

Full Length Research Paper

Opportunities and challenges for public primary school head teachers in the implementation of free primary education in Kisumu Municipality, Kenya: An analytical assessment

Benta Achieng' Opol Akech and Enose M. W. Simatwa*

Department of Educational Management and Foundations, Maseno University, Kisumu, Kenya.

Accepted 23 July, 2010

This study investigated opportunities and challenges for public primary school head teachers in the implementation of Free Primary Education in Kisumu municipality. Being a descriptive research, the study population consisted of 114 head teachers, 17,100 class seven and eight pupils in the municipality. Out of this, a sample of 37 head teachers and 456 class seven and eight pupils was selected through stratified random sampling method. Four instruments were employed in data collection for the study. These included: Questionnaire, Interviews, Observation and Focus Group Discussion. Qualitative data collected from open ended items in the questionnaire were analyzed on an ongoing process as themes and sub themes emerged from the data, while quantitative data collected from closed ended items in the questionnaire were analyzed by use of descriptive statistics in form of percentages, frequencies and means. The findings showed that head teachers had a number of opportunities and faced many challenges in the implementation of Free Primary Education. High enrolments, inadequate government funding, inadequate physical facilities, inadequate teaching and learning resource materials, poor teaching, overcrowded classes, poorly constructed classrooms, heavy workload for teachers due to understaffing, uncooperative parents, student indiscipline and poor financial management skills were some of the challenges that head teachers faced. The opportunities available included continuing and former street children, curricula and co-curricula materials and facilities that were in place before introduction of Free Primary Education and teachers. The head teachers adopted coping strategies in the implementation of Free Primary Education including dividing classes into streams, Parents Teachers Associations employing more teachers and providing other resources that were required. It was however, established that head teachers had a number of opportunities and strategies they could employ in implementing Free Primary Education. Based on the findings, it was recommended that the Ministry of Education should address the challenges faced by head teachers in the implementation of Free Primary Education. Teachers Service Commission should also employ more teachers, and the Ministry of Education should sensitize parents on their role in the implementation of Free Primary Education, allocate more funds and train head teachers in financial management.

Key words: Opportunities, challenges, free primary education, head teachers, primary, Kisumu municipality, Kenya.

INTRODUCTION

The aspect of 'Investment in Primary Education' has been a key element in the development process worldwide. Knight and Sabot (1990) established that primary education improves the earnings of its graduates

by nineteen percent in Kenya and thirteen percent in Tanzania. In such a noble process, there is always apparent social benefits that accrue from primary schooling, which include reduced fertility, better health

care and decreased child mortality. It is for this reason that most countries worldwide have prioritized primary education. In United States of America (USA) elementary schooling is free and compulsory to all children (World Education Services, 2004). In India central government provide 80% of the financing of Free Primary Education (FPE), while the local states implement and provide the rest of the financing (Government of India, 1994). Africa countries like Malawi, Uganda and Lesotho have implemented FPE (World Bank, 2004). Implementation of FPE in Kenya on its part started laying down strategies of achieving FPE as was first articulated in sessional Paper Number Ten of 1965 on African Socialism to eradicate ignorance, poverty and disease (Republic of Kenya, 2004). The first ever giant step towards granting FPE in Kenya was in 1974 (UNESCO, 1992). A presidential decree led to provision of Free Primary Education to pupils in lower classes. As a result, the total enrolment, which stood at 2.1 million at that time, rose rapidly so that in 1978 it had reached 3.2 million (Republic of Kenya, 2003a). This number weighed down on institutional growth such that in 1974, there were 3,700 primary schools and by 1980 the number had risen to 13,200 (Sifuna, 1980). With enlarged enrolment, a countrywide building program launched to cope with the required classes, charged school committees with the task of imposing building fund for each child. In most instances, this turned out to be higher than the school fees that charged prior to the decree and thereby rendering FPE program meaningless.

FPE re-introduction sought to address the limited progress towards the attainment of Universal Primary Education witnessed in the last decade (UNESCO, 2003). A new approach to the provision of Free Primary Education in Kenya was deemed necessary and in January 2003, it was declared in recognition of education as a basic right for all Kenyan children as articulated in the Children's Act of 2001. According to the Task Force report on Free Primary Education Republic of Kenya (2003b), the government would continue to pay teachers wage bill, support staff, pay for electricity, water and conservancy. The government would specifically provide to all public primary schools the required basic learning/teaching materials such as text books, exercise books, pieces of chalk and dusters.

