

The Effect of Free Primary Education on the Management of Public Primary Schools: A Case of Kitwe District on the Copperbelt Province of Zambia

Prisca Jere¹, Judith Nakamba²

¹Prisca Jere, Information and Communications University, School of Education, P.O BOX 30226, Lusaka 101011, Zambia

²Lecturer, Prisca Jere, Information and Communications University, School of Education, P.O BOX 30226, Lusaka 101011, Zambia

Abstract: *The purpose of the study was to investigate the effect of Free Primary Education on the Management of public Primary schools in Kitwe District which is on the Copperbelt province of Zambia. This case study aimed at achieving the following objectives: to investigate the sources of revenue for managing public primary schools, to identify the challenges and opportunities of sourcing revenue for the management of public primary Schools and to find out the strategies used by public primary schools to overcome the challenges of sourcing revenue for the management of schools. A sample of ten public primary schools from a population of forty six public primary schools was randomly selected for the study. The respondents were the Ministry of General education staff from the District education board secretary's office, head teachers, deputy head teachers, senior teachers, class teachers and pupils from the sampled schools. The study used both the quantitative and qualitative approaches to collect data by using questionnaires and interview schedules. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically whilst quantitative data was analyzed using excel and statistical package for social sciences (SPSS 20.0) to obtain descriptive statistics. The study found out that the sources of revenue for managing the sampled public primary schools included; government funding, PTA contributions, school tuck-shops, renting out school facilities and donations from well-wishers. The study pointed out that the selected schools faced some challenges when sourcing revenue which included; delay in disbursement of funds, negative attitude of parents towards helping schools run as a result of free primary education and some local companies and non-governmental organisations not willing to help. Despite the challenges, it was established that there were also opportunities regarding revenue sourcing. It was further revealed that the selected schools had put in place strategic measures to help them overcome the stated challenges of revenue sourcing. The study concluded that managing public primary schools comes with its own challenges when it comes to sourcing revenue for effective management. Based on the findings, the study recommended that; government may consider enhancing partnerships and support from other agencies such as Non Governmental Organizations to supplement its effort in the management of Public primary schools, the Government may consider revising the grants given to public primary schools and expedite the disbursement to facilitate proper planning by the district and school managements and schools administrators may consider promoting strong school community partnerships and encourage parents to take more proactive roles in matters regarding their children's education.*

Keywords: free education, management, revenue sourcing, challenges and opportunities

1. Introduction

Education generally is perceived to be one of the most promising and at the same time the most motivated paths individuals can undertake in order to realize life better and a more productive life line. According to UNESCO (2005) ^[19], the level of a country's education is one of the key indicators of its level of development. Jones (2011) ^[4] defines Free Primary Education (FPE) as education that is available with no charges to the child, the parent or the guardian. Investment in education can help to foster economic growth and enhance productivity, hence the need for its effective management.

1.1 Background

Zambia's Education Policy has gone through a number of changes since independence. At independence, in October 1964 Zambia inherited a racially segregated educational system which was managed by the missionaries, meager educational facilities and enrollments for Africans (Mobela, 2016) ^[6]. In 1965, the Zambian Government introduced a

Free Education Policy (FPE) to reverse the many years of injustice imposed on the Africans through the introduction of education fees and other charges they could hardly afford (Sibanda, 2013) ^[13]. The management of public primary schools was now the responsibility of the Ministry of Education (ibid). To support the free education policy, the government increased funding to the education sector and also ensured that all the schools were well stocked with educational teaching and learning materials such as exercise books, textbooks, pens, pencils, rulers, mathematical instruments, science kits, art, music, physical education equipment to help in the management of primary schools (Ministry of Education, 1967) ^[7].

In the 1980s, education policies were affected, and policy reversals were implemented due to the declining economy (Kaulule, 2006) ^[5]. The declining economy was as a result of the international price for copper which dropped during the mid-1970s coupled with a worldwide oil crisis (Bulfin, 2012) ^[1]. As a result of attempting austerity measures to rein in the budget deficit, the national primary and secondary education systems became severely underfunded and

therefore inadequate to meet the country's education needs (ibid). As a result, the management and quality of education during the period (1983-1988) were affected due to financial and other constraints such as excessively large classes, poorly furnished classrooms, dilapidated buildings, and scarcity of textbooks, science equipment and other essential items (Bulfin, 2012) ^[1]. According to Sikwibele (2003) ^[15], the external forces had also an influence on the reversal of the policy. For instance, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank believed that the free education policy was going to be a catalyst for African Development Problems.

