



A Comparative Analysis on Universal Primary Education Policy, Finance, and Administrative Systems in Sub-Saharan Africa

Findings from the Field Work in Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, and Uganda

March, 2008

Edited by

Mikiko Nishimura
and
Keiichi Ogawa



Graduate School of
International Cooperation Studies
Kobe University

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Foreword

Kobe University's Graduate School of International Cooperation Studies (GSICS) was selected as one of the strongholds of the International Educational Cooperation Initiative supported by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) in 2006. Under this initiative, we have been conducting a variety of activities in cooperation with international researchers and practitioners, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). The overarching question that cuts across our activities is how seemingly similar Universal Primary Education (UPE) Policies in the form of school fee abolition are responding to the needs and capacity of each country.

In the first year of this initiative, we conducted a macro-level analysis of the current status of UPE policies in four selected countries, namely Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, and Uganda. The outcome of the first year activities has been compiled in *Country Status Report for the International Educational Cooperation Initiative on a Comparative Analysis on Universal Primary Education Policy and Administrative and Financial Systems in Sub-Saharan Africa* published by Kobe University in March 2007. The aim of the second year activities was to bring the analysis closer to reality by portraying the administrative, financial, and perceptive issues that have emerged during the course of implementation of UPE policies at the district and school levels. This report compiles the outcome of the second year activities in which a pair of African and Japanese researchers collaborated in the field work and report-writing for each case study.

We are very grateful to the parents, teachers, and district officials who provided the information for this study in four countries. Our appreciation also goes to numerous researchers in Africa and Asia who gave us valuable comments at the final reflective meeting for the Africa-Asia University Dialogue project held at UNESCO, Paris in December 2007 and at an international education seminar held in Kobe in January 2008. Much is also owed to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan for its financial and logistical support to conduct this study.



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Chapter 1. Introduction

Mikiko Nishimura and Keiichi Ogawa

The Background of the Research Activities

Universal Primary Education (UPE) policy in the form of fee abolition has become popular in many countries in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) for achieving Education for All (EFA) since the mid-1990s (Avenstrup, et. al, 2004; UNESCO, 2008). Despite its recent rapid expansion, UPE policy has a long history in sub-Saharan Africa. Existing literatures indicate that previous attempts to achieve UPE in developing countries faced problems in its supply-driven policies, unclear mechanisms, and declined quality of education (Allison, 1983; Bray, 1986; Prince, 1997; Sifuna, 2007). The past experiences in poor countries such as Nigeria and Kenya also show that UPE policy implementation was prone to be affected by economic crisis (Obasi, 2000; Sifuna, 2007). Having a number of existing lessons in the past, however, the current UPE policy severely lacks analytical studies on its impacts and challenges beyond school enrollment (Nishimura, et al., 2008). Furthermore, some researchers have indicated the recent uniformity of the educational policies that prevail in the SSA countries and suggested that there should be studies to examine how these seemingly similar policies are responding to the capacity and needs of each country (Samoff, 1999; Foster, 2000; Brown, et al, 2001; Klees, 2001).

Under such recognition, this study attempts to analyze how UPE policies have been formulated, implemented and evaluated in each country and what kind of administrative and financial issues should be raised from comparative perspectives. As the first attempt to create a comparative analytical lens, four countries were chosen, namely, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, and Uganda. Malawi (1994) and Uganda (1997) have initiated the UPE policies relatively earlier than other countries, while Kenya (2003) and Ghana (2005) are the more recent implementers.

The study team, which consists of five researchers from Africa and five from Japan, has formulated a common comparative analytical framework and produced a country status report based on the existing policy documents and studies in February 2007. These findings were presented at a conference held in Kobe in March 2007 where the team received valuable comments from distinguished education specialists on a possible direction for further study. The comparative analytical framework was elaborated around five gaps in policy analysis namely; 1) performance gap; 2) financial gap; 3) administrative gap; 4) policy gap; and 5) perception gap. After comparing the results from each country, the team has identified that the performance gap and policy gap are the results of the financial, administrative, and perception gaps. The team also recognized the needs for investigating these gaps further at the local level and grasping the process of creating these gaps and the nature of constraints in more detailed manner (i.e. school and local government levels).

This report compiles the outcome of the activities for the Japanese FY2007 (April 2007-March 2008) which, therefore, focused more on field research at the local level to identify both common and unique themes surrounding the UPE policy in four countries especially in the areas of financial, administrative, and perception gaps.

Research Objectives/Targets

The study has four major objectives or targets as follows:

1. To create a common comparative analytical framework to examine educational administration and finance for UPE policies in sub-Saharan Africa;
2. To grasp common (i.e. regional) and unique (i.e. country-specific) issues of the UPE policies and administrative and financial systems for primary education sub-sector;
3. To strengthen academic exchange between researchers in Africa and those in Asia through the Africa-Asia University Dialogue Project on the issue concerned; and
4. To produce a joint policy recommendation on UPE policies and administrative and financial issues for each country as well as the SSA region as a result of academic collaboration of researchers in Africa and Asia.

For FY2007, the activities mainly focused on Objective 2 (to grasp common and unique issues of the UPE policies and administrative and financial systems), while making continuous efforts towards Objective 3 (to strengthen academic exchange).

Research Questions

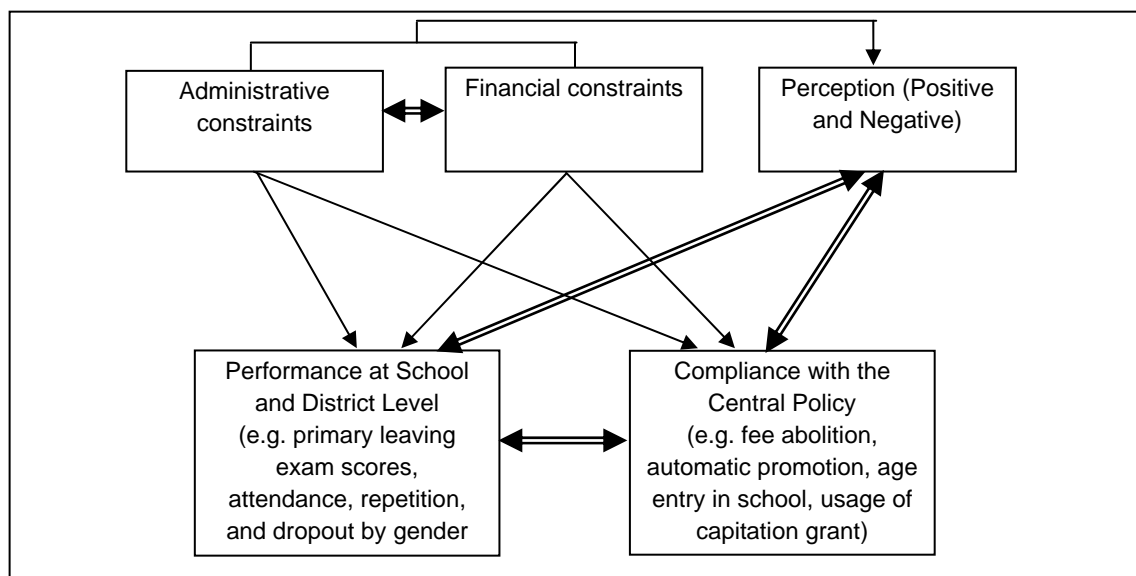
The overarching research questions that each country team followed are outlined below:

1. What are the administrative constraints for smooth implementation of primary education provision under the UPE policy?
2. What are the financial constraints for smooth implementation of primary education provision under the UPE policy?
3. How do stakeholders perceive UPE policy?
4. Are administrative, financial, and perceptive issues different in urban and rural areas?
5. What are the possible links among the administrative, financial and perceptive factors, school performance and local compliance (incompliance) with the central policy?
6. Are these possible links different in urban and rural areas?

Conceptual Map

The conceptual map is drawn in Figure 1. Administrative constraints and financial constraints are likely to have a strong link and mutual effects. Financial constraints limit administrative capacity, while administrative constraints may result in inadequate management of local resources for primary education. These administrative and financial constraints together are likely to affect perception of parents and School Management Committees (SMCs) on provision of primary education. The administrative constraints are also likely to influence performance at the school and district levels since adequate monitoring and evaluation as well as sound management of SMCs will affect school performance. This holds true for compliance with the central policy, as inadequate monitoring and evaluation may cause misinterpretation of policies on the ground. The financial constraints can similarly affect performance at the school level as well as local compliance with the central policy. For instance, the lack of finance or delay of capitation grant may cause incapacity at the school level to comply with the guideline for the usage of the grant.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



Source: Created by Authors.

Perception of parents and SMC members can be influenced by performance at the school level and whether schools comply with the central policy, while their perception, in turn, will encourage or discourage performance at the school level and if schools should follow the central policy. This is mainly because parents decide whether their children stay in school and may demand things that may contradict with the central policy.

Finally, performance at the school and district levels is likely to link with the degree of compliance of the central government policy, especially in terms of school fees and usage of capitation grant.

Each arrow may look differently by country concerned or by geographical location. When analyzing these links, all stakeholders were carefully identified so that complex relationships among actors should be covered. In addition, gender perspective and other necessary social considerations were incorporated when each country team elaborated country specific interview protocols.

