

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*

I. INTRODUCTION

The reality of providing universal education in Kenya was first realised in 2003 when the incoming government implemented free primary education (FPE) in the country in fulfillment of an electoral campaign pledge that was instrumental for its success at the polls. During the period coming to the polls there was growing consensus that the country required mass education for its citizens if it was to position itself in the global economy and raise its national status. Both the academic community and policy makers were getting restless on the impact of the World Bank led structural adjustment programs (SAPs) that demanded cost-sharing in schools, making it unfavorable for many poor Kenyan families to send children to school. In the 1990s the school system witnessed declining enrolments falling from 95% in 1991 to 78% in 2001 and by 2002 the completion rates for primary schools stood at 50% (Chuck, 2009). But 13 years down the road researchers of FPE in Kenya are still exploring the problems associated with the expansion of education especially the consequences of increased enrolment in schools without the corresponding expansion of physical facilities to accommodate the surge of pupils. In particular, research has been concerned on how huge enrollment has impacted on teachers’ effectiveness and the quality of teaching (Mwendwa, 2011) in response to the declining performances in the Kenya Primary Certificate of Education (KCPE) since 2003. While the Kenyan government acknowledges that implementation of FPE has faced a lot of challenges right from its inception (Republic of Kenya, 2005), several researchers concur that overcrowded classrooms, high pupil-teacher ratio, inadequate infrastructure and lack of sanitation facilities (Sifuna, 2005; Mushtaq 2008; and Itunga, 2011) have contributed to poor performance of learners in public primary schools. Research has also shown that bloated classes compelled primary school teachers to abandon a one-on-one interaction method of teaching in favour of the lecture method thereby compromising on the quality of teaching (Sang and Kipsoi, 2005; Mwendwa, 2011).

But that being the case primary school teachers are still oblivious that they are the most pivotal persons in the education process (Kochhar, 2003), and it is only through effective teaching that they can inculcate the right type of attitudes, values and skills. Teachers are aware that teaching is the only vehicle through which they can deliver quality education to the learners (Atanda, et. al., 2006) and possibly mould them into creative and responsible citizens. It is for this reason that whenever educators and policymakers address academic performance in primary schools, they focus on testing, accountability, and curriculum reform and other related concerns for they consider education as a basic human right (Mark, 2003). While there are a few schools that

have improved with the FPE, many have struggled especially in quality provision because the rising number of pupils has negatively impacted on teachers' effectiveness as expansion was not corroborated with improvement of their working conditions.

While there is a lot of research on many aspects of free primary learning in Kenya like overcrowded classrooms, high pupil-teacher ratio, and inadequate infrastructure, little has been done on how each of these or their combinations has impacted on teachers' effectiveness in imparting knowledge. This paper summarises the results of a study that was carried out to assess the impact of FPE on teachers' work performance for the purposes of making recommendations on how to improve teachers working conditions in order to raise their work output. The study was primarily concerned with the kind of teaching methods that public primary schools teachers in Kuria East Constituency adopted after the dramatic increase of pupils per class and how this and other related factors affected schools performance in the final examinations. The study was confined to the period between 1999 and 2008 in order to compare exam results prior and after the introduction of FPE in 2003.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Teaching – Learning Materials

There is no doubt that education stakeholders world over agree that a good learning environment is essential in achieving teaching and learning goals. There is also abundant research which shows that instructional materials are vital components of learning and no program can be easily implemented without them (Miller and Seller, 1990) as instructional materials provide information for consumption and practice for the pupils. A research by UNESCO on the provision of teaching and learning materials to the free learning program in Kenya carried out in 2005 praised the government for 'making this major accomplishment'. The research pointed out that the provision of instructional materials such as atlases, globes, and reference books had improved the quality of teaching (UNESCO, 2005). A similar micro study in Mwingi District in 2005 showed that the quality of education there had improved as a result of the government provision of learning materials (Gakuru, 2005).

However the considerable gain afforded by the provision of books and other facilities did not last long as the advantage was eroded by the high enrollment of pupils. The 2005 UNESCO survey observed that 'the average pupil-teacher ratio of 70:1 in most public primary has serious implication on learning and teaching'. Because of the increased workload, teachers now issue little assignment to avoid huge marking loads. The increase in the number of pupils that have to share a textbook has also compromised the quality of learning. 'Pupils are not able to efficiently use the textbooks as reference sources because they do not keep the books for long as they have to share them', (Sifuna, 2005). Learning in primary schools is completely strained due to influx of pupils, inadequate teachers and enrolment of school dropouts (Gichuru, 2005). Nkinyangi (2005) concurs and adds that due to high enrolment and congested classrooms, teachers are unable to teach well and pupils are unable to concentrate. Again, nearly all Kenyan public primary schools experienced problems of inadequate physical facilities as they had no extra classrooms to accommodate the extra number of pupils that enrolled under the FPE program, and worse still a good number of these schools did not have the physical space to erect new classrooms. A study by Kenpro in 2010 shows that some classrooms are congested to an extent that teachers and pupils have no ample space to move around during lessons. As we show later in this paper lack of adequate learning materials and facilities are a hindrance to the realization of quality teaching in Kuria East Constituency.