As cost sharing and other Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) policies were reinforced to help in the management of schools, more children especially those from poor families dropped out from schools as their parents could not afford the fees as well as the school requisites (Sibanda, 2013) ^[13]. The increase in the number of school drop outs was against the spirit of Education for All (EFA) which was advocated for at the Jomtien World Education Conference in 1990 in Thailand (UNESCO, 2003) ^[18]. In fact, the Dakar Framework for Action, item 7, stated that countries should have been committed to ensure that by 2015, all children of school going age acquired free, affordable and accessible education, with special emphasis on the girls coming from poor families (Sibanda, 2013) ^[13]. In 2001, the government of Zambia's budget allocation to education remained amongst the lowest in Southern Africa (Bulfin, 2012) ^[1].

In 2002, the Ministry of Education re-introduced "free education policy" but this time covering only grades I to 7 which was announced by the late President of the Republic of Zambia, Dr. Levy Patrick Mwanawasa (UNESCO, 2009) ^[21]. This was followed up by a circular (ME/71/126 No.3; 2002 dated 15th March, 2002) from the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education to all schools and education officers explaining what Free Primary Education entailed (Mobela, 2016) ^[6].

1.2 Statement of the problem

Developing countries have made rapid progress in providing access to primary education for all (UNESCO, 2014) ^[21]. Despite this achievement, there is still considerable work to be done to improve the quality of education through management of the public primary schools. Management of schools is important in ensuring quality and that the educational goals are attained. It is for this reason that this research was conducted to determine the effect of free primary education on the management of public primary schools in Kitwe District.

1.3 Significance of the study

The findings of the study may help the Ministry of General Education as well as the managers (Head Teachers) of public primary schools to understand the challenges and opportunities surrounding the Management of the free primary education system and how these challenges can be addressed. The inferences drawn from this study will also assist stakeholders in improving the revenue for management of free public primary schools.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Global Perspective

In order to provide education to all the children worldwide, a good number of countries embarked on the provision of free primary education. Some of these countries include; United States of America, Brazil, North America. Kaulule (2006) ^[5] also mentions countries including Central African Republic, Haiti, Nepal, Saotome, Norway, France, Sweden, Denmark, Brazil, Finland, Belgium and Austria among others as countries providing Free Primary Education

UNESCO Report (2009) ^[20] states that, Finland's main education objectives policy was to provide education to all citizens with education opportunities to access education irrespective of age, economic situation or gender. In India, the Central government provides 80 percent of financing of Free Primary Education, while the local states implement and provide the rest of financing. It is the duty of the local state to effectively manage the public primary schools and ensure that the finances are put to good use (ibid).

In the United States of America, Public Education is a state responsibility (Opande, 2013) ^[11]. School administrators at the district and school levels, are responsible for day-to-day management of public primary schools. The federal state and local governments provide the funding for the management of public primary schools (ibid). He further explains "that public school leaders on the other hand are open to scrutiny from all political constituencies, and make their organizational trade-offs in the open because of the public nature of both their revenue sources and their budget approval processes".

Establishment of Free Primary Education (FPE) in Kenya in January 2003 sought to do away with tuition fees and other levies in public primary schools. This led to high enrolments of pupils in schools. Educational management in Kenya's public Primary schools is the responsibility of the school management committees, The Board of Governors and the institutional head teachers (Ngithi, 2013) ^[10]. The influx of learners in schools due to the declaration of Free Primary Education (FPE) by the Kenyan government in 2003 resulted into acute under staffing and lack of material and financial recourses in public primary schools leading to employment of teachers who had either little or no training at all. This brought myriad administrative Challenges in all public primary schools (ibid).

