

The Funding of Free Primary Education and Its Prospects for Sustainability in Kakamega and Kajiado Counties, Kenya

Ogola Martin O., Olembo Jotham and Mse Godfrey

Abstract

The introduction of Free Primary Education in Kenya left the government with a greater role and burden in financing primary education. The new role encompassed mobilization of resources, paying tuition fees, training, recruitment and paying teachers, and the provision of infrastructure and instructional materials. Parents on the other hand were required to provide basic needs for their children such as school uniforms, food and transport to school where necessary. This paper sought to establish the funding mechanisms for FPE and examine the sustainability of the FPE initiative. The study was conducted in Kakamega and Kajiado districts (now Counties). From the 59 schools sampled, 59 headteachers and 177 teachers were included in the study. Fourteen Area Education Officers (AEOs), 118 parents, 118 School Management Committee (SMC) members, 2 District Education Officers and 7 senior officers from the Ministry of Education headquarters were also interviewed. The study used questionnaires, interview schedules and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) for data collection. Head teachers and teachers indicated that no preparation for FPE had been given to them prior to implementation and the training given after introduction of FPE was inadequate and rushed. Head teachers and teachers revealed that most parents were not actively involved in school management affairs and had misinterpreted the FPE policy. Members of SMC were seen as lacking the necessary capacity to contribute effectively in financial management, budgeting and curriculum support in schools. Still, SMCs were more supportive than PTAs. Five concerns emerged as fundamental to the sustainability of FPE in Kenya: budgetary provisions and constraints, Kenya's economic performance, donor support, political commitment and community support. The sustainability of FPE is threatened by high cost of funding, the shortage of teachers, reliance on donor support, uncertainty over continued political goodwill, slowed growth of the Kenyan economy and the apathy from parents. There are policy gaps relating to early childhood education, admission of pupils into primary schools and allocation of FPE grants.

Keywords: Funding, Free Primary Education, Prospective Sustainability, Kakamega, Kajiado Districts, Kenya

Full text: <https://www.iiste.org/Journals/index.php/JEP/article/view/17449>