CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Internationally, universal primary education (UPE) was first mooted following the 'universal declaration of human rights' (United Nations General Assembly resolution 217 A (III) 1948) and the subsequent education conferences of Jomtien in 1990, Amman in 1996 and the Dakar World Education Forum in 2000 (Sifuna 2005). Following these events, many developing countries have made several attempts to adopt policies that would see the attainment of universal primary education. Kenya, for example, is one of the developing countries that have aligned its free primary education programme to that of the Education For All (EFA) and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It is worth noting that Kenya has been making numerous efforts to introduce universal primary education (UPE) since attaining independence from Britain in 1963 (Oketch and Rollston 2007).

Universal primary education campaign in Kenya has mainly been as a result of presidential decrees. After the impetus of the campaign for free primary education in the early 1960s by the first President, Kenyatta, the embers of the campaign died out only to be revived by President Moi in 1978 after his ascent to the presidency. The push for basic education during Moi's tenure, like its predecessor, did not last long **(**Mwanzia 2004). One of the campaign manifestos of the Narc government (which succeeded the independent party KANU in 2003) was provision of FPE. The new president, Kibaki, kept his promise of reintroducing FPE and, hence, FPE remerged in Kenya in 2003 following an executive declaration by the newly elected president.

Different motives have driven the push for universal primary education in Kenya during the three regimes. In the 1960s, the motive was to expand post primary education, that is, secondary and tertiary education, to develop human resource. At that time many colonialists and expatriates were leaving Kenya, some vacating crucial posts in the civil service which needed to be filled **(**Muhoho 1975). The Government of Kenya also recognised the programme as an opportunity to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable economic development (Government of Kenya 2005). Since one had to attain primary education before secondary and tertiary education, access to primary education had to be expanded. Because those who completed tertiary education landed good employment with the government, significant demand for primary education arose. However the country was ill-prepared to handle the rush for primary school entry. There was neither enough infrastructure nor adequate teaching staff for the programme. The government reacted by marshalling fundraising efforts, dubbed “harambee” to help finance infrastructural developments, such as building of classrooms. School committees were formed at each primary school, or designated primary schools, to oversee the fundraising and building exercise. The fundraising, which according to policy was to be voluntary, became controversial with some school committees effecting forced contributions by , sometimes, confiscating properties of parents who failed, or were unable, to contribute. As the fundraising was having its toll on parents, the system was also producing too many secondary and tertiary education graduates and not all of them could secure the much-sought employment. By mid 1970s, the push for universal primary education had all but died out in Kenya, only to be revived in 1978 during early years of Moi’s tenure.

Moi introduced free milk, a form of school feeding programme, to entice more pupils to enrol for primary education and move Kenya towards attainment of UPE. He also abolished all fees hitherto paid by the pupils **(**Kimuyu, Wagacha and Okwach 1999). The large rush for primary enrolment that ensued soon overwhelmed the available resources and a myriad of fees reappeared in the primary education system. Thus, indirect and ad-hoc fees, such as *activity fees* and *building levies*, were introduced by individual schools. Not all households could afford these impromptu fees and many a pupil dropped out of school. Moreover, the feeding programmes were halted altogether mid 1980s, due to shortage of funds, and the hopes of attaining free primary education and universal primary education in Kenya , once again, died.

A more serious step at attaining universal primary education in Kenya was made in January 2003 when the newly elected President Kibaki declared, per his campaign manifesto, primary education free. This happened at a time when there was international pressure to implement MDG goals, which make primary education a human right, and at a time when the population of Kenya had grown to over 30 million, unlike in the sixties and seventies when it was below 20 million. The higher population, and the fact that primary education was now viewed as a human right, meant that the demand for primary school enrolment would be larger and more intense. All sorts of fees at all levels of primary education were once again abolished.

Thus, in fulfilling a noble campaign promise, president Kibaki launched the FPE programme in Kenya without first having looked into the kind of infrastructure that an expanded primary education programme would require (Marabi 2005; Maina 2005). Hence, soon after its dramatic reintroduction, and like in the preceding 2 attempts, FPE in Kenya faced numerous challenges. These included administrative and implementation shortfalls, lack of infrastructure (classrooms, administrative offices), shortage of learning materials and inadequate teaching staff among others (Marabi 2005). Many schools have some teaching lessons conducted under trees as classrooms overflow from increased enrolments. Some middle class families have reacted by withdrawing their children to private schools. It is worth noting that lack of teachers as well as infrastructure and study materials have led to a mushrooming industry of private schools, many of them without trained teaching staff as well. Moreover, the majority of households in Kenya live on less than a dollar a day such that a significant number of pupils are still unable to attend schools due to lack of food, learning material and transport. Indeed, some households still rely on their children to do petty chores like hawking and other child labour jobs to earn income for the families.

Hence, for Kenya to achieve universal primary education in line with international benchmark, more needs to be done than just adopting free primary education. More funds are needed to train and hire teaching and administrative staff, establish infrastructure, purchase learning materials, and initiate feeding programme. This research attempts to analyse these glaring funding challenges and recommend suitable strategies for the realisation of a sustainable universal primary education in Kenya.

1.1 Research Question

What are the sustainable financing options for the free primary education in Kenya?

1.2 Purpose of the Study

This research examines the financial sustainability and implementation of the free primary education programme in Kenya with a view to explaining the challenges it faces and formulating strategies for its success.

The specific objectives are:

i. Analysis of the universal primary education (UPE) generally and, particularly, the free primary education (FPE) programme in Kenya.
ii. Analyse the financial and other challenges facing the implementation of the FPE programme in Kenya.
iii. Recommend strategies for continued success and sustainability of the FPE programme in Kenya.

1.3 Context of the Study

The second target of the Millennium Development Goal states that, "...by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling" (United Nations 2000). With this in mind, the Government of Kenya saw the declining enrolment rates, from 80% in 1990 to 74% in 2002 in primary schools, as a setback (Government of Kenya, 2005a). Other issues that characterised primary school education in Kenya before 2003, and which the government sought to correct, included high drop-out rates and repetition rates (Bedi et al. 2004). Systematic mitigation of these issues and their effects is seen to be possible through the introduction of sound social policies and strategies, which include free primary education.

Prior to 2003, primary education was mainly financed by parents and guardians, although the levies were subsidised by the government for public schools (Sifuna et al. 2005). For private schools parents were fully responsible for the cost of education. This study construes ‘free’ to mean elimination of any form of school fees and levies. Hence, free primary education (FPE) is of great importance because most families in the Sub-Saharan Africa cannot afford the cost of schooling, which in most cases includes school fees, parent-paid supplements to teacher salaries, textbooks, materials, examinations, uniforms, meals, sports and cultural activities, and contributions requested by local schools.

1.3 Problem Statement

1.3.1 Main Problem

This study seeks to formulate strategies for funding and, hence, sustainability of FPE in Kenya as the country seeks to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 in accordance with the United Nations declaration.

1.3.2 Sub Problems

The first sub problem is to analyse the implementation of free primary education programme in Kenya with regard to policy, funding and cost centres as well as the roles of different interest groups in its implementation.

The second sub problem is to identify challenges encountered in the implementation of free primary education programme in Kenya.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The benefits of the free basic education are well acknowledged. However, lack of capacity and resources frustrates efforts to implement the FPE programmes in most countries. World Bank indicates that public education spending in Kenya is 6.9% of her Gross Domestic Product, and that the government caters for only 17.9% of the expenditure on education (The World Bank 2005). This is a worrying indicator considering that primary education comprises 54.1 % of the total spending. The implication here is that free primary education is heavily dependent on external/non-governmental funding and any withdrawal by the development partners could highly jeopardise the gains made in the programme. Programs and policies suggested by this study could therefore go a long way in ensuring that the Government of Kenya solidifies gains in attainment of free primary education.

This study proposes financing options and strategies to act as policy guidelines for sustainable implementation of free primary education in Kenya.

1.5 Delimitations and Limitations

1.5.1 Delimitations

The study is mainly based on secondary data (such as data from the Ministry of Education of Kenya, The World Bank, International Monetary Fund and UNESCO). These will be supplemented with information from previous studies on universal free primary education programmes worldwide.

1.5.2 Limitations

Since the study is reliant on information from the Government of Kenya and its development partners, the results would be rather general and subjective.