In Uganda Universal Primary Education (UPE) was introduced in January 1997. Education was seen as an important foundation of the Poverty Eradication Action Plan of which the Education Sector Investment Programme (ESIP) was a key building block. Uganda is in many ways has an education governance success story (Crouch and Winkler, 2008) ^[2]. The capitation grant used to fund non-personnel education spending at the school level is transparent and predictable and widely publicized (ibid). According to Crouch and Winkler (2008) ^[2], a high percentage (94%) of educational resources reaches the classroom which is an indication of effective management of

schools. PTAs and Boards of Governors raise revenues and approve school spending plans for those revenues.

Tanzania introduced Free primary education in 2001, largely as part of the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) process, having been incorporated into the Education Sector Development Programme, which has provided the framework for partnerships with the international development community since its appraisal in early 1999 (World Bank, 2001)^[23]. A gross enrolment ratio of 98% in 1980 had declined by the early 1990s to below 70%, and in 1999/00, the year before FPE was introduced, the gross enrolment rate was even lower, 63%, the net enrolment rate reaching only 46.7%. (ibid). There were severe shortages of classrooms, desks, instructional materials and teachers' housing, as well as insufficient numbers of teachers to cater for the school aged population (Sumra, Suleman, HakiElimu, 2002)^[16]. All government schools are administered and managed by the Department of Education. The Department has among others the role of ensuring that all programmes at school level are well implemented. At district and regional levels the district and regional education officers are in-charge of their areas respectively.

2.2 Zambian Perspective

Since 2002, when the government announced the Free Primary Education (FPE) Policy, a move rooted in the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative, the country has witnessed an increase in primary school enrolments (Syacumpi, 2012)^[17]. Heads of primary schools were directed not to charge any kind of fees in recognition of various economic challenges facing the general population especially in rural areas. The policy directive also barred schools from denying children from attending school on account of not having a uniform (Ibid). For children that had dropped out of the education system, the FPE directed that schools invite them back with no questions asked.

The Ministry of Education revised a grants scheme to compensate all schools (Mwansa et al, 2004)^[9]. In 2002, the schools received a grant of twenty seven billion kwacha divided over 5,081 schools and 597 Community Schools. Initially schools received equal amounts each of (US \$1418) 7.8 million kwacha divided over three equal installments of (US \$473) 2.6 million kwacha per term to help in the management of schools (ibid).

The Zambian government through Zambia Ministry of education indicated that enrolment in both primary and secondary schools in year 2012 stands at 7.8 million children compared to 7.6 million in year 2011. Secondary schools have 1.9 million students while primary schools have 5.9 million pupils (Zambian Government Ministry of Education, 2011)^[8]. Due to an increase in enrolments for many schools, it was difficult to meet costs for utility services like water, electricity and security (IOB, 2008)^[3]. The grants were still not sufficient enough to meet the overwhelming needs and several schools reacted by raising PTA fees at the upper basic school level (Grades 8 and 9). The pupil teacher ratio increased from 49:1 between 2002 and 2003 to 57:1 in 2005 (ibid). In some cases, there was

congestion in classrooms with an average number of 77 pupils per class.

Government financial reports for 2009 to 2013 reveal a relatively good budget performance (UNICEF, 2016)^[22]. However, in 2013 the Ministry of Education received funding exceeding the budget by 38 per cent and could not use the excess funds that were disbursed (only 64 per cent of disbursed funds were spent) (ibid). The review of budget further states that the allocation to education for 2016 represents a 3 per cent decline in the absolute allocation from 9.4 billion kwacha in 2015 to 9.1 billion kwacha in 2016. This is three percentage points below the 20 per cent budget target set by the Dakar framework for Education for All. The reduction in the budget allocation to the Education sector affects the management of public primary schools which cannot be run smoothly with inadequate finances. This compromised the management of education, leading to poor quality being seen as a major challenge facing Zambia in education to date.

However, it is argued that the numerous constraints that have been spotted in the implementations of the interventions as well as the management of free primary education system. The fact that the cost of FPE is beyond the current education budget allocation, this casts a very serious doubt on the viability of the current Free Primary Education as urged by Sifuna (2003)^[14].

2.3 Comparative studies

A study conducted by the United Nations Project "Task Force on Education and Gender equality" worldwide, revealed that the support by government to ensure quality basic education was not adequate (Kaulule, 2006)^[5]. Head teachers need enough support from the government "especially financial support" to enable them manage the over enrolled school pupils as well as the physical resources to ensure that there is provision of quality education to the learners. In most countries, the Governments are dependent on external finance for funding Free Primary Education, and this looks likely to be the case for the mid to long-term projects and not immediate.