2.2 Measures of Teacher Effectiveness

Hill, Smith and Rowe (1993) argue that effective schools are gauged by strong educational leadership, high student achievements, emphasis on basic skills, and frequent evaluation of students' progress. These elements were tested by Creemers soon after in 1994 and he arrived at the conclusion that the organization of a teacher has a bearing on his or her effectiveness in the classroom. He observed that classroom teaching is more effective whenever a teacher maintains efficient classroom management, issues properly organized homework, exhibits strong influence on pupils, sets clear goals, structures subject content, understands pupils, makes exemplary presentations, and frequently asks pupils some questions to stimulate them and also check whether they are grasping the subject matter. Creemers (1994) adds that whenever an effective teacher completes presentation of new content he or she immediately administers an exercise to have a feedback of his or her teaching.

However many researchers of the free primary learning in Kenya doubt whether the views expressed by Creemers (1994) are being observed in our public primary schools. Researchers specializing in school performance agree that teachers' effectiveness has been hampered by the increased workloads arising from high number of pupils per class. Since the introduction of FPE many primary schools are understaffed and teachers' performance has been greatly affected (Too, 2005). Wilson (2006) adds that large classrooms have affected aspects of teacher practice like instructional time and class management. The 2005 UNESCO survey also affirmed that large class sizes are detrimental to slow learners as the minimal teacher-pupil interaction occasioned by the high pupil-teacher ratio has forced teachers to teach at the pace of bright pupils. Further, most teachers have been de-motivated by the increased responsibilities without an equivalent raise in their remuneration (Kenya, 2008).

2.3 The Influence of Class Size on Schools Exam Performances

We have so far established that the introduction of free learning in Kenya came with large class sizes that resulted to high pupil-teacher ratio which affected the teacher-pupil interaction. Before proceeding to secondary schools, primary school pupils in Kenya sit for the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) after 8 years of primary learning. The rise in student enrollment in most public primary schools without the corresponding increase in capacity was expected to affect the quality of learning and hence the KCPE results. Moreover, a study on the impact of class size on student test scores carried out by Angrist and Lavy in 1999 has established that students in larger classes perform poorly. However, observations by Case and Deaton (1999) that used class size as a surrogate for quality of overall school inputs, found that there is a negative relationship between class size and student achievement. Equally, Hanushek (2003) established that school inputs, including small class sizes, have little effect on student academic achievement.

But the first argument is borne out for the Kenya case by the fact that though the performance of KCPE was markedly improving a few years prior to the introduction of FPE, this improvement was only slightly observed between 2003 and 2009 (Opiata, 2010). Additionally data from the Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC) indicate that since the introduction of FPE in 2003, KCPE performance in public primary schools was on downward trend (Kigotho, 2009). The trend has raised concerns amongst education stakeholders and education authorities were in 2005 incensed to see that only one out of the 100 top performers in the 2004 KCPE examination was enrolled in a public primary school (Weru, 2009). Pundits of free learning questioned the quality of education that the free learning program was offering and called for a clinical evaluation of the program in order to achieve the desired goals.

But why have public schools performed dismally after the introduction of FPE in 2003? Hargreaves (2001) argues that the conventional model of measuring school effectiveness and improvement is an inadequate tool for measuring the success of a school. Hargreaves suggests a model that combines four concepts of outcomes, leverage, intellectual capital, and social capital to measure schools effectiveness and improvement. His Capital Theory of School Effectiveness and Improvement maintains 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. It is evident that all concepts of outcomes, leverage, intellectual capital, and social capital as postulated by Hargreaves have a bearing on quality of education and on school performance. The introduction of FPE in Kenya had a bearing on pupils' performance in KCPE because the program introduced new leverages not anticipated in the education system. The Capital Theory of School Effectiveness and Improvement was relevant in this research before and after the introduction of FPE because it explains the relationships between the increase in enrollment rates, the overstretching of the schools and how teachers adjusted their teaching methods to handle large numbers of pupils and the impact of this combination on learning outcomes.

II. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Study Area

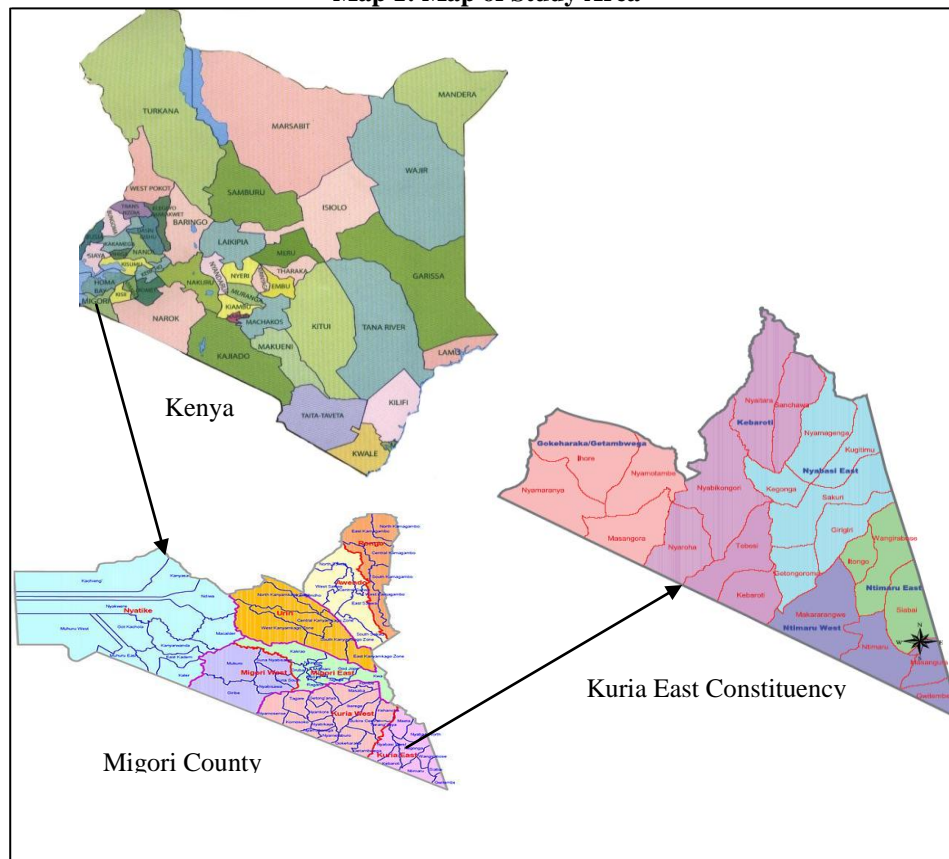
This study was carried out in Kuria East Constituency of Migori County. The Constituency is composed of five wards namely Ntitaru East, Ntitaru West, Nyabasi East, Nyabasi West and Getambwega (see map 1). Results of the 2009 National Population Census show that the constituency has a population of 93,229 people residing in 235 square kilometers. At the time of the study the constituency had 68 public primary schools.

3.2 Sampling and Data Collection

This study targeted the 68 head teachers and 637 teachers in the 68 public primary schools. Stratified sampling was used to identify 25 primary schools in the area while simple random sampling was used to identify 100 respondents among the primary school teachers. The 25 head teachers in the selected primary schools were automatically recruited as respondents for the study (table 1). All area education and quality assurance officers comprised the key informants to the research.

The research relied on both quantitative and qualitative information. The research administered two sets of questionnaires - one for head teacher and the other for class teachers - containing close ended questions to collect quantitative data, while quantitative data was gathered through a semi-structured interview containing open-ended questions.

Map 1: Map of Study Area



Compiled by Author (2012)

Table 1 Sampling Matrix

Ward	No. of Public Primary Schools	Sample Size
Ntitaru East	7	3
Ntitaru West	13	5
Nyabasi East	14	5
Nyabasi West	20	7
Gokeharaka/Getambwega	14	5
Total	68	25

Source: Research Data (2012)

The head teacher questionnaire sought information on all aspects of free learning especially on enrollment trends, number of streams per class, school staff composition, K.C.P.E performance, and teacher effectiveness before and after the introduction of FPE. The teacher questionnaire sought to know the perceptions of teachers regarding frequency of pupil assessment and availability of teaching and learning materials as well as how they felt about their effectiveness prior and after the introduction of FPE.

Similar instruments were also administered on the key informants. The key informants provided accurate data on school enrolment, number of teachers in the school, the number of pupils and school KCPE performances over the years. The coded data was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS).

III. Results

The research administered a total of 100 teacher questionnaires with a response rate of 88 percent. The remaining 12 teachers complained that class workload did not allow them to respond in time (see table 2).

