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FINANCING BASIC EDUCATION: WHAT ARE THE EQUITY AND QUALITY IMPLICATIONS OF FREE PRIMARY EDUCATION (FPE) AND FREE DAY SECONDARY EDUCATION (FDSE) POLICIES IN KENYA?

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ABSTRACT

The thrust of this paper is to examine free primary education (FPE) and Free Day Secondary Education (FDSE) education policies with a view to critically assess their implications on equity and quality of the education provided through these initiatives in Kenya. It is concerned with three questions? What is the current progress in enrollment and equity trends in education in primary and secondary schools in Kenya? What are the funding strategies for the primary and secondary education sectors in the country? What are the emerging challenges and implications of these free education policies on equity and quality in Kenya? The study utilizes both data and methods triangulation techniques combining secondary data sources through desk literature review and primary data from interviews with purposively sampled 136 primary and secondary school teachers and headteachers pursuing their school-based degree progrmmes at Kenyatta and Mount Kenya Universities. The major finding is that there has been a phenomenal growth in student enrollment both in primary and secondary schools in Kenya as a result of the implementation of these free education policies. However, education in the country has been fraught with multifarious and intertwined finance related challenges of providing quality and equitable education, resulting in conspicuously wide and severe regional and gender disparities in access to, and quality of education. The funds meant for primary and secondary schools are inadequate and irregularly transmitted to schools and this has exacerbated teacher shortages, high pupil-teacher ratios and inadequate and /or inappropriate teaching resources forcing teachers to resort to unorthodox instructional techniques. This has resulted in a drop in quality outcomes of education. It is concluded that although Kenya has adroitly put in place additional series of educational interventions and incentives including bursaries for the poor needy learners and encouraging individual schools to solicit for additional funds from the community and school projects to supplement government funding, these interventions are yielding more of quantitative growth in student enrollment at the expense of equity and quality of the education provided. It is recommended that in order to effectively finance basic education of high quality, all constraints related to additional educational financing should be eradicated through making strong and tough decisions that pragmatically translate the education policies from the current rhetoric chimera to practice.

INTRODUCTION

Background Information

Recent statistics indicates that education sector budget in Kenya has generally been increasing over the years particularly after the introduction of Free Primary Education (FPE) in 2003 and Free Day Secondary Education (FDSE) in 2008 (Republic of Kenya, 2012a). The public spending in education sector was allocated colossal funding which increased from Khs.92.2 billion (equivalent to US$ 1.08 billion) in 2005/2006 to Ksh.169 billion (US $1.88 billion) in 2009/2010 fiscal year to meet the new demands of the policies (Republic of Kenya, 2012).On average, the education sector accounted for 28 percent of the aggregate public expenditure in 2005/2006 and dropped marginally to 26 percent in 2009/2010 fiscal years (Republic of Kenya, 2013). The

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country's education expenditure as a percentage of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has remained fairly constant ranging from 6.1 percent in 2005/2006 to 6.2 during the 2009/2010 financial year (Republic of Kenya, 2012a). These efforts to devote meaningful funding to education is justified against the backdrop that available evidence from literature review suggests a positive and significant correlation between indicators of quality education and financial allocation (Brookings Institution, 2013; Oketch & Ngware, 2012; World Bank, 2008, 2012). Invariably, these strategies to generously finance education system in Kenya is hinged on the philosophy, vision, mission and target goals pursued through clearly stated objectives (Republic of Kenya, 2010a, 2010b, 2012a, 2013). Furthermore, the Ministry of Education in Kenya is guided by the National Philosophy, which places education at the centre-stage of the country's human and economic development strategies (Republic of Kenya, 2013). Thus, the education system focuses on the acquisition of knowledge and skills as well as provision of lifelong learning (Republic of Kenya, 2013; United Nations, 2013).

In line with the current United Nations (2013) and other educationally relevant international conventions and protocols which Kenya is a signatory to, the education in the country emphasizes provision of a holistic, quality education and training that promotes the cognitive, psychomotor and affective domains of learners, instilling values such as patriotism, equality of all human beings, peace, security, honesty, humility, mutual respect, tolerance, co-operation and democracy, through education (Odhiambo,2012; Republic of Kenya, 2012a, 2012b, 2013; United Nations, 2013; UNESCO, 2004, 2010). Ultimately the overall vision of education service provision in the country is to have a globally competitive quality education, training and research for Kenya's sustainable development. To achieve this, the Ministry has endorsed Vision 2030 and shall focus education and training towards achieving the goals of the Vision (Republic of Kenya, 2010b, 2012a, 2013). Needless to say, effective pursuance of these objectives, which emphasizes access, equity, quality and relevance as fundamental characteristics that define and drive systems of education and training, enough and sustainable funding must be provided. Thus, it is the contention of this paper that the design and implementation of an effective education and training systems that is cognizant of the four characteristics should be based on sound financial base of the country.

Over the years, the Kenya Government has vigorously expanded access to quality and relevant system of education and training, through a partnership between the state, parents, the community and key stakeholders with an intention of according equal opportunity to all, thereby ensuring equity (Republic of Kenya/UNESCO, 2012; Odhiambo, 2012; Wasanga, Ogle & Wambua, 2011a, 2011b). In the Kenyan context, access to education and training means adequacy of opportunities available to persons that wish to enter the system. Measures of access include: Gross Enrolment Ratios (GERs); Net Enrolment Ratios (NERs); transition rates from one cycle to the next; retention rates; completion rates; children out of school or training institutions (but should be in); The number of education and training institutions; and regional and gender parity (Odhiambo,2012; Republic of Kenya, 2012a; Wasanga, Ogle & Wambua, 2011a, 2011b). Other indicative measures include adequacy or otherwise of infrastructure, learning materials and teachers. Even if the enrolment ratios are high, large class sizes show inadequacy of infrastructure and hence limitation in expanding access. Similarly, high pupil to textbook ratios affects quality and limits expansion of access. Additionally, high Pupil to Teacher Ratios (PTR) affect both quality and opportunity to absorb more pupils for training, as are also the inadequacy of training equipment, laboratories and workshops and trainers with particular skills (Odhiambo, 2012; Republic of Kenya, 2012a; Wasanga, Ogle & Wambua, 2011a, 2011b). Equity means offering equal opportunities for education and training to all, irrespective of gender, ethnicity, religion, political affiliation or social status. Special attention is focused on disadvantaged persons such as persons with special needs and those from marginalised communities and minorities. Equity refers to fairness in participation in or using a service or allocation of resources. In education and training, equity focuses on:

(i) gender – girls vis-à-vis boys or females vis-à-vis males
(ii) regional differences;
(iii) ASAL/Slum areas vis-à-vis other areas;
(iv) socio-economic classes, mainly the poor vis-à-vis the rich;
(v) special Needs – such as disadvantages caused by disabilities (Wasanga, Ogle & Wambua, 2011a, 2011b). In education and training, equity is the most elusive characteristic at all levels and in some cases, affirmative action is needed to realise it (Republic of Kenya/UNESCO, 2012; UNESCO, 2005a.2005b; Wasanga, Ogle & Wambua, 2011a, 2011b).

Quality, on the other hand, is an indicator of the extent to which educational goals and objectives are achieved through implementation activities. Such objectives are normally stated in the curriculum documents. Assessment of quality is complicated as the tendency, as is the case in this paper, is to peg it to students performance in examinations (Odhiambo, 2012; Republic of Kenya, 2012a; World Bank, 2008, 2012). However, the paper is cognizant of the fact that education is far more than mastery of basic literacy and numeracy as pointed out by the Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda (United Nations, 2013). Thus, the paper keeps in view the fact that while the targets of education are about access to school and learning outcomes; education aims are wider (United Nations, 2013; Brookings Institution, 2013; Republic of Kenya/UNESCO, 2012; Wasanga, Ogle & Wambua, 2011a, 2011b).

Nonetheless, it is the contention of this paper that these indicators presuppose that the education system is not only adequately financed, but these finances are available in ways that neither exclude any learner by gender or region of residence nor leave any deserving learner behind (United Nations, 2013; UNESCO,2012). The contention finds support in the Report of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda under the auspices of the United Nations (2013) who aver that it is important to target learning outcomes, and to make sure that every child performs up to global minimum standard upon completing primary education (United Nations,2013). However, they caution that education should be perceived as being about far more than basic literacy and numeracy (United Nations, 2013; Brookings Institution, 2013). Their perspective is that while the targets of education are about access to school and learning,

educations aims are wider and financial implications are colossal (United Nations, 2013). They reiterate that as set out in the Convention on the Rights of the child, education should be geared towards enabling children to realize their talents and full potential , earn respect for human rights and prepares them for their role as adults(United Nations,1989; United Nations,2013). Eventually, they counsel that education should also encourage creative thinking, teamwork and problem solving amongst others (United Nations, 2013).

State of the Art Review

According to Lewin (2008), the role of education and human capital in promoting the growth of economies and improvements in human well-being is broadly recognized. The contribution of primary education is well documented (Lewin, 2008). Recent research findings also highlight the significant additional contributions to economic growth and social outcomes that secondary education and training can make. Conversely, sustained economic growth is essential if the resources necessary for accelerated secondary education development are to be mobilized (Levin, 2008). Analysis of education financing revolves around three main sets of issues. First, the total amount of expenditures, second the distribution of these between different levels of education and third the sources of financing. Each of these is influenced at different times by different factors. Across countries of sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) in the coming years, several changes to domestic and external factors will influence these issues. This paper focuses on future scenarios for, largely public, funding for education across SSAin the context of both recent trends and factors which may alter these trends including increased social demand to expand post primary education, the recent global economic downturn and changes in donors' priorities and behaviour. The paper acknowledges that countries across SSA differ widely in both education structures and the patterns of education financing (Hinchliffe, 2010).

The first eight years of this century witnessed an unprecedented advance in education enrolments. According to UNESCO's Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2010, between 1999 and 2007 the net enrolment ratio in primary education rose from 80 to 86percent in developing countries, the number of primary school age children out of school fell from 105 million to 72 million, the gross enrolment ratio in secondary education went up from 52 to 61 percent and that in higher education from 11 to 18 percent. But the poorest countries in sub-Saharan Africa still lag behind, with the same enrollment ratios at only 73, 34 and 4 percent, respectively in 2007 and there is a particular issue for countries affected by conflict. These increases in enrolments were driven largely by shifting attitudes towards girls' education (the gender parity index in primary education for all developing countries improving from 0.92 to 0.97), by the abolition of school fees and similar obstacles to enrolment at the household level, and by sustained global economic growth, making it possible to consistently expand real public spending on education (Hinchcliffe, 2010; Burnett, 2010). Relative success in terms of primary enrolments, even though there are now some signs of a slowing down in the pace, has not been matched, however, in terms of quality. It is now widely acknowledged that there is a crisis in educational quality in developing countries and those children are not learning what they should. Concerned as it is with finance, this paper does not repeat the well known evidence on this point. Note, however, that this evidence, including not just the standard international assessments but also from newer sources such as early grade reading assessments and citizen surveys (such as those of Parham in India and Owezo in Kenya, which assess all children in a household against grade 2 standards), indicates that the learning problem begins very early in primary school and requires a focus on basic reading and mathematics from the start (Hinchliffe, 2010). From a financing point of view, the issue is more what to do about this lack of learning – some of it has to do with teacher supply (class sizes being still impossibly large in many countries with recent rapid enrolment expansions) and hence with the level of funding but much to do with teacher training, teacher presence (absenteeism often being very high) and teacher expectations of students, none of which are about the level of funding but more about how it is used (Steer & Bauldienville, 2010, Burnett, 2010, Hinchcliffe, 2010).