The initial step towards the implementation of Free Primary Education was the abolition of all kinds of fees, levies and user charges, which for decades kept a large number of children and youth out of school. This therefore, meant that the government was going to channel funds to schools directly and the head teacher to be directly in charge of finances. Amidst of all these arrangements, the head teacher had no prior training in

financial management to meet these demands. Following the declaration of Free Primary Education in 2003 by the Government (Republic of Kenya, 2003b) there has been an overwhelming influx of children to public primary schools. Consequently, increased demands are placed on the Ministry of Education (MOE) by the public for the provision of teaching/learning materials and equipment, additional teachers and physical facilities. Inadequate provision of education to children with disabilities owing to the weak identification and assessment mechanisms also poses a great threat to the success of Free Primary Education program (Republic of Kenya, 2004).

The ministry of Education through the government of Kenya has however, made tremendous efforts to raise funds from donors such as World Bank, UNICEF, European Union, USAID and Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) like Plan International and CARE Kenya to finance FPE (Ministry of Education, 2007).

Substantially, the new approach to Free Primary Education put in place by the Kenya government in 2003 aims at meeting the millennium development goals of universal access to primary education by the year 2015. However, in this regard, Ramani (2003) pointed a number of factors that still remain a hurdle in the attainment of universal primary education goals in Kenya by 2015. Among the urban poor for instance; poverty, child labor, shortage of schools and teachers in slum areas remain the greatest impediment. While some rural areas have adequate school buildings, there are many others that are having none, particularly peri-urban areas with large slum populations. Many rural schools also lack even the most basic amenities such as toilets, electricity and running water. These challenges were not found to be unique to Kenya. Countries where FPE has been implemented like US, India, Malawi, Uganda and Lesotho, the head teachers had to cope with the challenges such as influx of children from all backgrounds, indiscipline, lack of planning time, overcrowding, falling survival rates, shortages of teachers, classroom, textbooks and teaching materials, access shock and low job satisfaction among teachers (World Bank, 2004; Arenstrop, 2004; Government of India, 1994; World Education Services, 2004; Sweetly, 2004).

In Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2004 on education and Training (Republic of Kenya, 2004), the Government of Kenya demonstrates its commitment to the development of education and training through sustained allocation of resources. Even though the Free Primary Education has had some positive impact in this region, it has been noted that the enrolment level at primary school between boys and girls within the municipality is not balanced. This is because majority of the local people still hold dearly to some of the old beliefs that boys are to be recognized and given priority in matters of development (UNESCO, 2005). It means that primary education sector still faces many challenges. Some of the challenges relate to access, equity, quality, relevance and efficiency in the management of educational resources.

*Corresponding author. Email: simatwae@yahoo.com.

Table 1. Study population and sample size.

| Divisions | Study population | | | Sample size | |
|-----------|------------------|-----|--------|-------------|-----|
| | S | H | P | H | P |
| Western | 45 | 45 | 6,750 | 15 | 180 |
| Urban | 21 | 21 | 3,150 | 07 | 84 |
| Eastern | 48 | 48 | 7,200 | 15 | 192 |
| Total | 114 | 114 | 17,100 | 37 | 456 |

Key: S = schools; H = Head teachers; P = Class VII & VIII pupils.

The management of public primary schools is the responsibility of the head teachers who undertake the instructional supervision and management in general. The government and all other stakeholders look upon the head teacher for effective implementation of any program introduced at this level. Free Primary Education is such a program that was introduced and it is the responsibility of the head teacher to ensure that it is effectively implemented on the ground. Free Primary Education has opportunities and presents great challenges to primary school head teachers because they are the ones expected to play a key role in its implementation. It was therefore, necessary to carry out a study on the opportunities and challenges for head teachers in the implementation of Free Primary Education in Kisumu Municipality.

Statement of the problem

The opportunities and challenges in the implementation of Free Primary Education as ingrained in the In Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2004 on education and Training (Republic of Kenya, 2004), are still a matter of utter concern to educationists. In all public primary schools, including those in Kisumu Municipality, head teachers like in any other parts of the country, are supposed to implement FPE. Kisumu Municipality was chosen an area of study because it encompassed characteristics of rural, per-urban and urban areas. Hence the findings of the study could serve as indicators of what was experienced in Kenya.