The above findings are in line with the findings of a study by Mobela (2015)^[6] who discovered that funding of schools by the government in support of Free Primary Education are inadequate. He further found out that the funds allocated to schools are irregular and did not arrive in time to help the school meet the cost of running.

According to (MOE, 2003) in Mobela (2015)^[6] the budget allocation to education in Zambia is the lowest in the sub-region compared to the overwhelming needs of these schools. This indicates difficulties in the operation and management of Primary of schools to date. According to Orlosky (1984) as cited in MOE (2011)^[8], adequacy of finance and its effective management determines the way the school is managed and whether or not the school will meet its objectives. If finances from the government are not adequate, then the schools are not able to procure all the necessary goods and services needed to meet their

objectives. Similarly, the government is anticipated to ensure that funds are released to schools in time. (ibid)

The above study is in line with the study entitled "Zambia: effective delivery of public services" by AMAP which disclosed that the level of funding for the Zambian education sector significantly explains poor sector performance in terms of access and service delivery in quality. This study found that, the government after eliminating user fees attempted to fund the free education though very low for instance in 2001 about 20 percent of the total budget was allocated to education (MOE, 2011)^[8].

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

A case study design was used in this research because it allows the exploration and understanding of complex issues. According to Zainal (2007)^[24], case study method enables a researcher to closely examine the data within a specific context.

3.2 Target population

The target population included all primary school teachers, pupils, headteachers, staff officers in the Ministry of General Education in Kitwe and the District Education Board secretary, Kitwe district.

3.3 Sample Size

The sample size was fifty (50) in total and the breakdowns of the respondents were as follows; the number of pupils were seven (7), the number of teachers were ten (10), the number of school managers/head teachers were ten (10), the number of deputy head teachers were ten (10), the number of senior teachers were ten (10), then two (2) Ministry of General education staff and one (1) District Education Board Secretary.

3.4 Sampling techniques

Random and purposive sampling methods were used to help target a group which was suitable to bring out rich information related to the central issue being studied for in-depth analysis. Simple random sampling technique was used to select ten schools and come up with the sample of ten pupils and forty teachers in the selected primary schools whilst purposive sampling technique was used to come up with the sample of ten head teachers, ten deputy head teachers, twenty seven senior teachers, two Ministry of General education staff and the district education board secretary.

3.5 Instruments for data collection

The questionnaires and Interview schedules were used to collect data that was needed for the study.

3.6 Data analysis

Data which was collected was analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically using content analysis, as themes and sub themes emerged from the data that was collected. Quantitative data was analyzed using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS 20.0) and excel to obtain descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages.

4. Findings and Discussion

The study sought to establish the following study objectives; to investigate the sources of revenue for managing public primary schools, to identify the challenges and opportunities of sourcing revenue for the management of public primary Schools and to find out the strategies used by public primary schools to overcome the challenges of sourcing revenue for the management of schools.

4.1 Sources of revenue for managing public primary schools.

Table 1: Sources of revenue

Source of revenue	Percentage of Head teachers	Percentage of Debs staff	Percentage of Deputy head teachers	Percentage of Senior/class teachers
Tuck-shop	100	100	100	100
PTA contribution	100	100	100	100
Church rentals	40	0	20	50
Donations	20	20	20	20
GRZ grants	100	100	100	100

Source: field data, 2018

From table 1 above, it is clear that 100% of the respondents are using Government grants, the tuck-shop and PTA-contributions as sources of revenue for managing public primary schools. While 40% of the head teachers, 20% of the deputy head teachers, 50% of the teachers from the sampled schools mentioned church rentals as a source of revenue. Furthermore, 20% of the respondents mentioned donations as a source of revenue for managing public primary schools.