Despite the huge progress made in primary enrolments, massive financing gaps remain for basic education. The latest EFA Global Monitoring Report puts the global gap at $16 billion a year, though many donors are skeptical of this, citing alleged absorptive capacity constraints. In addition, it is highly unlikely that developing countries will be able to afford to provide universal access to secondary and tertiary education using current delivery models. Levin's analysis, for example, indicates that more than an additional 3% of national income would be needed to achieve gross enrolment rates of 60% at lower secondary and 30% at upper secondary in low enrolment countries with existing cost structures. There are no recent systematic estimates of the global financing needs of rapidly expanding secondary and tertiary education, but it will certainly be difficult for developing countries, whose spending already amounts to some 4% of national income, to meet these needs, except, as in East Asia and Latin America, where demographic trends towards lower fertility are also working to reduce financing needs at primary school (Buckland, 2003, Lewin, 2008, Hinchliffe, 2010).

All told, it is clear that the quality issue in basic education is accompanied also by a financing issue for education as a whole. The two are linked in a dangerous way, however. Most attention at international meetings this decade has been on the basic education financing gap, rather than on the effectiveness and efficiency of current spending. As the full extent of the quality problem now emerges, as does alarming evidence from NGOs monitoring absenteeism and the diversion of public spending1, the attention to financing gaps could backfire if it is not accompanied also by renewed attention to effective spending (Burnett, 2010). A global review of public expenditure on education in SSA needs to begin with some comments on the overall lack of data (IMF, 2010; OECD-DAC. 2010). A recent evaluation of the Education for All – Fast Track Initiative (EFA-FTI) utilized three sets of expenditure data – from the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS), Pole de Dakar and the Secretariat of the Fast Track Initiative (FTI). The related working paper on finance concluded that 'missing data are a serious problem for all three sources' (Rawle, 2009). A review of available education expenditure data from UIS for 208 countries between 1999 and 2006 found that the average annual percentage of missing

observations ranged from 45 percent to 88 percent depending on the indicator, and for low income countries the situation was generally far worse (Burnett & Bermingham, 2010). For SSA countries the Pole de Dakar, using a wide variety of sources, has been able to assemble estimates on key public finance indicators for education again for the period 1999 to 2006 for just 33 out of 51 countries (Hinchcliffe, 2010). This overall financing issue is now compounded by the effects of the global financial crisis. These are not easy to summarize, both because of the lack of any systems of real-time monitoring but also because, now that recovery has largely begun, it is not yet clear what will be the structural consequences of both developing countries and donors now reducing the public spending deficits that they largely – and wisely – used to overcome the crisis (Hinchliffe, 2010). A financial crisis could be expected to have an impact on education through cuts in actual or planned public spending on education (resulting in lower enrolments than would otherwise have occurred) , through parents' withdrawing their children from school because of an inability to afford the household costs (direct and indirect), through parents reducing spending on tutoring out of school, and through cuts in aid from rich countries. Evidence is sparse on all these aspects, as it is on the impact on enrollments (Burnet, 2010) . Let us briefly examine each in turn:

First, evidence from literature indicates that the indirect costs of education can indeed reduce students enrollment in schools through parents' withdrawing their children from school because of an inability to afford these costs (direct and indirect), through parents reducing spending on tutoring out of school, public spending on education (Burnett, 2010). The picture is, however, mixed from various countries. On the one hand, some countries, such as China, Korea, Thailand and the USA, increased public spending on education as part of their crisis response (Burnett, 2010). On the other hand, many others, however, had no scope to do so and have had to cut education as a share of public spending, including Benin, Ghana, Lesotho, Rwanda and Tanzania (Hinchliffe, 2010). Based on past experience and evidence from cross country data, household surveys and qualitative studies, are as yet unpublished as World Bank study by Lewis and Verhoeven (2010) as reported in Hinchliffe (2010) shows that countries are more likely to protect education spending (compared to that for health) in a downturn and to increase spending more sharply after a crisis; and that it is the lowest income countries that are most likely to curtail spending while upper middle income countries raise spending (Hinchcliffe, 2010).

Secondly, in terms of household costs of education, literature indicates that reduced household spending might lead to withdrawing children from school as education spending is diverted to food and other immediate necessities (Burnett, 2010, Steer and Baudienville, 2010). There is as yet little evidence on what has happened. It might also lead to parents with children in private schools instead sending them to free public schools – again, there is little evidence that this has happened though there has apparently been some cascade effect of parents shifting children from more to less expensive private schools (World Bank, 2008). Thirdly, in terms of private tutoring, there is no evidence on what has happened to tutoring payments during the recession (Burnett, 2010, Steer and Baudienville, 2010). Here, it is worth remembering that these payments by parents are now very significant around the world, amounting to perhaps as much as one percent of GDP on average, or equivalent to fully a quarter of what governments spend on education (Bunnet, 2010). No wonder, the Basic Education Act 2013 outlaws private tuition in Kenya as it denies the children from poor backgrounds the chance to pay and benefit from the perceived benefit of tuition (Republic of Kenya, 2013). Fourth, with regards to enrollments, the crisis underlines dramatically the need in education to have something akin to the sentinel sites for disease incidence in the health sector. In the absence of such real-time monitoring, all we have so far are estimates (Burnett, 2010, Steer and Baudienville, 2010). The latest World Bank MDG Global Monitoring Report confirms that spending on education has largely been protected so far but suggests that some 350,000 students may be unable to complete primary school by 2015 compared to what was expected prior to the crisis and that the pace of closing the gender gap in both primary and secondary education will slow (Burnett, 2010, Steer & Baudienville, 2010).