1.6 Assumptions

This study will make the following assumptions:

i. The free primary education programme currently underway in Kenya is unsustainable in terms of costs, structures and management. As a result a reform of the programme needs to be effected by the Kenyan Government to align it with the socio-economic environment prevailing in the country.

ii. Funding for the free primary education programme in Kenya excludes the provision of basic child survival requirements (feeding, hygiene and medical care, shelter, and clothing), basic nurturing and support, and physical and material support which, according to Bategeka (2005), should be provided by parents.

iii. The Kenyan government's statistics on the programme implementation is as a result of continuous monitoring and evaluations. The aspects expected to be evaluated include the quality and examinations pass rates, enrolment rates, completion rates, repetition rates, teachers' salaries and age of the pupils in the programme.

iv. The government of Kenya does not have the capacity to run a sustainable free primary education without the financial support of the development partners.

1.7 Outline of the Research

Chapter 2 surveys the literature on universal and, free primary education. *Chapter 3* discusses the research methodology. The chapter examines the nature of the research, the overall research design, and the method of data collection, sample size and the method of data analysis.

Chapter 4 presents and interprets the research results, which mostly, will be derived from the literature and other documents from the Kenyan government and its development partners. Finally, *Chapter 5 concludes by* discussing a summary of the main findings. It further discusses methodological limitations, recommendations as well as suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Free primary education (FPE) literally means the provision of basic education at no costs to the beneficiaries. FPE aims at the provision of literacy and numeracy, life skills, and a basic general knowledge of health, nutrition, and society to school going children at no direct cost to the students or parents (United Nations 2000). This section discusses the theories of funding for primary school education. It also discusses economic and social theories of cost sharing of education, benefits and economic rationale for primary education, the international campaign for universal primary education as well as the implementation of the free primary education in Kenya and the challenges it is facing.

2.1 Economic Theories on Financing of Education

There are not many theories, economic and other, on financing of primary education per se. However, numerous economic theories, as well as empirical work, on financing of education in general, exist. Due to international efforts, some theories that are social in nature have also emerged.

Most well known of the economic theories, on education financing, are on cost sharing. For example, Blaug (1973) and Fuller (1987) advocate community financing as part of cost sharing for services. Cost sharing is considered necessary to relieve fiscal stress on the government. It is also argued that additional resources are made available through cost sharing to increase expenditures on direct learning resources such as on books. A significant number of scholars believe that cost sharing will eventually result in increased enrolments, particularly of the poor, and force government to manage resources more efficiently. Cost sharing comes in two ways: through compulsory charges (cost recovery) and through discretionary charges (cost sharing). These two terms basically mean taxation and user fees, respectively.

Tax finance is the most stable source of funds for services (Thobani 1983; Tan, Lee and Mingat 1984). Most, but not all, people would accept that tax systems should be progressive, that is, the better-off should contribute a larger proportion of their income at the margin than the less well off. User fees, on the other hand, are a comparatively fragile base for social service finance. Moreover, fee finance relates to the individual consumption of services and can interfere with efficient and equitable service provision because of the effect on distribution (Bird 1976).

Total resources for education can be increased through (a) increasing overall public expenditures; (b) reallocating to education within a given level of public expenditure; and (c) increasing non-government contributions. These strategies of financing for education are deemed to bear no reduction (or a less than proportionate reduction) in education enrolments.

In most countries, tax finance is the major source of funds for education. In some countries increased cost sharing occurs without any significant progress in reducing the cost of learning to pupils and their parents, or in improving services. In other words, parents are forced to pick up the costs of state inefficiency, or of costly state education policies. The argument applies to both public and private schools. While supporting public funding for education Bategeka (2005) advocates a two-pronged method: *Cost-benefit analysis of education* and *cost-effectiveness analysis of education.* The former helps identify education investment alternatives that are most beneficial in terms of cost and the possible benefits and outcomes. The latter is crucial in the estimation of the cost of achieving certain policy objectives of education programmes through different approaches, with the eventual aim of determining which approach is the best at minimum cost.

Colclough (1990) and Blaug (1973; 1976) advance the neoliberal approach where by individuals and governments are viewed as rational. The Assumption of rationality here is based on the assessment of how agents react to interventions. These set of theories attempt to explain how governments and households react to cost sharing and cost recovery (see also Behrman 1996). Central to the rationality theories is the concept of 'human capital'. 'Rational' human beings as well as the society at large are assumed to make human investments based on economic grounds.

Investments by definition yield streams of financial and economic returns (Todaro and Smith 2003; Adesina 2000; Adepoju and Fabiyi 2007). The returns on investing in human capital (education for this matter) are expressed in the form of lifetime earnings and other financial and non-financial returns, which benefit both society and individuals. Thus, it is rational for both individuals and government to spend on education as it, intertemporally, pays off. These streams of returns can be estimated and internal rates of return both to individuals and to society as whole derived to guide policy (Loasby 1991; Behrman 1996).

Fungibility of money, which has to do with substitutability of money, is also classified in these theories (Cassen et al. 1987; Pack and Pack 1993). For example, if a government gets foreign aid when, at the same time, it has its own funds, it might not be known which funds get spent on education: the governments' or the aid money. The concept of fungibility of money on cost sharing policies implies that cost sharing may just achieve the opposite of what it is intended to achieve; reduce expenditures meant for education as government reallocates its own revenue elsewhere. Thus, whether cost sharing can increase total resources, as is often assumed, depends very much on the underlying reasons. It is more likely to mitigate the effects of reductions in government expenditures, or result in increased expenditures in other parts of the budget, rather than to increase total expenditures on education. The fungibility of money can mean that consumers pay for inefficient government sectoral management, which can outweigh any advantages that competition and consumer awareness might bring. Similarly, where fees are raised outside the tax system it has proved hard in many countries to control them.

Poor households tend to have more children, and the ratio of total education costs to total household income for poor households will be higher. This is also true for larger households having the same income. One consequence of this is the additional burden placed on families by extending basic education without compensation measures. It is also likely that in poor areas the number of households represented in a school will be less than in better off areas, because of larger families. The average expenditure per child would thus be lower, and the revenue of the school would be reduced by reduced income from parents (Levhari and Weiss 1974).

Improved quality of teaching and learning may result from managerial improvements and from better resource allocation. They may also result from improvements in the provision of specific inputs such as textbooks or construction labour. It is reasonable to suppose that availability of inputs enhances quality given that the circumstances are favourable (for example, that there are competent teachers). The history of specific cost recovery schemes for textbooks, for example, has not so far been encouraging, though it is often difficult to see why. Even though specific cost sharing strategies like textbook funds might seem to exert a positive influence on quality, they still have to be considered within the overall menu of alternatives which might be pursued to improve quality (Hanushek 1986; Fuller 1987; Lockheed et al. 1991).

The relation of cost sharing to efficiency is explored theoretically and empirically in this study. Much of the rationale for user charges derives from a belief that they stimulate efficiency and accountability. However, it is equally likely that the reverse may be true, particularly in countries with weak fiscal and institutional management. Overcoming resource constraints by charging users can permit inefficient management of resources within the sector and throughout the government budget as a whole, because pressure to find resources through other means is reduced. Creese and Kutzin (1994) note that governments are frequently viewed to be inefficient, so the less the government manages education financing, the better. On the other hand they reason that the success of market prescriptions depends on an efficient bureaucracy, as well as a set of complementary interventions. This explains the cause of much of the decline in enrolments in many developing countries, especially in public schools, and why individuals may choose not to pay, or locate to private schools which they view as more efficient. Taylor (1999) argues that government role must remain secondary to the role of parents and guardians and should only be limited to education finance and oriented towards desirable social outcomes. This opinion is however challenged by scholars, such as Creese and Kutzin (1994) who point out that vigorous involvement of the government in education may lead to enormous success particularly in infrastructure expansion and increase in levels of enrolment. Hanushek (1986) cites the case of Bolivia where, due to increased government participation, the number of primary schools increased from 271,593 in 1999/2000 school year to 1,098,489 in 2005/2006 school year and over one million people participated in adult literacy programmes. The outcome of these opposing views is that education financing is a responsibility for governments and households.

Other economists tend to weigh a child's or a household's opportunity cost of schooling in terms of earnings foregone (Bertrand and Griffin 1983). The opportunity cost evaluations, while of interest, can only be speculative (Buchanan 1977). It is likely that many, if not most, children want to go to school, and it is equally likely that many are not able to attend because of family pressures to work. Family income foregone is a cost to the family of a child attending school.