METHODOLOGY

Research questions

1. What opportunities do head teachers have in the implementation of Free Primary Education in Kisumu municipality?
2. What challenges do head teachers face in the implementation of Free Primary Education in the Kisumu municipality?
3. How do head teachers cope with the challenges of implementing Free Primary Education in Kisumu municipality?

Methods

The study was designed to follow the strategies of descriptive research. Cohen and Marion (1994) described descriptive research

as a study design and used to obtain information concerning the current status of the phenomena under study and to describe what exists with respect to variables or conditions in a situation. The research design was suitable for this study because the study focused on the current phenomenon in the implementation of Free Primary Education.

Considering these points, the study population encompassed 114 head teachers and 17100 class seven and eight pupils in 114 public primary schools. Out of this population, a sample of 37 Head teachers and 456 class VII and VIII pupils was selected through stratified random sampling. The sample size of 456 was considered representative of the 17100 pupils. This is in accordance with Kathuri and Pals (1993) who recommend that for a population of 20,000, there should be a minimum sample size of 377 and 456 was well above this (Table 1).

Four instruments were used to collect data for the study. These were open ended questionnaires, interviews, document analysis and focus group discussions. The open ended questionnaire was titled questionnaire for headteachers, the interview was titled interview schedule for head teachers and the document analysis and focus group discussions was titled focus group discussion schedule for pupils. The questionnaire consisted of two parts. Part 1 elicited information on general details and part 2 consisted of specific information based on the research study.

The face validity of the instruments was determined by three experts in research methodology in the department of educational management and foundations, Maseno University who actually, scrutinized the instruments. Their suggestions were used in revising the instruments before use in the data collection. Reliability of the instruments was determined through a pilot study in ten schools that were not included in the actual study. The weaknesses, ambiguity and inconsistency noted were corrected in the final draft before use. As instruments for data collection, Questionnaires were administered to the head teachers of various schools, interviews were held on one to one basis on the various Head teachers, and groups of 10 classes comprising seven and eight pupils were engaged in focus group discussion. Questionnaires and interview schedules were marked for identification and classification. Qualitative data collected from Focus Group Discussions, Open Ended Items in the Questionnaire, Document Analysis, and Interviews were analyzed on an ongoing process as sub-themes and themes emerged from the data. Quantitative data collected from closed ended questionnaires and Document Analysis was analyzed by use of descriptive statistics in form of percentages, frequencies and means.

RESULTS

Question 1: What opportunities do head teachers have in the implementation of free primary education in Kisumu Municipality?

In providing an answer to this question, the head teachers were asked to state the opportunities they had in the implementation of FPE in Kisumu municipality for the period 2003 - 2008. Their responses were as shown in the Table 2.

As depicted in Table 2, all the thirty seven head teachers (100%) indicated that they had the following: Physical materials, finances and human resources, classrooms, Pupils, Free Primary Fund, Text books, Teachers, Desks, Staff room and QASO. Eight (21.62%) and four (10.81%) indicated that they do not have account clerks and library services, respectively. During

Table 2. Opportunities for head teachers in the implementation of free primary education in Kisumu Municipality as cited by Head teachers (n = 37).

| Opportunities | Frequency (F) | Percentage (%) |
|----------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Sanitation facilities | 37 | 100 |
| Classrooms | 37 | 100 |
| Pupils | 37 | 100 |
| FPE fund | 37 | 100 |
| Textbooks | 37 | 100 |
| Teachers | 37 | 100 |
| Desks | 37 | 100 |
| Library | 4 | 10.8 |
| Office space | 37 | 100 |
| Accounts clerks | 8 | 21.62 |
| Quality assurance officers | 37 | 100 |
| Play grounds | 37 | 100 |

Table 3. Challenges of Implementation of free primary education as indicated by head teachers (n = 37).

| Challenges | Frequency (F) | Percentage (%) |
|--|---------------|----------------|
| Inadequacy of FPE funds | 18 | 48.6 |
| Accountability of FPE funds | 12 | 32.4 |
| Delays in receiving of FPE funds | 07 | 18.9 |
| Older children shy to learn | 07 | 18.9 |
| Overcrowding in class | 18 | 48.6 |
| Inadequate facilities & stationary | 37 | 100 |
| Poor sanitation | 18 | 48.6 |
| Former Street children with bad behavior | 07 | 18.9 |
| Control of pupils | 18 | 48.6 |
| Shortage of text books | 37 | 100 |

the interview one of the head teachers remarked that "schools have the basic facilities to implement FPE and what they need is proper guidance on the utilization of these facilities." During focus group discussion, pupils pointed out that classrooms, FPE fund, text books and desks were available for head teachers to implement FPE in Kisumu municipality. It was also observed that the opportunities cited by the head teachers and pupils were available.