4.1.1 Government funding

According to the findings of the study 100% of the respondents indicated that the GRZ funds are disbursed to public primary schools in form of grants. The funding varied from one school to another depending on the population of the school. In addition, the study found out that the GRZ funds disbursed to public primary schools were in the range of K3000-K5000 per term. It was further revealed that the funding from the Government was not disbursed in good time to allow management from such schools to plan adequately and was also insufficient to effectively run the affairs of the schools. This was the main reason that impelled the schools to engage in other fundraising ventures. This result is in line with Mobela (2016)^[6] findings, who found out that the funds disbursed to schools by the Government were not enough to meet the running cost of the schools which made schools to charge PTA project funds to help run the school affairs. The findings also collaborate

with Phiri (2015)^[12] who established that delays in disbursing funds to support free primary education has frustrated many teachers and put pressure on parent's finances.

4.1.2 Tuck-shops From the findings of the study, all the respondents attested that their schools had tuck-shops. The study established that the profits raised from these tuck-shops were used to run the daily activities of the school as indicated by most of the sampled head teachers. The interviewed teachers were also in support of the head teachers' sentiments. It was established further that despite some tuck-shops being small, they were stocked with a variety of merchandise that most pupils could afford. Some of the commodities sold included among others, pens, pencils, pupils books, soft drinks and different food stuffs. The study further found out that most of the sampled schools generate profits from the selling of various commodities because they have a lot of pupils who provide market for the goods in their schools. Most of the interviewed class teachers and senior teachers highlighted how supportive they were towards their respective school managements in sourcing revenue for the smooth running of various school activities by helping out with selling in the school tuck-shops during school breaks.

4.1.3 PTA Contributions

Despite the free education policy stipulating that user fees of any form had been scrapped and the government's emphasis that pupils' attendance should not be attached to any form payments, schools have continued to charge PTA fees. The study established that PTA contributions were also another source of revenue in all the sampled Public Primary Schools. It further discovered that contributions made by parents toward the various school projects as confirmed by all the sampled participants helped to run the schools in one way or the other. However there were some concerns from some quarters that some of the moneys from PTA contributions were being embezzled by most head teachers in these schools as indicated by 70% of the teachers interviewed. Perhaps this could be one of the reasons as to why some schools are in a deplorable state in terms of the infrastructure and environment. This could be against the conceptual framework of this study which is based on the idea that, if the public primary schools are to be managed effectively, the revenue must be adequate and also put to good use. Key factors to the successful management of public primary schools include creating an enabling environment suitable for promoting pupils' learning. Therefore in the quest to improve school infrastructure and other requisites, there is need for adequate financing in terms of grants and the enhancement of material resource provision given to schools to enhance their smooth running thereby providing quality education to pupils.

4.1.4 Donations

The findings of the study revealed that there were instances when some schools received donations from various stakeholders. The study established that some non-governmental organisations came on board to help some public primary schools with various requisites which included among others, exercise books and paint and money. The study also found out that apart from non-governmental organisations, some churches and individuals also donated

materials and money for various activities. Some respondents from the DEBS office indicated that the district office also donates funds raised from the district farm to some primary schools especially those that are most vulnerable. Despite the aforementioned assertion, no other respondents mentioned the Kitwe DEBS farm as a source of revenue for management of public primary schools in the district. Therefore the farm may not be a very viable source as at now. In the same vein, one head teacher indicated that the only funds received through the DEBS office is the funding from government. Therefore the issue of the farm remains not very clear.

4.1.5 Renting out of school facilities

The study found out that some of the sampled schools supplement their revenue by renting out some of the facilities to some churches and the community. According to the findings, this was mainly done during weekends and school holidays to avoid disturbing the school programs. The idea of hiring out government facilities may not be a legalized source and a viable source of revenue, even though some schools see it as an opportunity to source revenue for running various activities. The overuse of infrastructure though large classes and other activities, has left some schools in an unacceptably poor physical conditions. However the study found out that some schools were in a good state because churches renting there were asked to renovate the rooms they were renting by painting the walls, replacing old socket outlets and even replacing the old floors with potholes among others. The revenue generated from the aforementioned is used to run various activities of the school which include among others, buying of some school requisites and paying some auxiliary workers who are not on government payroll. These findings are similar to Syacumpi (2012)^[17] who found out that some primary schools raised some funds through renting out rooms for functions and church activities.

