

Kenya's three initiatives in UPE

Introduction

Since gaining independence in December 1963, Kenya has pursued a deliberate strategy that emphasised education as the key factor to development. Indeed, The Kenya Constitution, Sessional Paper No. 10 on African Socialism and various national development plans, recognised education as a means for promoting national integration among the various tribes and ethnic groups in Kenya¹. Education was seen as a catalyst for political, economic and social advancement for individuals, through which human capital accumulation, essential for economic growth and national development could be attained. This belief made it imperative that Kenya had to pursue policies geared to the expansion and improvement of education for leaders of independent Kenya to sustain their political leadership.

It is therefore not surprising that each of Kenya's three presidents made an attempt to introduce Universal Primary Education (UPE) as part of their political agenda. Kenya's first President, Jomo Kenyatta, announced in 1972 that school fees for grades 1 to 4 would be abolished at the start of the school year in 1974². This policy brought in its wake a surge in enrolment of children who had been excluded from the school system because of their inability to pay fees. However, the gains made were not sustained.

In 1978, President Daniel arap Moi became the second President of Kenya on the death of Kenyatta. He proclaimed that all school fees including building funds and other levies in primary schools should be abolished the following year, in 1979. In addition, arrangements were also made to start a programme to provide free school milk to all primary school children. These two decisions also resulted in a swell in enrolments. Again, this policy was not sustained as we shall see in the text of this chapter.

The third President of Kenya, Mwai Kibaki, succeeded Moi in December 2002 after a general election. The President's first policy initiative was to make primary education a focal point of his presidency. He immediately declared that 'Free Primary Education' (FPE) should be implemented in January 2003 at the start of the school year. By 2004 there was an increase of 1.3 million children over the previous year, representing an increase of 22 per cent over the previous year and a Gross Enrolment Ratio of 99 per cent. The current expansion to fulfil the EFA goal of free and universal primary education is still on-going.

This chapter on Kenya will look at the three attempts made at implementing UPE and will analyse the difficulties and shortcomings in policy and resources faced in each instance. It will discuss what lessons are to be learnt if UPE is to be sustained. But first, there will be an explanation of the current education system followed by the history of UPE efforts since 1963.

The present day

Structure. The current formal education system was introduced in 1984 and has an 8-4-4 structure consisting of 8 years of primary education (age 6–13), followed by 4 years of secondary education (14–17), leading to a minimum of 4 years for a general university degree (specialist courses take longer). At the end of the 8 years of primary education, pupils undertake the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) examination, the grades of which are used mainly to select and allocate pupils to secondary schools. At the end of the 4 years of secondary education, pupils sit the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE), which determines the grades for entry into university or to other post-secondary training institutions. Since 2004, pressure has been building from the public for the Government of Kenya (GOK) and the Ministry of Education (MOE) to consider 12 years of schooling (primary and secondary education) as being part of the basic education cycle. The 8-4-4 structure was introduced in an attempt to provide a vocational element in the last three grades of primary education to cater for the needs primary school leavers. This policy has not been wholly successful, partly from a curriculum planning point of view and partly from a lack of resources to maintain the vocational element.

Management. The management of formal education and training is mainly through MOE. Various other government ministries such as the Local Government, Home Affairs, Heritage and Sport, Health, and Labour and Human Resource Development, provide some sector-specific education and training. For instance, the Ministry of Labour and Human Resource Development provides technical education and training through Youth Polytechnics (post-primary education) and industrial training programmes (post-secondary education). It is also responsible for adult and continuing education programmes.

Policy, planning and the development of strategy for education rests with the MOE headquarters, although in many instances there has been considerable interference on education policy directly from the President. The MOE has eleven main departments:

- Administration and Finance
- Early Childhood Development and Pre-primary Education
- Primary Education
- Secondary Education
- University Education
- Field Services
- Planning and Development
- Formulation and Projects
- Inspectorate
- Legal matters
- Audit

In addition to the Departments, there are also semi-autonomous Government Agencies that come under the MOE. These are: The Kenya Institute of Education (KIE) responsible for curriculum development; The Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC) which sets and marks examinations at the primary, secondary and technical and vocational level; the Commission for Higher Education (CHE) responsible for university education;

the Higher Education Loan Board (HELB), a body that determines the amount of the loan for university students, provides loans and collects repayments; the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) responsible for employment, deployment, salaries and all matters related to teachers once the teacher has been employed by the TSC; the Kenya Education Staff Institute (KESI) for training staff in MOE but which also provides training for other Government Ministries; the Kenya Institute of Special Education (KISE) which trains staff to teach children of various disabilities; and the Kenya Literature Bureau (KLB) responsible for printing and publishing books for schools.

Among the institutions listed above, those relevant to the success of UPE would be the TSC because it is responsible for the recruitment of teachers which it deploys throughout the country, and for dismissing teachers. It is also responsible for the welfare of teachers in schools, for the payment of their salaries and for arranging in-service training of teachers to improve their quality or to in-service them on new methodology and/or content. The KIE is responsible for curriculum development in all the sub-sectors of education except university – early childhood development, primary, secondary, teacher education and technical and vocational education. Curriculum for universities is done by the universities in collaboration with CHE and through linking with universities in other countries (mainly in the North). The KIE works closely with the Inspectorate and the KNEC.

The Permanent Secretary for Education is responsible for the proper functioning of MOE and is accountable for everything that happens within education and training. MOE is divided into two: the professional wing, and the administrative and managerial wing. The professional wing is headed by the Education Secretary (ES) and responsible directly to the ES are the Directors of Education for: Basic Education, Higher Education, Quality Assurance and Standards; and Policy and Planning. The functions that come under the District Secretary (DS) are: planning, budgeting and financing, and all personnel employed by the MOE at headquarters and those in the provinces and districts.

Education is decentralised from the central headquarters to the provinces, then to districts, divisions and zones. The Provincial Director of Education (PDE) is in charge of all educational services in the province and is responsible for carrying out the mandates and regulations issued by the Permanent Secretary. Below him is the District Education Officers (DEO) who are responsible to him for education in the district. Within each district there are Divisional Education Officers. The larger Divisions have Zonal Education Officers who have dual responsibility for school inspection and teacher development and support. In theory, decisions related to education at the local level can and should be made by the PDE or DEO. In practice decisions are made at the MOE headquarters or through the Provincial Commissioner who is from the Office of the President and is responsible to the President for the management of the province.

A brief outline of each sub-sector

Pre-primary education. In the past 20 years the programme has grown exponentially and has become significant in Kenya. It is for children between the ages of 3 to 5 – before starting primary school at the age of 6 years. The number of children attending pre-primary units in 1990 was 822,796 and there were 20,000 preschool teachers. By 2003, the

number of children had increased to 1,207,276, representing a Gross Enrolment Ratio of around 30 per cent.

Before 1980, pre-primary education was the responsibility of Local Authorities, while agencies such as local communities, non-governmental organisations, and various Christian churches made a substantial contribution. In 1980, the Government assumed responsibility for the training of pre-school teachers partly because the social demand for pre-primary education was growing and partly because the quality of teaching and services provided varied so much that the GOK felt that it should step in and provide basic training for teachers at this level of education. In collaboration with donors, the GOK established the National Centre for Early Childhood Education and 14 districts were chosen to participate in the programme as District Centres for Early Childhood Education. The Kenya Institute of Education designed the curriculum, the syllabus and teaching materials.