Question 2: What are the challenges faced by headteachers in their effort to implement free primary education in Kisumu Municipality?

In looking at this question tentatively, the headteachers

were asked to indicate the challenges they encountered in the implementation of Free Primary Education for the school year 2003 - 2008. The challenges mentioned by the Head teachers included inadequacy of FPE funds, accountability of FPE funds, delays in receiving of FPE funds, older children shy to learn, overcrowding in class, inadequate facilities and stationary, poor sanitation, former street children with bad behaviour, shortage of teachers, control of pupils and shortage of textbooks (Table 3).

In the interview sessions carried out, one of the Head teachers stated that they were not able to undertake the program effectively without adequate funds. The interview further gathered more concrete information regarding accountability of funds, school heads who had no interest in accounts saw the updating of books of accounts as quite demanding without prior training, not to mention the delays in disbursement of funds that could take as long as three months according to some heads.

Question 3: What are the coping strategies Head teachers employed against the challenges in the implementation of free primary education in Kisumu Municipality?

In an attempt to respond to this Question, substantiating this third query, questionnaires were administered and various interviews were conducted to find out how the headteachers were coping with the challenges of implementing Free Primary Education in Kisumu Municipality.

When asked about the coping approaches, diverse responses from school heads included; 29.7% of head teachers making use of whatever the government disbursed without discriminating. In some cases new admissions were not captured in the statistics. Eleven (29.7%) used what was available even if it was inadequate, fourteen (37.8%) of head teachers made parents to contribute and this was done with some amount of difficulty. Study findings further showed that thirteen (35.14%) of head teachers combined classes by employing multigrade system (putting children of different classes in one room to be attended to by one teacher), sometimes just keeping very large groups of pupils engaged in peer learning. Thirteen (35.14%) head teachers made PTA to employ more teachers. This however, was not possible in the peri-urban and slum areas. Eleven (29.72%) head teachers said that they made use of volunteer teachers. During the interviews, all thirty seven (100%) Head teachers pointed out that the government should employ more teachers to stem the shortage of teachers. Concurrent findings showed that five (13.51%) of head teachers closely monitored work done everyday by trying to be available, empowering deputy and senior teachers to assist in supervision of work done. Five (13.51%) organized remedial/multi shift classes where this was successful there was some

Table 4. Coping Strategies for inadequate funds inadequate teachers, large class size and adult teachers in the implementation of free primary education as cited by head teachers (n=37).

| Coping Strategies | Frequency(F) | Percentage (%) |
|--|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Inadequate funds | | |
| Fund transfer to needy children by head teachers | 6 | 16.3 |
| Perseverance | 11 | 29.7 |
| Parents contributing | 14 | 37.8 |
| Borrow and pay back | 6 | 16.2 |
| Inadequate teachers | | |
| Combining classes | 13 | 35.14 |
| PTA employing more teachers | 13 | 35.14 |
| Teachers offering voluntary services | 11 | 29.73 |
| Large class size | | |
| Close monitoring of work done everyday | 5 | 13.51 |
| Remedial classes/multi-shift | 5 | 13.51 |
| PTA employing more teachers | 6 | 16.21 |
| Divided into streams | 21 | 56.76 |
| Adult learners | | |
| Give work equivalent to the rest | 23 | 62.162 |
| Have no adult learners | 10 | 27.027 |
| Don't admit adult learners | 4 | 10.811 |

financial input by parents. Five (13.51%) made PTA to employ more teachers while Twenty one (59.5%) said that they divided large classes into streams. Observation on the ground revealed that there was minimal teacher/pupil contact where the classes were large. One of the Head teachers during the interview stated "the multishift or creation of new schools should be undertaken to cater for the increased enrolment." In the issue concerning adult learners, twenty three (62.162%) of the Head teachers ensured that work given to adult learners was equivalent to other students. This was to ensure that there was no discrimination and to bring everybody on board. Ten (27.027%) Head teachers did not have adult pupils; these were mainly in the CBD schools where level of awareness was high and there was some order in admission of pupils. A few of the Head teachers said that they did not admit over the age of students' altogether. These were mainly in the CBD schools. During the interview, all thirty seven (100%) Head teachers, indicated that the admission should be reviewed to exclude children outside the school that are more than the class age with two years.

