course, these children may be different from existing students in terms of socio-economic background, age, ability, etc.
3. Increased centralization = loss of local accountability
 - SMCs no longer raise funds for the school, thus their governance power is undermined;
 - Parents no longer pay for the school, so may lose sense of ownership;
 - Authority over hiring and firing, etc. is held by Ministry, with little Information on school management.

Areas for further Research

Further to having researched on the above area, the researcher felt that there is need in future to research in Nandi, Kenya on:

- The effect of infrastructure and free primary education on learning;
- Challenges faced by teachers in free primary education;
- Quality and free primary education;
- Sustaining free primary education.

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