

An Evaluation of Dynamics of Quality of Education Provided By Non-Formal Primary Schools in Nairobi, Kenya

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Abstract

Basic education in Kenya is provided through Formal and Non-Formal Education Institutions. The Non-Formal Institutions that provide basic education are the Non-formal primary schools (NFSs), which offer the regular school curriculum and Non-Formal Education Centres (NFECs), which follow a non-formal basic education curriculum. The formal school system is not able to provide access to all learners, especially those from urban informal settlements resulting to enormous growth of NFSs. Despite the great role, the NFSs continue to play in providing an alternative channel basic education there is paucity of literature on the quality of education that these schools provide. This study was an attempt to fill this gap. The specific objectives of this study were, first, to establish the quality of learners who attend Non-Formal Schools. Second, to investigate the quality of the learning environments provided in the Non-Formal Schools. Thirdly, to evaluate the quality of the curriculum used in the Non-Formal Schools. Fourthly, to investigate the quality of the educational processes employed in the Non-Formal Schools; and finally, to evaluate the quality of educational outcomes obtained from the Non-Formal Schools. The study was informed by the general systems theory and adopted the UNICEF framework of education quality that defines education in terms of five quality dimensions, namely; learner, environment, content, processes and outcomes. Descriptive survey design was used to investigate the quality of education provided in these schools. The target population comprised 411 NFSs that had presented candidates for KCPE. Stratified random sampling was used to get study respondents who comprised the pupils, teachers, headteachers of the NFS. Data collection was done through use of questionnaires, interview guide, review of curriculum documents and observation. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics by use of the SPSS software while qualitative data were analysed thematically. The study findings were children who enrolled in the NFS were very needy as they came from poor households; some children had difficulties getting medical care, food, and shelter and were prone to insecurity. Other findings were the NFSs lack suitable and adequate physical facilities and instructional materials for use by the learners; most of the teachers who teach in the NFSs were untrained; school managers lacked training in school management. Further the study found out that there was regular use of continuous assessment and NFSs performed quite well in the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) and rated better than the public schools in Nairobi county. From the above findings, it was concluded that despite the many challenges Non-formal primary schools provide quality education. The researcher recommends first, for intervention programmes that help families meet basic needs, second, for support from the government and other actors to improve the quality of the physical facilities, and finally for in-servicing/recruitment of trained teachers.

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