

The central problem of this study which was conducted between August 2006 and September 2009 was the vexed question of the role of NGOs in financing public primary education in Budalangi, Busia District. The study adopted a descriptive research design which involved collecting data in order to determine the contribution of NGOs towards public primary education within a sample space. Out of a population of 16 NGOs, 33+ primary school headteachers, 16,518 pupils, a sample of nine NGOs, seven primary school headteachers, 111 pupils and parents was drawn. This gave a total of 238 respondents. The sample responded to items in the research instruments which were administered by the researcher. The instruments were; Questionnaires for both NGO administrators and headteachers and Interview Schedules for both pupils and parents. The researcher visited a sample of nine NGOs and seven primary schools and administered the instruments. The vast field of data was condensed and summarised before being analysed using statistical methods such as the mean, frequency tables and graphs. The findings of this study have shown that NGOs play a central role in promoting quality, access, equity and relevance of primary education by providing physical facilities such as classrooms, administration blocks, toilets and workshops to-schools. There was also direct support to pupils in the form of uniforms, learning materials, health services, clothing and feeding. Parents of the supported pupils also received support in the form of medicine, beddings, mosquito nets, shelter while some were offered part-time jobs by the supporting NGOs. It was noted that the number of supported pupils was significant (31%) in relation to total school enrolment. However, the NGOs faced the challenge of insufficient funds to support the increasing number of orphans. It importantly emerged that most (43.8%) NGOs relied on international donors for funds thus raising sustainability questions on the supported projects. Most NGOs had no exit strategy. The respondents reported chronic inability of the NGOs to provide adequate and continued support. Clearly more needs to be done and where possible NGOs should use capacity building for sustained support and to work hand in hand with the government and all other stakeholders in education to help Kenya meet its commitment towards making basic education a fundamental human right in line with the Jomtiem commitment of 1990 of which Kenya is a signatory.