Finally with regards to quality improvements most countries especially in Sub-Saharan Africa *have* not, generally, kept pace with increases in access (USAID, 2001, Burnett, 2011). As school fees are reduced or eliminated, national budgets are hard pressed to keep up with the costs of educating burgeoning school-age populations, e.g., additional classrooms and qualified, trained teachers (OCED-DAC, 2010). Despite improvements in many countries, quality remains uneven, and the average time needed to complete each cycle of education is increasing. Although girls are enrolling in greater numbers, they remain likelier than boys to drop out (Odhiambo, 2012). Notwithstanding the aforementioned bottlenecks related to education financing, much progress has been made towards achieving the global goal of universal primary education since the Millennium Conference and the Dakar World Education Forum in 2000.The number of children enrolled in primary schools worldwide rose by more than 40 million between 1999 and 2007 (UNESCO, 2008). Net primary enrolment in sub-Saharan Africa rose from 58% to 74% over the same period (United Nations, 2009). At the same time, there has been a substantial increase in aid to sectors linked to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), including education. International aid commitments to basic education almost doubled, from $2.1 billion in 2002 to $4.1 billion in 2007 (UNESCO, 2010).

While the right to basic education has been a key element of almost every international declaration on human rights since the UN was established, there has been a shift away from the early position that education should be "free" at every level. A rights perspective implies commitment to equitable access to quality education, and these three values, (equity, access and quality) are inherently inter-related. When efficiency impacts negatively on equity in access to quality learning, then efficiency becomes a rights issue. While the world can afford quality basic education for all, many countries cannot. Many of the calculations to establish affordability focus on access, and do not provide adequately for the costs of improving quality, or for the added costs of reaching the hard to reach (Buckland, 2003; Steer & Baudienville, 2010).

Statement of the Problem

These efforts and timely international debate on the benefits and functions of education notwithstanding, the MDG Report (2009) laments that by June of 2009, the provision of UPE had not been achieved, a fact reiterated at the January 26 and 27, 2010 Brussels meeting of the Global Campaign for education, that some 77 million children worldwide, 57 percent of them girls, are still not enjoying their right of education (Oketch & Ngware, 2012). The MDG report revealed variable achievements among the world's regions: low enrollment in sub-Saharan Africa, compared to the moderate enrollment registered in Western and Southern Asia, and the high enrolment in South Eastern Asia, North Africa, Latin America and Caribbean and the Commonwealth of Independent States of Europe and Asia (Oketch & Ngware, 2012). The united Nations (2013) on its part lamented that, globally, there is an education, learning and skills crisis .They pointed out that some 60 million primary school-age children and 71 million adolescents do not attend school (United Nations, 2013). Even in countries where overall enrollment is high, significant number of children leave school early(United Nations, 2013, Brookings Institute, 2013).

On average, 14 percent of young people in the European Union reach no further than lower secondary education (UNESCO, 2012). Among the world's 650 million children of primary school age, 130 million are not learning the basics of reading, writing and arithmetic (United Nations, 2013). The foregoing notwithstanding, literature abounds which indicate that since the attainment of independence in 1963, the Government of Kenya has massively expanded access to education several-fold. Basic indicators of access show that primary and secondary schools have increased from 6,058 and 151 in 1963 to 27,489 and 7,308 in 2010, respectively. Equally, primary and secondary enrolments have exponentially increased from 891,553 and 30,121 in 1963 to 9.4 million and 1.8 million in 2010, respectively. However, the unfinished business is lack of a clear picture and understanding of how these noble FPE and FDSE policies in the country are currently being implemented and the emerging funding related challenges as well as their overall implication on access to, equity and quality of educational provision in the country.

Purpose and Objectives

The overall purpose of this paper is to assess and establish the status of basic education in Kenya under the free education provision with particular focus on access to, equity and quality implications of Free Primary Education (FPE) and Free Day Secondary Education (FDSE) policies in Kenya. The paper has three fold objectives: i) to assess the current progress in enrollment and equity trends in education in primary and secondary schools in the country; ii) to examine the funding strategies for the primary and secondary education sectors in the country; and iii) to establish emerging challenges and implications of the free education policies in Kenya on access to, equity and quality of basic education in Kenya.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The paper used mixed methods involving quantitative and qualitative research approaches with a purposively selected sample of 136 primary and secondary school teachers and headteachers pursuing their school-based post-graduate degree progrmmes at Kenyatta University during the 2012/2013 academic year. The data was generated from intensive review of literature from secondary sources that included Government documents, education review reports on education, statistical abstracts and appropriation account documents; as well as primary data from interviews with the sampled respondents. The literature review focused on access, equity and quality trends as well as the funding mechanisms. The interviews with key respondents focused on emerging challenges as a result of the free education policies in educations and suggestions on how to alleviate these challenges. The internal validity of the study results reported in this paper was enhanced through the use of *data triangulation* by sampling various data sources from teachers enrolled in different universities as well as *methods triangulation* which involved the use of mixed methods in investigating the problem of the study (Brook, 2013).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Access, Equity and Quality Trends in education in Kenya

Enrollment trend in Primary school education by gender

In terms of access and equity in primary schools in Kenya, the Basic Education in the country has been extended to cover early childhood education (ECDE) two years, and is a requirement for each primary school to have a pre-school wing on the understanding that the first few years are the most formative in the mental and intellectual development of a child. However, for the sake of space and focus of this paper, we confine our discussion on primary and secondary school levels of education. The data exhibited in Table 1 indicates that there has been a phenomenal growth in primary education in Kenya between 2001 and 2010.