The development of the facilities and the payment of teachers' salaries continue to remain the responsibilities of parents and the community. With the introduction of FPE in 2003, enrolment in Early Childhood Development programmes declined and this may be due to parents' perception that the cost of pre-primary education was high given that primary education was free.

There is talk of a policy initiative to mainstream pre-school as part of basic education and to integrate 4 to 5 year-old children into the primary cycle by 2010. Primary schools would have a pre-school facility and interested stakeholders would manage this facility. As there has been no clarity of how this would be financed, some donors are strongly opposed to this move.

Primary education. It is in essence the first phase of Kenya's formal education system and officially starts at age 6 in Grade 1 and is completed at age 14 in Grade 8. The curriculum is general – it has a wide variety of subjects to impart: literacy, numeracy, manipulative skills, and basic knowledge in history, civics, geography, literature and science. According to the KIE, primary education should develop the whole person, including the spiritual, mental and physical capacities; to appreciate and respect the dignity of labour and to develop positive attitudes and values towards society. Within cities and towns the medium of instruction is English. Outside towns, the first three grades are taught in the vernacular, with English introduced as a subject. After the third grade, the medium of instruction switches to English. In the last two grades of primary education, pre-vocational skills are introduced.

A diversified curriculum was brought in when the 8-4-4 system of education was introduced in 1984 consisted of 13 teaching subjects of which 7 were examined. The broad curriculum and the extensive selection of subjects required a large amount of resources – both in terms of the number of teachers who had to be trained to teach these subjects and in the actual materials used. The broad curriculum left little time and effort for students to study and master the core subjects to gain essential basic skills. Parents shunned the vocational subjects and, with the economy stagnating, there were less resources available to teach the pre-vocational subjects. An overhaul of the curriculum is currently being undertaken with emphasis placed on the core subjects.

Providing primary education to all has become central to the implementation of the

Poverty Reduction Strategy since the acquisition of basic literacy skills is seen as a means of expanding access to employment opportunities and sustainable livelihoods. The Government's policy was to achieve UPE by the target date of 2005 (but fell short of it) and also to attain Education for All (EFA) by 2015. It is continuing with the policy of providing free and compulsory primary education to all Kenyan children by working in partnership with national and international stakeholders in education to realise UPE and EFA.

The number of trained teachers employed rose from 17,682 in 1963 to 162,072 in 2006 (89,607 male and 72,465 female). During this period and especially since 1990, the number of untrained teachers has been significantly reduced from 61,659 in 1990 to 921 (634 male and 287 female) in 2006. Some of these untrained teachers are recruited directly by the school itself and on a temporary basis.

Recurrent expenditure at the primary level is predominantly personal emoluments in the form of teacher's salaries and other benefits. As a result of the 1997 teacher salary review, nearly 98 per cent of the primary education budget went on teachers' salaries and allowances, leaving less than 2 per cent for operations and maintenance (including spending on the school feeding programme)³. The lack of funds for curriculum implementation, for teaching and learning materials and equipment has been stark and the under-resourcing over a period of time has had a detrimental effect on the quality of many primary schools.

At the primary school level there has been significant improvement in the participation of girls. Girls made up only a third of the enrolment in primary schools at independence. By 2005 the proportion of girls had risen and the Gender Parity Index (GPI) for all grades in primary education stood at 0.99. Regional disparities in gender exist in Kenya. Although by 2005, the GPI had been realised at the national level, the disparities range from the remote disadvantaged semi-desert in the North Eastern Province, GPI of 0.71, (an intensely Muslim area where parents are reluctant to send girls to school), to Nairobi Province, GPI of 1.04 (far more girls at school than boys). The anecdotal evidence in Nairobi is that boys have been more disillusioned with the benefits and quality of primary school than girls and have dropped out of school, preferring to earn money in the streets. Also many of these boys are from the slum areas where they have to fend for themselves and school has not given them any credible alternative opportunities.

Secondary education. This consists of a four-year cycle from Form I to Form IV catering to students between the ages of 14 to 17. Apart from the traditional academic subjects for those who proceed to higher education, a vocational element (business and technical education) has been introduced to give a flavour of technical and vocational skills to those who do not proceed to university. But this has been unpopular with parents especially as there have been problems both with the design and the practicality of the curriculum. The vocational element has had the same fate as the primary education curriculum and is in the process of being revised.

There are three main categories of public secondary schools: national; provincial; and district secondary schools. The 17 national secondary schools are the best endowed with facilities and resources. Together they produce the most number of pupils for university –

and for this reason they are in the greatest demand. It is every parent's hope that their child will get admission to a national secondary school. Admission is by merit and a district quota has been established with the top achieving students gaining admission to the 17 national secondary schools. The provincial schools are a second best resort. The rest of the government schools are the district schools which vary in quality having limited provision and resources. A number of the district secondary schools were built through funds collected by the community through the vigorous *Harambee*⁴ movement. These secondary schools have since been taken up by the Government. Annual fees charged for secondary education vary from the equivalent of US\$100 to \$300 a year.

Private secondary schools have mushroomed in Kenya and vary in quality. In 2006 there were 722 private secondary schools. Some of the good private secondary schools offer excellent curricula and extra-curriculum activities, have good and well maintained facilities, a more committed teaching force and are generally better than the national schools. They compete favourably for places at the national universities. The private schools at the lower-end of quality are mainly a money-making enterprise and in the last few years the Inspectorate and the Schools Registration Section have been monitoring these schools with a view to close the non-performing ones.

Expansion in secondary education has been tremendous. Between 1963 and 2006, enrolment grew from 30,000 to 1,030,080 and the number of schools expanded from 151 to 4,247. By the end of the period, the number of teachers employed was 49,105. Of the total enrolment in 2006, girls accounted for 47 per cent of enrolment and the GER for the same year is 32.4 per cent. The transition rate from primary to secondary schools has also increased from 44.6 per cent in 1990 to 60 per cent in 2006.

Policy priorities for secondary education are geared towards increasing access to secondary education, especially for girls and for disadvantaged groups such as the disabled, AIDS orphans, street children and Children in Difficult Circumstances (CEDC). A bursary scheme had been established to provide support for children from economically poor backgrounds but it was not well targeted, supervised and lacked transparency. As it was often given to cronies of those administering the scheme, MOE is currently reviewing the programme. Due to the increased number of pupils attending primary schools, it is the policy of the Ministry to increase transition rates to secondary education by 70 per cent, 80 per cent and 90 per cent by 2008, 2012 and 2015, respectively.

Technical education. Technical education in the MOE is offered at the tertiary level at the National Polytechnics. There are 4 national polytechnics with a total enrolment of 10,472 in 2001. The national polytechnics are at the apex of technical training and provide courses leading to diplomas and degrees.

The Harambee Institutes of Technology, now known as the Institutes of Technology (IT) were built by communities as part of the *Harambee* movement to provide some post-secondary training to those who did not get into the national polytechnics or university. Most of the subjects taught initially were business education, secretarial skills and some level of computer training as these were low on recurrent cost. A number of the better-endowed ITs now offer courses in electric engineering, mechanical engineering, building and car-

penry. The courses offered are not at the same level as the national polytechnics.

Technical, Industrial and Vocational Education (TIVET) is also offered by the Ministry of Labour and Human Resource Development. The Village Polytechnics, mainly funded by the community, with subsidy from MLHRD, offer courses in artisan and crafts for post-primary students and secondary school drop-outs. The Institutes of Technology offer courses at the post-secondary level, some of which are similar to those offered at the ITs. In addition, courses are also offered to firms for individuals who have started working and need a proficient course to boost their skills.