Other theories of funding for education are mainly social in context. These theories are built around the issues which consider education or health services as a right (for example, see Bulmer, Lewis and Piachaud 1990; Gardner 1994; Vylder 1995; Mingat, Jee-Peng and Ramahatra 2002). The framework depicting children's' rights is that of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN 2005). Most governments are signatories to the Convention, and as far as education is concerned, states are obliged to 'make primary education compulsory and available free to all' (See particularly Article 28 in UN 2005). Article 4 of the Convention recognises the possibility of resource constraints: 'with regard to economic, social and cultural rights… States Parties shall undertake such measures to the maximum extent of their available resources and, where needed, within the framework of international cooperation'. The last phrase opens an avenue for foreign aid flow from foreign governments, IGOs, NGOs and business, to developing countries in aid of funding for educational services. It is implied in the convention that developed countries are obligated to help developing countries finance and manage development activities, including primary education, so as to achieve the MDGs.

The role of foreign aid agencies in the context of the present discussion can hardly be exaggerated: cost recovery was a central part of economic adjustment strategies on which aid was conditional, and there were few dissenters within the agencies. Moreover, most aid policy was directed towards expansion and increasing costs and it disrupted the natural evolution of education systems within fiscal feasibility. It had a direct impact through this mechanism on cost recovery imperatives (Bird 1976).

Although any discussion of cost sharing will have an economic bias in that the justifications for cost sharing policies relate to the financing of education, the cultural and social environment in which cost sharing activities take place will, to a great extent, determine how they work (Foster 1965; Musgrove 1982; Serpell 1996; Preus and Kappan 2007). There is considerable cultural diversity between countries which directly affects people's reactions to cost sharing, and the insights from anthropological and sociological research are important in balancing the cruder assumptions of economic rationality.

2.2 Some Benefits of Primary Education

Several reasons have been brought forward as to the importance of education. Stevens and Weale (2003); Pinckney (1997) state that the improved standard of living, since 1800s, is due to improved education. Incomes that people earn are also positively correlated with the level of education. Hence, education opens avenues for people to obtain decent income and, as such, individuals have the incentive to seek education. Sifuna (2005); Naidoo (2003); Batageka (2005) list possible benefits of free primary education as; its contribution towards poverty reduction since it would lay foundation for future skills, training and further education; its ability to provide training which ensures that women are empowered to reduce the burden of care provision; empowerment of children who would otherwise be engaged as child workers or be socially marginalized (such as street kids) and most importantly; it helps break the cycle of poverty by creating a new generation that is functionally literate and numerate. If spending on education delivers returns of some sort, in much the same way as spending on fixed capital, then it is sensible to talk of investing in human capital, as the counterpart to investing in fixed capital (Psacharopolous 1994). As already discussed, the process of education can be analysed as an investment decision.

Basic Education is one of the high impact investments that can be made, and one that will lead to progress on many developmental challenges including basic health, family planning and economic development to name but a few. For example, a child born to a literate mother is 50% more likely to survive to the age of 5 years. Children with educated mothers are twice as likely to go to school and suffer from lower malnourishment rates. In fact an impact study by Oxfam estimates that if all children completed primary education, 700,000 new cases of HIV/AIDS in young people could be prevented each year. Mover basic education can buttress food *security*: A farmer with just four years of basic education is 8.7% more productive and will be more likely to understand the causes and treatment of crop diseases, and how to introduce new farming techniques, than a farmer with no education. Because of these benefits attached to basic education, of which primary schooling is paramount, governments and international society, principally UN, have been at the forefront at the efforts to adopt it in all countries.

2.3 International Agitation for Free Primary Education

The campaign for universal primary education was spearheaded by a number of international conferences involving IGOs, principally the UN, and other organisations in the mid 20th century. Some of these conferences included the Universal Declaration of human Rights in 1948, World Conference on Education for All in 1990, Mid-Decade Review of Education for All in 1996, Dakar Conference in 2000 and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (United Nations 1948; United Nations 2000; Adesina 2000; Sifuna 2005). Many of these conferences stressed the need for provision of free primary education, and this section will single out Universal Declaration for Human rights and the Millennium Development Goals for further discussion.

2.3.1 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948

The Universal Declaration of human rights was adopted and proclaimed by United Nations General Assembly resolution 217 A (III) of 10 December 1948. The Article 26 of the resolution specifically states as follows:

(1) 'Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.'

(2) 'Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.'

(3) 'Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.'

It is worth noting that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights resolution was the first international articulation of the rights to basic education to people of all walks of life, making it a global undertaking. Mutula (2006:441); Mutiiria (2004) uphold that this declaration is primarily based upon recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of human beings as the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world. Mutula (2006:441) and Mwanzia (2004) single out Article 21 which specifically recognises that everyone has the right to equal access to public service in his country (United Nations 1948).

2.3.2 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

The United Nations Millennium Summit Declarations is based on the basic tenets of eradication of poverty and achievement of sustainable development among others (United Nations 2000). It is worth noting that it singled out Africa as having special needs and pledged support towards attainment of these MDG goals. These MDGs targeted, among other things, "to ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling and that girls and boys will have equal access to all levels of education"(United Nations 2000). The basic tenet of free universal education is therefore equal accessibility to education to all pupils regardless of their gender.

2.4 Towards a Model of Funding Options for Free Primary Education

From the theories of financing of education, and empirical work on the importance of basic education, the sources of financing and players can be gathered. These include governments, international society and households. The discussion that follows is focussed on the roles that these actors play in financing of basic education.

Rationale for Government Support for Basic Education

Market failure is one significant reason for the government to intervene in the funding of education whereby education is largely seen as a public good. Because business mainly exists for profit motives, it will fail to cater for the underprivileged who may not be able to pay for education service (Taylor

1999; Scott and Morrisson 2006; Rondinelli 1981). Hence government must step in to help these underprivileged children realise their education dreams. This calls for the subsiding of education fees and expenditure (see Taylor 1999; Riddell 2002). Education also leads to other societal benefits than those accruing to the student. For instance, it leads to a stable democracy (UN 2000), increased tax base, attracts FDI, less reliance on social welfare needs (Bedi, Kimalu, Manda and Nafula 2004; Seekings 2002; Rose 2003; Mushemeza 2003). Moreover, education is viewed as a tool for redistribution of societal resources as strategies of ensuring future generations are well empowered (Taylor 1999).

In quest for attaining UPE, governments have increasingly become the major stake holders in the programmes (see Foster 1965; Aduwa-Ogiegbaen 2006; Sifuna 2005).

Table 1 below illustrates the proportion of public and private sector involvement in education funding. It shows that all the developed economies have a disproportionate bigger spending by public sources than private sources. However, this is not the case for most developing countries, save for India and Venezuela. Other developing countries like Kenya, Indonesia and Tanzania have slightly above average public spending in education, although this ratio needs to be increased.

In addition governments have become involved in the following:

(i) Development of assessable and improved educational programmes. Several schools have as a result been established through the cooperation between the government and the community.

(ii) Enhancement of teaching and development of competency for teachers normally at costs below the market rate or sometimes at no cost.

Table 1: Ratio of private and public sectors pending on Education for selected countries

Group and country	Public sources	Private sources
OECD countries		
Australia	85	15
Canada	90	10
Denmark	99	1
Finland	92	8
France	90	10
Germany	73	27
Ireland	93	7
Japan	74	26
Netherlands	98	2
Spain	50	20
United States	79	21
Low and middle-income countries		
Uganda (1992-1993) (1)(2)(3)	47	53
Haiti	20	80
Hungary	93	7
India	89	11
Indonesia	63	37
Kenya (2) (1992/93)	**62**	**38**
Tanzania(1993)(1)	69	31
Venezuela (1987)	73	27

Source**:** World Bank 1995

(iii) Making education more cost-effective. This has meant that even though minimal levies are paid by the parents the educational facilities are still affordable and within reach of the greater majority.

(iv) Development and promotion of effective use of innovative materials in schools. This has involved the use of locally available and affordable materials.

(v) In some cases the government has had to provide meals at no direct cost to pupils or their households to ensure that the school pupils do not go out of the institutions in search of food. For example, in Malawi, provision of meals has resulted in high enrolment rates are sustained in schools (Kunje and Lewin 2000).