Methodological Design

Since the research attempted to obtain common and unique themes grounded in identified gaps, a qualitative methodology was perceived as most suitable by the team. In the course of the limited duration and the budget, the in-depth case study method was applied with a small number of samples of approximately 16-20 schools in each country. In light of the fact that the countries are largely dominated by rural areas and the need to grasp the difference between rural and urban areas, each country team was designated to figure out the sound proportion of sample schools by location. Furthermore, in order to maintain a relevant research framework for a comparative analysis, the criteria for site selection were determined as follows.

Sampling Criteria

- ◆ Between 16-20 schools in total
- ◆ Schools should be located in at least 2 different districts
- ◆ The selected site should not include extreme cases
- ◆ Include both rural and urban/semi-urban schools
- ◆ Include poor performing, average performing, and well performing schools
- ◆ Parents and SMC members should be called upon in areas surrounding selected schools

Once the site was decided, each country team identified all possible stakeholders to be consulted with interviews to respond to the overarching research questions. Since each country has a different educational administration system and actors at all levels, details were set by each country team. The overall key actors are outlined below.

Individual and/or focus group interviews were arranged with a case-by-case approach in each country. In addition to interviews, observations were made in the schools, district education offices and other possible sites to grasp the learning conditions including crowdedness of classrooms, teacher absenteeism, and monitoring systems of the schools. Furthermore, test scores and district documents were collected along with interview and observation notes. When compiling the report, results were triangulated by these three sources.

Key Stakeholders to be Interviewed

	Approx. number
◆ District Level	
• District Education Officers (DEO)	2+
• District Inspectors of Schools	2+
• District Administrative Officers	2+
• District Finance Officers	2+
◆ School Level	
• Head Teachers	16-20
• Teachers	32+
◆ Community Level	
• Parents	32+
• SMC members	16+

Interview Protocols

While interview protocols should be created for each country, the core interview protocols were shared by all team members (see Appendix). The mode of interview was semi-structured so that interviewer could probe questions as the need arose and apply to each country specific setting. The forms of interview could be either individual or focus group interview. It was recommended for each country team to organize individual interviews with district officers and teachers and focus group interviews with parents and SMC members. The interview protocols incorporated as many close-ended questions as possible for the purpose of comparison across countries by some standardization.

Summary of Findings

General impact of UPE policy

UPE policy signifies strong government's commitment and donor contribution towards EFA goals by enabling children who would not have enrolled in school to come to school. The most apparent impact of the UPE policy is seen in increased enrollment in all four countries. In Kenya, Uganda, and Ghana, UPE intervention also included provision of teaching and learning materials and additional classroom construction.

However, UPE policy also had drawbacks at the school site. When school fees were abolished, over-age and underage children flocked into school. The most notable challenge was overcrowded classrooms, which in some schools led to low teacher motivation. The leverage between strong commitment of governments and donors and available resources was another issue. Schools suffer from lack of funds, while not being able to ask parents for fees. Parents have also become passive in every form of participation in school activities and decision making. A common attitude illustrated by parents and communities is that now that the government is responsible for *everything*, they have no stake in school governance. Under such an environment, dropout of pupils is another challenge under UPE policy.

Some unique themes are seen in Kenya and Malawi. In Kenya, examination results declined after the introduction of UPE policy, while experiencing increased repetition in contrast to a decrease in dropouts. In Malawi, quality indicators of schools also declined. However, some parents in Malawi have changed their passive attitude and become more cooperative with schools after some years of witnessing the lack of additional public resources made available at schools.

Administrative Challenges

Common themes that cut across administrative issues of UPE policy is mainly rooted in its top-down policy implementation and unpreparedness of the system for the changes. Since the inception of UPE policy, no clear policy on roles and responsibilities has been shared by stakeholders. Ad hoc training opportunities given to head teachers on accounting and school management under UPE were not enough for head teachers and School Management Committees (SMCs) to obtain confidence in daily school management.

UPE policy also creates some policy conflicts that make administration fairly difficult. For instance, automatic promotion policy and an increase in enrollment throw teachers into an extremely difficult situation. Fee abolition and inadequate amount of UPE capitation grant are also contradictory and give head teachers' headaches and sometimes push themselves in debt. As a consequence of these conflicts, schools are compelled to hold larger classes with more limited resources.

Some unique themes are found in all countries. In Uganda, it has been witnessed that local politicians interfere in schools when schools ask parents for some contribution. This furthered confusion on roles and responsibilities of parents and communities under UPE policy. In addition, upon the introduction of Universal Secondary Education Policy in 2007, public resources for primary classroom construction have been diverted to secondary sub-sector, making overcrowded classrooms a continuous challenge. In Ghana, functions of SMCs are found to be weak, while district officials hold relatively strong self-confidence in their tasks under UPE policy. In Kenya, the low participation of parents and SMCs

seems to create mutual mistrust and poor relationships between schools, especially between teachers and the community. Finally, in Uganda, Ghana, and Malawi, decentralization policy devolved much power over educational planning and budgeting to district councils. As a consequence, technocrats such as education officers at the district level have less power over sectoral planning. Thus, decisions made at the district may have some compromises with the national policy.

Financial Challenges

Under UPE policy, the capitation grant has been disbursed from the central government to schools directly in Kenya, and via districts in Uganda and Ghana. The capitation grant is calculated as per pupil cost of primary education. Nevertheless, our interviews revealed that the amount of the capitation grant is not guided by baseline survey but more affected by whatever is available within the national account and that the aggregated amount at the school level is lower than how much schools used to collect from parents and communities prior to the implementation of UPE policy. In addition to the insufficient amount of the capitation grant, delay of funds is commonly experienced at school level in all countries. This apparently affects daily school activities. Mismanagement of school funds is also reported as a challenge.

Since the introduction of UPE, the budget for primary education has become heavily dependent on the central government. Although districts are allowed to put some additional resources, minimal or no resources are available at the district level. Parents are also found to be covering private costs of schooling (e.g. uniform, development fees, examination fees, lunch, transportation, tutoring, etc.) that is higher than the capitation grant. The overall insufficient budget allocated towards primary education at district level seems to most negatively affect monitoring of schools.

The unique themes are seen in Malawi where there has been no capitation grant for more than ten years under UPE policy. Much of the budget on education has been taken as leave grants for teachers, teacher deaths, and transfer of teachers, leaving a negligible amount for teaching and learning materials. In addition, the case of Uganda also uniquely revealed notable variability of primary education financing at the household, school, and district levels under UPE policy.

Perceptive Issues

UPE certainly was a consensus agreed upon by democratic elections and a domestic decision making process in each country. The majority of stakeholders interviewed in this study perceive that the current policy is good and that they view primary schooling as either important or very important for both boys and girls. Parents in Kenya, Uganda, and Ghana also report that although they are bearing the private cost of schooling under the UPE policy, the amount is lower than what it used to be. The UPE policy is greatly appreciated by parents and communities for its equitable nature to benefit the poor. The cases of Uganda and Kenya also showed that parents appreciate the provision of teaching and learning materials under the UPE policy.

However, the majority view that the implementation of the policy has a number of problems. In particular, the automatic promotion policy is much contested by all stakeholders at the district and school levels. This is due to the fact that to promote pupils to the next grade without meeting the proficiency set by each grade will do more harm than good for a child since s/he will not obtain anything at the end of the primary cycle and the school system will compromise quality of education.

There are some unique themes revealed in Uganda, Kenya, and Malawi. In Kenya and Uganda there was a gap between what parents perceive and what they actually do. Although interviewed parents claim that they contribute much to school by attending meetings and so on, interviews with district officials, head teachers, and teachers contradict these responses. There may be the possibility of our sampling bias whereby interviewed parents are those who are relatively cooperative with schools. In Malawi, fee abolition was not complied with due to lack of any other resource base, and hence parents responded that the cost of schooling was higher than before the introduction of UPE policy. Parents also hold negative views on nonexistence of provision of teaching and learning materials unlike other three countries. The case of Malawi, therefore, indicates that the lack of financial and administrative unpreparedness lead to the incompletion of UPE policy.

Linkages among Factors

All four countries showed that administrative and financial constraints have a strong link and mutual effect at both the district and school levels. Limited resources and lack of administrative capacity constrain the capacity of the schools to fully and adequately implement the UPE policy and maintain a high level of performance at school. However, the overall perception of parents and SMC members of the UPE policy was positive and did not reflect the administrative and financial constraints and school performance in Kenya, Uganda, and Ghana. In Malawi where there was no capitation grant to replace school fees, stakeholder reactions varied and proved that the stakeholders are capable of introducing positive or negative changes to the way schools perform. The linkage among factors seems to cut across rural and urban schools and there was no clear regional difference within a country.

Policy Suggestions

What this study revealed clearly was that effective policy implementation would require considerable consultation with key stakeholders. Without a baseline survey, any systematic implementation of the policy may become infeasible. Although governments and donors have organized a series of advocacy campaigns on UPE policy, continuous and untiring sensitization and commitment towards the policy may be required to avoid any confusion or local political interference. In particular, there is a need for an effective system of monitoring the programme and tightening accountability of the policy. Faced with increased enrollment, each country now needs to bear cost-effective strategies to raise the quality of primary schools with limited resources in order to tackle the challenge of maintaining both quantity and quality of education. Furthermore, equity issues should be considered, especially for orphaned and vulnerable children who may need special care. Preschool provision may also be effective to prevent underage entry into primary school.

Finally, who owns UPE policy is an important question to be posed. As mentioned earlier, our study revealed that the relation between school administration and parents and communities has weakened after the inception of UPE policy. This is not to say that parents would need to pay in order for their voices to be heard at schools. On the contrary, how parents keep their voices heard when fees are no longer required is a key question to be pursued in order to make UPE policy sustainable. Who owns UPE policy and who is accountable for UPE policy? Ultimately, it is not just the government who complies with the policy and accountable for the public, but it is the public who should also be accountable for what they voted for. Sustainability of UPE policy can be ensured only with this mutual accountability relation.