Teacher education and training: Primary teachers. There are 29 public and 8 private colleges that offer pre-service education and training to teachers of primary schools in a two-year residential course. In 2003, there were 16,794 students enrolled in state teacher training colleges (51 per cent were female) and the 8 private teacher training colleges enrolled about 4,500 students. Annual output of qualified teachers is in the order of 10,000. The public colleges operate below their capacity of approximately 18,000 (about 1,500 places not used). Apart from providing an in-service two-year full time residential course, the public teacher training colleges also provide a three-year distance learning and part-time residential course to up-grade and up-date teachers in the service. A quota system for admission exists to provide regional balance and provision is made from those in disadvantaged areas to be admitted with lower grades. The current recruitment criteria have no special emphasis on subject grades, resulting in poorly qualified teachers particularly in science and mathematics.

Secondary teachers. There are two public secondary school diploma teachers' colleges that offer a pre-service course of 3 years. There are 5 universities (4 public and 1 private) offering degree programmes leading to a Bachelor of Education degree. The degree programme is 4 years.

Kenya appears to be one of the few Sub-Saharan African countries not suffering from a lack of trained primary school teachers. Currently the supply of teachers outstrips the demand. Not only are there surplus trained teachers graduating from teacher training colleges, there is also the budgetary implication if all these teachers were employed – paying their salaries and pension. There is a strict code, based on classrooms, of how many teachers can be deployed to each school. Schools may wish to have additional teachers to cope with the number of primary school children but they have to pay the salaries of these teachers from school funds. Many of the public primary schools cannot afford them. The dilemma of surplus primary school teachers became particularly acute in 1995 when the supply of trained teachers outstripped the actual demand for them. The MOE and the Teachers Service Commission were forced to change its statutes on its recruitment policy in 1997. Previously, every trained teacher was guaranteed employment in schools. After 1997, the recruitment and deployment of teachers was decentralised and made dependent on the number of vacancies in that year in the district. In addition, there were stipulations on the employment of these teachers. One was that teachers employed would serve in that specific school and district for a minimum of 5 years before being considered for a transfer. This was designed to regulate the deployment of teachers whereby urban areas had teacher-pupil ratios of 1:20 while the rural areas, particularly those in arid

areas, had teacher-pupil ratios of 1:45. Prior to the third attempt at UPE in 2003, the national pupil-teacher ratio was around 1:31, very favourable for a country in Sub-Saharan Africa! Anecdotal evidence suggests that Kenyan trained teachers are getting jobs in other Africa countries, particularly in Eastern and Southern Africa, where the demand for trained and qualified teachers is high. Teachers also had substantial increases in their salaries over a two year period between 1996 and 1998. The new regulations are to make it imperative for schools and teachers to be utilised efficiently.

University. It is the apex of Kenya's formal education and training system. In addition to preparing high level manpower for national development, the universities also undertake research, development and dissemination of knowledge.

Enrolment at university has been steadily increasing since the establishment of the University of Nairobi in 1970. By 1980 the University of Nairobi could no longer cope with the demand for university admissions and between 1985 and 1992 there was an unprecedented expansion in capacity. Six universities were established and enrolment jumped from 9,044 in 1985 to 43,290 in 1992. As a result of this rapid expansion, most universities lacked adequate teaching facilities and materials, adequately trained lecturers and the necessary social amenities such as student and staff housing and related facilities.

The demand for university education continues unabated. One reason is the low transition rate of 4 per cent from secondary to university and this has resulted in the mushrooming of private universities to fill in the gap. At the time of writing, there were 17 private universities (6 private universities have been officially accredited, all varying in quality and in the type of degree offered. Total enrolment in public and private universities is about 72,000 students; annual intake in public universities of students with some public subsidy is around 10,000 and there is also an annual intake of 4,000 self-sponsored students, who bear the whole cost themselves. In addition, the private universities enrol about 6,000 annually.

In the public universities, undergraduate education generally consists of a 4-year course culminating in a Bachelors degree; specialist courses such as medicine may take 6 years. Supervision of universities is assured by the Commission for Higher Education (CHE).

Cost-sharing exists at the public universities. MOE pays around US\$1,270 per student and students pay US\$500. Self sponsored students pay fees ranging from around US\$2,400 for an Arts degree to \$5,400 for Medicine.

The three attempts at UPE

In order to discuss UPE and the three efforts made, it is necessary to review the context of the importance of education to Kenyans which has its roots and determination in the colonial era.

The colonial era

Education in Kenya was segregated and stratified along the lines of race, gender and creed. The central government provided education to all European children whose parents were working in Kenya. Some provision was made to African schools (it was argued

that there were insufficient resources to provide education to all African children) and some provision to Asian schools. Christian missionaries and local communities were left to fill in the gap. Although the central government did provide some grants to schools, which were supplemented by the missionaries' own resources, there was a shortfall and fees had to be charged to make up for running the school, providing teaching materials and equipment, furniture and construction⁵. In addition to paying fees, parents had to buy text books and exercise books for their children.

The curriculum was also affected by the segregation mentioned. There were three types of curriculum – one for the European schools, another for the Asian schools and another for the African schools. European and Asian education had a 7 year basic cycle while African education had an 8-year cycle made up of two cycles of 4 years each. Those who passed Grade 4 and wished to continue with education could go on to Grade 5. In addition, African education had an over-emphasis on practical learning as compared to the broad-based academic education offered in both European and Asian schools. The response of the Africans to this was to build their own schools in opposition to the government schools and their policy – thus started the Independent Schools based mainly in the Central Province in Kenya. By 1952 there were over 400 Independent Primary Schools⁶ funded through self-help and it laid down the foundation for community participation in education through the *Harambee* movement, once independence had been achieved⁷. The significance of the Independent Schools was to highlight the importance of education, something that future heads of government and politicians wanting to rise to prominence could not ignore. Indeed, it had political undertones with distinct political consequences.

Post independence period – from December 1963 onwards

The Kenya African National Union (KANU), the political party that won the elections, had Universal Primary Education in its manifesto: 'every child in Kenya shall have a minimum of seven years free education' (Kenya African National Union 1963 and 1969). When Jomo Kenyatta became the first President of Kenya, reform in education began. The ruling party explicitly stated that the government would be guided by the principle in the KANU manifesto. Within two weeks of the party taking over from the colonial administration, the government appointed Professor Simeon Ominde to undertake a review of the segregated education system and propose a way forward for all ethnic groups. Professor Ominde produced the Kenya Education Commission Report in 1964 which recommended a unified system offering one curriculum that would foster national unity and the creation of the critical mass of human capital required for national development. Policies to integrate the various ethnic groups were also undertaken, one of which was to pay fees to those African families whose children had the basic education requirements to enter primary or secondary schools but could not afford the fees in former European or Asian schools.

Reviews of the Kenyan education and training system have since been undertaken periodically (about every 10 years), or if there is a particular issue to look into. The Government usually appoints a committee, a working group or a commission to review, advise and suggest recommendations to the Government⁸. This practice has kept educa-

tion in the forefront of the minds of the public. Some milestone reports are: the Report of the National Committee on Educational Objectives and Policies in 1976, which focused on redefining Kenya's educational policies and objectives; the Report of the Presidential Working Party on the Second University in Kenya, which led to the introduction of the current structure of education the 8-4-4 system; the Report of the Presidential Working Party on Education and Manpower Training for the Next Decade and Beyond in 1988 which focused on education financing, quality and relevance; and, finally, The Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Education System of Kenya in 2000, which recommended an integrated curriculum but which the government did not accept due to cost implications. Its recommendation on reviewing all the curricula in primary and secondary education has been adopted and is being implemented.