(vi) Another key role of government pertains to institutionalisation and implementation of FPE policy. It is precisely because of this that the international education policies were affirmed and signed into charters like the universal declaration of human rights, the Dakar charter among others. Sustainability of the free universal education programme would require government's careful assessment of costs and funding. This often involves cooperation with development partners and citizens. Apart from cost evaluation, good governance demands that the government offer prescriptive and preventative education policies that are made to suit national interests, strategies and vision. It is for this reason that each country will often have different educational programmes and structures; this is perfectly explained by Oketch and Rollestone (2007); Sifuna (2003; 1990); Raymond and Sadoulet (2003). The historical and economic backgrounds seem to have been a major influence on financing of primary education policies in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania (Republic of Uganda 1995; Mushemeza 2003).

From the foregoing, it is apparent that government involvement in the provision of free primary education, like in any educational programmes is vital. Not only are they major financiers of the programmes, they are also the architects and implementers of education policy and curriculum design.

Households

Parents, and by extension households, also have a key role and stake in the education of their children. The World Bank (1996) notes that contact and cooperation between teachers and parents ensured marked achievements can be made in universal free education programme in rural and urban areas. Parents and/or guardians should develop trust between them and teachers. Parents also contribute financially to schools and engage in school management programes (World Bank, 1996; Thaman 2002).

Bategeka (2005) states that Parents and/or guardians play a crucial role in the provision of UPE implementation by virtue of the fact that they provide basic child survival requirements especially feeding, hygiene and medical care, shelter, and clothing. Furthermore, they provide basic nurturing and material support. In addition Bategeka (2005) states that the provision of key elements of nurturing include preparing a child to attend school, safe home environment, and ensuring that the child is clean and learning materials as the crucial parental role in universal primary education.

In Kenya, parents have supported the ideal of universal primary education by paying the minimal levies through the cost sharing policy (Sifuna 2005). Management of schools is usually done by the teaching community in conjunction with the households' heads, and is important in uniting parents and teachers. Moreover, management of schools has often been done through the countrywide Parents Teachers Associations which form an integral part of public school management in Kenya (Sifuna 2005).

Donors: IGOs, Foreign Governments and NGOs

The United Nations is perhaps the greatest non-governmental organisation involved with the universal primary education agenda. For example, it releases documents and agreement frameworks that encourage the programme and pressurises for its implementation. It is no wonder that the UN Millennium project office through its publication entitled ‘task force education’ encourages the donors and international technical agencies to undertake the following roles in the education sector: (1) support bold political leadership and provide firm financial commitments to make Universal free primary education and the Fast Track Initiative work and (2) Reform the donor business to commit new funds through a strong coordinated global effort that rewards and reinforces countries’ measurable progress (United Nations Development Programme 2005; The East African Standard, January 16, 2003; Rose 2003).

The donor community often works with governments in ensuring establishment of pilot programs and setting up of new schools, especially in urban slums and remote localities. Sometimes, distributing aid directly to families from where underprivileged pupils come has been a preferred practice by the donor community, especially the NGOs. NGOs have also been instrumental in the establishment of community or NGO-managed schools in villages, especially where the Government is unable to recruit suitable teachers. In addition, NGOs have become handy in establishing classrooms and office blocks in schools with inadequate structures (World Bank 1996).

The above literature clearly demonstrates that NGOs participate widely in the projects of free primary education. Indeed their contribution forms a vital role in coordinating of international effort for adoption and realisation of universal primary education programme.

2.5 Challenges Facing the Implementation of UPE

Challenges that governments in the developing countries face with the implementation of free primary education are varied according to countries. Experts have noted these challenges and classify them as, limited funding, ineffectiveness and inefficiency of education systems, HIV/AIDS scourge, and conflicts. These are discussed next.

2.5.1 Limited Funding of UPE

Taylor (1999) observes that public education is a large international business. For example, Taylor states that in 1994 the governments of Germany, Italy, Japan, and the United Kingdom each spent at least 2.9 percent of their GDPs on primary and secondary schooling. Others such as Canada and France expended at least 4 percent of their GDPs for the same purpose (Taylor 1999; Lewin 1999). These are large figures considering the big size of these countries' GDPs.

Public financing of free primary education in developing countries is however, limited mainly because these countries economies are small and majority of the people live in poverty and can barely afford food and shelter. For example, a study in Nigeria revealed that even though parents take responsibility for uniforms, books and other materials, their annual income was too low to cover these expenditures adequately (Ibe-Bassey 1996).

2.5.2 Ineffectiveness and Inefficiency of Education Systems

Quality of education can be assessed by looking at the rates of drop-out from school, the proportion of pupils who have to repeat years, rates of primary completion and transition to secondary education. It has been observed that more than 20% of children enrolling in the first year of primary school failed to complete four years of education. Completion rates of the full primary cycle in most countries in sub-Saharan Africa are between 60-70%. Africa also has some of the lowest transition rates to secondary education, many below 10% **(**Mushemeza 2003; Ligomeka 2002).

2.5.3 HIV/AIDS Scourge

HIV/AIDS causes prolonged suffering, sickness and death which lead to increased poverty, through the direct costs of illness and the loss of labour and source of income. The end result is increased dependency ratios in poor communities due to increase in the number of HIV/AIDS orphans. In sub-Saharan Africa the traditional life patterns have been disrupted with children becoming heads of household, being adopted or staying at home to care for sick family members or taking to the streets. This has been at the expense of their education, amongst other things (UN 2000).

2.5.3 Conflicts

Conflict flare-ups have continued to disrupt education processes in parts of sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, the Middle East and Asia with teachers and pupils being actively engaged in the wars or becoming their victims. The main countries affected include Congo, Uganda, Rwanda, Somalia, Colombia, Nepal, Peru, Afghanistan and Iraq. The case of child soldiers, who would otherwise have been in school, is extensively documented in the case of Uganda and Congo conflicts (Kinunda 2001).

2.6 Because of the problems noted in Section 2.5, primary education in developing countries is characterised by certain features, the most vivid of which are:

2.6.1 Lower Enrolment Rates

Available data estimates that 113 million children, 60% of them girls, are not enrolled in school. This incident is particularly pronounced in the Sub-Saharan Africa where net enrolment rates, 62% or 42 million, are the lowest, in the world. South and West Asia with 47 million enrolment rates, but with a higher total population of children of school-going age, also fair badly in this situation. In both regions, there is a strong correlation between low enrolment and the incidence of poverty (Kendall 2003).

2.6.2 Gender Imbalance

Of the 25 countries worldwide with the poorest girl: boy ratios in primary and secondary education, 17 are in sub-Saharan Africa. In these countries only about 55% of girls, as compared to 66% for boys, of school-going age were enrolled in schools in 1998. In the same year, south and west Asia had the enrolment rates for girls and boys at 67% and 79% respectively. In most high-income countries and Eastern Europe the Caribbean and Latin America there is near parity of enrolment rates across sexes, with Scandinavian countries recording higher percentages for girls (Kendall 2003; Ochieng 2002).

2.6.3 Social Exclusion

Exclusion of minority groups and disadvantaged classes goes against the grain of the achievement of universal primary education by 2015. Exclusion from education could be due to belonging to lower class or caste, or ethnicity.

Sometimes, it is due to being part of linguistic, cultural or religious groups perceived as minority or inferior. Children with disabilities are also disadvantaged by the facilities that often do not cater and/or not fit for their use.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the theories on funding of education. The economic theories on education funding include the neoliberal approaches, which extol the rationality of, on the one hand, the individual and by extension the household, and on the other, the government. The premise of this set of theories is that as long as funding of education is considered an investment, it is rational for both the government, due to the expected larger societal returns, and the household, due to expected future personal earnings, to investment in education. The theories further explain the rationale of cost sharing in funding education service. They state that cost sharing is necessary because governments, especially in the case of developing countries, do not have enough funds to implement education programmes and activities. Neither can households, most of whom live on less than a dollar a day, afford the market cost of education for their family members. In this instance, the donor community comes in handy to mitigate, but hardly to eliminate, this funding gap.

By extension, these theories question the effectiveness and efficiency of governments in providing for and managing education service. Some of these economic theorists claim that lack of institutions and trained personnel in the education sector has led to mismanagement of funds, poor put-through rates in public schools, and that it is because of this that some middle class families prefer to take their children to private schools where education service is perceived to be efficient. The inefficiency of the government is further illustrated by what economic theorist term fungibility of money. They claim that a government may divert its budgetary allocation to the education sector to other sectors after receiving donor funding. Another economic theory of education funding is on the opportunity cost of attending school. This is illustrated amongst children from poor households who would rather be engaged as child labourers to earn income for the family instead of going to school. In such instance, such households would fail to send their children to school due to the opportunity cost (income forgone).