Table 2 Teacher Respondents per Ward

Ward	Questionnaires Administered	Questionnaires Submitted back for Analysis
Ntimaru East	12	11
Ntimaru West	20	18
Nyabasi East	20	16
Nyabasi West	28	25
Gokeharaka/Getambwega	20	18
Total	100	88

Source: Research Data (2012)

4.1 Available Teaching Methods Before and After FPE

Table 3 Teachers Perception on Teaching Standards

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Greatly Improved	24	27.3
Not changed	22	25.0
Has declined	42	47.7
Total	88	100

Source: Field Study (2012)

Before the introduction of FPE in 2003 the average pupil-teacher ratio in the country was 40:1 but these dramatically changed to 70:1 as free learning afforded many children the opportunity to go to school. For this reason we asked the teacher respondents of how the teaching profession had been affected by the introduction of FPE and 47.7% of them compared to 27.3% confirmed that there was a general decline in the teaching standards in all public primary schools. Only 25% teacher respondents felt that the standards had not changed (table 3 above). All teacher respondents agreed that classes had become too large and teachers no longer could afford the opportunity to design sophisticated teaching methods. All respondents complained that overcrowding of pupils had made it impossible for them to move around the classrooms during teaching time and they therefore resorted to lecturing as the principal method of imparting knowledge. And 87.5% teacher respondents compared to 12.5 % indicated that free learning had influenced their choice of teaching methods and disrupted their daily teaching schedules.

Additionally, all teacher respondents complained that they had stopped giving random quizzes whenever they covered a topic as they could not cope with marking workload. Again, over 90 percent teacher respondents compared to less than 10% experienced difficulties in marking daily assignments as was the practice before the introduction of FPE. The respondents informed this study that due to large class sizes teachers now urge pupils exchange their assignments and mark for each other while the teacher reads out the answers. Regrettably, individualized training for weak students has almost come to naught and remedial classes no longer exist. All key informants in this study agreed that a combination of these factors has negatively affected the quality of teaching in most public primary schools in Kuria East Constituency.

4.2 Impact of FPE on Teachers Performance

The major objective of this study was to investigate the impact of the introduction of free learning on the effectiveness of teachers' performance in Kuria East Constituency for the period between 1999 and 2008. A summary of teachers' perceptions on how FPE had affected their performance and the nature of their work is given in table 4 below. Over 84% compared to about 16% stated that too much workload had affected their performance; 88.6% compared to 11.6% complained about the increased number of pupils per class; while over 70% compared to about 30% complained there was more demand from pupils. Again 68.2% respondents compared to 31.8% said that free learning had introduced more responsibilities without any compensation; 64.8% respondents said they worked for long hours; while 55.7% respondents said that schools lacked adequate learning resources for pupils, while about 60% said they lacked free time for themselves.

Table 4 Impact of FPE on Teachers Performance

		Response		Total
		Yes	No	
Too much workload	Frequency	74	14	88
	(%)	84.1	15.9	100
Too many pupils in class	Frequency	78	10	88
	(%)	88.6	11.4	100
Increased demand from pupils	Frequency	62	26	88

	(%)	70.5	29.5	100
Having more responsibilities	Frequency	60	28	88
	(%)	68.2	31.8	100
Longer Working Hours	Frequency	57	31	88
	(%)	64.8	35.2	100
Inadequate Learning resources for pupils	Frequency	49	39	88
	(%)	55.7	44.3	100
Lack of time for one's self	Frequency	52	36	88
	(%)	59.1	40.9	100

Source: Field Study (2012)

Further, 32% head-teacher respondents complained that there were increased cases of indiscipline in schools especially among the newly enrolled and over-age pupils, and this was reflected in the examination results for the years 2003 and 2004. The head teachers also stated that cases of indiscipline had reduced teacher motivation as corporal punishment had been outlawed by the Children Act, 2001. Teachers also complained that guidance and counseling as a method of addressing indiscipline was not possible for classes that accommodated more than 50 pupils, and even if it was, guidance and counseling departments had not been established in any of the sampled schools.

Head teachers viewed lack of proper training and preparedness on the teachers as a hindrance to effective teaching. They noted that teachers were never prepared to effectively manage large classes let alone communicate effectively with every pupil in the classes. The head teachers also said that teachers were ill-equipped to deal with a double-shift system that demanded them to be in class from 8 to 5. By lunch hour most teachers appeared tired and could not effectively attend their pupils in the afternoon sessions and in some cases most afternoon classes suffered immensely as a good number of teachers absconded classes while others told pupils to read on their own. The school administrators therefore developed the opinion that FPE was only meant to send many children to school and those who rooted for it were not in a hurry to address the quality of teaching that would go a long way to sustain the program.

And from the interviews with the education officers and the quality education officers, this research learnt that schools in the area were no longer administering external mock exams, especially for class 8 KCPE candidates. The sheer number of pupils per class had made it very expensive for the schools which were in the first place not receiving money for this exercise and the government had barred them from receiving extra tuition fees from pupils. The quality assurance officers also complained they were not receiving adequate logistical support from the ministry of education to effectively supervise all schools in Kuria East Constituency.