As indicated earlier, at Independence primary education was almost exclusively the responsibility of the local communities or non-governmental agencies such as local churches and was under the jurisdiction of the former colonial Regional Authority. In 1966, the Kenya African National Union, with its centralist tendencies, needed to weaken the Regional Authorities particularly as some of the Provinces had voted and were aligned with the opposition party, the Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU). The strategy used was to move primary schools to the newly formed Local Authorities (different name but similar functions to the Regional Authorities) and at the same time remove the revenue base of the Local Authorities. De facto, the control of primary education became dependent on central government subventions through the Local Authorities.

The government merely wanted to extend influence and control over those who were responsible for primary schools. During this period it was preoccupied with and was giving priority to post-primary education in order to facilitate the Africanisation of middle-level and high-level positions in the economy (Republic of Kenya, 1966). It took over the best secondary schools, which became government-maintained schools (government provided funding for capital and recurrent expenditure and had a say in admissions) and Kenya's first university was established in 1970, the University of Nairobi – which was wholly funded by the government. A snapshot of government financing to education illustrates this point. In 1969 the unit cost of primary education was 0.31, while that of secondary education was 38.84, and university was 541.55.

By the 1970s Africanisation was well under way and secondary and university education were well established. The government was then in a position to give primary education the attention it deserved and to enable KANU, (the party still in government) to fulfil their independence manifesto and pledges.

As discussed above, the jurisdiction over primary education had been passed on to Local Authorities, who paid a small grant to schools and this was topped-up with contributions from religious bodies and through fees payable by parents for the running and maintenance of schools. The amount of fees charged varied from school to school depending on the facilities (library and stock of books, swimming pool, sports field, etc.), and the number of subjects taught and the number of teachers and staff employed. Wishing to make the provision of education more homogeneous, the government made its second move in 1970. Primary schools were to be designated as either private schools with no funding

from the government or public schools i.e. eligible for some funding by the central government. As many of the missionary and community run schools were dependent on the Local Authorities for the payment of teacher's salaries, they opted to become public schools. The MOE took over the control of the administration and the provision of school revenue and with this move, the financial cost of primary education, including teachers' salaries, was shifted to the MOE. The effect of the take-over on the Government's financial responsibility can be seen in the following figures: in 1969, the primary education budget was K£397,441, representing 5.04 per cent of the total recurrent budget for education; in 1970, the cost of education jumped to K£3,212,670, representing 25.97 per cent of recurrent expenditure on education, or an increase of over 700 per cent over the previous year.

With the aim of speeding up the progress of universal primary education, President Jomo Kenyatta announced the removal of fees in primary education, starting in 1974. The section below will discuss the circumstances, the policies and the outcome of the First Surge in primary school enrolments.

The first attempt – 1974

Nine years after independence, in 1973, President Jomo Kenyatta announced that from 1974 tuition fees would be abolished for the first four grades of primary education. The first four grades were chosen because this had previously been a cycle in itself for African schools in the segregated education system prior to independence (as described earlier, African primary education was 8 years with two 4-year cycles), and had then been replaced with a 7-year cycle. The four years of free primary education would to encourage those outside the school system, for whatever reason, to enrol in schools thereby giving them a flavour of primary education. It must be remembered, that at this time, children were needed to help their parents either at work or in the household and some parents had to be persuaded to send their children to school.

Enrolments in primary education had been growing steadily but slowly (Chart 3.1). In the 10 years of independence from 1963 to 1973, enrolment grew from 891,553 to 1,816,017 children in primary schools. Enrolment was growing at an annual average rate of around 7.5 per cent. However, with the announcement of free primary education for Grades 1 to 4, the enrolment rate between 1973 and 1974 increased dramatically to 49 per cent in one single year! In actual numbers, enrolment grew from 1,816,017 children enrolled in 1973 to 2,705,878 in 1974 – almost a million more children attended school. The following year in 1975, the growth rate fell back to the pre-announcement time and is recorded as 6.5 per cent.

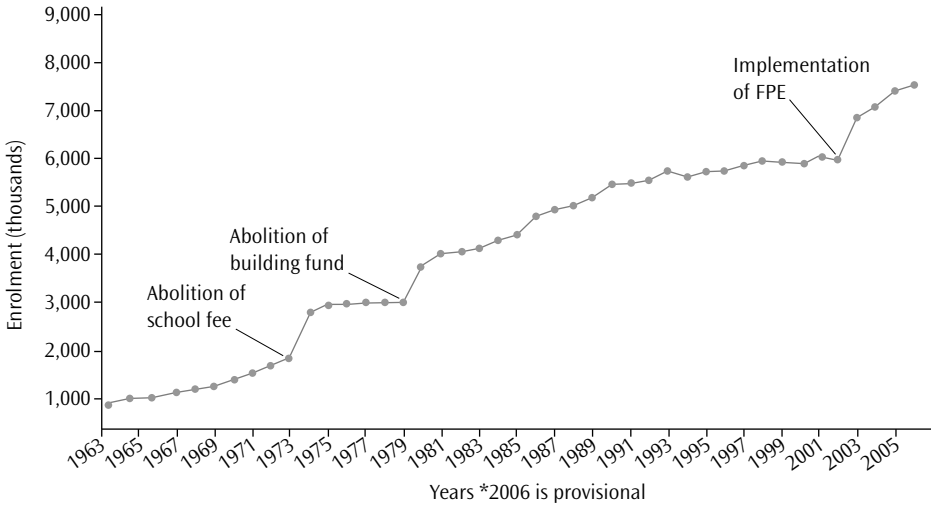
Over the next few years the enrolment growth tapered off. While in absolute terms there was a modest increase in numbers, there were many who dropped out of school and many of those outside the school system did not enrol. Why were these gains not maintained?

- a *Government inability to sustain the finances.* In its enthusiasm to take over primary schools, which previously had been partly financed by religious bodies and the community, the government had taken on a financial burden which it was not able

to sustain at levels that schools themselves were able to sustain. Teacher's salaries took much of the budget and there was little left to give schools for operations and maintenance. Quality of education took a nose-dive and parents withdrew their children from school.

- b** *Demand on parents to construct schools.* Parents and the community were responsible for constructing the additional schools and classrooms where necessary. While some school management committees allowed those parents who could not afford to pay in monetary terms to contribute in labour, other school committees insisted on the monetary payment of building fees as being conditional to enrolment and attendance. Parents who could not afford to pay for school building funds withdrew their children from school.
- c** *Over crowding of classrooms and the effect on quality.* The expanded enrolments meant that, until additional classrooms were built, school children had to be crammed into the existing classrooms, putting a strain on teachers as pupil-teacher ratios rose. The quality of education was compromised in those schools that had high pupil-teacher ratios. To remedy this situation, untrained teachers were hired. Total teacher recruitment increased by 22,000 in one year – from 56,543 in 1973 to 78,340 in 1974. With the output of teachers colleges at around 1,500 trained teachers a year, the 21,797 additional teachers required in 1974 were recruited largely from a pool of untrained people willing to teach, thus began a pool of untrained teachers. The total number of untrained teachers in the system grew from 5,411 in 1973 to 26,208 in 1974. By the following year, 1975, the number of untrained teachers had risen to 31,284, bringing the proportion of untrained teachers to trained teachers in primary education to 37 per cent, that is over one-third of the existing teaching force was untrained. While the Kenya National Union of Teachers insisted that untrained teachers provided reasonable education, it was clear that quality of education had plummeted and that parents preferred to have their children as child labour/domestic labour, where they could be earning some money instead of wasting their time and money in school.
- d** *Introduction of levies.* With the realisation that facilities could not be maintained, schools gradually began to impose levies on parents – officially the levies could not be referred to as fees, since these had been abolished by Presidential decree. Parents were levied on school maintenance and development costs. In addition, parents had to buy school books and equipment. The children of those who could not afford the levies dropped out of school.
- e** *Fees re-imposed in Grade 5.* Data shows that when fees were encountered in Grade 5, children dropped-out of school (Somerset, 2007). Although school fees were only US\$8 per annum, it had clearly acted as a deterrent to school participation for children from low-income families (ibid., Somerset). Poverty associated with the cost of education contributed to parents withdrawing their children from school.