DISCUSSION

The relayed research information has revealed an analytical

review of the opportunities and challenges for public primary school Head teachers in the implementation of Free Primary Education in Kisumu Municipality, Kenya Table 4. The findings show that the opportunities for Head teachers in the implementation of FPE included: Availability of sanitation facilities, classrooms, pupils FPE funding, textbooks, teachers, desks, libraries, office space, accounts clerks, quality assurance officers and play grounds. These findings on opportunities for implementation of FPE in Kisumu Municipality were consistent with those cited by World Bank (2004), Arenstrop (2004), Government of India (1994) and World Education Services (2004) as having been available in USA, India, Malawi, Uganda and Lesotho in the process of implanting FPE in these countries. As was indicated in the tabulated data, facilities were available in varying degrees from one institution to another. In the CBD schools, classrooms were painted, window panes fitted, ceiling boards placed, floor cemented, the ones developing cracks repaired and corridors leading to class rooms had roofs fitted and floors cemented. In Peri-urban schools however, class rooms lacked proper windows, ceiling boards and doors; some classes were constructed of mud. They were however, able to accommodate students and teachers to facilitate FPE. Some schools benefited from CDF and were able to construct more classrooms to ease the congestion.

All Head teachers 37 (100%) pointed out that they had experienced influx of pupils because of the government intervention. This finding agreed with what the task force on implementation of FPE had suggested (Republic of Kenya, 2003) that there would be an influx of people. Parents' found the program affordable as most levies that had made education expensive had been struck off. Head teachers appreciated the fact that they had financial support from the government. In the rural and informal urban settlements, the money had a lot of impact since many parents had difficulty in paying fee. In the CBD schools, there were permanent structures with ablution blocks in place enhancing hygiene in the schools. Provision of Textbooks was a major priority of the government and this enhanced learning in schools. In many schools textbooks had a positive impact; the ration was hardly 1:1 in any of the visited schools as indicated in Table 3. The disadvantaged areas in particular, realized improved exposure and therefore, some improved their performance.

In most of the schools visited, desks were available even though in some cases they had to improvise. Schools in the municipality had desks though in over enrolled schools they made use of long benches which were cheaper to source. Repairs and maintenance of the furniture was done at the end of the year.

The schools that had staffrooms, libraries, office space, play grounds and account clerks, benefited greatly from the services. Staff rooms are very necessary for teachers to prepare, mark and relax during their free time. This improved time spent in school marking or planning hence improved results. A very small percentage of schools visited had libraries and those were the Central Business District schools. These meant pupils had more access to books outside the normal class texts or did have a place for extra work when not in class. 21.6% percent of schools had accounts clerks and these were in the central business districts. However, these were employed or recruited after the first year of Free Primary Education in 2003. They made work easier for heads as they are trained and not involved in other activities of the school. Head teachers had time to attend to other pressing issues and also teach the pupils. In situations where there were no accounts clerks, heads were effectively in-serviced in book keeping and on accounting procedures. Sound academic performance requires efficient financial control and accountability.

Quality assurance officers were more sensitized and customers friendly and hence being useful to the schools. The head teachers, deputies and senior teachers were also given basic training in Quality Assurance to enable them effectively carry out supervision duties in schools. The availability of teachers in schools and the fact that some committees employed more teachers was an opportunity to the head teachers.