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Chapter 2. The Case of Ghana

Joseph Garthey Ampiah and Shoko Yamada

1.0 Introduction

Ghana has undergone significant and ambitious educational reforms in her post-colonial period. As the end of the colonial era approached, demand for education became more pressing and the government in 1945 proposed a 10-year plan for further expansion of educational provision. In this plan, universal primary education was targeted to be achieved within 25 years (i.e. by 1970). The next wave of the expansion plan was the 1951 Accelerated Development Plan (ADP) for Education, which also aimed to achieve universal primary education (UPE) for all. The main ADP strategy to improve access to basic education was to abolish tuition fees. After independence in 1957, the new government still considered it a priority to make basic education free and introduced the 1961 Education Act to support this vision. These policies helped expand access to elementary education very rapidly. This review of the educational system is quoted extensively from two documents (Akyeampong et al., 2007 & Ampiah et al., 2005) on education in Ghana.

By 1970 Ghana had one of the most highly developed education systems in Africa (World Bank, 2004). Gross enrolment ratios increased dramatically, 60% of teachers in primary schools were trained, and the Ministry of Education (MOE) projected that all untrained teachers would be eliminated from the education system by 1975. The late 1970s and early 1980s, however, saw a sharp economic decline and the real value of government financing for education fell sharply from 6.4% of GDP in 1976 to 1.4% in 1983, and resulted in a near collapse of the education system.

In 1987, an Education Reform Programme (ERP) to reverse the decline in the education system was launched in partnership with the World Bank and other International Agencies. The major goals of the ERP were to expand 'access to basic education, to improve the quality of basic education, to make education more relevant to Ghana's socioeconomic needs,' and to ensure sustainability of the reform programme after the economic adjustment period. To date, the 1987 reforms have benefited the most in terms of investment to improve access and quality of basic education. Although this huge financial investment into the Ghanaian educational system has made an impact on educational performance in Ghana, many educational indicators suggest that growth has not been sustained.

An Education Reform Review Committee (ERRC) was set up in 1994 to review the achievements of the 1987 ERP. Following it, in accordance with the World Bank and other international donors, in 1996, the 'free compulsory universal basic education' (FCUBE) reforms were introduced to address the weaknesses in the 1987 reforms. The FCUBE aimed to achieve UPE by 2005. UPE could however, not be achieved in 2005. Additionally, it sought to improve girls' enrolment and has generally succeeded in achieving this target (see MOESS, 2006). Implementation of the FCUBE was supported by the World Bank Primary School Development Project (PSDP). Two main areas of activity of the PSDP were the following:

- Policy and management changes: (i) increased instructional time, (ii) reducing student fees and levies, (iii) improve skills and motivation of head teachers, (iv) community involvement in selection of head teachers, (v) orientation of district officials and community leaders, (vi) support to school supervision, and (vii) school mapping
- Investment in physical infrastructure: (i) construction of classrooms, (ii) construction of head teachers' housing, (iii) provision of roofing sheets. Communities were to be responsible for building the external walls ("cladding") for pavilions constructed by the project (World Bank, 2004, p.21-22)

By 2003, over US\$ 500 million of donor funding had been injected into Ghana's education sector. Funding from the World Bank, the principal donor from 1986 to 1994 were used for school infrastructure development and rehabilitation, teacher training instructional materials including the

production of teacher materials and textbooks in primary and JSS. Other support from the World Bank went into head teachers' housing (see World Bank, 2004). DFID, USAID, and the European Union also supported various aspects of the reforms.

The FCUBE programme was met with several problems and constraints. Management weaknesses have undermined its impact which included poor supervision both at system and school levels (Fobih et al., 1999). According to the FCUBE 1999 implementation report, one of the important lessons learnt in the implementation of the FCUBE programme is that, 'continuing to expand access to basic education and increasing physical inputs into the system are not effective unless the quality of activities at the school level improves significantly' (MOE, 1999, p.4).

However, the World Bank's assessment of its role in improving educational access and quality through its support to both the 1987 and 1995 reforms is generally positive. It concludes from analysis of its contributions to the reforms that this had led to reversing the deterioration of the educational system, the number of schools increased, from 12,997 in 1980 to 18,374 in 2000, the basic school enrolment rate increased since the beginning of the reforms by over 10 percentage points between 1988 and 2001 (World Bank, 2004).

Despite these appreciable gains reported by the World Bank, analysis of access indicators show that there continue to be difficulties in reaching a significant proportion of children who do not enrol at all. In particular, gains made in enrolment have been difficult to sustain throughout the 9-year basic education cycle. The World Bank admits that, improving quality and quantity of education infrastructure (i.e. classrooms) is an important strategy but is not by itself adequate. More needs to be done to ensure equitable access to quality basic education.

In 2003, the Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES) issued an Education Strategic Plan (ESP) for the period 2003-2015. The new ESP focused on the achievement of Universal Basic Completion, whose aim was for all enrolled students to complete 6 years of Primary and 3 years of Junior Secondary education. This is a more ambitious goal than mere Universal 'Primary' Completion (UPC). Accordingly, the government's goals have been revised to 100% completion for primary education to be achieved in 2012 so that UBC would be attained by 2015 (MOES, 2006). Gender Parity was scheduled to be achieved by the end of 2005. This target could however not be achieved.

A major achievement in the Ghanaian education system is that 18 months after the inception of the ESP, good progress had been made in terms of access across many areas of the sector. In particular, enrolment rates have risen in primary, JSS and post basic sub-sectors (MOESS, 2004). These have, in general, led to improved Gender Parity Indicators (GPI), Gross Enrolment Rates (GER), and survival and completion rates at the national level. Primary school enrolment growth has been sustained at 3.5% in 2003-04, with an overall growth of 8.6% between 2001-02 and 2003-04. This has resulted in a significant increase in students enrolled from 2.72 million to 2.96 million over the period from 2001-2004. Primary enrolment growth for girl students has been particularly positive with increases of 3.2% in 2003-04 and 9.3% over the period 2001-02 to 2003-04. The significant increases in enrolment have outstripped the projected population growth, estimated at 2.7% per year, and as a result the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) has increased from 84% to 86% (female increase from 80% to 83%, male increase from 87% to 90%) over the two year period.

In 2004, the Government of Ghana introduced a capitation grant scheme for school operating budgets for basic schools as part of the strategy to decentralize education provision. The introduction of capitation grants is another major initiative to achieve universal basic education. Originally, it was introduced in 40 districts and later extended to 53 districts designated as deprived. In 2005, the scheme was extended nationwide. Currently the capitation grant per child is ₵30,000 (approximately \$3) per enrolled child in a year. Initial evidence indicated that its introduction led to massive increases in enrolment (overall about an additional 17 percent rise. As a percentage of unit cost per primary school child, however, this amount is insignificant. In 2005, the actual unit cost for a child in a public primary school was ₵644,283 which is approximately \$72 (MOESS, 2006). Thus, although the total capitation budget may be high, it has done little to raise the unit cost for a primary child.

The expansion due to capitation grant was linked to the 'abolition' of fees which was a requirement. In one particular district, additional enrolments included about 33 percent of children who had dropped out (MOESS, 2006). But, as expected the surge in enrolments have brought new challenges and pressures on resources, both manpower and resources. Two key ones that have been identified by the Ministry of Education include: (i) the need to improve the infrastructure of public basic schools, and (ii) training of head teachers to manage the funds appropriately to deliver quality learning outcomes (MOESS, 2006).

Decentralisation of educational administration, finance, and management is one of the two policy initiatives which stand out in the attempt to achieve UPE. The 1951 Accelerated Educational Development Plan provided the foundations for decentralised educational management in Ghana. In the 1951 plan, local councils were responsible for the provision and maintenance of educational facilities, while central government took responsibility for teachers' salaries. The decentralisation process was further strengthened by the Education Act of 1961, which reaffirmed control and management of education at the local level to local councils. However, poor managerial capacity and the weak financial resource base of the local councils undermined the decentralisation process. Both the 1987 Reform and the 1992 Constitutional Provision echoed and re-emphasised the need for decentralisation. The Ghana Education Service was one of the 22 departments to be decentralized under the Local Government Act. Consequently, the Ghana Education Service (GES) in 1998 started a process of de-concentration of pre-tertiary education management by shifting some of its responsibilities and powers in the management of resources, services and staff to district and school levels.

Basically, decentralisation of education is intended to improve the operational efficiency and promote a more responsive approach to educational needs at the district, community and school levels, the lower rungs of educational service delivery system. Under the decentralisation process, there has also been growing demands on the district education offices to play bigger roles in preparing budgetary plans and sharing the financial burden. As part of the Education Strategic Plan implementation process, districts have to prepare District Education Work Plans (DEWP) reflecting projections and targets up to 2015. Districts are also expected to prepare 3-year Annual District Education Operational Plans (ADEOP) to inform the preparation of district budgets. By the Local Government Act 462 of 1993, devolution of responsibilities was legislated. The law assigns resources, responsibilities and decision making powers on financial prioritization to District Assemblies. District Assemblies receive funding from the Central Government Common Fund allocation of 5% revenue, which they are free to spend in accordance with their priorities. One of few conditions was that twenty percent of this fund was to be allocated to improving education in the area of providing infrastructure.