Chart 3.1. Enrolment (thousands) in public primary schools 1963–2006



Source: Somerset, A. (2007) & MOE Education Statistical data * Provisional

Chart 3.2. Grade 1 Primary school enrolment 1963 to 2006



Source: Somerset, A. (2007) & MOE Education Statistical data

The second attempt – 1978

Between 1975 and 1978, parents and the communities bore the cost of building schools, building teacher’s houses and buying text books for their children, while the Government paid for teachers’ salaries. During this period many schools had increased their building levies to cope with the increase in enrolments. To add to the financial burden of parents for new school buildings and classrooms, construction costs unfortunately escalated during this period due to higher oil prices, restrictions being imposed on private credit to combat mishandled coffee boom money, and the closure of the Tanzania border (East African

Community break-up), leading to tighter import restrictions⁹. Classrooms that had previously cost US\$1,300 in 1974 were costing about US\$ 3,900, over three times as much by 1978 (ibid., Somerset). Schools transferred these increased costs as higher building levies on parents, who were now paying between five and ten times as much as the original tuition fee that had been abolished. Parents who had more than one child at school, often had had to remove some siblings to enable at least one child to attend school.

In 1978 President Daniel Arap Moi became Kenya's second president, after the death of President Kenyatta. Having come from the ranks of being a primary school teacher before entering politics and being nominated the Vice-President a few years after independence, he was aware of the hardship and problems parents faced. The following year in 1979 he announced that primary education from Grade 1 to Grade 7 would be free and that schools could no longer collect building levies from families whose children had enrolled in schools. Funds for building schools could only be raised through the joint effort of the community and not households, giving a fresh impetus to the *Harambee* movement. In addition, he also introduced the free school milk scheme, whereby children would get a packet of milk twice a week to improve their nutrition. The School Milk Scheme was introduced in schools in 1981 and the Scheme lasted until 1998.

Enrolments surged for a second time, rising from 2,994,894 in 1978 to 3,698,246 in 1979, an increase of 703,352 or 23.5 per cent. It showed that the financial burden on parents had been great. Those children who had dropped out of school at re-entered the school system at every grade and it was not uncommon to find boys with sprouting beards sitting with 7 year-old children. The profile of children over the age of 8 years old in Grade 1 can be seen in the table 3.1. below. In Grade 1 alone there was an increase of 63 per cent in enrolment.

Table 3.1. Age profile of Kenya Grade 1 enrollees in 1978 and 1979

Age	1978	1979	Percentage increase 1978 to 1979
6 years	260,500	339,200	30
7 years	220,900	364,300	65
8 and 9 years	106,200	230,400	117
10 years plus	11,500	43,400	278
Total 6 to 10	599,100	977,400	63

Source: Somerset 2006

It is also interesting to note from the table above that while the number of 6 year olds increased by only 30 per cent, the number of children of 8 years and above increased by 395 per cent, the largest increase being among those over the age of 10 years. This indicates that it was the out-of-school children who took advantage of the no school levy policy, most probably because they were unable to afford to pay the levies.

The MOE accommodated this increase by hiring only a modest number of teachers, unlike the first surge in 1974 when thousands of teachers were recruited. In the second surge,

teachers recruited increased from 90,391 in 1978 to 92,827 in 1979, an increase of 2,436 or only 3 per cent. The expanded primary school enrolments were accommodated through increased class sizes. Pupil-teacher ratios rose from 33.13 to 39.84 during the same two years. There was a public outcry and the social pressure to recruit more teachers became political. In the following year, the government gave in and allowed the Teachers Service Commission in 1980, to recruit 9,662 more teachers, most of whom were untrained. Pupil-teacher ratios dropped to 38.31 and continued dropping gradually until they were 30.4 in 1995.

Enrolments continued to increase like the 1974 group at a steady but slow pace. GER reached a peak of 95 per cent in 1985 but by 1990 it had fallen to 88.8 per cent and on the eve of the third surge in 2002, it had declined to 87.6 per cent. Drop-out rates were also high particularly between Grade 1 and 2, which had a rate of 26 per cent. By the time the 1979 cohort reached Grade 5, nearly 45 per cent of the children had dropped out of school; similarly, by the time the 1986 cohort had reached Grade 7, only 32.2 per cent of the original cohort remained (Somerset 2006).

Why did enrolment level off when school fees and building fees had been abolished? The attainment of UPE failed despite 'free primary education' and a state-funded scheme to supply free milk to primary school children due to a number of reasons:

- a *Very large class sizes.* Additional teachers had not been recruited in time and the increased school population was accommodated through increased class sizes. These classes were too large to teach and very little learning took place. Students, disillusioned with school, dropped out.
- b *Basic classrooms and facilities were lacking.* Temporary class rooms were constructed, which were wholly inadequate for the purpose. The lack of facilities was even worse in Grade 1. Grade 1 was considered not to be as important as the higher grades and in many instances the former Grade 1 classrooms became Grade 5, 6 or 7. Grade 1 children were taught in the open air (under the shade of trees) or in the school corridors. There was an increase of 63 per cent in Grade 1 between 1978 and 1988. It was the over-aged children in this category who became disillusioned with education and dropped out – perhaps for the second time.
- c *Lack of teaching and learning materials.* The lack of adequate class-rooms was compounded by the lack of adequate teaching and learning materials. The employment of additional teachers meant that more funds had to be sought for teachers' emoluments. The Government had increasingly narrowed its contribution to four main line items: Of the total primary education budget, 92 per cent was for teachers' salaries and benefits; 6 per cent to the provision of school milk (ended in 1988); 1.4 per cent to boarding schools in the Arid and Semi-Arid areas; and 0.6 per cent to school equipment (Republic of Kenya 1988, and Appropriation Accounts 1990/91). By 1998, with salary increases being awarded to teachers, their pay alone took up 98 per cent of the entire primary school budget with only 2 per cent left for boarding schools in the Arid and Semi-Arid areas and for teaching and learning resources. MOE was unable to provide teacher's manuals or books, nor even

basic teaching tools such as chalk and dusters. School teachers reported that chalk was kept in the head teacher's office and each teacher was given a piece of chalk in the morning and had to account for its usage at the end of the class.