4.2 Challenges of sourcing revenue for the management of public primary Schools

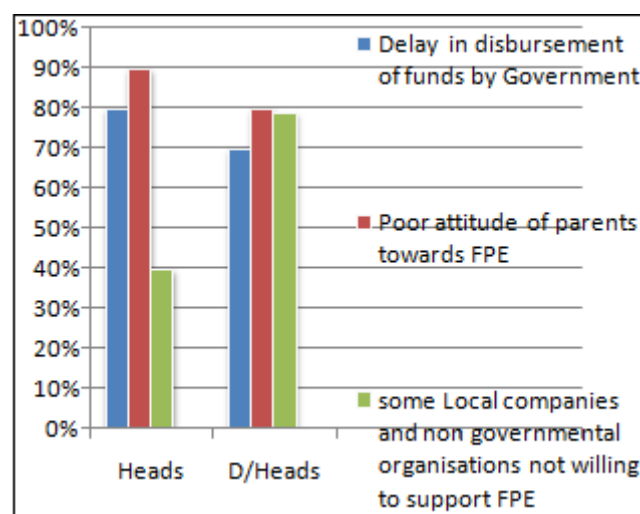


Figure 1: Challenges of sourcing revenue for managing public primary schools

Source: Field data, 2018

The figure above clearly shows that there are challenges of sourcing revenue as can be seen from the head teachers and

deputy headteachers responses. According to the findings, the majority of the respondents representing (9) 90% of the head teachers and (8) 80% of the deputy head teachers mentioned poor attitude of parents towards free primary education as one of the challenges of sourcing revenue for the management of public primary schools. The findings further revealed that (8) 80% of the headteachers and (7) 70% also mentioned the delay in disbursement of funds by government whilst (4) 40% of the head teachers and (8) 80% of the deputy head teachers mentioned that some local companies and non-governmental organisations were not willing to support in the management of public primary schools.

4.2.1 Delay in disbursement of funds

According to the findings of the study, delay by the government in the disbursement of funds to public schools was one of the challenges of sourcing revenue for the management of public primary schools. All the sampled head teachers, deputy head teachers, senior and class teachers mentioned the delay of government funds as a challenge. Planning and budgeting is an integral aspect of management, necessary to ensure that both a financial and implementation strategy is in place for the year ahead. However, the study found out that the government funds meant for the running of public primary schools did not arrive in time to enhance the planning and budgeting to be done on time. These findings agree with that of Phiri (2015)^[12] who found out that the government delays to fund the public primary schools.

All the sampled DEBS office staff acknowledged that the funds from governments to the schools were not only erratic, but had had also become inadequate as the funds were not adequate to cover requirements. There appears to be no standard when it comes to the disbursement of funds from the DEBS office to the schools. The staff at DEBS office acknowledged this as they were only able to disburse funds to primary schools when they received funding from the Ministry of General Education.

Sixteen years into the execution of the FPE policy, the financial flows from government to the primary schools still leaves much to be desired. The delay of the disbursement of funds as pointed out by the study affects the management of public primary schools. Some head teachers indicated that it was difficult to carry out certain school activities because of lack of funds. It was established that the grants which come with decisions often made at higher levels without consultations from the head teachers need to be revised if the quality of education and effective management are to be attained. According to the findings the money received in terms of grants is by and large channeled towards various contributions demanded by the district office.

4.2.2 Attitude of parents toward free primary education

The study pointed out that some parents had a negative attitude towards helping schools run as a result of free primary education which was one of the major challenges of sourcing revenue for the management of public primary schools. However a few parents still supported the schools by making the necessary contributions. Research demonstrates that effective schools have high levels of

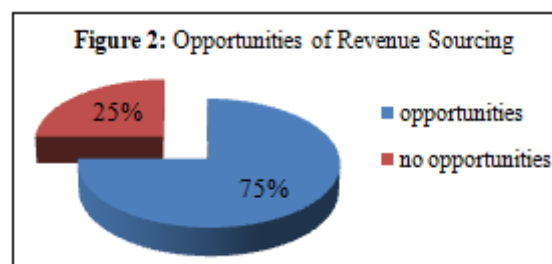
parental and community involvement. This is why it is important for parents and schools to work together. The findings of the study further revealed that sourcing revenue through PTA funds for the management came with its own challenges. For instance, most head teachers indicated that it was not easy convincing parents to make monetary contributions in terms of project funds. Therefore there is a misunderstanding by parents of how a policy should be implemented.