4.3 Performance of Public Primary Schools in Kuria East Constituency (1998 – 2008)

Before the introduction of free learning in Kenya, public primary schools in Kuria East Constituency posted inconsistent KCPE performance with some improving and others declining. But upon the introduction of FPE in 2003 more than 31% of the schools recorded a dip in performance although available data show that they are steadily improving.

All head teacher respondents told this study that the introduction of FPE program in 2003 disoriented both the school administrators and teaching staff thereby affecting school output. Some of the classes were overcrowded such that some pupils were taught outside under trees. Above all teachers who were tasked in preparing standard eight pupils for KCPE had to juggle through classes in order to take care of increased numbers in lower classes. Some 73% teacher respondents thought that FPE was introduced in a hurry and in effect it created a sudden and an unexpected surge in teaching workload. They complained that the government did not even bother to physically and psychologically prepare teachers on how to handle the program and it only sorted emerging issues on an ad hoc basis. The teachers added that the approach affected them negatively and reduced their effectiveness leading to poor performance. Poor performance was also attributed to the influx of previous pupils who had dropped out of school for long periods but had now joined school after the abolition of school levies. Majority of them rejoined school in classes 7 and 8 and poor performance from this group partly contributed to the dismal KCPE results for 2003 and 2004.

Table 5 below shows the KCPE performances of public primary schools in the various wards of the Kuria East Constituency during the period 1998-2008. Schools in Ntitaru West posted the best performances with a mean score of 51% for 11 years. During the same period schools in Nyabasi West posted a mean score 47%, those in Ntitaru East 45%, those in Getambwega 43% and those in Nyabasi East 39%. Thus, when analysed longitudinally between 1998 and 2008, the mean score for the entire constituency was less than 50%.

Table 5 Ward's Performance in KCPE between 1998 - 2008

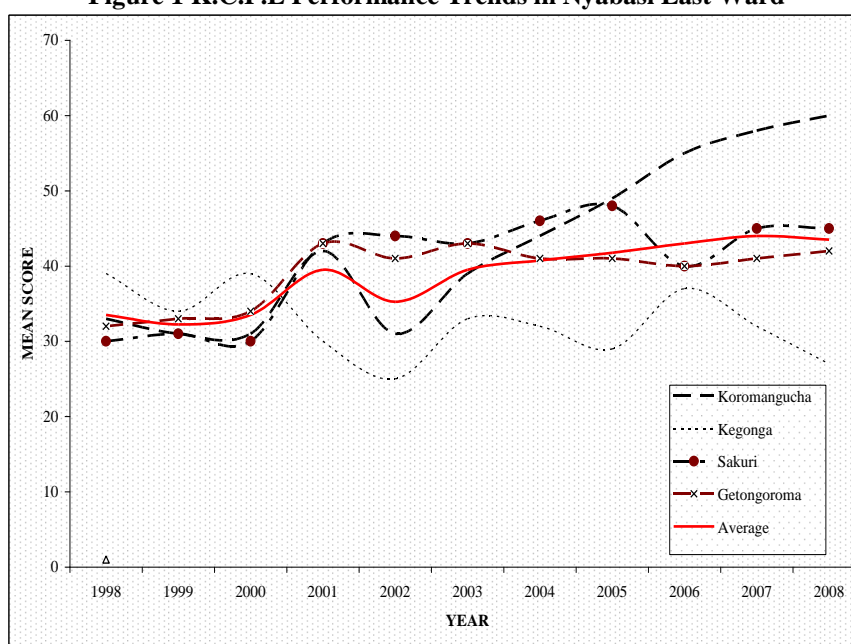
Name of Ward	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Mean
Nyabasi W.	42	45	42	52	47	48	49	47	49	51	50	47
Ntimaru W.	50	46	44	50	53	53	50	53	52	53	54	51
Nyabasi E.	34	32	33	38	33	38	41	42	44	45	44	39
Ntimaru E.	45	47	38	52	44	50	46	45	43	44	46	45
Getambwega	45	39	42	41	39	40	42	41	47	48	47	43
Mean	43	42	40	47	43	46	46	46	47	48	48	

Source: Field Study (2012)

4.3.1 Schools KCPE Performance per Ward

In addition to examining the KCPE performance in the entire constituency, this research also studied the performances of the individual schools in the wards.