Inadequacy of funds as has been pointed out and has led to parents being made to contribute extra levies to

enable the successful running of the schools. A good number of parents find it difficult to raise the extra levies demanded by the school. These included tuition fee, examination fee, and excursion fee among others. A number of schools sent pupils home to collect the money when parents failed to remit it in good time. The parents were sensitized about the payment of extra levies during PTA meetings, but some failed to comply. They reasoned is that payment of extra levies defeated the purpose of FPE. The head teachers found it a problem because some activities like music and drama were recurrent and so required funding every year. Apart from inadequacy, the disbursement of FPE funds are been delayed and this caused uncertainty and hence result in the delay in purchases of the materials needed for the running of FPE like textbooks, exercise books and pieces of chalk. Some head teachers resorted to borrowing and paying later at an extra cost. Overcrowding crippled effective dissemination of information, a class of fifty and above was difficult to manage though head teachers talked of close monitoring through work done everyday; creating time for remedial work, employing more teachers and dividing the large classes into streams. This was tricky, for one, the amount of work done everyday did not guarantee learning having taken place. Classrooms were available for the head teachers to implement FPE; in terms of numbers, they were inadequate leading to congestion thus hampering the teacher's ability to teach effectively. These findings on challenges faced in the implementation of FPE in Kisumu Municipality were consistent with those cited by Sweetly (2004) and Government of India (1994) as having been experienced in Indonesia and India during the implementation of FPE.

Conditions of the classrooms included; open window panes, which distracted children from concentrating. Lack of ceiling boards was the reason why noises were heard across the classrooms and this made learning conditions non conducive. Shortage of desks was experienced because of over enrolment. Moreover, most of the desks were observed to be in poor conditions, which made them uncomfortable for the pupils, making the classrooms unpleasant places for learning and this impacted negatively on children participation in class lowering quality of education under FPE program. Pupils were available, but they varied in ages (from seven to sixteen years) and experiences, it was noted that some dropped out of school because they could not cope. These finding agreed with those of Arenstrop (2004) on the experiences in Malawi, Uganda and Lesotho in the process of FPE implementation. Most affected were street children that had been attracted to FPE.

Textbooks were available as they could be bought from government funding. However, the pupil/book ratio was in most cases, generally higher, beyond what school policies advocate, for example one to two. This was because rate of tear and losses were generally high making it difficult for teachers to provide quality education

of pupils in the FPE program.

Teachers were available to teach all the subject areas, however, all schools experienced shortage of teachers with the consequences of each teacher having a higher work load of generally above 40 per week. Furthermore, most teachers resided far from schools and therefore, managing students work in terms of marking of books and Continuous Assessment Tests were wanting. Generally, the primary school teachers were found to be overwhelmed by work because there were more demands from them under the FPE program. Accounts clerks services were available but a few head teachers were in a position to supervise them and as a result much could not be expected of them. This led to demotion of some heads because they were not able to account for the FPE funds as required.

The population of pupils was far much beyond the facilities in all of the visited schools and as a result basic facilities like toilets and water points were not enough. Toilets were not cleaned well leading to spread of water borne diseases like typhoid and dysentery. Over crowding in classrooms also led to the spread of skin and air borne diseases like tuberculosis. Although inadequacy of funds posed a problem, head teachers easily tackled this as they were able to transfer whatever money they had to needy pupils. Informed parents however gave them problems because they knew that when it came to extra levies all of them would be asked to pay equally. Some of the students came from poor backgrounds and sometimes could not cope and therefore were forced to drop out because they could not afford the basic requirements like uniform and remedial funds (FPE, 2006). This trend is however not recommended. One cannot start educating a child on credit from such early stage. Inadequacy in teaching staff was a problem, though Head teachers interviewed talked of employing more teachers through PTA funds. This did not work very well because parents were not willing to pay extra levies. With more sensitization of parents and other stakeholders things improved. In cases where teachers were employed, they were not regular; they only taught for a while and then left for private schools where they were sure of getting regular and better salaries after obtaining experience from public schools. Combining classes was possible when the number did not exceed 60 pupils. However, when the number was above 100 it was not possible to fit them in one class and if they did then teachers found it difficult to monitor pupils work and this affected close monitoring by head teachers of daily progress. Remedial classes were also encouraged by head teachers even though teachers demanded for payments. Where the teachers were overworked during normal class hours, it was not possible to have effective remedial. It was therefore, necessary to employ reserve teachers. Adult learners were considered mature in terms of age and were sometimes put to guide the younger children, though age did not necessarily mean maturity

and responsibility. This was sometimes counter productive. Some were made prefects though they ended up not being very competent and also the younger learners did not want to co-operate with them. This brought about indiscipline in school, when it comes to academic work, they were given the same task and the results were made public, this discouraged some of them who even dropped out of school. (UNESCO Assessment of FPE 2006)