Table 1. Enrollment in Primary schools by gender in selected years 2001-2010

Year	2001	2004	2007	2010
i. Boys	3,002,500	3,815,500	4,222,800	4,759,900
ii. Girls	2,939,100	3,579,300	4,031,000	4,629,300
Total	5,941,600	7,394,800	8,253,800	9,389,200
Parity Index(ii)/(i)	0.98	0.94	.95	0.97

Source: Ministry of Education Facts Sheet (2013) and Republic of Kenya (2012a)

The enrollment in primary schools steadily increased from 5,941,600 comprising 3,002,500 boys and 2,939,100 girls in 2004, to 7,394,800 comprising of 3,815,500 boys and 3,579,300 girls in 2004 a year after the implementation of Free Primary Education (FPE) in 2003. These impressive enrollment trends skyrocketed to clock 9,389,200 comprising of 4,759,900 boys and 4,629,300 girls in 2010 (Republic of Kenya, 2012a, 2012b). The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) at primary level increased from 91.2% (92.7% and 89.7% for boys and girls respectively) in 1999 to 109.8% (109.8% and 109.9% for boys and girls respectively) in 2010.The Net Enrolment Rate (NER) steadily increased from 68.8% 68.8% for boys and 68.8% girls respectively) in 1999 to 91.6% (94.1% and 89.0% for boys and girls respectively) in 2007 to 92.5% (94.6% and 90.5% for boys and girls respectively) in 2008 and further to 92.9% (93.6% and 92.1% for boys and girls respectively) in 2009 (Republic of Kenya, 2012a,2012b).

Despite this impressive performance at the national level, when these statistics are unpacked at regional level and examined with a gender lens, then there emerges widespread gender and regional disparities especially at the secondary school level (Republic of Kenya/UNICEF, 2012). For instance, in 2010 the NER dipped slightly to 91.4% (90.6% and 92.3% for boys and girls respectively at the national level but with disappointing trends recorded in North Eastern Province and other regions located in ASAL and urban slums (Republic of Kenya/UNICEF, 2012).

Literature reveals that enrolments projections at three levels of schooling from 2009 to 2015 have been done in Kenya and show contrasting revelations (Odhiambo, 2012). The projected statistics indicate that total primary school enrolment is expected to grow at a stable rate during the period from 2010 to 2015 following the stabilization of the impact of FPE which began in 2003. Enrolment in public primary schools is set to increase from about 8 million pupils in 2009 to 9.2 million in 2012 and 10.5 million by 2015 (Republic of Kenya/UNICEF, 2012). Total primary school enrolment (public and private) will increase from 9 million pupils in 2009 to 10 million in 2012 and 11.5 million by 2015 (Republic of Kenya 2012a,2013). Transition rate from primary to secondary increased marginally from 59.6% (56.5% for male and 63.2% for female) in 2007 to 64.1 % (61.3% for male and 67.3% for female) in 2008, further increasing to 66.9% (64.1 % for male and 69.1% for female) in 2009 and to 72% in 2010 (Republic of Kenya/UNICEF, 2012).

The implication of this exponential growth in student's access to basic education in Kenya is that the projected number of public primary school teachers required using a PTR of 40:1 is expected to increase to 221,296 in 2011. Teacher shortage at primary education was estimated at 30,637 teachers in 2011. Private primary schools enrolment is also expected to increase from 793,683 pupils in 2007 to 967,722 pupils by 2015 (Republic of Kenya, 2012a, 2012b). Assuming a class size norm of 50:1, the required number of public primary school classrooms in 2015 is projected at 229,248, up from 193,000 in 2007. Automatic progression/transition of pupils from one grade to the next and from primary school level to secondary education is also expected to surge by 2015 (Republic of Kenya/UNICEF, 2012).

Enrollment trend Secondary Education

The number of secondary schools has increased from a total of 6,566 secondary schools in 2008 to 7,308 in 2009 against 26,666 primary schools over the same period. Enrolment grew from 1.18 million students in 2007 (639,393 boys and 540,874 girls) to 1,328,964 (735,680 boys and 593,284 girls) in 2008 and further to 1,500,015 (804,119 boys and 695,896 girls) in 2009 (Republic of Kenya/UNICEF, 2012). The GER for secondary increased from 27.3 % (28.8% for boys and 25.7% for girls) in 1999 to 47.8% (50.9% for boys and 46.3% for girls) in 2010. The NER recorded an increase from 28.9% (29.8% for male and 27.9% for female) in 2008 to 35.8% (36.5% for boys and 35.1% for girls) in 2010, having progressively improved from 13.7 % (13.5% for male and 13.9% for female) in 1999. The gender disparity index as at 2009 stood at 0.96 % (Republic of Kenya, 2012a). Total secondary school enrolment is expected to rise sharply over the period 2009 to 2015. This is as a result of a number of factors, including: the impact of free primary education and hence the growth in numbers completing class 8; the policy of increasing the transition rate to over 75% by 2012; the expected 100% transition rate by 2015 and the implementation of the Free Day Secondary Education policy and internal efficiency gains in primary and secondary schools. Public secondary school enrolment is expected to increase from 1.03 million students in 2007 to 2 million in 2012 and 2.2 million by 2015. Enrolment in both public and private secondary schools is projected to increase to 2.18 million students in 2012 and 2.4 million by 2015(Republic of Kenya/UNICEF, 2012).

Using a benchmark of a maximum class size of 45:1, the required number of classrooms will increase from 31,473 in 2007 to 52,279 by 2015. The projected number of teachers required for public secondary schools based on Average Teaching Load (ATL) of 18 hours per week is expected to rise from the current 51,200 teachers in 2010 to 76,481 teachers by 2011. This translates to a teacher shortage of 21,728 teachers in 2011; 24,971 teachers by 2012 and a PTR of 24:1 by 2012 which is less than the recommended 35:1. Improving efficiency in teacher utilization by increasing average teaching load to between 20 and 24 hours average teaching load per week, and ensuring that teachers teach at least two school subjects will marginally cut the teacher shortage by around 32 % (Republic of Kenya, 2012a; Odhiambo, 2012). It is estimated that the MoE should be projecting to provide Basic Education for about 15.8 million children (ECDE, Primary and Secondary education); and tertiary education and skills development programmes for about 6.3 million youth by 2015(Republic of Kenya/UNICEF, 2012). Given these high projected growth in student enrollment against the background of the slow development of school infrastructure and inadequate provision of essential teaching learning resources, there is bound to be serious overcrowding in classrooms and high pupil/teacher ratios that will in combination compromise the quality of education.