In order to strengthen school governance and community engagement, all schools are required to form School Management Committees (SMCs). SMCs include representatives from local communities, parents and teachers. These committees are expected to support the head teacher in the general management of the school and assist in identifying priority areas for school development, and mobilising community support. However, the figures for SMCs in public basic schools show that by the end of 2003-04 academic year, less than two-thirds of schools had established SMCs, which may imply that many head teachers and communities do not see the necessity of SMCs.

In addition to SMCs, all schools are required to produce School Performance Improvement Plans (SPIP) on annual basis, which outline the key actions the school will take to improve school management, the school environment, and more effective teaching and learning practices.

Seeing various activities introduced to achieve UPE, the current study was undertaken to assess the progress made by Ghana towards the achievement of UPE in the light of decentralisation of education at the district and school levels.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Design

The aim of the study was to investigate the impact and challenges of UPE in Ghana. This study analyses how UPE policy in Ghana have been implemented and see if there are any gaps between the governmental plan and results in the following five aspects: performance, finance, administration, perception and policy. These identified gaps in the implementation of UPE in Ghana were explored through an in-depth case study of selected rural and urban schools in two districts in the Central Region of Ghana. For each of the five critical areas stated above the study explored specific related issues as follows:

- ◆ Performance
 - ◇ Performance at the district levels
 - ◇ Performance at school level
- ◆ Policy
 - ◇ Compliance with the central ministerial policy at the district and school levels (i.e. no school fees, no underage pupils, automatic promotion, etc.)
- ◆ Administration
 - ◇ Performance of School Management Committee (SMC) (i.e. roles and responsibilities and its functions)
 - ◇ Administration of in-service teacher training
 - ◇ Monitoring and evaluation of educational quality at the district level
- ◆ Finance
 - ◇ Source of income at the district and school levels
 - ◇ Actual expenditure at the district and school levels
 - ◇ Process of education finance
- ◆ Perception
 - ◇ Perception of district officers on UPE policy
 - ◇ Perception of school teachers on UPE policy
 - ◇ Perception of parents and SMC on UPE policy
 - ◇ Parental perception on the cost of schooling (i.e. direct and opportunity costs).

The overarching research questions which guided the study are as follows:

1. What are the administrative constraints for smooth implementation of provision of primary education under the UPE policy?
2. What are the financial constraints for smooth implementation of provision of primary education under the UPE policy?
3. How do stakeholders perceive UPE policy?
4. Are administrative, financial, and perceptive issues different in urban and rural areas?
5. What are the possible links among the administrative, financial and perceptive factors, school performance and local compliance (non-compliance) with the central policy?
6. Are these possible links different in urban and rural areas?

2.2 Sample

Two districts (Cape Coast and Mfantseman) in the Central Region of Ghana were selected as representatives of the socio-economic characteristics of the region. Also, they are easier to access from the University than other districts, which was an important condition with the financial, human, and time constraints of this research. In each district, 10 schools were selected based on locality (urban/rural) and performance (high/low performing) as determined by the District Education Offices. In each district, five schools were selected from urban areas by simple random sampling to include three high performing and two low performing schools. Similarly, five schools were selected from rural areas by simple random sampling to include two high performing and three low performing schools. In total, 20 schools were visited. At each school, the head teacher, at least two teachers, and at least one of the SMC members were interviewed. The total number of interviewees summed up to be 20 head teachers,

40 teachers and 20 SMC members. At the district level, two District Directors of Education (DDEs) were interviewed. At the community level 100 parents whose children were enrolled in the selected schools were selected by simple random sampling and interviewed.

2.3 Instruments

Three generic interview protocols designed by the consortium of researchers on this UPE study were used in the study, each targeting specific informants. The interview protocol for DDEs sought to capture administrative roles and responsibilities of the DDEs which were directly in support of UPE. This included issues of planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation of schools, deployment of teachers, provision of teaching and learning materials and construction and rehabilitation. The protocol also sought to find out the handling of finances meant to support UPE and the perception of the DDEs on the UPE policy and the ways it was implemented in the District. The interview with DDE was meant to solicit ideas on how differently the policy would have been presented and implemented to get better results.

The second interview protocol targeted head teachers and teachers. It dwelt on roles and responsibilities of head teachers and the challenges associated with attaining goals of the UPE policy. It also looked at the way SMCs were functioning and the reasons why some were not performing well in their duties. The protocol also focused on school finances and how they were managed under UPE. Lastly the protocol sought to assess how teachers perceived the UPE policy and its implementation. Despite the wide coverage of issues in the generic interview protocol, however, many questions about school administration and finance are relevant only to the head teachers but not to ordinary teachers in the Ghanaian context. Therefore, although the team asked all questions both to head teachers and to teachers at the beginning of the research, they soon decided to narrow the focus of the interview with teachers on the questions about the perception of the implementation of the UPE policy.

The third protocol was for parents and SMC members. This instrument was to capture the perception of parents and SMC members on the UPE policy and the ways it was implemented.

2.4 Procedure for Collecting Data

Data was collected from District Education Offices and 20 basic schools in October when schools were in session. Permission was sought from the DDEs to visit schools in their district for the study after the rationale for the study had been explained to them. The DDEs provided information which was used to select the schools. The researchers divided themselves into two teams so that each could visit one district. The researchers first identified research assistants who were students pursuing masters' degrees in basic education at the University of Cape Coast and were well versed with the education system in the country. The research assistants were introduced to the instruments to be used in collecting data in the schools. They were trained on how to capture the data in both the vernacular and English language which are the medium of communication in the communities and instruction in the schools respectively.

The principal researchers interviewed the DDEs. In subsequent days, the teams visited the selected schools in each District taking one school at a time. The principal researchers and assistant researchers in each team interviewed head teachers and teachers. The research assistants interviewed parents and SMC members.

2.5 Data Analysis

Data from the protocols were coded and entered in SPSS software package for analysis. Frequencies were generated to give the number of respondents who had given particular responses. Findings of the study are discussed according to research question and presented below. Comparisons between districts have also been made.

3.0 Results

3.1 Administrative Issues in Implementing UPE Policy

3.1.1 District level

In the Cape Coast Municipality, the overall education planning is done by the DDE and all the unit heads in the municipal office. The budget officer does the budget planning for the municipality. Monitoring of schools and evaluation of schools are executed by the supervision/monitoring unit and inspection unit respectively. The District Director, with the help of the posting committee, deploys teachers to the various schools in the municipality. The supervision and monitoring unit is in charge of the administration of in-service teacher training in the district. The supply of textbooks and other scholastic materials to the schools in the district come from the Headquarters of the Ghana Education Service in Accra. The Cape Coast Municipal Assembly undertakes the construction of new classroom blocks and rehabilitates old ones in the municipality.

Table 1: Educational roles and responsibilities in the Cape Coast Municipality

	Roles	Person/institution in charge	Observed Challenges
(a)	The overall education planning	District Director and unit head concerned	Authority for crucial decision-making on education is not at the district level, it is only the implementation done at the district
(b)	Budgeting	Budget officer	After budgeting, there are usually delays in the release of funds to the district. Also, not all the money budgeted for districts are released to the district
(c)	Monitoring of schools	Supervision and monitoring unit	Transportation to schools especially in remote areas is difficult which makes it difficult for regular visits to take place
(d)	Evaluation of schools	Inspection unit	No problem
(e)	Development of teachers	District Director and posting committee	Most teachers are reluctant to go to rural areas when posted.
(f)	Administration of in-service teacher training	Supervision and monitoring unit	Funds for INSET are not enough as there are many competing areas for the limited funds allocated to the district.
(g)	Construction and rehabilitation of schools	Municipal Assembly	Recommendations can only be made to the Municipal Assembly as it is their responsibility.
(h)	Provision of textbooks	Distribution only, no purchase	Supplies from the GES headquarters are not timely
(i)	Provision of other scholastic materials	Textbooks come from headquarters	Supplies from the GES headquarters are not timely

In the Mfantseman District, the overall education planning is done in collaboration between the District Director of Education and the human resource officer. The major challenge perceived by the Director is that most educational planning is done at the national level and the district only implements whatever policies that come from the national level. The budget officer plans the budget for the district office. The various departments in the district office and circuit supervisors plan their activities together to monitor schools in the district.

Table 2: Educational roles and responsibilities in the Mfantseman District

	Roles	Person/institution in charge	Observed Challenges
(a)	The overall education planning	Team work (Director, AD-human resource)	Authority for crucial decision-making on education is not at the district level, it is only the implementation done at the district
(b)	Budgeting	Budget officer	After budgeting, there are usually delays in the release of funds to the district. Also, not all the money budgeted for districts are released to the district
(c)	Monitoring of schools	Various departments plan activities, circuit supervisors etc	Transportation to schools especially in remote areas is difficult which makes it difficult for regular visits to take place
(d)	Evaluation of schools	Circuit supervisors, monitoring and evaluation team	No problem
(e)	Development of teachers	District Director and HRMD director	Most teachers are reluctant to go to rural areas when posted.
(f)	Administration of in-service teacher training	Training officer and subject area specialist	Funds for INSET are not enough as there are many competing areas for the limited funds allocated to the district.
(g)	Construction and rehabilitation of schools	Assembly (common fund)	No problem
(h)	Provision of textbooks	Central government	Supplies from the GES headquarters are not timely
(i)	Provision of other scholastic materials	Government(central) and donor support	Supplies from the GES headquarters are not timely

Evaluation of schools is carried out by the monitoring and evaluation team and circuit supervisors. Deployment of teachers to schools in the district is done by the District Director and the HRMD (Human Resources Management Division) Director. Provision of teaching and learning materials in the district come from the government through the Ghana Education Service. The District Assembly common fund is used to construct new classroom blocks and rehabilitate worn out blocks.