- d *Untrained teachers and poor quality of education.* The untrained teachers were given the lower grades to teach. Often they had no prior training and were recruited from the ranks of unemployed secondary school leavers. These school leavers were not committed to the teaching profession but accepted employment as teachers as it provided them with a means of earning their living. Parents became disenchanted and kept their children at home, especially girls and young children who had to walk long distances to school.
- e *Child labour.* In some areas of Kenya (Nyanza, Eastern, Coast and Central Kenya) the opportunity cost of parents sending their children to school was very high. This is because labour is needed in the coffee, tea and sugarcane plantations, fishing, sand harvesting, quarrying, etc. Therefore, if there is very little learning going on at schools, children drop out of schools to engage in the workforce to supplement household incomes (MOE Workshop Paper¹⁰).
- f *Pre-vocational element not well designed or planned.* In changing the structure of education from a 7-4-2-3 to an 8-4-4 system, President Moi instructed that a vocational element be introduced in the curriculum. The KIE was either unprepared or did not have the capacity to prepare the curriculum and train teachers. The design had flaws, and the implementation had problems with very little guidance and instruction for teachers, head-teachers and the Inspectorate. Implementation was by trial and error and very clumsy. Parents did not want it. Parents wanted education to have core academic subjects, which would hold their children in good stead when leaving school and were unhappy with the new curriculum. In addition, the MOE did not have the funds to pay for vocational education (the practical content is very expensive). The cost of the materials for vocational education was gradually shifted to parents who took their children out of school.
- g *Impact of the primary school league tables.* The KNEC calculated league tables in 1978 which established merit orders based on the Certificate of Primary Education (CPE) scores at two levels of aggregation – first at the District Level and then within each district at the school level. It became a major public issue – politicians, government officials, unions and newspaper editors joined in the lively debate. Trophies were established to give recognition to schools that performed best (Somerset 2007). To enhance the position of the school in the district, school principals had to ensure that the mean scores of all the candidates taking the CPE examination were high. It became advantageous to the school that the academically weaker children, by repeating the previous grade, would hopefully rise up to the standard required for the CPE examination and could move on to the final primary school class. Parents of weaker children were opposed to their children having to repeat, and those who felt strongly about it and could not afford to have their child repeat and stay longer at school, withdrew their children from school.

- h *Cost-sharing gradually began to creep in again.* With a lack of budgetary provision from the MOE for the running and upkeep of schools, schools began to fall apart. Because funds for running and maintaining schools was only permissible through the *Harambee* movement, the Parents-Teachers Association put pressure on parents to contribute to the maintenance of schools through *Harambee*. Parents from economically poor backgrounds felt victimised for being forced to contribute to *Harambee* funds because in many instances their contribution was made a condition for the admission of their children to school. Parents who could not afford to contribute to the *Harambee* pulled their children out of school. The report of the Presidential Working Party on Education and Training for the Next Decade and Beyond (1988) recommended the introduction of cost-sharing. Other than teachers' emoluments, parents, through the Parents Teachers Association, and with the help of the community, were responsible for primary education.
- i *Poverty.* The Second Poverty Report in Kenya (2000) reported that 56 per cent of Kenyans lived on or were below the poverty line. According to this report 30.7 per cent of the children out of school cited poverty as the main reason for not attending school. Further evidence of poverty was found in the Arid and Semi Arid Lands where household food security is a problem. The World Food Programme provides a school meal to children in these areas to encourage their parents to send them to school. When food was not delivered to schools (poor transportation and/or organisation), enrolment dropped and schools were closed (MOE Workshop Paper). Parents took their children out of school to help in household activities (collecting firewood, bringing water, looking after younger siblings, or assisting with the grazing of livestock). This gesture also highlights the value that parents place on schooling – which should be that learning is taking place which will be beneficial to their children, but clearly it is not.
- j *HIV/AIDS.* HIV/AIDS has emerged as another cause of school drop-outs. When parents have become too sick to provide for their children, the older children are forced to leave school to take care of their parents and their younger siblings. The younger ones are eventually removed from school because there is no money to pay fees.

Parents' reaction to Education during the Moi era could be summed up as disillusion, disenchantment and disappointment. It is no wonder that the GER fell from 95 per cent in 1985 to 87.6 per cent in 2002.

The third attempt – 2003 – on-going

President Mwai Kibaki succeeded Moi in December 2002 after a general election. It was the first time since independence that an opposition party had won the national political election and could form the government. Kibaki and the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) broke 40 years of political dominance by one political party that had ruled Kenya. While Kibaki was in opposition, there was a growing national and international consensus (various lobbies of multi-lateral and bi-lateral agencies, international NGOs and civil society groups) that NARC should take action immediately to fulfil Kenya's commitment

of achieving the EFA target of UPE by 2015 through abolishing school fees and levies. In its manifesto published in 2002, NARC pledged that it would provide free and compulsory primary education to all children. Kenya was a signatory to the Jomtien and Dakar agreements.

On taking over the reins of government, President Mwai Kibaki's first policy pronouncement was to make primary education a focal point of his presidency. He immediately directed that 'Free Primary Education' (FPE) should be implemented in January 2003 at the start of the school year.

President Kibaki inherited an education system that was crumbling and of poor quality and the brave decision he had taken had not been planned for. There were just a few weeks from the time the national elections were held (end of December) and the swearing in of the new government in January 2003, when Kibaki made his Acceptance Speech in which he talked about free primary education. The beginning of the school year for primary and secondary schools in January also added to the planning crisis.

Events have been recorded thus: 'On Saturday, 4th January, the Minister for Education clarified the pre-election pledge – no child would be required to pay any form of fees or levies to any public primary school, and that every child regardless of age should report to the nearest public primary school for admission' (MOE Workshop Paper 2006). The new academic year was due to start on 6th January 2003 and the Minister put together a task force and summoned them to a crisis meeting on the same day, Saturday, to work out the strategies for the implementation of Free Primary Education (FPE) programme. No provision in the existing budget had been made for FPE (the Kenya financial year is from June to July) and the government could not wait until the end in June 2003 to allocate additional funds to primary education (the school academic year is from January to December). With no budget or any formal plans, the policy was seen as a mirage and wishful thinking of a new and inexperienced government. The fear was that quality would also be compromised.

Two days later, on 6th January, those who had been out of school reported to the closest school as the announcement, indicated. Expansion in primary education again jump-started for the third time with enrolments in public primary schools increasing from 5.9 million in 2002 to 7.2 million in 2004 (an increase of 22 per cent), representing a GER of 99 per cent (102 per cent girls; 97 per cent boys – MOE Census Data). Universal and free primary education in 2003 opened the school system to everyone who wanted a primary education – both over-age and under-age people came into primary school. One person who made headlines was an 82 year old the man, a Mr Kimani Ng'ang'a, who started primary education at Grade 1 and would not be persuaded to attend adult literacy classes because according to him, adult literacy was under-funded and lacked material and qualified teachers. In 2007 he was still in school, in primary Grade 5.

Between 2003 and 2007, UPE or rather FPE (Free Primary Education) has continued to expand, has continued to be a government priority and has continued to receive government support. How has the government organised it this time to make it work and what did it do differently?

- a *Professionals from outside the government were included in the Task Force.* Membership was drawn from a cross-section of stakeholder groups (civil society organisations, education professionals, Faith Based Organisations, the media, NGOs/INGOs, multi-lateral and bi-lateral aid agencies).¹¹ By including NGOs and aid agencies, the MOE ensured that it would get the best range of advice and the best deal with civic society.
 - i NGOs and Aid Agencies boosted the capacity of MOE and Treasury officials by working alongside them to assist with realistic plans, to identify potential problems and to attempt to solve them or to work around them.
 - ii In addition, the move to bring aid agencies into the planning process right at the beginning, transferred responsibility for the success of the programme onto them. Organisations represented in the Task Force were the first to offer financial assistance to the fledging programme. They also arranged to form a coalition with other donors to support the programme.
 - iii The media also felt that they could not be critical about the plan or the government because they too were responsible for the implementation of the ambitious programme.