Financing Primary and Secondary school Education

The data contained in Table 2 which displays education expenditure between 2005/2006 and 2009/2010 fiscal years indicate that Kenya's public spending on education has continued to rise over the years, particularly since the introduction of the free primary education in 2003. A closer scrutiny of the data in the table reveals that the sector's total expenditure increased from Kshs.92.6 billion in 2005/6 to Kshs.160 billion in 2009/10. On average, the education sector accounted for 28 percent of the aggregate public expenditure in 2005/6 and 26 percent in 2009/10. The country's education expenditure as percentage of GDP remained fairly constant ranging from 6.1% in 2005/6 to 6.2 % in 2009/10. Table 3 contains data on public expenditure in education for the period from 2005/2006 fiscal year to 2009/2010 financial year. As reflected in Table 3, primary education sub-sector received the highest percentage allocation of public education spending; 53.070% in 2005/06 and 46.60% in 2009/10. In 2009/10 secondary education, technical and university education sub-sectors received 27%, 4.5% and 11% of total education spending, respectively. The salient message portrayed with the data in Table 3 is that the Government of Kenya attaches a lot

Table 2. Education Expenditure 2005/2006 fiscal years to 2009/2010

Budget Item/financial year	2005/2006	2007/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/2010
Education as % of GDP	6.1	6.0	6.2	6.3	6.2
Education as % of GOK Total expenditure	28.0	26.0	23.2	25.0	26.7
Education recurrent as %as % GOK total recurrent	32.1	32.8	31.0	31.7	32.7
Education development as% total education development	10.3	7.4	6.0	7.9	7.8
Education recurrent as % total education expenditure	93.0	92.4	91.9	91.0	93.1
Education development as as total education expenditure	7.0	7.6	8.1	9.0	6.9
Appropriation in aid as % of education expenditure	5.3	4.8	5.7	4.3	3.8

Source: Appropriation Accounts, MPER, various, Republic of Kenya, (2012a)

Table 3. Public Education Expenditure 2005/2006/2009/2010

Budget Item/financial year	2005/2006	2007/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/2010
General Administration and Planning	10.8	9.19	9.75	7.26	12.36
Primary Education %	53.7	56.03	52.01	49.81	46.60
Teacher Education %	0.34	0.19	0.36	0.29	0.17
Special Education %	0.21	0.34	0.35	0.43	0.13
Early Childhood Education %	0.06	0.05	0.05	0.18	0.15
Adult and Continuing Education	0.08	0.08	0.10	0.12	0,09
Secondary Education %	2.17	2.17	3.46	4.85	4.73
Technical Education %	13.39	14.43	10.9	12.39	11.28
University Education %	92.60	103.86	121.32	136.89	160.33
Total Expenditure[in Ksh. Billion]	93.04	92.43	91.88	91.05	86.46
Recurrent percent	6.96	7.57	8.12	8.95	13.54
Development Percent	73.99	73.86	76.21	75.79	69.41
Basic Education					

Source: Appropriation Accounts, MPER, various, Republic of Kenya, (2012)

Table 4. Unit public spending by level of education, 2005 to 2008

Unit Cost	2005	2006	2007	2008
Primary	6,251	6,862	7,457	7,781
Secondary	20,783	24,918	29,485	58,585
Technical	24,651	32,302	43,474	55,318
University	113,867	143,353	138,417	137,707
Secondary as a percentage of Primary	3.3	3.6	4.0	7.5
Technical as a percentage of Primary	3.9	4.7	5.8	7.1
University as a percentage of Primary	18.2	20.9	18.6	17.7
GDP Per capita	38,787	42,592	47,011	52,012
Primary as a percentage GDP per capita	0.16	0.16	0.16	0,15
Secondary as a percentage of GDP per capita	0.54	0.59	0.63	1.13
Technical a a percentage per capita	0.64	0.76	0.92	
University as a percentage of GDP per capita	2.94	3.37	2.94	

Source: Appropriation Accounts, MPER, various, Republic of Kenya,(2012a)

Table 5. Benefit incidences of public spending on education (%)

Socio-economic Groups	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	All education
Poorest Quintile	24.7	9.5	1.9	17.4
Quintile 2	25.2	15.9	2.0	19.3
Quintile 3	21.6	21.9	7.0	19.4
Quintile 4	18.2	25.5	19.1	20.2
Richest Quintile	10.2	27.2	70.0	23.7

Source: Demery and Gaddis,(2009), based on the KIHB dataset of 2005/06

of emphasis in the development of basic education as reflected in the overall allocation of over 70 percent of the total educational expenditure to this level of education. In fact the primary education sub-sector has consistently been allocated about half of the funds budgeted for the education Ministry. The high allocation to primary education is consistent with the MDGs and EFA goals of attaining 100% NER and completion rate by 2015 and can be associated with increased access to primary education (NER of 92% in 2009). However, unit cost spending shows a different picture, as portrayed in Table 4. Table 4 shows estimated government (recurrent) spending per student enrolled in the respective levels of education. Primary education public unit spending increased from Kshs.4, 945 in 2003 to Kshs.7, 781 in 2008 at current prices. The unit public spending at secondary education (Kshs.58, 585) was 7.5 times that of primary education in 2008 and 1.13% of GDP per capita. University and technical education public unit spending (Kshs.55, 318 and Kshs.137,707) were 7 and 18 times that of primary education, respectively. The 2008 unit spending at secondary education level includes the annual free day secondary school per capita allocation to public schools across the country. Table 5 contains data regarding the extent to which various socio-economic groups benefit from the three levels of education, measured as a percentage benefit to public spending (Republic of Kenya, 2012). According to data presented in Table 5, low income groups benefit more from primary education compared to high and medium income groups, but less from tertiary and other levels of education.