Other theories of funding for education, perhaps more powerful than the economic theories are mainly social. These theories have emerged because education is considered as a human right and demanded by all citizens from the government. These theories have been mainly pushed by the international campaign spearheaded by the UN. An example is the Millennium Development Goals. The push for UPE has come out of the realisation as to the importance of basic education, not only for the individual but to the larger society as well. Because of these social forces, political leaders have been forced to make pledges to implement free primary education if elected. Some governments, like that of Kenya, have made good their promise of FPE and gone ahead to implement it.

However, as the case of Kenya shows, it is not just enough to declare primary education free. There are a number of challenges, and that need to be overcome, facing FPE. These include issues, such as gender parity and inclusiveness in enrolment, effects of HIV/AIDS on teaching, lack of institutions and structures to manage the resources for FPE, inadequate security and lack of physical infrastructure. The most glaring of the challenges, and which is very true in the case of Kenya, is inadequate funding for the FPE.

The next two chapters will discuss, to a greater depth, the sources of funding for the free primary education in Kenya. The role of the donor community, households and Kenyan government in funding and management of the FPE programme will also be discussed.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In the preceding chapters, the theories of financing of education, as well as the rationale for funding of primary education were discussed. The challenges facing implementation free primary education, and by extension, universal primary education were outlined. This section intends to lay the foundation for an investigation into the implementation of the FPE in Kenya, especially as regards the funding options. Hence, the methodology of the research for this study is outlined in this chapter. Two broad issues, namely research design, and the research methods will be discussed in this chapter.

3.1 Research Design

This study intends to use qualitative methods mainly. This is because the challenges of free primary education program in Kenya have to be studied by analysing a collection of documents, existing research and other available records, which in themselves, need descriptive methods. Even where figures are involved, they will be used essentially to give more description to the issues that are being considered. Qualitative techniques will assess the information-rich answers to the objectives of the research.

Firestone (1987) expounds on the main tenets of qualitative study as based on the ability to actively engage the researcher in understanding a phenomenon through social reconstruction of collective definitions of situations. This particularly makes the case of the challenges of universal free primary education program in Kenya ideal for the proposed methods due to the specificity of the problem and belief that sustainability entails customised solutions to specific environments and situations.

3.2 Research Methods

The study employed the use of case study approach, also known as documentary research. This decision was necessitated by the fact that the researcher failed to get access to, and hence did not survey, the policymakers of free education programme. Nevertheless, these approaches have the ability to be intensive in analyses and descriptions (see, for example, Hancock and Algozzine 2006). As this study showed, vital information can be gathered from case studies. Following next is a discussion of the role and appropriateness of case study in research undertakings.

Eisenhardt (1989) defines case study research as involving empirical investigation of reality using multiple sources of evidence. Hancock and Algozzine (2006:15-16) outline the hallmarks of case study research as, focusing on a representative group and phenomenon, applicability to local contexts, and (3) ability to be descriptive in nature hence making it well grounded in theory and details. Other experts view documentary research as the process of gathering information from existing texts and documents, such as newsletters, newspapers, certificates, census publications, novels, film and video, paintings and personal photographs. The sources may be audio-visual and electronic, or in print (Scott and Morrison 2006).

Documentary research commences with conceptualisation of a document and design of research questions around it. After conceptualisation the document is analysed differently depending on leanings to different schools of social science thoughts. These include analysis as objective realities, analysis as representative of practical requirements as well as analysis with active engagement, analysis with intent to revise against the background of refusal to acknowledge the meaning and analysis in the context of the writer and his writing environment (Scott and Morrison 2006).

Social science school of thoughts hold diverse opinions on documentary research. Positivists advance a view that documents represent an objective reality of life and are true accounts of social facts that exist independently of interpretations. This means social study research can be constructed and achieved entirely by documentary analysis (Hancock and Algozzine 2006).

Ethno-methodologists believe that documents are representatives of practical requirements; documents are in this case interpreted as 'accomplishments' that construct events and are based on the rationale that renders the social order accountable and comprehensible. Ethno-methodologists believe that documents contents can be negotiated and manipulated by interested parties (Hancock and Algozzine 2006).

Critical Realists believe that documents cannot be read in a detached manner but must be engaged with during research, engagement in this case considerations by the researcher of the differences between his/her own frames of meanings and those found in the text. The researcher thus examines the document as it is and relates it to his beliefs before analysing it in wider socio-political and economic context (Hancock and Algozzine 2006).

No matter the affiliations of researchers, all agree that documentary research may lead to interpretation of documents out of intended contexts. Hancock and Algozzine (2006) particularly insist that authenticity, credibility, representativeness and meaning of documents used are paramount to obtaining correct results. As a result it is advised that the following be interrogated: (a) Source and history of document (b) process of documents availability to research audience (c) accuracy and integrity of the document (d) representativeness of the document and available complimentary sources to the document and (e) sources and author of information in the document.

Based on source of narrative accounts, documents may be classified as primary, secondary or tertiary. Primary sources are narratives compiled by actual witnesses to events as they occur. These materials are considered reliable but may be exaggerated due to the emotional embodiment. Secondary documents are often written by independent authors after interviewing witnesses, the author is however aware of problems in the production the data. Tertiary sources refer to documents compiled by independent authors having no idea or information on actual events occurrences. They are often objective analysis of occurrences based on theories and analysis of personalities, trends and events. Tertiary documents enable researchers to locate other references like indexes, abstracts and other bibliographies and are often available from libraries and Internet search engines (Hancock and Algozzine 2006).

In consideration of the nature of documents and the publisher, classification can also be either public or private documents. Public documents are authored by governments or local government departments and dwell on issues of great interest to the public. Public funds are used to prepare and publish the public documents. On the other hand private documents are authored by the private sector or private citizens for personal reasons using private funds (Hancock and Algozzine 2006).

Depending on accessibility levels documents can further be divided into closed (for example secret police files), restricted (for example medical files and confidential corporate reports), open-archival (include census reports) and open-published (include government budget statistics).

In as much as documentary research seems appealing it is hampered by some limitations. Eisenhardt (1989) and Hancock and Algozzine (2006) observe some of these as: the tendency to study information that can be measured and standardised often leads to simplification of data and makes it hard to venture in un-researched areas. Simplification of data sometimes leads to reproduction of meanings used by authors and rarely to give critical analysis in socio-political and economic context. Moreover it is almost impossible to simulate the emotional and environmental context within which a document is produced.

In the case of FPE in Kenya, this study looked at the both public and private documents. Public documents were obtained form Government of Kenya offices, mainly ministries offices and websites. Private documents were obtained form intergovernmental organisations (IGOs) as well as local newspapers, mainly the "the East African Standard". A brief discussion of these documents follows next.

Private Documents

- IMF and World Bank's "Global Monitoring Report" for 2005 and 2006 from which the information on the role of the donor countries, IGOs, clubs (OPEC), and NGOs, in funding the FPE education, were sourced.
- The East African Standard Newspaper serialized serious cases of misappropriation of funds meant for FPE in 2009. Indeed, the embezzlement of the FPE caused some donor community, notably USA and the UK, to withhold their funding for the FPE in Kenya.

Public Documents

Form the following government of Kenya documents; the spirit implementation as well as monitoring of the FPE programme are detailed.

- Government of Kenya, Ministry of Planning and National Development (2003): *National Development Plan, 2002 – 2008*, Government Printer, Nairobi.
- Government of Kenya, MOEST (2003): *Free Primary Education: Every child in School*, Nairobi
- Government of Kenya, MOEST (2003): Millennium Development Goals: Progress Report for Kenya, Nairobi
- Government of Kenya, MOEST (2003): *National Action Plan on Universal free primary education (EFA) 2003-2015*, Nairobi
- Government of Kenya, MOEST (2003): *Report of the National Conference on Education and Training*, Government Printer, Nairobi
- Government of Kenya, MOEST (2004): *Report of the Task Force on Implementation of Free Primary Education*, Jomo Kenyatta Foundation, Nairobi
- Government of Kenya, MOEST (2005): *Financial Management Training Manual for Primary Schools*, Government Printer, Nairobi

3.3 Limitation of the Research

The researcher had difficulty in obtaining some documents that contained actual disbursement of funds to specific regions. Some of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology employees claimed that these were classified information that could not be taken out of the office. Several attempts by the researcher to book an appointment with the relevant education officials were thwarted by red tape and bureaucratic processes. The many calls and messages left at the desks of directors of education and the accountants at the Treasury went unanswered. The researcher mitigated this problem by obtaining some of the information form the World Bank Library due to her affiliation with the Bank as a staff.

