

Basic Education in Kenya: Focus on Strategies Applied to Cope with School-based Challenges Inhibiting Effective Implementation of Curriculum

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ABSTRACT

This study explored strategies applied to cope with challenges inhibiting effective implementation of basic education curriculum in Kenya. The study was framed by the constructivist theory. Convenience sampling was used to select a sample of 205 primary and secondary school teachers and employed mixed methods to collect and analyze data. It was found that despite the gains made in accelerated enrollment in, and quality of education since the launch of free primary education (FPE) and Free Day Secondary Education (FDSE) in Kenya at the national level, there still remain pockets within Kenyan geographical regions which have remained behind in attaining effective implementation of curriculum, resulting into low academic achievement. Among the key challenges affecting effective implementation of basic education include: insufficient physical facilities and instructional resources to cope with the exponential growth of student population resulting from the abolition of school fees and introduction of FPE and FDSE; inadequate teachers resulting in high teaching load prompting the use of ineffective teaching methods; Lack of motivation of the teaching force resulting into insufficient focus on the learner and thus creating little room for use of modern teaching techniques that require individualized teaching, amongst others. As a result, the coping strategies employed both at the Ministry of Education level; school level and teacher level have not been effective in ensuring the provision of equitable and quality education. Given the fast approaching deadline of 2015 for meeting the internationally agreed goals and commitments, the international development partners and other key education stakeholders should come forward and generously support educational development, especially the aspects that enhance effective implementation of basic education in Kenya, strictly in line with national priorities. In doing so, Kenya will not only be on track towards the attainment of the internationally agreed goals that appertain to education, but the attainment of quality EFA will be within reach.[309 words]

Key words: Basic education, School-based factors, Teacher classroom practices, Curriculum Implementation, Teacher professional development, Enhanced access and performance.