The gains for poorest welfare group at primary level are estimated at 24.7 percent; 9.5 percent for secondary and 1.9 percent for tertiary education. Gains for richest quintile are 27.2 percent and 70 percent, at secondary and tertiary education respectively. This paper contends that the current percentage of the benefit incidences of public spending on education is skewed at the disadvantage of poorest quintile and quintile 2 socio-economic groups. Hence, the percentage of funding levels of the poorest quintile and quintile 2 groups at primary and secondary school levels should be doubled to reach at least 19 percent and 32 percent, respectively

Impact of Free Basic Education on Equity and Quality in Kenya

The introduction of Free Primary Education (FPE) in 2003 was intended to enable every Kenyan child have access to primary education (Std. 1-8). It is, however, evident from the foregoing discussion that not every child has taken advantage of the FPE as over 1.5 million eligible children are reportedly still out of school 9 Republic of Kenya, 2012a, Odhiambo, 2012; Republic of Kenya/UNESCO, 2012). Similarly, the introduction of Free Day Secondary Education (FDSE) in 2008 was intended to increase enrolment, retention and transition from primary to secondary education. Despite the above interventions, there have been high dropout and low enrolment rates at all levels of education and also low transition rates to secondary schools particularly amongst the girls in ASAL districts compared to other regions (Republic of Kenya/UNESCO, 2012). There is sufficient evidence to conclude that the education sector has been beleaguered with a myriad of intertwined challenges facing children from poor socio-economic backgrounds in their quest to access and participate in basic education. School managers at both levels have introduced levies, which are largely responsible for keeping students out of school. The level of grants has also not been revised to reflect the variations in cost of services; commodities funded at the two levels; resource needs at institutional levels and the specific standards for school inputs (Odhiambo, 2012).

Despite high spending on the sector by the government through FPE and FDSE policies, households are still expected to pay substantial latent user-charges in education. The latent charges which are high and unregulated take the form of Parents Teachers Association (PTA) charges, examination fees, sports fees, high school uniforms in some schools, and other school development expenses. The other constraints related to financing of education include: resource mismanagement and failure to comply with financial regulations in some schools due to inadequate capacity of members of the Board of Management (BOM) in financial management, inadequate funds to acquire and develop appropriate school infrastructure, unplanned construction of school infrastructure using inconsistent and unapproved building specifications, amongst others. All these expenditures constitute off-budget spending on education but the data is rarely available on the cost burden of schooling on households despite the free schooling interventions (Republic of Kenya, 2012a, Republic of Kenya/UNESCO, 2012).

Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, it is evident that this paper has unearthed a plethora of specific constraints related to education financing under the free basic education in Kenya. These challenges beleaguering the provision of quality and equitable basic education that emerged which include, but not limited to, the following: inadequacy of FDSE grants; resource mismanagement in the schools; inadequate and or dilapidated infrastructure; unplanned construction of schools; high poverty incidences that affect households; co-existence of understaffing and overstaffing; high latent cost of education as a result of unregulated school levies; proliferation of un-coordinated school projects; delays in remittance of funds from the Ministry of Education; amongst others. The cumulative impact of these challenges has adversely compromised the envisaged equity and quality of education to be provided through the FPE and FDSE policies in Kenya. The recommendations that follow are geared towards reversing the identified negative impact of the cost-related factors on access and quality of education in Kenya.

First, on the issue of the inadequate financing of education through FPE and FDSE policies, it is recommended that the Government of Kenya through the Ministry of Education should step up the current allocation of funds to individual students in primary and secondary schools in the country. The Ministry of Education should also encourage and work out logistics of soliciting for additional funds from other sources such as school income generating activities. The Government of Kenya should not abrogate its responsibility of developing adequate and appropriate school infrastructure such as classrooms, well-equipped laboratories, adequately stocked libraries and Information and Communication (ICT) laboratories. The parents and communities on their part should cater for strictly regulated and monitored expenses related to national examinations, internal assessments, and transport and affordable school uniforms.

Secondly, the Government of Kenya policies on FPE and FDSE within the context of EFA and MDGs is to enhance access to, participation and gender equity in basic education. However, attainments of these objectives still remain elusive and utopia at all levels of education and training. Although gender parity in enrolments has been improving steadily, especially at the national level, these statistics reveal conspicuous regional and gender disparities when unpacked at the regional level and examined with a gender lens. The cost of latent cost of education imposed by individual learning institutions on the already over-burdened and poor households is blamed for this negative impact. It is recommended that the current trend whereby the children from the poorest socio-economic backgrounds only significantly benefit at the primary school level and access less at secondary and tertiary levels should be reversed.

Thirdly, it has been established that the pupil/teacher ratio at primary school level increased from 1:39 in 2003 to 1:45 in 2009 portraying an impressive stable trend at the national level, but displaying gross disparities within regions, with the worst affected being ASALs districts and areas affected by insecurity. The situation is unlikely to improve since the teacher shortage in primary schools is about 40,000 and about 20,000 at secondary level at the national level but with more disappointing statistics regionally due to skewed abilities to recruit teachers locally beyond the ones provided by the Teachers Service Commission. It is recommended that the current staff rationalization process meant to balance teacher

recruitment and deployment should be expedited and special consideration be given to schools and regions that have for long endured the negative impact of the scarcity of the qualified teaching force. Fourth it is also evident that the textbook/pupil ratio for lower primary has improved from one textbook for more than 10 pupils before 2003 to 1:3 by 2007, reaching 1:2 in 2008 and 2009. For upper primary, TPR has improved from 1:2 in 2007 to almost 1:1 in 2008 and 2009 for the majority of schools. However, these have weakened sharply since 2009, and small schools do not benefit from economies of scale, and have ratios far higher than this (Value for Money Audit Report (2009). The GOK budgetary allocation for the sector is insufficient and this does impact negatively on the provision of resources such as textbooks, PTRs and Retention Rates are also affected. Completion Rates stood at 76.8% (79.2% boys and 74.4% girls) in 2010, although these already show a decline from the previous year, 83.2% (88.3% and 78.2% for boys and girls respectively). To this end, it is recommended that alternative sources of funding for both the primary and secondary sectors of education be urgently put in place in order to eliminate the acute financial stress to basic educational institutions as well as the resultant negatives trends of inequity and dilution of quality of basic education being observed.