Time and resource constraints also prevented the researcher from conducting a field study amongst stakeholders and other primary education entities in Kenya. The researcher had to compensate this by looking at more literature and secondary sources.

3.4 Conclusion

Apart from the information gathered on FPE in the literature review section, this chapter helped obtain information that was specific for the Kenyan case. The researcher, however, decried the lack of transparency at the relevant ministries in Kenya, namely Ministry of Planning, Ministry of Finance (the Treasury) and the Ministry of education Science and Technology.

The research used mainly qualitative methods to analyse the information gathered from the secondary sources. This was majorly because the processes, implementation and the challenges of the FPE in Kenya needed more descriptive tools than measurement tools, whereupon quantitative techniques would have been more applicable. The findings are presented in Chapter 4 whereby analysis is also conducted.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Having reviewed an extensive amount of literature in Chapter 2, this chapter analyses the information obtained from some secondary sources, notably from the Ministry of Education (hereinafter MOE) Ministry of Planning, the World Bank and last but not least, the East African Standard newspaper. The main issues discussed in this chapter are the funding, with the focus being on the sources of funds, the allocation of the FPE funds, the accountability, administration and the challenges facing the free primary education programme in Kenya. Amongst the challenges discussed are corruption at the MOE, high enrolment and dropout rates, poor structures and weak institutions.

4.1 Towards the Implementation of Free Primary Education in Kenya

MOE Report (Task Force on Implementation of Free Primary Education 2004) explains that enrolments in primary schools surged from about six million to about 7.2 million pupils, resulting in a gross enrolment rate of 104%, after the announcement of commencement of FPE in Kenya in January 2003, compared to 87.6% in 2002. However, this report does not state whether other fees, such as exam fees, have been abolished as well. Table 2 below outlines key public spending indicators in education in Kenya between 1985 and 2006.

Sifuna (2005) observes that the Kenyan government increased its education budget in 2003/04 financial year by 17.4% to Kshs.79.4 billion, with over Kshs 7.6 billion specifically allocated to the FPE programme. Of this amount, Kshs

3.7 billion, Kshs 1.6 billion, Kshs 1.2 billion, Kshs 430 million and Kshs 250 million were given by the World Bank, Department for International Development (DFID), Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), Swedish government and UNICEF, respectively.

Table 2: Public expenditure, as percentage of GDP, in education in Kenya,

Description	**1985**	**1990**	**1995**	**2000**	**2006**
Total spending as % of GDP	6.1	5.7	6.5	5.2	6.9
Current spending per student at primary level (% of p.c. GDP)	14.5	13.1	-	22.2	21.0
Current spending per student at secondary level (% of p.c. GDP)	44.0	-	-	14.8	20.7
Current spending per student at tertiary level (% of p.c. GDP)	652.2	-	-	204.8	-

Source: World Bank 2006

Moreover, Ministry of Planning records in 2009 indicate that DFID, SIDA, the World Bank, CIDA and UNICEF are helping to bridge the current funding shortfalls, especially those related to teaching and learning materials. For example, in 2009, the World Bank approved a grant of $50 million and DFID provided £13 million. GTZ, JICA and the WFP are also contributing to the sector, but this study failed to obtain the data on their contributions. Over the past three years, a DFID-supported project which matched government funding of textbooks led to average annual increases in non-salary expenditure of 25%. This corroborates the theories on the sources of funds for education service as discussed in Section 2.4 of the literature review. The foregoing discussion shows that the Kenyan government has continued to work close with other actors, namely the donor community and households to support the FPE.

Despite, the government having received significant financial assistance from the donor community (the government is already spending 6% GDP and 36%

of recurrent expenditure on education) it still faces the problem of allocation of these resources within the education sector (World Bank 2005).

In 2006 alone, total education spending before the introduction of FPE amounted to 29% of Kenya's recurrent expenditure, of which about 55% was on primary education. However, 93% of this amount was spent on salaries, thereby leaving very little for capital or development expenditure. This raises questions on the allocation of the available funds within the education sector in Kenya.

4.2 Process of Allocation of Resources at School Level

Under the participatory (cost-sharing) education development philosophy, the government's contribution to meet the revenue shortfalls occasioned by introduction of the FPE was based on block grants to all public (government-maintained) schools to fund teaching, learning materials and extra-curriculum activities. The grant, whose allocation is positively correlated with school enrolment figures, is compiled and collated by DEOs using monthly school returns. Other criteria occasionally used in the grant allocation process include basic conditions in the school and the degree of depletion of school infrastructures. Under the program, each pupil is allocated the same amount of funds of Kshs 1,020 or USD13.60 per year. This vote per pupil is still significantly low considering that two-digit inflation in Kenya has raised living costs.

Once the MOE has computed the funding requirement for each school, it remits the funds by direct wire transfer to DEOs or school bank accounts at the district. When remitting the funds, the MOE also issues guidelines on its disbursement procedures including allocation between learning materials, such as textbooks, exercise books, registers and fixed expenditures, such as staff wages, rent and electricity and water bills. However, some MOE officials, and ministers have been accused of altering the allocations in favour of their regions and communities. For example, Minister Sam Ongeri (MOE) is on record to have boasted of how he used his position to alter the Nyanza Province's FPE allocation to favour his Kissi tribe (The East African Standard 8 February 2010).

If these allocation problems of expenditure on primary education are eliminated, more funds can be made available for other areas, such as construction of more classrooms and schools, hiring and training of more teachers and financing feeding programmes and special needs of girl-pupils.

4.3 Accountability Programmes and Public Transparency

The MOE developed guidelines giving accountability and transparency procedures in the use of the grant funds. The DEOs through the Area Education Officers (AEOs) have the ultimate responsibility of monitoring and evaluating compliance with these guidelines to minimize any opportunistic behaviors. The staff at the MOE headquarters also evaluates compliance with the guidelines in the application of the resources in a sample of primary schools countrywide. In addition, the MOE provided for both internal and external auditing of the schools' annual accounts, recommending appropriate sanctions for non-compliance with the guidelines**.** From the study, it was found that head teachers had generally complied with the laid down guidelines, but in some cases they interfered with different votes especially when the disbursement was delayed.

However, limited participation of communities in implementation of the program, weak monitoring activities by the MOE, lack of disaggregated education performance indicators for rural and urban areas, seemed to undermine the transparency and accountability of the program. The monitoring and evaluation systems for the program are expected to benefit from recent and planned national household surveys. The data from these surveys is expected to facilitate development of disaggregated education indicators to be monitored and evaluated.

4.4 Challenges Facing FPE in Kenya

Many obstacles continue to face the implementation of the program. The efforts of the government to achieve positive results in education is held back by budgetary constraints, weak capacity in the school's management processes, lack of clear guidelines on admissions, delay in remittance of funds and expanded roles for head teachers. Recently, corruption cases, which threaten the continuity of the FPE, have been reported at the MOE. These issues and others are discussed next.

4.4.1 Corruption at the Ministry of Education

The Ministry of Education (MOE) has been in the focus over corruption since December 2009, when UK government suspended funding, citing the loss of about Kshs100 million meant to fund free primary education. It has also recently emerged that books worth Kshs1.7 billion bought with the FPE funds had disappeared from public schools. The East African Standard newspaper reported the loss of these funds late 2009, a story the Ministry first denied. A study that probed 18,000 schools recommended that 5,000 of them be investigated over the disappearance of the books. To the best of our knowledge, no investigation of that sort has been instigated.

In January 2010, the US Government withdrew USD7 million (Kshs350 million) in aid to the embattled ministry until those implicated in the theft of FPE funds are prosecuted (East African Standard 6 February 2010). Although twenty six senior ministry officials were suspended, the PS and the Minister have not been suspended or investigated. Indeed, the attempted suspension of the Minister of Education by the Prime Minister, Raila Odinga, were immediately reversed by the President who claimed that the Prime Minister does not have constitutional authority to effect suspension of a minister. This shows that lack of proper institutions and clear separation of powers and role is encouraging corruption in the public sector, not least in the Ministry of Education. Hence, lack of institutions and structures is leading to leakage of funds from the FPE, leaving Kenya heavily-dependent and vulnerable to external funding of the FPE programme. If these leakages are eliminated, the dependence on external funding can be reduced.