Both districts had competent personnel who were in charge of the various administrative sectors of the district. However, it was clear from interviews with both directors of education in the two districts that generally, most of the educational planning is mainly done at the national level and only implemented at the district level. Also, the fact that administrative issues at the district level are the responsibility of three agencies namely, the central government, district education office and the district assemblies makes coordination difficult. When there are any lapses from any of the three agencies, the administration of UPE suffers. The observed challenges stated for the Mfantseman District also applies to the Cape Coast District. Issues such as construction and rehabilitation of schools, provision of textbooks and provision of other scholastic materials are not under the mandate of the District Director of Education. This makes it difficult for the education office to make provisions for schools and therefore hard to make recommendations to schools regarding improvements in teaching and learning materials. Both DDEs interviewed said there were no gaps between their capacity and their given tasks at the district level.

3.1.2 School level

Table 3 shows that out of the 20 head teachers interviewed, only 20% indicated they found it most difficult to supervise other teachers. They cited areas such as teacher punctuality and inspection of lesson notes as kind of supervisory activities they actually do. One head teacher said it was difficult to sometimes leave a class and move to other classes to supervise other teachers as he was a non-detached head teacher, a head teacher who are not released from teaching work to take up management tasks.

For quite a high proportion of head teachers (45%), the major problem facing UPE in their schools was the construction and rehabilitation of their schools (Table 4). The demand for more and better school facilities is obvious due to the increase in school population as a result of UPE policy. Head teachers can only make the request for more and improved facilities to the DEOs. However, as noted earlier, the DEOs have no control over funds for construction and rehabilitation of schools. It is the responsibility

of the District Assemblies to construct and rehabilitate schools and requests for school facilities are therefore channelled through DEOs to the District Assemblies.

Table 3: Roles and responsibilities of head teachers (N=20)

Roles and responsibilities	Numbers of head teachers who rated the task as the most difficult	Description of reasons for being the most difficult to observe
(1) supervising other teachers	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> teacher punctuality, checking lateness, lesson notes preparation. sometimes I have to leave the classroom to supervise other teachers. teacher absenteeism and preparation of lesson notes.
(2) managing SMC	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> political rivalry among members. apart from the chairman, the others are ineffective. lack of punctuality among members in attending meetings.
(4) deciding usage of UPE grant	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> some teachers fail to give proper accounts of monies given them for purchase. delay in approval of grant and sometimes you receive less than expected.
(5) deployment of part-time staff	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> there is difficulty in raising funds to pay such staff.
(6) request for school construction or rehabilitation	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> it is not easy to access funds from central government. you write to the district assembly office and they don't respond because there are no funds.
(7) communication with parents	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> they often delay in their response and it needs constant follow-up. parents don't come when they are needed. Parents are not concerned about school. when you call them they don't come. parents don't come when you need to talk to them; they come at their own convenient time.
(8) sending teachers to in-service training	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> funds inadequate or non-existing. inadequate funds for INSET. They are not willing to go.

The head teachers recounted many problems confronting them in the implementation of UPE policy and the countermeasures they had taken to address them. Sixty percent of head teachers complained about the passive attitude of parents. This is not surprising because many parents are of the notion that there is complete free education under the UPE policy and hence they have been absolved of all responsibilities towards the school their children attend, not only financially but also administratively. Out of these 12 teachers, 40% indicated that they use PTA meetings to educate parents on the need to develop a positive attitude to the education of their children.

The rest of the head teachers mentioned that they have met with some parents and opinion leaders in their communities to advise them on the need to contribute to education of their wards. With the introduction of capitation grants to support UPE, most parents have considered that they are not expected to pay any levies to the schools. Hence, any call on them to support school development and improvement is met with resistance. Also, since last year, the schools and SMCs are prohibited to solicit any contribution from the parents and community, putting aside the fund-raising initiated by the PTAs. The other problem is insufficient and overcrowded classrooms in eight of the 20 schools visited. As noted earlier, the only option is for the head teachers to appeal to the district assemblies through the DEOs to respond to this need of infrastructure. The double- or triple-shift has been discouraged in the Ghanaian education system due to its unproductive nature, enabling fewer contact hours between children and teachers, reduced time for curriculum delivery, promotion of truancy among children, and not making room for extra and co-curricula activities in schools. All shift schools were therefore given additional facilities. Because of that, even though the increased enrolment caused the shortage of space again, these schools cannot re-introduce shift system as a solution to overcrowdedness. The only solution in this situation should be the provision of more facilities by the District Assemblies, which often do not come because of the fund shortage or long chain of communication.

Also, 35% of head teachers admitted there had been a fall in the morale among teachers due to large classes resulting from the introduction of the UPE and this is a major challenge to them as head teachers. One head teacher has been encouraging the teachers during staff meetings whilst another had put two teachers in class one to teach as a way of reducing the work load in that class since the class cannot be separated due to shortage of classroom facility.

Table 4: The major challenges after UPE and countermeasures

Challenges	Numbers of head teachers who rated each problem as a major challenge	Countermeasures taken so far
(1) overcrowded classrooms	8	I have appealed to the DEO for more classrooms and furniture. Repaired broken furniture. Parents brought in furniture. Requested the District Assembly to Provide additional classrooms
(2) passive attitude of parents	12	I have met with parents and local opinion leaders to advise them on the need to contribute to education Started sending invitation letters to individual parents instead of general announcement.
(3) passive attitude of SMC	3	I organized a meeting with chiefs, elders and SMC members to educate them to change their attitudes. The SMC couldn't meet last year, as the request of meeting have fallen on deaf ears
(4) decrease of school funds	5	Offertory from worship to supplement. Catholic church organized meetings to raise money for the school. Headmistress's pocket money supplements the grant when money has not come. Payment of PTA dues. Appeal to district assembly for funds.
(5)insufficient number of classrooms	8	The schools notified the needs for support to the Municipal Assembly. Requested an NGO to support.
(6) dropout of pupils	3	Discussion with pupils and parents. Educate parents and pupils concerned. Inviting parents and discussing problems.
(7) repetition of pupils	6	May repeat students according to the discussion with pupils and parents We repeated those who perform poorly
(8) decline of morale/incentive among teachers to teach large classes	7	I encourage them during staff meetings. Nothing can be done unless government introduce some measure to raise motivation. Let two teachers to teach one class to reduce burden.

Some head teachers interviewed in both districts identified gaps between the tasks given to them and their capacity to deliver educational services and proposed possible interventions to address these gaps (Table 5). Generally, most head teachers in the Cape Coast Municipality (80%) did not see any gaps between the tasks and capacity of schools compared to 50% of head teachers in the Mfantseman District.

Table 5: The tasks and capacity of schools

	Cape Coast District (N=10)	Mfantseman District (N=10)
Existence of gaps between tasks and capacity (Number of school teachers who rated yes or no)	Yes = 2 No = 8	Yes = 5 No = 5
Areas in which gaps exist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of budget to pursue given tasks • Insufficient number of teachers • Lack of understanding of tasks • Lack of policy guidelines from government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of training for teachers • Lack of budget to pursue the given tasks • Teacher absenteeism • Lack of understanding of tasks • Insufficient number of teachers • Low morale of teachers • Low morale of some teachers • Lack of policy guideline from the government
Proposed possible intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • INSET for teachers • monetary allocation for the pursuit of specific task • the grant must come on time so that we can buy the needed teaching & learning materials at the right time • adequate funds should be made available to undertake given task • increase teacher motivation • education of teachers and head teachers on some policy guidelines for UPE • building teachers' housing and providing means of transport for teachers • providing sufficient textbooks to meet the increase in the number of pupils • avail training avenues and materials for teachers • posting of teachers to the school • clear guidelines from the government to perform tasks • promote assistance from PTA and SMC for school management • discussion with teachers concerned and advise if necessary 	

3.2 Roles, Responsibilities and the Current Status of SMC

The questionnaire requested head teachers to select roles and responsibilities of SMCs which, in their opinion, are actually played by the SMC of their schools. The results are discussed as below.

3.2.1 To plan school activities

From Table 6, both DDEs interviewed stated the planning of school activities as part of the roles and responsibilities of SMCs. However, out of the 20 head teachers interviewed, only 30% indicated planning of school activities as part of the roles and responsibilities of SMCs. The actual function of SMCs according to the two DDEs was on the average moderate. The school heads also on the average rated the functioning of the SMCs as moderate.

Table 6: Roles, responsibilities and the current status of SMC

Actual function of SMC Roles and Responsibilities of SMC	Numbers of schools/district officials that chose the item as roles and responsibilities of SMC		The status of SMC's function (the average rating between 1=very active and 5=not functioning)	
	District officials (N=2)	School head teachers (N=20)	District officials (N=2)	School head teachers and teachers (N=20)
(1) To plan school activities	2	6	3.0	2.6
(2) To decide the ways of spending UPE grant	2	5	3.5	2.0
(3) To audit school finance	2	10	4.5	2.0
(4) To employ part-time staff	1	4	4.0	4.4

3.2.2 To decide the ways of spending UPE/FPE grant

From Table 6, both DDEs interviewed, selected “deciding on the ways of spending of the UPE grant” as part of the roles and responsibilities of SMCs. However, only 25% of head teachers rated this item as part of the roles and responsibilities of the SMCs. On average, the DDEs rated the actual performance of the SMCs concerning decision on the ways of spending UPE grant as rarely functioning whilst head teachers who selected the function rated the performance of SMCs on this function as moderate. Most head teachers did not see SMCs as the body which must control and monitor the finances of their schools.