Fifth, the other contentious yet critical finding is that free primary school capitation grant of KShs. 1,020.00, which was instituted in 2003 and Ksh.10, 265 in secondary schools instituted in 2008, has not been increased to keep pace with inflation. Consequently, schools have resorted to charging parents levies for a range of activities, including supplementary assessment examinations, additional tuition and development levies. The other requirement that all pupils should wear uniform is an extra cost burden on parents. The interviewed teachers and headteachers argued strongly that graft and mismanagement has been domesticated in most basic education institutions and expressed fear that the free primary and secondary programmes now face a possibility of being withdrawn or suspended by key development partners funding the programme. If these revelations are genuine enough then this paper recommends that enhanced training of education managers in effective financial management followed by radical governance reform including the introduction of legislation to take legal action against corrupt officials and the institution of strong financial management procedures to revitalize the programme should urgently be put in place.

Sixth, it was established that huge latent user-charges have found their way into the FPE and FDSE progrmmes in basic institutions in the country. To this end, it is strongly recommended that the guideline regulating imposition of levies should be reviewed and enforced. Levies should not be used to deny children opportunity to attend school. Although the Parents Teachers Associations (PTA) area allowed suggesting the extra levies to be imposed to parents sometimes consensus is largely stage managed with little consultation with parents regarding their ability to raise such extra school levies. In addition, as a requirement , the new Constitution requires the national government to target areas with peculiar characteristics and to extend additional funding or county governments in those areas should provide supplementary grants to avoid additional school levies. It is also recommended that since the children from the poor households were more severely affected by the latent user charges sneaked into financing education at school level, the poor should be cushioned against these adverse effects of cost-sharing by redesigning and enhancing bursary allocation to focus more sharply on the poor and deserving students. In addition, bursary funds should be enhanced to the entire secondary school cycle to all orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs) and ensure sustainable support for the beneficiary to complete the entire school cycle. In the event that full FSE is not practical in the short term, the Ministry of Education should consider enhancing bursary funds to OVCs. To this end there should be no other fees related constraints to the children from poor backgrounds. In particular, there should be no compulsory remedial tuition. Even when this remedial tuition is necessary and provided, no child should be denied such services because they cannot afford to pay for remedial tuition. Hence, there is need to increase access to post-primary education among the low income groups. This is particularly so because whilst increasing access to primary education is critical in laying the foundation for entry to higher education, primary education is not sufficient in itself in reducing poverty; ensuring sustainable development and meeting the skills needs identified in Vision 2030.

Seventh, it is established there is a long delay in release of funds from Treasury, which in turn leads in delays in remittance of funds to schools. This point was stressed by the teachers and principals interviewed who maintained that basic education institutions cannot follow a strict implementation tempo when basic learning resources are either inadequate or reach schools late. It is recommended that the disbursement schedules for monies released from the National and County Governments, the private sector, NGOs, households, communities, religious organizations and development partners should be sent to County Director of Education (CDE) and Sub-County Education Officers (SCEOs) for monitoring purposes according to laid down time frame. Eighth, it is evident that recurrent spending, predominantly administrators and teachers' salaries, accounts for over 90% of education sector public spending. However, although the amount of funds directed towards development has been less than 10 percent of total public expenditure in education over the years, there was a marked improvement during the 2009/2010 fiscal year when the vote reached a high 13.54 percent. There is therefore need to identify interventions towards improving efficiency across the sector.

Some options for reducing recurrent expenditures should include improving teacher utilization especially in secondary education where teaching loads need to be brought up to between 20 and 24 hours per week to meet international norms, and by implementing enrolment-based differentiated norms at primary education. Finally, there is need to specifically address finance related challenges affecting vulnerable groups at Basic Education level including school-going age children in informal urban settlements, ASALs, inclusive and special needs education. It is recommended that innovative approaches including sustainable support for mobile schools in the sparsely populated and nomadic parts of the country, improved health and nutrition programmes, sustained school feeding and capacity building for teachers in the local communities should be intensified. In additions secondary school bursaries (with support from the Ministry of Education, constituency bursary committees and local communities) should target the poor and vulnerable children

who should be identified right from primary and maintained at secondary school level be provided with total financial support to ensure complete access to, retention and productive participation in the entire basic education cycle. To end, this paper strongly argues that the introduction of Free Primary (FPE) and Free Day Secondary Education (FDSE) in Kenya were very innovative and adroitly formulated policies but these policies have not yet fully seen the light of the day by achieving the objectives for which they were meant to accomplish. The finance related constraints to effective implementation of the FPE and FDSE policies have led to a situation whereby equity and quality of education has been compromised. The resultant wide and severe regional and gender disparities in access to, and quality of education among some pockets of the Kenyan society have hit the last blow to the success of the programmes.

On this account, the paper reaches a well considered final verdict that overall attainment of Universal Basic Education (UBE) by 2015 is still a mirage and utopia in Kenya and, therefore, it is not yet times to celebrate total success. Although this paper has further shed brilliant light on the plight of the poor by examining the skewed incidence benefit of public funding on basic education, the dominant tone of this paper is that the children from poor households are still disadvantaged despite the introduction and implementation of FPE and FDSE, and this terse message should urgently reach the planning and decision –making desk at the Ministry of education in Kenya to make timely corrective measures. The parting shot in this paper is that although the Government of Kenya thorough the Ministry of Education has made commendable progress towards meeting education for all (EFA) initiatives in quantitative terms at the national level, the unfinished business is reversing the regional and gender disparities coupled with the emerging negative impact of these policies on equity and quality of education in the country. To this end, there is urgent need for concerted efforts among all key education stakeholders in the country to eradicate all the financial related bottlenecks *through making strong and tough decisions* geared towards pragmatically translating these free education policies from rhetoric chimera to practice.

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