4.4.2 Weak Surveillance Systems

The documents show that monitoring of the implementation of the program was significantly ineffective, encouraging overstatement of enrolment figures as well as embezzlement and misallocation of funds. Furthermore, weaknesses in tendering process have been noted. Some Area Education Officers (AEOs), inspectors and auditors, who are supposed to visit schools regularly within their jurisdiction, face logistics and administrative hurdles. This reduces their efficiency, which in turn affects the effective implementation of program.

4.4.3 Lacklustre Community Participation

Information from the MOE Documents of 2006 notes less vibrant community involvement in the program. In many districts, local community representatives did not participate in the decision-making process. Within the framework of decentralization of the education system and implementation guidelines of the program, the process used at the school level for procurement, prioritization and school administration was participatory. There was close coordination between the SMC and the community. Involvement of the community in decision-making was expected to generate a sense of ownership, enhance accountability, and ensure that content, scheduling, and educational requirements are accurately identified and adapted to local conditions. The limited involvement of the community in management, planning, and learning in some of the instances was attributed to lack of requisite skills and ignorance.

4.4.4 HIV/AIDS Pandemic

The HIV/AIDS scourge had a significant negative impact on FPE. HIV-infected teachers became ill (increasing absenteeism and impairing their effectiveness) and some died (reducing teacher supply). The overall result is that teacher: pupil ratio increased and the curricula were not completed in time.

4.4.5 High Enrolment Rates

Increased student numbers led to shortage of teachers. Teacher-shortage has dogged the education sector (and especially the primary schools) since mid 1990s, when the government froze new recruitments under the World Bank-inspired Structural Adjustment Program (SAP). In the last five years, the government has only been replacing teachers who die, retire or resign from service. The government, however, has not catered for the increased enrolments.

The documents from MOE (2003) indicate that significant shortages of classrooms, teachers and teaching facilities, have been mainly caused by the unexpected 1 million additional pupils who were previously out-of-school, and who turned up to attend classes in response to the government's abolition of school fees. In many schools, the classroom sizes have grown from an average of 40 to 120 pupils per class. The teacher: pupil ratio in some schools, especially in urban areas went as high as 1:120, much above the recommended ratio of 1:40 by the MOE. The increased number of students in classrooms has significantly reduced the efficiency of teaching as the teachers no longer have the optimum level of personal interaction with the pupils.

4.4.6 Weak Management Systems at Schools

There is notable lack of management skills among head teachers and School Management Committees (SMCs). When a teacher is promoted to be a school head teacher, in most cases such a teacher does not undergo any additional training to prepare him for the management role. The same case applies to members of the SMCs (especially those in the rural areas), who in most cases are illiterate. Financial management at the schools has been somewhat weak. Most schools do not have qualified accounts clerks to keep proper books. The MOE documents report that some schools take two or three months, rather than four weeks as prescribed in the MOE guidelines, to execute their expenditures. This results in unnecessary delays in the acquisition of learning materials and other inputs despite the resources having been availed.

4.4.7 Vested Interests

World Bank 2005 notes that political interference in schools is a hindrance in the FPE programme. Some politicians from certain communities demand that school head teachers be appointed only from their communities. For example, when a head teacher from another locality or community is posted to a school, he may not be as effective as he would have due to constant interference by the local politicians who would sometimes resort to inciting parents or the community against such “a foreign head teacher”.

4.4.8 Delay in the Disbursement of Funds to Schools

Delay in the disbursement of the funds has also been cited as another challenge, which affects the implementation of programmes. This has been attributed to the slow pace of fund disbursement by the Ministry of Finance, as well as to logistical issues, such as directing the funds to wrong account numbers. Schools at times have to run for a whole term without obtaining the MOE funds. A lot of funds, which would otherwise be put to fruitful purposes such as school feeding programs and infrastructure developments, and hence reduce reliance on donor funds, are lost in these inefficient processes.

4.4.9 High Dropout Rates

According to a new research by UNESCO (reported in the East African Standard of 6 February 2010) poverty and gender intersect with language, ethnicity, region and rural-urban differences are some of the mutually reinforcing factors that force pupils out of schools. For instance in North-Eastern Province and other pastoral districts in Kenya, enrolment stands at about 40 per cent, several years after free primary education was introduced. Once again, it is noted that it is not just enough to abolish school fees, as even being a nomad, for instance, increases the risk of being out of school.

Approximately 20 per cent of children from poor families who are mainly from urban slums, poor rural and pastoral communities, are out of school. Hence, getting children into school through abolition of fees is just one step towards universal primary education. Due to the above, many children are likely to drop out before completing the primary cycle.

4.4.10 Larger number of Girl-child Dropouts

The East African Standard of 1 November 2009 reported that in the first years at primary schools in Kenya, the ratio of boys to girls is nearly equal, but as age increases, girl enrolment decreases. Several causes can easily explain this: pregnancy, early marriages, poverty and, in some schools, lack of “girls-only” latrines. But a new study at the Great Lakes University in Kisumu reveals that menstruation has become another major cause. A significant number of girls lack sanitary towels. Rather than endure embarrassment, teasing from boys or feelings of shame, girls stay home. As time passes, monthly absences add up. Eventually girls fall behind academically and often drop out. The study reports that I in 10 Kenyan girls do not attend school during menstruation. This brings the role of parents and households into focus: they should teach their daughters how to manage their menses. Parents also need to provide sanitary towels to their daughters. Even NGOs which work closely in schools and provide some support directly to poor households should do good to provide reusable sanitary pads to girls who come from humble backgrounds. Shopkeepers are also requested to stock sanitary towels and display them clearly. Indeed the parliament has already passed a law that directs reduction of taxes on single-use sanitary towels. However, government can help this cause by subsidising the cost of sanitary towels.

The discussion above indicates that the challenges facing FPE in Kenya are not very dissimilar in other countries. However, there are some distinct problems with the implementation of FPE in Kenya. These include corruption, tribalism, lukewarm community participation and some unique disadvantages, such as menstruation stigma, facing the girl child.

4.8 CONCLUSION

Under the FPE, it was anticipated that all legible children for primary schooling will enroll and remain in school, to learn and acquire quality basic education and skills training. To meet the challenge of mobilizing the vast amount of resources required to implement the FPE, the government promoted and strengthened partnerships with all stakeholders in the education sector, namely parents, local communities, private sector, multilateral and bilateral agencies.

While the government is charged with the mobilization of resources, such as paying tuition fees, provision of infrastructure, recruitment of teachers and development of the curriculum, the parents provide uniforms and learning materials and other basic requirements, such as food, sanitation for girl-child and transport. The donor community comes along to assist the government with the funding of the projects of the FPE, while, at the same time, assisting parents with some basic provisions for children such as feeding programmes.

During implementation of the program the quality of teaching and learning generally worsened. The outcome has been attributed to several factors including, growing number of unqualified teachers in schools, and increased teacher absenteeism. Low teachers’ salaries have also precipitated a drop in teachers’ morale some of whom abscond from work to search for alternative or additional jobs. HIV/AIDS pandemic has also led to increased teacher absenteeism and, hence drop in time spent in the classroom and decline in quality of teaching.

The study further found out that the quality of learning has been substantially compromised as the number of pupils in primary school has persistently increased rapidly over time, outpacing the number of teachers. The outcome has seen significant increase in the pupil-teacher ratio. Despite the relative deterioration of the teaching and learning environment, internal efficiency, measured by dropout rates, repetition, and completion rates registered a net improvement since the implementation of the program. These results suggest that, currently pupils tend to progress more rapidly through the system, than in the last decade, before the inception of the FPE programme.

The study findings show that implementation of the program was partially successful in meeting its objectives. It has improved access to primary education with enrolment rates increasing rapidly. Consequently, disparities in enrolment rates between rural and urban areas, between rich and poor and between girls and boys have been narrowing, but by no means eliminated.

Amongst the challenges facing FPE programme in Kenya, corruption at the MOE is the most serious one. This is more so because the two most senior personnel at the ministry namely the Minister and the Permanent Secretary have been implicated in the loss of funds meant for FPE. The corruption at the MOE has led to some donor-countries, namely the UK and the USA, withholding their funding for FPE programme in Kenya. From the development point of view, the disparities in enrolments and dropout rates amongst girls and boys; communities; poor and rich households; rural and urban is not a desirable outcome. Also, community participation is generally weak and needs to be enhanced to yield a sustainable system.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Brief Overview of the Research Background

Efforts to introduce free primary education in Kenya, which started shortly after Kenya gained independence in 1963, have a long and chequered history. In the 1960s the motive of free primary education was to expand access and produce enough number of students, to proceed to secondary and tertiary education and later to fill the human resource gaps left vacant after expatriate and colonial labour emigrated. However, in the 1970s the motive was to increase access so as to reduce disparities and inequalities in enrolment that were, and still are, apparent amongst communities, provinces and rural-urban parity. These early attempts, which had not been planned properly before their implementation, did not last long before school fees were reintroduced back to the primary education system.