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was wrapped up that the opportunities in the form of improved access, guaranteed government funding, availability of textbooks, teachers, classrooms, desks, office space, playgrounds, and quality assurance officers' services were of utter necessity in the execution of Free Primary Education. With all these opportunities associated with challenges in the form of inadequacy and delay of funding, problems of accounting procedures by the head teachers, inadequate facilities and stationery, older children shying from learning, street children with bad behavior, hard to control pupils by teachers, shortage of classrooms, teachers and textbooks. With all these challenges, the head teachers had to come up with coping strategies such as combining classes into less streams, Parents Teachers Association employing more teachers, closer monitoring of work done every day and remedial classes/multi-shift. This suggests that despite the opportunities available for FPE implementation, the challenges arising from them require stiff strategies put in place to counter them.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the findings and conclusions of this study, it was recommended that Admission to primary Schools should be restricted to acceptable age limits of 6 - 13 years. Those above the age bracket (6 - 13 years) should be advised to join adult literacy programs. The government should revise the Free Primary Education budget to take into account the varying enrolment in the course of the year and also the inflation factor. The government should also take the responsibility of taking up the infrastructure and development of schools, and this could be achieved by reintroducing schools equipment schemes to make provision for textbooks and other learning materials. It was also suggested that the governing body should employ more teachers to cater for the increased enrolment and ensure that the Kenya Education Staff Institute train head teachers in financial management in order to manage the FPE funds very well. Coupled with this hiring of more accounts clerks could assist in proper book keeping at primary school level.

It was also proposed that the disbursement of Free Primary Education funds should be in two phases in a year, that is, in January for the beginning of year requirements and June after the budget for learning and examination materials required for end of the year programs. Advise was also passed that head teacher should be given a free hand within the legal framework to manage the discipline of pupils in school, in addition to the government encouraging creation of more schools and perk up on infrastructure; that is, libraries to ease congestion. The municipality need charged with the duty of improving sanitation by providing functional sewerage systems, water supply and electricity to enhance public health in schools. In the light of security, it was suggested that the government should enhance safety of persons and school facilities to create conducive environment for learning.

Since this study restricted itself to Kisumu municipality, it was as a matter of fact, recommended that there is need to have study replicated in other Districts in the country, in order to give a general picture of head teachers' experiences in the whole country. This prompted a dire need for further studies on the role of school management committees and Parents Teachers Associations in management of Free Primary Education Funds as they were found to be crucial in the management of primary school.

REFERENCES

- Arenstrop R (2004). Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi and Uganda: Impact of Universal Primary Education. Washington DC: World Bank.
- Cohen C, Marion L (1994). Research Methods in Education. London. UK Routledge.
- Government of India (1994). The District Primary Education in India. Available online: www.education.wic.in
- Kathuri NJ, Pals DA (1993). Introduction to Educational Research. Njoro: Egerton
- Knight E, Sabot W (1990). Education, productivity and equity. Paris: Oxford University press.
- Ministry of Education (2007). Ministry of Education Handbook on FPE in Kenya. Nairobi: Jomo Kenyatta Foundation.
- Ramani K (2003 November, 29th). Education talks herald changes. East African Standard. p. 14. Nairobi: The East African Standard Media Group.
- Republic of Kenya. (2003). Economic Survey. Nairobi: Government printer.
- Republic of Kenya. (2003). Report of the Task Force on the Implementation of FPE. Nairobi: Jomo Kenyatta Foundation.
- Republic of Kenya (2004). Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2004 on Educational Training
- Sifuna D (1980). Short essays on education in Kenya. Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau.
- Sweetly E (2004). Managing Basic Education Project in Indonesia. Available online: www.mbeproject.net
- UNESCO (1992). Free Primary Education, Kenya. Nairobi: UNESCO.
- UNESCO (2003). Kenya UNESCO Year Book. Nairobi: UNESCO.
- UNESCO (2003). Africa UNESCO Year Book Africa Department. Nairobi: UNESCO.
- UNESCO (2005). Challenges of implementing Free Primary Education in Kenya: Assessment Report. Nairobi: UNESCO.
- UNESCO (2006). Assessment of Free Primary Education – Fact book online Education for all. Nairobi: UNESCO.
- World Education Services (2004). World Education Profiles. Ottawa: WES.