3.2.3 To audit school finance

Both DDEs also chose auditing school finance as part of the roles and responsibilities of the SMC (Table 6). One-half of head teachers also chose auditing school finance as part of the roles and responsibilities of the SMC. This seems to be the only item where one-half of head teachers agreed with DDEs. On the other roles and responsibilities of SMCs, 35% or less of head teachers agreed with DDEs. Concerning the actual function of the SMC, both head teachers and DDEs on the average rated them as rarely functioning.

3.2.4 Employment of part time staff

Table 6 shows that one of the two Directors of Education chose employing part time staff as part of the roles and responsibilities of the SMC. Only 20% of head teachers also chose employing part time staff as part of the roles and responsibilities of the SMC. However, concerning this function, they all rated the SMCs on average as rarely functioning.

The responses from the head teachers and the DDEs seem to give the impression that the roles of the SMCs are not very clear to majority of head teachers as they were not unanimous about the roles and responsibilities of SMCs in the schools and in some cases contradicted what the DDEs had stated. Areas where SMCs seem not to be functioning very well are related to finance and school governance. This is not surprising since head teachers do not see financial and governance issues as being in the domain of SMCs. The two DDEs were not in agreement about who employs part-time staff in the schools. Generally, the SMCs were seen not to be functioning. Table 7 gives the reasons why this was so.

From Table 7, one of the DDEs cited confusion of the roles of SMCs under the UPE policy as the reason for their not functioning. The other DDE stated the misunderstanding that the government is responsible for everything under the UPE policy as a reason for the SMCs not functioning. Both DDEs also cited lack of leadership on the part of head teachers as a reason for the SMCs not functioning. Generally, since head teachers were not very sure of the roles and responsibilities SMCs were to play in the administration of their schools, any roles SMCs may be playing which run counter to what head teachers expect would be resisted. No wonder, SMCs were largely seen to be ineffective.

Table 7: Reasons for SMC not functioning

Reasons for not functioning	Numbers of district officials who cited the following reason
(a) Confusion on their roles under UPE/FPE policy	1
(b) Misunderstanding that the government is responsible for everything under UPE/FPE policy	1
(c) Lack of interest in education	0
(d) Difficulty in attending meetings because of work	0
(e) Lack of leadership of the head teacher	2

3.3 Financial Issues in Implementing UPE Policy

3.3.1 District level

Table 8 shows the financial sources of income and expenditure for basic education at the district level for the 2005/2006 academic year. In the Cape Coast Municipality, problems facing education finance were mismanagement of funds and problem of ghost names. For the problem of mismanagement of funds, the DDE stated that most head teachers were not managing properly funds given to them. On the problem of ghost names, the director indicated that some teachers who are supposed to be on study leave without pay sometimes take their salaries.

Table 8: Financial sources of income and expenditure for basic education at the district level

	Cape Coast Municipal Office	Mfantseman District
Source of funds allocated to (if available) primary education	Central government Donor support Capitation grant MP common fund	Central government Donor support Capitation grant MP common fund
(a) List of funds from the central government	GH ¢294,993.76	GH ¢109,137.24
(b) List of funds generated at the district level	District Assembly fund NGOs	District Assembly fund NGOs
Total amount of expenditure on primary education in FY2005/6		
By item		
(a) Teacher/non-teachers salaries	GH ¢1,316,099.65	GH ¢3,809,178.59
(b) Non-salary items (goods and services)	GH ¢29,272.85	GH ¢42,955.89
(c) Construction	None	GH ¢29,862.80
(d) Maintenance	None	GH ¢7,411.69
(f) Miscellaneous	GH¢ 52,545.30	GH ¢68,488.17

\$1=GH¢ 0.97

Tables 9 and 10 give a list of problems facing the Cape Coast Municipality and the Mfantseman District respectively. Both districts have the problem of ghost names. This is the case where some teachers who are supposed to be on study leave without pay take their salaries. The incidence of ghost names is a nation-wide problem and hence is not limited to the two districts in this study. Apart from that the DDE in the Cape Coast Municipality complained about head teachers not managing the UPE grant properly.

Table 9: A list of problems facing education finance in the Cape Coast Municipality

Problems	Description
Delay of UPE/FPE funds	None
Shortage of budget	None
Mismanagement of funds	Most head teachers are not managing funds properly
Accountability of school finance	None
Problem of ghost teachers	People on study leave without pay sometimes take their salaries
Inadequate amount of school finance	None
Insufficient budget for monitoring schools	None

Table 10: A list of problems facing education finance in the Mfantseman District

Problems	Description
Delay of UPE/FPE funds	None
Fluctuation of the budget	None
Accountability of school finance	None
Problem of ghost teachers	People on study leave without pay sometimes take their salaries
Inadequate amount of school finance	None

3.3.2 School level

At the school level, Table 11 shows that in the Cape Coast Municipality, the average total amount of expenditure in the 2005/2006 academic year was ₵9,246,250 while the average total amount of expenditure for schools in the Mfantseman District was ₵9,300,675. The average total expenditure on classroom construction per school was ₵2,058,000 in the Cape Coast Municipality while it was ₵1,395,000 in the Mfantseman District. The expenditure was therefore lower in the Mfantseman District. The average total expenditure for schools in the Cape Coast Municipality on rehabilitation or maintenance of school was ₵940,000 which was lower than that in the Mfantseman District (₵1,200,000). The average total expenditure for schools in the Mfantseman District on extra curricula activities was ₵2,069,750 while it was lower (₵1,339,800) in the Cape Coast Municipality. The DDEs however, complained about the inability of the government to give to the districts the full amount of money budgeted for them. According to the DDEs sometimes the districts get only 70% of budgeted amount. When this happens, some items are prioritised leading to some of them being dropped out or money allocated them slashed substantially.

Table 11: Financial sources of income and expenditure for basic schools

	Schools in Cape Coast Municipality	Schools in Mfantseman District
Source of Income and proportion (if available) for primary education	(e.g.) - school fee - community participation fee	
Average total amount of expenditure in FY2005/6	₵9,246,250	₵9,300,675
By item		
(a) Salary of teachers and administrative staff	None	None
(b) Classroom construction	₵2,058,000	₵1,395,000
(c) Rehabilitation/maintenance of school	₵940,000	₵1,200,000
(d) Extracurricular activities	₵1,339,800	₵2,069,750
(e) School lunch	None	None

\$1= ₵ 9,700

In Table 12, all the 20 head teachers interviewed cited delay of the UPE funds as a problem of education finance in the various schools. Ninety-five percent of head teachers interviewed said fluctuation of their budget was a problem in their schools. All head teachers interviewed said inadequate amount of school finance was also problem of education finance in their schools. The release of the capitation grant is done in each school term. Even then, the full amount due to schools is rarely released, not to mention delays in the release of the funds. Sometimes schools run for a full term without the capitation grant.

Table 12: List of problems facing education finance at school level

Problems	Number of school heads that rated the item as problem	Description
(1) Delay of UPE/FPE funds	20	Government is not able to release funds on time
(2) Fluctuation of the budget	19	Government is unable to give the full amount requested by the districts
(3) Mismanagement of funds	0	-
(4) Accountability of school finance	1	Fund management requires very cumbersome paperwork
(5) Problem of ghost teachers	0	-
(6) Inadequate amount of school finance	20	Capitation grant per pupil is only ₵30,000 which is not enough to run the schools
(7) Inability of parents to pay fees	0	-

3.3.3 Cost of schooling and parental contribution to schools

The variation in the cost of schooling as seen in Table 13 is very wide and reflects parents' incomes and capacity to meet their children's needs adequately. The cost of transporting children to school seems to be the highest cost of schooling per year. The mean of ₦705,651.28 is about 24 times the capitation grant of ₦30,000 per child provided by government in the name of 'free' education for primary school children. This cost is mainly borne by parents whose children attend urban schools. Some parents also provide extra education for their children and this seems to take substantial amount of money from such parents. School uniform which is compulsory has a mean of more than three times the capitation grant whilst school lunch which is important for children cost on the average more than 23 times the capitation grant. The cost of education as shown in Table 13 is in respect of direct cost parents were spending to enable their children's schooling despite the abolition of school fees. Although the household expenditure on education is far greater than the amount of capitation grant per child, the majority of parents (55.8%) feels that their financial burden became smaller now than before the implementation of UPE policy.

Table 13: Cost of schooling per year (in cedis)

Cost of schooling	Mean	SD	Median	Minimum	Maximum	N
(a) uniform	98,786.32	56,453.34	81,000.00	25,000.00	4 50,000.00	117
(b) transportation	705,651.28	379,621.51	720,000.00	100,400.00	1,800,000.00	39
(c) school lunch	692,166.67	463,216.07	540,000.00	120,000.00	3,000,000.00	109
(d) scholastic materials	142,660.87	115,006.09	110,000.00	15,000.00	7,500,000.00	115
(e) fees collected by school	None	None	None	None	None	
(f) additional education (e.g. tutorial)	339,155.17	460,525.39	180,000.00	6,000.00	2,700,000.00	58
	Difference of costs before and after UPE policy implementation					
	Higher now than before		More or less the same		Lower now than before	
Number of parents/SMC members who respond	24		29		67	
Proportion in each response (%)	20.0%		24.2%		55.8%	

Table 14 shows that 79% of parents and 95% of SMC members indicated they visited the schools of their children more than once a term. Only 2% of the parents had never visited the schools of their children. Again, the table shows that 52% of the parents and 65% of SMC members said it was very important for them to contribute to the development of the school. Forty-seven percent of parents and 35% of SMC members thought that it was important to contribute to school.