The most dramatic re-entry of FPE was witnessed in 2002 when a campaign promise abolishing primary school fees was made good by the National Rainbow Coalition (Narc) government. This action followed intensive international campaign and local demand for introduction of free primary education, as provision of education was now seen as a right. It is imperative to note that while the international community had been pressing for universal primary education, the Narc government mainly abolished school fees. The abolition of school fees, which has been the only element of FPE in Kenya, is only one step towards achieving UPE and the MDGs.

The problems that led to the collapse of the preceding two attempts of adopting free primary education soon returned to haunt Kenya shortly after the reintroduction of the programme in 2003. The major problem, lack of funds and hence the incapacity to construct more classrooms and buy learning materials, has meant that the increased enrolments have led to overflow of classes as the teacher child ratio increased to 1:120 in some cases. This has severely reduced the effectiveness and quality of primary education in public schools leading to some families transferring their children to private schools.

The international community has lent a helping hand by giving grants for the FPE programme in Kenya, but the financial problems and other obstacles still characterise the programme. Other worries are that high drop out rates especially of girl-pupil, pupils from poor households and those from marginalised and nomadic communities, still persist.

Execution of the Research

It is for this reason that this study sought to discuss the alternative ways of financing free primary education in Kenya. The following objectives guided the research.

The first objective was to examine the financial sustainability and implementation of the free primary education programme in Kenya with a view to explaining the challenges it faces and suggesting possible policy options for its success. The task required that the study analyse the implementation of free primary education programme in Kenya with regards to policy and funding, especially to devolved centres, and the roles of different interest groups in its implementation. The other task was to identify challenges encountered in the implementation of free primary education programme in Kenya in the prevailing socio-economic environment.

To achieve the above objectives and tasks, the study hypothesised that the free primary education programme in Kenya is unsustainable mainly because of luck of institutions, infrastructure and management as well as shortage of, or inappropriate, funding. Hence, a reform of the programme was needed to align it with the socio-economic environment prevailing in the country. It further hypothesized that the FPE programme in Kenya excludes the provision of basic personal needs of pupils, such as feeding, hygiene, transport and special needs of the girl child. Moreover, it was assumed that the statistics provided by the Government on the FPE programme was accurate, and that proper monitoring and evaluation of the programme is in place. The study further assumed that the government of Kenya does not have the capacity to run a sustainable free primary education without the financial support of the development partner, such as the World Bank, donor countries and NGOs.

To achieve the above objectives and prove or disapprove of the hypothesis, the study was divided into five chapters.

The research started off by reviewing literature in Chapter Two where the economic and social theories, as well as some empirical work on funding of education were investigated. In chapter 3, research methodology, where research design and research methods as well as the limitation of the research were discussed. In Chapter Four, analysis of the research findings was done, which drew a lot from several documents from IGOs and government ministries, namely the Ministry of Planning and that of Education.

The research found the FPE programme to be a mixed blessing, but its successes outweigh its failures. The general philosophy that hinged on partnerships with other actors, such as the community, households and the donor community were sound and realistic. It was, however, evident that the timing of the launch of the program was more a matter of political expediency than a well thought out and planned policy for free primary education. No research seems to have been conducted prior to launch of the program, thus explaining the many obstacles encountered during its implementation. The lesson drawn from this is that early and good planning would have been an important condition for the successful implementation of the program.

The program has contributed significantly to increased access of primary education. However, there are still some disparities, especially in terms of access to education, between urban and rural areas. In rural areas, girls still get less schooling opportunities than boys. If this gap in schooling is not closed, then inequality across gender will deteriorate, and most aggravating is that, poverty traps can endure. In addition, quality of teaching has slightly deteriorated, most probably due to increased student: teacher ratio which has contributed to teacher demoralisation.

The Kenyan government is significantly dependent on external sources for funding FPE, and this appears likely to continue into the long term. While macro aspects of the FPE have been the focus of the government and donors alike, it is the micro challenges which have been responsible for most of the inequalities and dropout rates in primary school education. These micro differences require differential treatments according to gender, locality and poverty scales. While the macro requirements have significantly been provided for by the current framework of funding, the micro needs of specific children, communities and regions have not yet been factored in the funding of the FPE programme in Kenya.

The implication here is that if the objective is to reduce inequality, then the state must intervene by providing incentives for children in rural areas to attend school. Such incentives may consist of: school lunch programs and cash transfers to poor households. Donor countries can also identify established NGOs to conduit special grants direct to needy students, especially to the girl child whose special needs may cause her to be absent from school or dropout altogether. Government is further encouraged to scale up the training of teachers and empower school heads, their deputies and SMC on the management of funds.

The reported shortage of funds, corruption at the MOE and inefficiency in the allocation of resources will hamper the implementation of the FPE programme. The government is advised to crack down on corruption and improve transparency and accountability in the way FPE funds are spent. The donor community should also find ways of supporting the schools directly even if it means going through agencies such as AusAID, USAID, and DFID as well as established NGOs. This way, they can bypass the corruption at the MOE and avoid leakage of FPE funds. This shows that lack of proper institutions and clear separation of powers and role is encouraging corruption in the public sector, especially at the Ministry of Education. The study recommends that the government strengthens its oversight role in the manner the FPE funds are spent by creating and empowering anti-corruption units

In some districts, school principals did not follow the MOE guidelines aimed at improving the management of the program. As pointed out before, concepts such as costs and revenues were hardly understood. Therefore, in order to achieve a more successful capacity development program, school leaders should be trained to deal with control and management. Moreover, since implementing transformation programs requires changing the culture of the system, the districts, schools, the communities and Ministry of Education should work with teacher and leadership training to ensure that their graduates are fully trained and prepared for their roles in the new education economy. Moreover, the implementation of decentralized programs requires disaggregated data in order to ensure an accurate monitoring of the progress.

However, there are some success stories. Indicators of internal efficiency, such as reduced dropout and repetition rates indicate that pupils are now moving more rapidly through the system.

Limitations of the Study

The researcher had difficulty in obtaining some documents that contained actual disbursement of funds to specific regions. Some of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology employees claimed that these were classified information that could not be taken out of the office. The researcher mitigated this problem by obtaining some of the information form the World Bank Library due to her affiliation with the Bank as a staff.

Time and resource constraints also prevented the researcher from conducting a field study amongst stakeholders and other primary education entities in Kenya. The researcher had to compensate this by looking at more literature and secondary sources.

Recommendations

The study made following recommendations and suggestions for enhanced management and performance of the program:

Recommendations to the Government

- The government should increase the vote per pupil, especially for female pupils.
- Government should empower institutions to stamp out corruption that is eating into the FPE funds. Government can also improve the efficiency in the allocation of funds to reduce further leakage of funds and hence reduce its dependence and vulnerability on external funding.
- There is need for the government to differentiate between urban schools and rural schools in the allocation of funds, instead of awarding equal amounts to schools solely on the basis of enrolment, more funds should be allocated to the rural areas where there is a higher incident of poverty.
- The government should also address the macro socio-economic issues and challenges that affect not only enrolments, but also learning and retention rates. These include poverty, hunger, sanitation, disease that lock out girls, and pupils from poor house holds, nomads and those from the rural areas.
- More funds needs to be allocated towards building more classrooms as well as hiring and training teachers. Involvement of non-trained teachers should be considered for highly deficient regions in order to level off the high pupil to teacher ratios.

Recommendations to the Donor Countries

- Donor countries should consider direct funding of the programmes of the FPE through NGOs to bypass corruption at the Ministry of Education.

- In light of the shortages of schools, classrooms and teachers, donor countries should increase their funding to finance the acquisition of these items.

Recommendations to the NGOs and IGOs

- The NGOs should work closely with the communities and schools to identify high-deficient households. Such households should be targeted with relief food, and money for girl pupils' sanitation.

Recommendations to the Households

- Households should provide their girl child with funds to buy sanitation materials for their menses and educate them. A significant number of girls dropped out of school for being embarrassed from menstruation stains due to lack of sanitation.
- Parents should also participate in the community activities at schools and increase their oversight over how school funds are being spent by the school administrators.

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