- b *Participatory approach.* The Task Force involved the community at the grass roots at the outset of the planning programme and empowered them to take ownership of the programme.
 - i The media were used to publicise FPE; its implication, expectations and potential impact to the communities
 - ii At the local level, the communities were involved in the planning and decision making process. Local plans were designed incorporating short-term strategies that the communities could support.
 - iii The MOE sent its officers to the field to work with the local Education officials and to carry out a rapid assessment of the situation on the ground and to collect data to inform the planning process.

- c *Resource mobilisation.* The government, together with donors and interested stakeholders, embarked on a rapid resource mobilisation exercise for the programme.
 - i A technical team was formed and it determined an acceptable unit cost for financing FPE.
 - ii Actual funds harnessed were:
 - a Supplementary funds from the government were released to facilitate the programme until the end of June – approximately US\$31.6 million was disbursed. Another US\$6.8 million under emergency funding was provided by the government;
 - b DFID gave an initial grant of US\$21.1 million; UNICEF gave US\$2.5 million;
 - c Financing during the year came from: The World Bank US\$50 million to increase institutional capacity and for instructional materials; DFID, together with SIDA, gave an additional US\$10.6 million; WFP US\$13.9 million; OPEC US\$9.9 million; there were other smaller donations from Oxfam (GB), Action Aid, etc.;
 - d A fund was started for well-wishers who wanted to support the FPE programme and during the first year a total of US\$10,500 was collected.

- d *Funds sent directly to schools from the MOE.* The ‘good practice’ experience of the Dutch government in two districts in Kenya was replicated. Each school had to open two bank accounts (some schools had never had bank accounts and consequently there were teething problems with the accidental interchanging of numbers etc). The MOE signed an agreement with the commercial banks requesting minimal charges to schools. By electronically transferring the funds directly into the schools’ bank accounts from the MOE headquarters twice a year, the funds by-passed the Provincial and District offices (where leakages and irregularities could occur), thereby safeguarding the totality of the funds.
- e *Parents-Teachers committees set up.* Every school had to have a School Management Committee, which consisted of the head-teacher as secretary and the rest of the members were elected by parents from the school’s Parents Association. A unit cost per school grade had been identified and parents were informed that the funds their school was to receive depended on the number of children in each grade multiplied by the amount. This was the capitation grant. Each child was to receive a certain number of text books, exercise books, pens, pencils and a compass set. Anecdotal evidence indicated that if children went home without the stipulated number of books, pens etc., parents came to the school to demand to know what had happened and threatened the head and teachers that they would report them to the government. Such was the extent to which the media and the government had galvanised parents and the communities. A clear lesson was that parents appeared to be the best custodians of their children’s education once they were empowered.
- f *The two school accounts.* (i) The School Instructional Materials Bank Account (SIMBA). The total amount the school received was based on the number of children in each class multiplied by the unit cost of that grade. To ensure transparency, the signatory to the account was not a member of the SMC but was accountable to it. Heads were also in-serviced on the accuracy and promptness of reporting enrolment to the MOE, without which funds could not be disbursed. (ii) The second account was the General Purpose Account (GPA) which was for operation and maintenance expenses of the school. Neither of the two accounts was for teachers’ salaries.
- g *Transparency in the use of the funds.* Each school had to draw up charts on manila paper (also sent to schools). One chart had enrolment by class and gender; the second chart had the school accounts on it for the SIMBA, and a third chart had the GPA on it. These were to be displayed either outside the head’s office or in the head’s office at all times. Inspectors and MOE officials could visit schools at random and check enrolment and the use of the funds. The system has worked well and the MOE has agreed that it would be in use every year.
- h *There were two notable champions during the third attempt.* The first two attempts at UPE did not have champions and hence they failed. The third attempt has been steered in a dedicated manner by Professor George Saitoti, who has a credible track record for being able to steer difficult reforms. He is a mathematician by profession and has a good understanding of educational issues such as finance, access and quality of education (he was previously Minister of Finance and is well versed in the

relationship of education to GDP, and education and the productive sectors). He made a vigorous attempt to engage with interested stakeholders and donors and has taken a personal interest and ownership of the implementation on FPE. He went abroad and met with various donors to obtain sufficient funding to cover at least seven years of the implementation of FPE during which it is expected that the domestic capacity to finance will have grown¹². Professor Karega Mutahi, Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Education has also been a driving force to implement FPE and has travelled throughout the country listening to people's problems in the implementation process and trying to remedy the problems. The two champions in the Ministry – the Permanent Secretary and the Minister of Education – worked in harmony and were determined that FPE would succeed; the success so far should be credited to the two of them.

The impact of FPE

Teachers. The number of teachers rose marginally on the third attempt. Total number of primary teachers rose from 172,424 in 2002 to 176,887 in 2004, an increase of only 2.4 per cent. The MOE was unable to employ additional classes for the expanded primary population because of the need to contain the wage bill. At the time of writing, there was an IMF freeze on employing teachers and a ceiling was being imposed on the recruitment of all civil servants. According to the freeze, total MOE salaries, including teacher remuneration, should not exceed 5.2 per cent as a percentage of GDP. It has been argued that there are two reasons for this. One is that education spending in Kenya as a percentage of GDP is estimated as 6.6 per cent compared to 3.6 per cent for Sub-Saharan Africa. These expenditures are skewed towards wages and salaries. The second reason is that pupil-teacher ratios are low, particularly at secondary level – estimated to be at 21:1 in 2005¹³.

The non-recruitment of additional teachers in primary education has apparently increased the efficiency of the utilisation of teachers. Teacher-pupil ratios rose from 31:1 in 2002 to 40:1 in 2004. In Kenya, the supply of trained teachers is greater than demand

Table 3.2. Teachers in public primary schools and pupil-teacher ratios 2002–04, Kenya

Province	Number of teachers			Pupil-teacher ratio		
	2002	2003	2004	2002	2003	2004
Coast	10,398	10,527	10,783	35.1	43.6	48.8
Central	24,176	23,709	23,303	33.0	35.8	36.5
Eastern	36,386	36,815	36,573	31.5	35.0	36.9
Nairobi	4,117	4,007	4,189	35.3	48.1	48.5
Rift Valley	44,685	46,897	46,603	33.1	36.8	38.1
Western	21,933	22,718	22,753	40.1	46.1	48.0
Nyanza	29,467	30,611	31,205	34.4	41.9	40.3
North-Eastern	1,262	1,288	1,478	38.2	50.0	45.6
Total	172,424	176,572	176,887	34.1	39.1	40.3

Source: Ministry of Education and the Teachers Service Commission

and there is a surplus over 600,000 trained teachers. However, it has to be noted that national teacher-pupil ratios are deceptive. Great disparities exist. The ratio of 40:1 is the national average which does not reflect the true picture in marginalised and economically poor areas. Highly populated areas such as those in the urban slums and some rural areas have high class sizes – some schools are over-crowded and have a ratio of 100:1. In the more sparsely populated affluent urban areas, class sizes are much lower. In particular, class sizes in the North-Eastern Province of Kenya (situated in the semi-desert) are low, due to the scattered nature of the nomadic population.

The MOE is aware that the quality of education has taken a nose-dive with the rapid quantitative expansion of primary education. To arrest the situation, it created the Directorate of Quality Assurance and Standards (DQAS), to work with the Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC) to carry out a national assessment in all districts. It had yet to report at the time of writing.