4.2.3 Involvement of local companies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs)

From the findings of the study, some local companies and non-governmental organisations were not willing to help the public primary schools with some financial and material resources. A head teacher at a named school indicated that despite the school sharing the same boundary with a named company, the company was not willing to help the school in whatever way. One of the roles of NGOs in the development of free primary education is to support the management of the government-run primary schools. It was established from the study that regardless of this fact some non-governmental organisations operating within the same community where some public primary schools, were not committed to help in the management of these schools. However, it was revealed from the findings of the study that some named non-governmental organisations helped public primary school with various materials which included among others; exercise books, uniforms and shoes for the pupils especially those from vulnerable families.

4.3 Opportunities of sourcing revenue for the management of public primary schools.

The study also sought to establish whether there were opportunities of sourcing revenue for the management of public primary schools. The responses of the targeted respondents were as shown in Figure 2



Source: Field data 2018

Regarding the opportunities of sourcing revenue for the management of public primary schools, at least 75% of the respondents affirmed that there were opportunities of sourcing revenue. Some of the opportunities mentioned included; creativity and innovativeness among school managers, bringing different stakeholders including parents on board (stakeholders' participation) in order to offer quality education to the children and improved entrepreneurship skills among schools.

4.3.1 Creativity and innovativeness among school managers

Creativity has always been at the heart of human endeavor. It is linked to innovation, which creates unexpected value

now recognized as central to managerial performance (Syacumpi, 2012)^[17]. Creativity and innovations enhance the management of public primary schools. The findings of the study revealed that, sourcing revenue for managing public primary schools enabled some head teachers to be creative and innovative. Some head teachers pointed out that managing public primary schools could be stressful especially when there was inadequate revenue to run various affairs of the school. In this vein, it can be argued that head teachers need to be creative and innovative in order to source adequate revenue for the management of public primary schools.

4.3.2 Stakeholders participation

Parents and other stakeholders who appreciate the free primary education system and understand the difficulties schools face are a valuable source of support which schools cannot afford to underrate. The study revealed that some public primary schools had an opportunity of bringing different stakeholders such as NGOs including parents on board in order to help in the management and offer quality education to the children. However this depends on the community where the school is located. In the same vein, some headteachers indicated that it was not easy convincing most parents to contribute moneys in terms of project funds towards the school considering the fact that the free primary education policy does not demand so. Despite this fact, the study has pointed out that some parents were supportive and contributed accordingly. These findings clearly indicate that, some head teachers are committed in helping the government manage public primary schools.

4.3.3 Entrepreneurship skills among schools

It was established from the findings of the study that sourcing revenue for managing public primary schools provided the school managers and teachers with an opportunity to improve their entrepreneurship skills. The study has revealed some schools engaged in various activities which included among others; selling of uniforms and different food stuffs to the learners in order to raise funds for managing various activities of schools. In some instances, a few schools had gardens from which they raised funds by selling the vegetables to teachers. Some of the interviewed senior and class teachers also confirmed that schools were engaged in different business activities in the quest to raise revenue for the management of the day to day activities of public primary schools. One head teacher mentioned that sourcing revenue for managing public primary schools did not only equip one with entrepreneurship skills as a head teacher or a teacher but also as an individuals.

4.4 Strategies used by public primary schools to overcome the challenges of sourcing revenue for the management of schools.

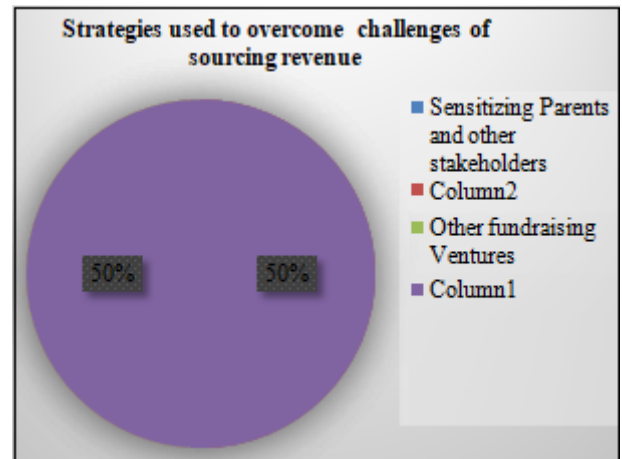


Figure 3: Strategies used to overcome the challenges

Source: Field data, 2018

Figure 3 shows that 50% of the income in the sampled schools came as a result of sensitizing parents and other stakeholders on their role in FPE while the other 50% were from other fundraising ventures sources which included; tuck-shops, selling school uniforms and renting out of school facilities. .