Figure 1 K.C.P.E Performance Trends in Nyabasi East Ward

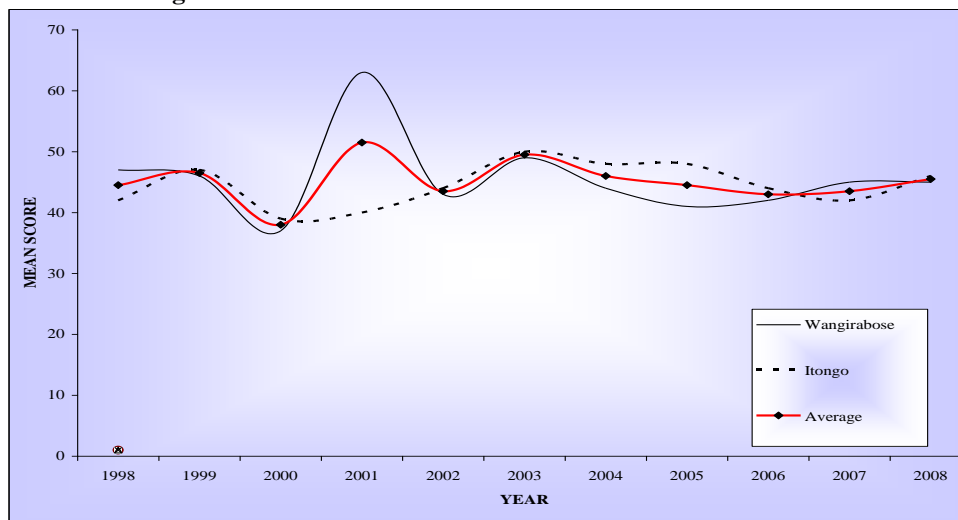


Source: Research Data (2012)

Fig. 1 above shows that four schools in Nyabasi East ward recorded moderately fair KCPE results over the years and with the exception of Kegonga primary school all other schools showed some improvement in 2001. The improvement was consistent with the rest of the country as the national examination body had just reduced the examinable subjects from seven to five and pupils were expected to do well. In this ward Koromangucha primary school recorded the best performance in 2008 (60%) while Kegonga had the worst performance in 2005 (29%).

But as with the data sets of Case and Deaton (1999) and Hanushek (2003) most of the schools in the ward showed a steady improvement in KCPE performance despite the growth in number of pupils per class. For instance, Koromangucha Primary School which averaged 43% during the period of study witnessed a steady performance after the introduction of FPE. Sakuri and Nguruna Primary Schools also improved during this period. However, Kegonga Primary School with an average of 32.5% had a fluctuating performance within the period and remained the worst performing school. But in spite of having the best pupil- teacher ratio in the constituency schools in Nyabasi East Ward could not do well as expected because of the frequent cross border tribal clashes between the Kuria and the Kipsigis in the South and with the Maasai in the East.

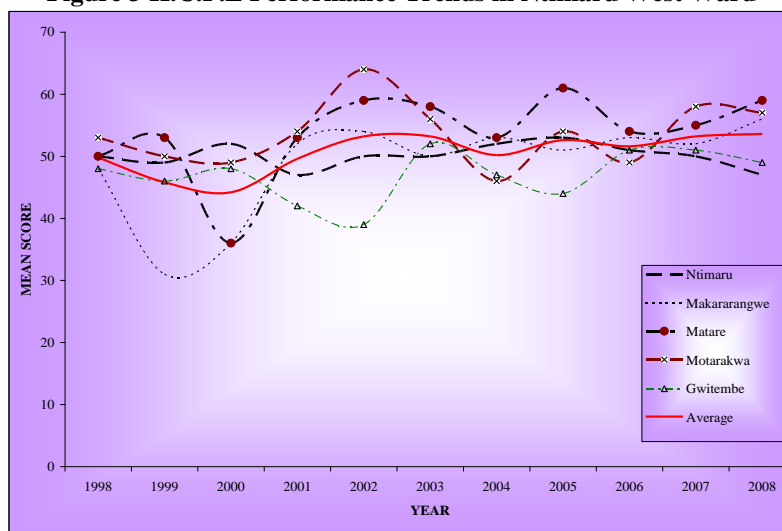
Figure 2 KCPE Performance Trends in Ntimaru East Ward



Source: Research Data (2012)

Complete data for schools in Ntimaru East Ward were only available for Wangirabose Primary School and Itongo Primary School. The schools posted the best KCPE average performance in 2001 (52%). Their worst performance was in 2000 when they recorded an average of 38%, due to a major circumcision ceremony held there in 2000 that involved most male pupils who sat for KCPE that year. The performance of the schools in the ward significantly decreased in 2003 but went up in 2004 but then dropped in 2005. The performance stabilized in the following years but did not match the performance of schools in other wards. In 2001 Wangirabose Primary School posted the best performance score of 63% compared to its worst score of 37% in 2000. Itongo Primary School recorded its highest performance in 2003 at 50% and its lowest performance in 2000 at 39%. With the introduction of FPE, performance slightly decreased in all the sampled schools in the ward between 2004 and 2007 and only improved slightly in 2008 (Fig. 2 above).

