

Challenges of Implementing Free Primary Education in Kenya: Assessment Report.

UNESCO

Executive Summary

The Free Primary Education (FPE) assessment study was carried out in 162 primary schools in Kenya in February 2004. The study covered nine sampled districts in five provinces. Eighteen schools were picked from each of the nine sampled districts. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST) records show that the sample area had a total of 2,169 schools with an enrolment of 963,918 pupils. Thus, the schools visited represent 7.5 per cent of the schools and 9.04 per cent of the enrolment in the targeted sample districts. The overall aim of the study was to document the experiences of the first year of implementing FPE and use them to address the emerging challenges. The FPE study collected data from many sources and used different data collection techniques both quantitative and qualitative. These included Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) to collect qualitative data from pupils, teachers and community members. The mail questionnaire technique was used to collect data from headteachers, a checklist to collect observational data from schools and in-depth interviews to get data from headteachers and district education officials. The study established that after an initial increase in enrolment, public schools were beginning to experience a decline in enrolment due to dropouts and to a lesser degree, transfer to private schools. While enrolment rose to 92,974 in the 162 sampled schools in 2003, up from 74,410 in 2002, the number dropped to 88,356 in 2004, representing a 5 per cent drop. A number of factors explain this situation, including unfriendly learning environments, poverty, child labour and HIV/AIDS. According to the study, the bulk of the pupils are in classes that are not appropriate to their age. Only a quarter of the pupils are actually in a grade that is suitable for their age, while 44 per cent are over-age for their grade by two or more years. The results indicate that the majority of the pupils are above the age expected for their grade. This has a negative Impact on their learning achievement. Moreover, - some of them were indisciplined and bullied younger pupils. Being over-age for grade also impacts on the survival rates especially for the girls, w h o due to cultural practices, are considered marriageable once they reach teenage even though they may still be in primary school.....

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