4.4.1 Sensitizing parents and other stakeholders

It was established from the findings of the study that 50% of the revenue in all the sampled schools came as a result sensitizing parents on their role in supporting FPE during PTA meetings, inviting various companies and Non-Governmental Organizations to come on board and help out. Public primary schools and their communities do not exist independent of each other, even though they are commonly viewed as separate units. Effective management of public primary schools cannot be achieved in the short term by efforts from the Government alone; there is need for sustainable and enduring links with the parents and other stakeholders such as NGOs within the communities to contribute to achieving this goal. These findings are in line with Ngithi (2013)^[10] who pointed out that parents and other stakeholders need to understand their role in facilitating the education of the children in public schools.

The PTA contributions are the most “certain” form of contribution to the school budget as they are collected at the school level. All the sampled head teachers and deputy head teachers indicated that PTA contributions from parents is one of the strategies which was being used to overcome the challenge. This indicates that the head teachers and deputy head teachers do not just depend on the government to provide all the revenue for managing public primary schools.

4.4.2 Fundraising ventures

In the quest to bridge the funding gap schools have taken on different forms of fundraising ventures to raise additional funding for their smooth running. It was established from the findings of the study that other direct fundraising activities such as; tuck-shops, the selling of school uniforms within the schools, renting out classrooms, school halls and playing grounds to churches and the community at large during weekends among others were another strategy the sampled schools were using to overcome the challenges of

sourcing revenue. From the findings, the tuck-shops were stocked with a variety of affordable food stuff and other items to sell to pupils in order to earn profit to help in the running of day to day school activities.

All the sampled participants admitted to the fact that fundraising ventures contributed noticeably to raising the financial status of schools. It is clear that fundraising ventures are contributing significantly to enhance the revenue base in public primary schools if managed strategically. However some teachers who were interviewed argued that fundraising ventures should not be a major source of funding, but a supplement to government funding. The study further established that fundraising activities need of a lot of time and effort, which sometimes come at the expense of quality service delivery.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

Based on the findings, the study concludes that managing public primary schools comes with its own challenges especially in face of revenue sourcing for effective management. Apart from government funding which was insufficient and also not disbursed to schools on time, there were other sources of revenue identified by the study for managing public primary schools which came with their own challenges. For instance, the sources included; PTA contributions, school tuck-shops, hiring out some classrooms, school grounds and school halls to churches during weekends and some donations from a few companies and Non Governmental Organisations. It was revealed that that some parents had a negative attitude towards helping schools run as a result of free primary education and some local companies and non-governmental organisations were not willing to help the public primary schools with some financial and material resources.

On the other hand, the study revealed that despite the stated challenges, there are opportunities attached to revenue sourcing which included creativity and innovativeness among school managers and teachers, bringing different stakeholders on board in order to offer quality education to the children and improved entrepreneurship skills among schools.

Further, most of the school Headteachers and Deputy Headteachers affirmed that there are strategies which they used to overcome the challenges of sourcing revenue for effective management of public primary schools. The study further concludes that some of the strategies used were; sensitizing the parents and other stakeholders on their role in supporting FPE during PTA meetings and other fundraising ventures.

5.2 Recommendations

For public primary schools to be effectively managed, the study recommended the following:

The government may consider enhancing partnerships and support from other agencies such as Non Governmental

Organizations to supplement its effort in the management of Public primary schools.

The Government may consider revising the grants given to public primary schools and expedite the disbursement to facilitate proper planning by the district and school managements.

School administrators may consider promoting strong school community partnerships and encourage parents to take more proactive roles in matters regarding their children's' education.

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