Table 14: Parents' contribution to schooling of their children

	Number of parents/SMC members who responded to the item below:	
	Parents (N=100)	SMC Members (N=20)
Frequency to visit school:		
(1) more than once a term	79	19
(2) once a term	16	0
(3) once a year	3	1
(4) never	2	0
Importance to contribute to school:		
(1) very important	52	13
(2) important	47	7
(3) not so important	1	0
(4) not necessary	0	0
Forms of contribution to school:		
(1) attend meetings at school	34	11
(2) help construction or rehabilitation of school	35	10
(3) provide lunch for pupils	22	8
(4) pay more fees collected by the school	0	0
(5) donate some goods to school	13	1
(6) donate some money to school	21	0

When it comes to the form of contribution offered to the school, the table shows that helping in construction or rehabilitation of schools was the highest. Thirty-five percent of parents and 50% of SMC members said they help in the construction or rehabilitation of schools. This is followed by attendance to meetings at the school. The table shows that 34% of parents and 55% of SMC members said they attended meetings at the school as their contribution to the schools of their wards. The table further shows that 13% of SMC members and 21% of parents donated goods and money respectively to schools. In a way parents and SMCs made contributions to the schools of their children not only financially but also in various other forms.

3.4 Stakeholders' Perception of UPE Policy

3.4.1 District level

In Table 15, both DDEs said in general, it was very easy to comply with the fee abolition aspect of the UPE policy. Also, in general, it was easy for them to comply with the policy of standard entry age into primary school. One of the Directors said, however, that the policy should be relaxed a little to achieve the national target of getting all school-going children enrolled in school by 2015.

Table 15: Easiness/difficulty in complying with UPE policy

Policy items	Easiness/Difficulty average rating (Very easy: 1- Very difficult: 5)	Description (Reasons)
(a) Fee abolition	1.0	Full compliance due to Capitation grants
(b) Age entry into school	2.0	Relaxed due to 2015 target
(c) Automatic promotion	2.0	Sometimes promoting non-performing children is difficult
(d) Handling UPE grant	2.5	Heads are not implementing rules about it

In both urban and rural areas, children enter primary school a year or more later than age 6, the standard entry age as stipulated by the UPE policy. Over-aged children attending school is therefore an issue not only in rural schools but in urban schools as well. If the strict entrance age policy will not be relaxed, it is likely that many children will be turned away from school, which would result in failure to achieve the goal of UPE. Both Directors said on average it was moderately easy to comply with the handling of UPE grant. However, one of them said that the heads of the schools were not implementing well the rules for the handling of the UPE grant.

In Table 16, both DDEs interviewed said that the UPE policy could have been implemented differently. One of the DDEs suggested that the district should be made to release UPE funds whenever the schools need them and that if the money is deposited at the district it will solve the problem of shortage and delay in the release of funds that currently face schools. The other director shared this view.

Table 16: Suggested alternative policy options

District	Number of district officials who responded in each to the following question: Could UPE policy have been implemented differently? (N=2)	
	Yes	No
Cape Coast Municipality	1	0
Mfantseman District	1	0
Suggested policy options		
Cape Coast Municipality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Let district release the funds when schools need them - Deposit the money at the district. The delay and shortage of funds will be minimized that way 	
Mfantseman District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Delivering the resources directly to the schools 	

3.4.2 School level

Head teachers

In Table 17, only one head teacher indicated that the current policy is good and well implemented. Sixty percent of head teachers in the Cape Coast Municipality and the Municipal Director of Education stated that the current policy is good but not well implemented.

Table 17: Head teachers' perception of UPE policy

Perception on UPE policy	In Number of personnel answered in each item	
	Cape Coast	Mfantseman
(1) The current policy is good and well implemented	0	1
(2) The current policy is good but not well implemented	7	5
(3) The current policy has problems but well implemented	0	0
(4) The current policy has problems and not well implemented	3	4

Twenty percent of head teachers in the Mfantseman District shared similar opinion with their colleagues in the Cape Coast Municipality, whilst 15% of head teachers expressed a different opinion. They stated that the current policy has problems and not well implemented. Twenty percent of head teachers in the Mfantseman District also stated that the current policy had problems and not well implemented.

Table 18 shows that generally, head teachers in the Cape Coast Municipality perceived the compliance with the UPE policy easier than their counterparts in the Mfantseman District.

The policy of fee abolition in the perception of head teachers in the Cape Coast Municipality was easier to comply with, compared to other aspects of the UPE policy. The policy of automatic promotion was rated as moderately difficult.

In the case of the head teachers in the Mfantseman District, it was rather the handling of UPE grant which was easy, with automatic promotion being the most difficult. In both districts, complying with the policy of automatic promotion seems to be difficult for head teachers to comply with. The main reasons for this difficulty given by the head teachers centred on the performance of pupils. The policy indicates that irrespective of the performance of pupils they should be promoted provided they had attended school 60% of the time. This, in the view of head teachers, is unacceptable as it would affect the performance of the pupils in the final certificate examination and hence their schools' standing on the academic league table. Head teachers have therefore been repeating pupils with the permission of their parents and guardians, and sometimes the pupils themselves contrary to the policy. Sometimes parents and guardians disagree with head teachers' decision to repeat their wards hence the difficulty.

Table 18: Head teachers' perception of easiness/difficulty in complying with UPE policy by school

Policy items	Easiness/Difficulty average rating (Very easy: 1-Very difficult: 5) by head teachers (N=10) Cape Coast District	Easiness/Difficulty average rating (Very easy: 1-Very difficult: 5) by head teachers (N=10) Mfantseman District	Description (Reasons)
(a) Fee abolition	2.0	3.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some parents are willing to help since the money is insufficient but government says the schools are not allowed to collect money from parents Parents should know that they should not pay anything Every school needs funds apart from UPE grant for school development Parents think with the UPE policy, they should not provide anything for their ward's education
(b) Age entry into school	2.6	3.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In rural areas, children do not start school early enough Because of the entry age policy, it is difficult placing pupils aged above six years We are admitting pupils who more than six years We add a pupil to class one who are more than six years Difficult to turn parents away Some children need to repeat the same grade for their own good If children want to learn, there is no reason for denying them It is difficult to admit pupils who are more than six years Some children develop faster physically and mentally before six years old (need to admit some early age entry) Some children are over grown Parents disagree In rural areas, the pupils age sometimes do not correspond with their maturity Difficulty turning away children who want to enter school because of entry age policy
(c) Automatic promotion	2.8	4.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sometimes necessary due to very low pupils performance If you promote students automatically, some children with low academic performance would suffer as he or she moves higher on the academic ladder When the child is not performing we can't promote him or her It will affect the child's performance at final exams Some time the pupil is not ready for the next grade Parents have to agree first to promote their children to the next grade Pupils who are not academically good should be made to repeat so that they study better and pass BECE Children don't perform at the same rate of mental development Work output becomes difficult and reflects poor performance Because of the lack of parental care, they don't come to school hence fall behind in their studies
(d) Handling UPE grant	2.5	1.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It involves a lot of documentation which waste a lot of administrative time Problem meeting all specification of budget for the school Troubles caused by the requirement to fill the numerous forms; accounting by items Grant should not overwhelmingly controlled by GES
(e) Other components	2.0	2.4	Parents have developed a misconception that government is to provide everything after the introduction of UPE policy

In Table 19, 90% of head teachers interviewed in the Cape Coast Municipality said the UPE policy could have been implemented differently. They suggested options such as payment of fees by parents, whilst the government bear the cost of textbooks, uniforms and other items which form the greater proportion of the cost of education.

Table 19: Head teachers' suggested alternative policy options

District	Number of teachers who responded in each to the following question: Could UPE policy have been implemented differently? (N=20)	
	Yes(head teachers)	No
Cape Coast municipality	9	1
Mfantseman District	9	1
Suggested policy options		
Cape Coast municipality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fees could have been paid by parents, so that books, uniforms etc which form the greater cost of education could have been borne by the government. Financial administration could have been made less bureaucratic by making the funds be lodged in the school so that external auditors come to audit on regular basis. Money should be ready before/ immediately school re-opens. Everything that has to do with education must come before school re-opens (notebooks, chalkboard etc) Necessary amount of funds should have been assessed accurately, so that parents can make up for the difference. Regarding teaching & learning materials: typing of questions and running them; textbooks should be supplied adequately every year.. 	
Mfantseman District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education and re-orientation of all stakeholders about the policy. Capitation grants could have started with lower primary so that the grant per child could be increased The grant should be provided in two tranches instead of three The grant should be remitted to the school's own account directly without passing through the district office. Need to publicise the policy - component, requirements and implementation- more thoroughly and widely 	

Others said financial administration could have been made less bureaucratic by making the funds available at the school level so that external auditors audit the accounts on regular basis. In the Mfantseman District, 45% of head teachers interviewed also said the UPE policy could have been implemented differently. Thirty percent of head teachers indicated that the capitation grant policy could have started with lower primary school level so that the grant per child could be increased. The need for more sensitization about the policy before its implementation was also suggested.

