

The Impact of Free Primary Education on Teachers' Effectiveness in Kuria East Constituency

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Abstract

The World Bank structural adjustment programs in Kenya that demanded cost-sharing in public primary schools led many poor families withdraw children from school such that when the government introduced free learning in 2003 the pupil-teacher ratio increased from 40:1 to 70:1. This paper is a summary of a study that sought to determine the impact of free primary education on teacher effectiveness in Kuria East Constituency for the period 1999-2008. It employed the Capital Theory of School Effectiveness and Improvement which discounts the conventional model of measuring school effectiveness and improvement as an inadequate tool for measuring school success, but advocates that schools should leverage on effective strategies that allow for large impact from relatively low effort instead of employing too much effort and yielding too little. Simple random sampling technique was used to identify 100 teacher respondents and 25 head teachers from 25 schools that were identified through stratified sampling of a total 68 schools in the area. Results show that increase in class sizes made teachers adopt lecture methods, not issue adequate assignments, avoid marking assignments, and reduce their morale, a combination that was reflected in examination results. The research recommended that the government adopt performance contracts for teachers so that they are paid according to the workload arising from extra-large classes that have come with free learning.

Key words: Free Primary Education, Pupil-Teacher Ratio, Teacher Effectiveness, Kuria East Constituency

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