Figure 3 K.C.P.E Performance Trends in Ntimaru West Ward

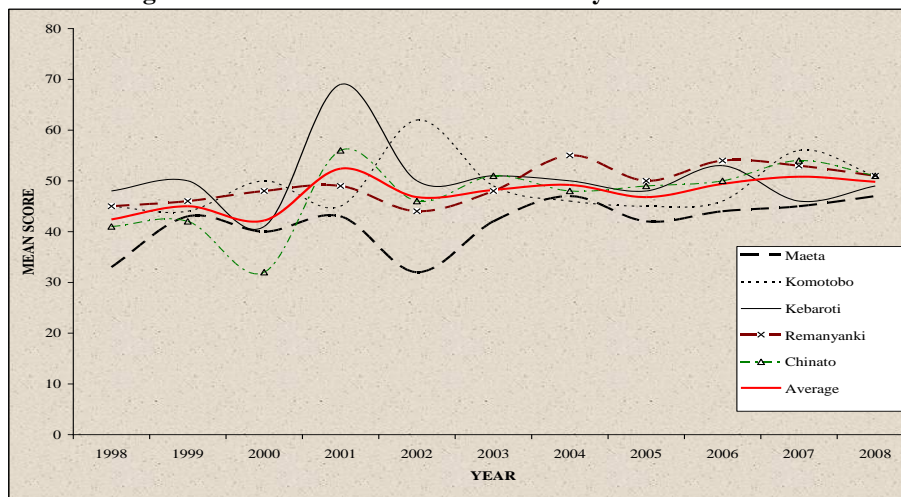


Source: Research Data (2012)

Fig. 3 above shows that public primary schools in Ntimaru West Ward as a whole showed no major variation in performances but witnessed a drop in the 2003 when FPE was introduced. Schools in the ward recorded the best average performance in Kuria East Constituency during the study period (50.7%). The best performance was witnessed in 2008 (54%) while the worst performance was recorded in 2000 (44%). During the period of study Motarakwa Primary School recorded the best performance in 2002 (64%) while Makararangwe Primary School posted the worst performance in 1999 (31%). The overall best performing school in the ward was Matare with an average score of 53.7% while the worst performing was Gwitembe Primary School with an average of 47%. All area education officers stated that the good performance in the

former was due to continuous good leadership in the school, whereas the latter performed poorly due to the regular inter-tribal wars between the Kuria people and the Maasai of the neighboring Trans Mara District.

Figure 4 KCPE Performance Trends in Nyabasi West Ward

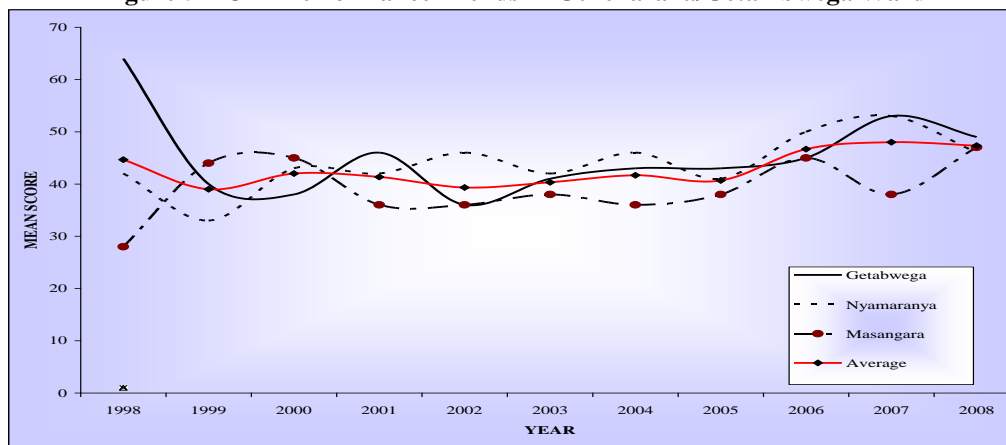


Source: Research Data (2012)

Although the performance of the schools in Nyabasi West Ward showed some fluctuation (Fig. 4) they nevertheless posted the second best performance with an average score of 47.5% during the study period. The schools posted the best average performance in 2001 (52%) the year when KCPE examinable subjects were reduced from seven to five, whereas their worst performance (42%) in 2000. The best performance (69%) during the study period was posted by Kebaroti Primary School in 2001 whereas Chinato and Maeta primary schools posted the worst performances of 32% in 2000 and 2002 respectively.