Repetition, drop-out and completion rates are also being closely monitored. Initially, the MOE put a stop to repetition but parents complained that their child had not grasped the subject content of the previous class and an automatic promotion meant that they would be even worse off. Due to parental pressure, the MOE has capitulated and has made allowances for the weaker primary school children to repeat.

One unexpected phenomenon has been the growth of private primary schools. With the increase in class sizes in the state system, compounded by the re-entry of pupils who had previously dropped out of school for several years, the quality of education has fallen. Pupils, who have re-entered school, have relapsed into semi-literacy and teachers are finding it difficult to cope with the large variation of the learners. Attention given by the teachers to the new entrants means that they cannot give adequate attention to those who were in school and have progressed in the school grades. Learning for the latter has been compromised. Consequently, parents who can afford to pay fees in private schools have removed their children from public schools and put them in private schools that have moderate class sizes and where teaching and learning is visibly taking place. So great has been the exodus to private schools that enrolment in one year grew from 187,966 in 2002 to 253,169 in 2004, an increase of 34 per cent! Staffing has not been a problem as there is a surplus of teachers in the country. Anecdotal evidence is that private schools now have a choice in their recruitment of teachers and that they are able to recruit them at a lower salary than they would have been able to a few years ago. Thus, one of the results of expanded primary school enrolment has been the mushrooming of private schools in Kenya. On the other hand, in the poorer areas, some private primary schools, which did not offer a good education have closed down because parents transferred their children to public schools after the announcement of free primary education.

Education expenditure

The performance of Kenya's economy improved in recent years. After experiencing declining trends in macroeconomic performance from the late 1980s right through the 1990s till 2003, the country gradually picked up and real growth rates rose from a low of 0.6 per cent in 2002 to 3.6 per cent in 2003, to 4.9 per cent in 2004 and 5.8 per cent in

2005. The growth has been attributed to the priority macroeconomic policies pursued by government within the Economic Recovery Strategy for Wealth and Employment Creation (ERS) framework.

The importance that the government has given to education can be seen in the high investment allocated to the sector. Education in Kenya has continued to receive one of the highest public spending allocations. Total education expenditure as a percentage of GDP rose from 6.2 per cent in 2002/3 to 6.6 per cent in 2005/6 representing 29.6 per cent and 25.8 per cent of total government public spending in the respective years.

Most of the funds allocated to primary education has been in the form of recurrent expenditure (96.4 per cent in 2004/5)¹⁴, leaving capital development expenditure with less than 4 per cent at the time of rapid primary school expansion. The implication of such a small percentage being devoted to capital development has meant that most of the physical infrastructure in primary education was financed either by households or through external support, even though FPE was meant to be free with no parental obligation. The situation changed in 2005/6, when the share of the capital development budget increased from 3.6 per cent to 7 per cent, due in the main to the external support from development partners for the Kenya Education Sector Support Programme¹⁵, which was accepted by the donors in 2005 as being robust and viable for increased investment.

External support for education through Donor Appropriations in Aid (AIA) has been small compared to what the government has put in the pot. It has been estimated that donor funding to FPE has been around 6 per cent to 8 per cent of total expenditure on Free Primary Education effort. The main donors to FPE are the World Bank and the UK government. DFID is the major player but exact figures have been difficult to obtain as it also handles the consortium money in the Fast Track Initiative. UNICEF has a tranching programme and the World Food Programme provides the food which the GOK distributes.

With the increased resources spent on the provision of instructional materials (text book, exercise books and a compass set) for each primary school pupil, there is the beginning of a change in the primary school recurrent budget. Teachers' salaries and emoluments as a percentage of the recurrent budget have been falling. In 2002/3 teacher's salaries comprised 96.18 per cent; in 2003/4 it was 81.2 per cent; in 2004/5 it was 81.36 per cent and in 2005/6 it was 80.2 per cent. The measures show that inputs other than teachers' salaries are being injected into the schools system to improve quality. A recent study in 2006 showed that the provision of instructional material and the teacher in-service programme has had a positive impact on quality. Using the KCPE 2003 results as the base year, the study has established that KCPE scores for schools in economically poor districts increased by 1.7 per cent between 2003 and 2005¹⁶.

Conclusion

The Government remains fully committed to the successful implementation of the FPE. Financially, the government has increased its allocation to the MOE's budget over the next four years. The Medium Term Economic Framework 2006/7 to 2009/10¹⁷ shows what the MOE has been allocated for each year: 33.1 per cent; 34 per cent; 36.4 per cent and

35.4 per cent of the total government budget – over one-third of government spending is being devoted to education. The MOE is also aware that quantitative expansion has been undertaken at the expense of quality. Together with its development partners, it is taking measures to remedy the problem, bringing in external professionals to boost its capacity for qualitative improvement, which includes an in-service programme for primary teachers in content and methodology to make the curriculum more relevant, as well as making resources such as text books available to pupils. Measures to increase access through the building of schools with help from Kenya's development partners and well-wishers have also been undertaken. The success is also due to parents who have continued to be involved in the running of the schools that their children attend and to ensure that their children actually receive the books they are entitled to. Anecdotal evidence also suggests that it is difficult for teachers to be moon-lighting or to be absent from school without a good reason, as parents demand to know why a class does not have a teacher. In those areas where there is a school feeding programme, parents have mobilised themselves into groups and volunteer to cook the mid-day meal. Finally, the entire FPE/UPE programme has been underpinned with the recovery in Kenya's economy. Economic growth was expected to sustain the expanded primary school enrolments; but the latest world economic events may put a brake on some of the government's more ambitious plans.

Notes

- 1 All information pertaining to education is from the Ministry of Education, unless otherwise cited.
- 2 All statistics in this paper are from the Planning and Development Department, Ministry of Education, Government of Kenya, unless otherwise stated.
- 3 World Bank Report, 2004.
- 4 *Harambee* is a Kiswahili word meaning 'lets pull together'. Money is raised by a group of interested stakeholders inviting people to get together to contribute/pledge funds towards a project.
- 5 Lillis, K. 1986
- 6 Mutua, R. 1975
- 7 Mwiria, K. 1985
- 8 The Ominde Commission of 1964 was followed by: The Education Act (1968) (Revised 1970); The Report of the National Committee on Educational Objectives and Policies (1976); The Report of the Presidential Working Party on the Second University in Kenya (1981); Report of the Presidential Working Party on Education and Manpower Training for the Next Decade and Beyond (1988); The Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Education System of Kenya (2000); Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2005 on Policy Framework for Education, Training and Research in Kenya (2005).
- 9 T.C.I. Ryan. Email communication on 7th September 2007.
- 10 Ministry of Education Paper for Workshop on 'Building on What We Know and Defining Sustained Support', held at the Hilton Hotel Nairobi, 5–7 April 2006.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 Email communication from Professor T.C.I. Ryan to Alba de Souza. He was a former lecturer at the University of Nairobi, former Economic Secretary to the Ministry of Finance, and currently consultant to the Governor of the Central Bank of Kenya.
- 13 Draft Paper on Efficiency of Government Education Expenditures in Kenya. March 2007.
- 14 World Bank (March 2007). Draft Paper on the Efficiency of Government Education Expenditures in Kenya.

- 15 The KESSP 2005–10 was the first programme prepared as a Sector Wide Approach (SWAp) for Education planning and financing reflecting levels of support by donors).
- 16 Ministry of Education (2006). Delivering Quality Primary Education and Improving Access: An Impact Evaluation of the Instructional Materials and In-service Teacher Training Programme.
- 17 Document which has guided GOK spending and covers government financial commitments.