Finally, KCPE performance trends in Getambwega Ward oscillated just below 50% which compared well with the national average (fig. 5). However this performance got a slight knock between 2002 and 2005 and only slightly picked in 2006 presumably when the teaching had got used to the challenges of free learning in the ward. Getambwega ward was ranked fourth out of the five wards with an average score of 42.8%. The best performing school in the ward was Getambwega Primary School with a score of 45.3% while the worst performing school was Masangara with a score of 39.2%. Best score during the study period was 64% recorded by Getambwega in 1998 while the worst performance was at 28% recorded in Masangara in the same year.

Figure 5 KCPE Performance Trends in Gekeharaka/Getambwega Ward



Source: Research Data (2012)

As shown throughout this study one of the major impacts of FPE was the increase in enrollment of pupils in public primary schools which impacted negatively on schools. The study utilised Pearson Correlation r product-moment to determine the relationship between two quantitative and continuous variables – the class size and school performance. Results in table 6 indicate that there existed significant correlation at 0.05 (2-tailed) in 9 out of the 11 years of the study period. Thus 82% of the cases showed a significant correlation between the school size and school performance.

Table 6 Spearman's Rho Correlation: KCPE Mean Scores vs Teacher Pupil Ratio

			KCPE mean Score	Teacher pupil ratio
Spearman's rho	KCPE mean Score	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.307**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.010
		N	19	19
	Teacher pupil ratio	Correlation Coefficient	-.307**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.010	.
		N	19	19

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

IV. Summary and Conclusions

Following the hiccups witnessed in the education sector after the World Bank led economic adjustments of 1980s the government of Kenya finally re-introduced free primary learning in 2003. Before the introduction of the program the average pupil-teacher ratio in the country stood at 40:1 but it increased to 70:1 as free learning allowed many children to join school. Some 47.7% teacher respondents compared to 27.3% confirmed that FPE contributed to decline in the teaching standards in public primary schools, while only 25% felt the standards were okay. All teacher respondents agreed that classes were too large and teachers could no longer move around the classrooms during teaching time and had resorted to lecturing methods. Some 87.5% teacher respondents compared to 12.5 % indicated that free learning had disrupted their daily teaching schedules.

All teacher respondents said they no longer gave quizzes after covering a topic in class because marking assignments were too huge. Over 90% teacher respondents compared to less than 10% experienced difficulties in marking daily assignments and instead urged pupils to exchange their assignments for marking as teachers read out answers. All teacher respondents confirmed that individual pupil attention had ceased and teachers were teaching at the pace of the bright pupils.

Further, over 84% teacher respondents compared to about 16% stated that too much workload had affected their performance; 88.6% compared to 11.6% complained about the increased number of pupils per class; while over 70% compared to about 30% complained there was more demand from pupils. Again 68.2% teacher respondents compared to 31.8% said that free learning had introduced more responsibilities without any compensation; 64.8% respondents said they worked for long hours; while 55.7% respondents said that schools lacked adequate learning resources for pupils, while about 60% said they lacked free time for themselves.

All head teacher respondents confirmed that the introduction of FPE program in 2003 had disoriented school administrations and teaching staff thereby affecting school output as classes got overcrowded and some pupils had to be taught under trees. There was little time to prepare exam classes prompting 73% teacher respondents to imply that the government had introduced FPE in a hurry, as it did not prepare the teachers physically and psychologically and handled the emerging issues on an ad hoc basis. The key informants confirmed that schools in Kuria East Constituency no longer administered external mock exams for class 8 KCPE candidates, and this affected their performances.

On the overall, the research found that though the mean KCPE score in the sampled schools had declined after the introduction of FPE, there has been a steady improvement from 2006 onwards. This improvement is in consistent with the findings of Opiata (2010) that statistics for the 2009 KCPE results showed that there were some gains that had been lost in 2003 immediately after the introduction of free learning. The improvement may have taken this long possibly due to the teaching methods available to teachers or the immense workload that that progressively made teachers less motivated to teach.

Teachers all over the country continue to feel the impact of FPE and they are frustrated with the Kenyan government which they view as having taken them for a ride. Ever since 2003 teachers, through their professional unions, have confronted the government over better remunerations and employment of more teachers but the government has been quite slow to meet their demands. As the teachers and the government continue to mark each other the overall standards of education continue to stagnate due to congestion in classes and overburdening of the teachers who are still in service as was observed by Nkinyangi way back in 2005.

5.1 Recommendations

Given the foregoing conclusions the study made the following recommendations:

1. The use of performance contracts for the teachers would also go a long way in gauging the teachers teaching performance vs their workload.
2. The government should also revise on how to financially compensate teachers handling extra-large classes. Teachers whose schools have a high pupil teacher ratio should be accorded a better remuneration than those

with very low pupil teacher ratio. This will go a long way in motivating teachers to be more result oriented than is the practice today.

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