Teachers' perception

Fee abolition

In Table 20, a large part of teachers interviewed said that it was moderately easy for head teachers to comply with the fee abolition aspect of the UPE policy. However, 25% of teachers who said it was difficult to comply with the aspect of fee abolition said the funds were not enough to run schools. Fifty percent of teachers indicated that parents think everything about their children's education is free because of the abolition of school fees. Thirty percent of teacher said parents were not supporting their wards' education because of the fee abolition under UPE policy.

Age entry into school

Generally, teachers felt it was easy to comply with the standard entry age policy into school under the UPE policy. Teachers who said it was difficult to comply with the policy gave reasons such as some pupils are older than their age; some pupils do not know their date of birth etc.

Automatic promotion

Table 20 shows that many teachers interviewed said it was difficult for them to comply with the automatic promotion aspect of the UPE policy. About 43.0% of teachers said some pupils are weak academically hence it would not be advisable to promote them. Others (25.0%) said the standard of education would be lowered if this aspect of the policy is enforced fully. Others gave different reasons as outlined in Table 20. Similar concerns about automatic promotion were expressed by head teachers in both districts too.

Handling UPE grant

Table 20 shows that generally, teachers perceive that it was moderately easy for head teachers to comply with the handling of UPE grant.

Table 20: Teachers' perception of easiness/difficulty in complying with the UPE policy

Policy items	Easiness/Difficulty average rating (1-5) by teachers (N=40)	Description (Reasons)
(a) Fee abolition	2.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There will not be enough funds to run the programme• Pupils in the villages may be forced to pay by the heads despite the fee abolition policy.• Parents think everything is free because of abolition of fees.• Parents are not supporting their wards' education.
(b) Age entry into school	2.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some pupils are older than the standard entry age.• Any age group is accepted at school in reality.• Some pupils don't know their date of birth.• Everybody is given the chance of attending schools whether started from kindergarten or not.
(c) Automatic promotion	3.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some pupils are academically weak• When you promote academically weak students, they cannot cope with the next grade.• The standard of education will be lowered.• If the child is not ready for promotion, it makes teaching and learning difficult for the teacher.• Pupils have different cognitive ability.
(d) Handling UPE grant	3.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teachers do not know when the grant comes and the amount.• Needs of schools are higher than the grant given• The school has to comply with strict rules in managing the grant.

From Table 21, one can see that 63.0% out of the 40 teachers interviewed, said the current policy was good but not well implemented. About 30% of teachers said that the current policy is good and well implemented. However, only 10% of teachers thought the policy has problems by design.

Table 21: Teachers' perception on UPE policy

Perception on UPE policy	Number of teachers answered in each item	
	Head teacher (N=20)	Teacher (N=40)
(1) The current policy is good and well implemented	1	11
(2) The current policy is good but not well implemented	12	25
(3) The current policy has problems but well implemented	4	2
(4) The current policy has problems and not well implemented	3	2

Parents and SMC members

Many parents and SMC members rated all the aspects of the UPE policy as good and average rating ranging from 1.6-1.8 with the exception of the aspect on automatic promotion which was rated bad. In Table 22, the average rating by parents and SMC members of the abolition of school fees under the UPE policy is pretty good (1.7). However, those who said it was very bad argued that it had made parents reluctant to contribute to their children's education. Others felt that the cost of education is still the same since the cost of books borne by parents is higher than the school fees which was abolished.

About one-third of parents and SMC members stated that if the child is not performing well academically, he/she should not be promoted to the next grade. It seems complying with the aspect of automatic promotion under the UPE policy of is most difficult for all stakeholders.

Table 22: Parents' perception of UPE policy

Policy items	Average rating (1=Very good to 5=Very bad)	Description (Reasons)
(a) Abolition of school fee	1.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We pay more for books than for fees The cost of education is still the same because I pay more for books It makes parents reluctant to contribute to their ward's education Fee abolition is not the most important need of parents concerning education.
(b) Provision of textbooks	1.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The textbooks are not enough; Government should supply all writing materials. We do not receive the books from the school Not every child has textbooks
(c) Construction of classrooms	1.6	
(d) The right age entry into school	1.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is not every child who would be matured at that age Early maturity and late maturity must be taken into account it will waste the time of clever children The child may be too old It will help pupils to complete school early especially the academically weak ones
(e) Automatic promotion	4.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> if the child is not performing well, he/she should not be promoted to the next grade if the child is repeated he or she would feel ashamed, and so he will learn hard The child needs to know what is taught at each level before he or she moves to the next level If you send an academically weak child to the next grade, she or he can't learn the more difficult things Some pupils are slow learners and if they are repeated it will help them academically
(f) Parental contribution in provision of labour, lunch, and uniform	1.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government should take care of every cost absolutely. Not all the parents have the resources to provide children with necessary things for their education. Lack of funds to contribute.

Parents and SMCs' perception of schooling

From Table 23, one can see that 78.3% of parents and SMC members interviewed said it was very important to send the boy-child to school. About 79.2% of parents and SMC members said it was important to send the girl-child to school. Parents and SMC members' perception of schooling for both the boy-child and the girl-child was therefore very positive. In Table 23, 83.3% of all the parents and SMC members claimed that they would send their boy-child to school even if the school would have charged fees, whilst 96.7% of parents interviewed said they would send their girl child to school if they were charged school fees. Only 3.3% of parents and SMC members said they would not send the girl child to school if they were charged school fees. One parent did not respond to this question.

Table 23: Parents and SMCs' perception on schooling

	Number of parents/SMC members who rated in the following					
	Very important	Important	Moderate	Not necessary	Don't know	Total
Schooling for boys	94	26	0	0	0	120
Schooling for girls	95	24	1	0	0	120
If school fees are charged						
	Yes	No	Total			
Sending boys to school	100	20	120			
Sending girls to school	116	3	119			

In Table 24, 79.2% of parents and SMC members interviewed said when their boys are not able to enrol in school, they would let them learn a trade or go into apprenticeship. About 7.0% of parents and SMC members said they would let the boys work in the farms if they are not able to send them to school. Two of the parents said they would let their boys go to fishing if they are not able to enrol in school. Also, 74.2% of parents and SMC members interviewed said they would let their girls learn a trade or go into

apprenticeship if they are unable to send them to school whilst 10.8% of the parents indicated that they would let their girls work in the market if they not able to send them to school.

Table 24: Perceived activities of out-of-school children

Activities	Number of parents/SMC members who selected the following item for their children's activities if they had not enrolled their children in primary school (N=239)	
	For Boys	For Girls
(1) Work in market	2	13
(2) Work in farms	8	4
(3) Household chores	3	2
(4) Take care of siblings	0	1
(5) Do nothing at home	3	3
(6) Get married	0	0
(7) Go to fishing	2	0
(8) learn a vocation/apprenticeship	96	89

Table 25 shows that 68% of parents and SMC members interviewed in the Cape Coast Municipality said the quality of education offered by the schools was good or very good. The table further shows that 40% of the 10 SMC members interviewed in the Cape Coast Municipality said the quality of education has been good after the introduction of UPE grant. However, 16% parents said the quality of education has been bad. However, in the Mfantseman District, 60% of parents and one-half of SMC members interviewed said the quality of education was good whilst 8% of parents said the quality of education was very bad.

Table 25: Parents' and SMCs' perception on quality of education

	Very good	Good	Moderate	Bad	Very bad	Total
Parents (Cape Coast)	9	25	8	8	0	50
SMC members (Cape Coast)	4	3	3	0	0	10
Parents (Mfantseman)	3	30	7	6	4	50
SMC members (Mfantseman)	1	5	3	0	1	10
Suggested measures for quality improvement						
Cape Coast Municipality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents and teachers should meet to discuss the academic progress of their children very often Teachers should take their time to explain things well to pupils Parents should provide the necessary materials for their children's education 					
Mfantseman District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children should get more reading of books to supplement the teacher's work. Children should be engaged in extra classes after school 					

Table 26 shows that in the Cape Coast Municipality, 32% of parents said the UPE policy could have been implemented differently, whilst 68% parents said the implementation was okay. Out of the 10 SMC members interviewed, 80% said the UPE policy could have been implemented differently. The table further shows that in Mfantseman District, 54% of parents and 40% of SMC members said the UPE policy could have been implemented differently.

Generally, similar views about the administrative, financial and perceptive issues cut across urban and rural areas. Therefore there is not much contrast between rural and urban schools apart from the cost of schooling which seems to be high for parents whose children attend urban schools due to transportation and feeding costs.

Table 26: Parents' and SMCs' perception of UPE policy implementation

District	Number of parents or SMC members who responded in each to the following question: Could UPE policy have been implemented differently?	
	Yes	No
Cape Coast Municipality	Parents-16 SMC-8	Parents-34 SMC-2
Mfantseman District	Parents-27 SMC-4	Parents-23 SMC-6
Suggested policy options		
Cape Coast Municipality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government should have recruited more teachers and build more schools first before implementation of the UPE policy. • The funds could have been brought to the school directly. • Fees could have been paid by parents, so that all learning materials are provided by government. • Deductions of capitation grants for sports and cultural activities should be re-considered 	
Mfantseman District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Necessary to raise awareness of parents of the content of UPE policy. E.g. Parents have to buy uniforms, books etc. • There should have been more education and sensitisation of parents on the content of the policy before implementation to prevent some opposition like paying PTA dues and other fees. • Deductions for sports and cultural activities should be re-considered • Education and re-orientation of all stakeholders about the policy 	

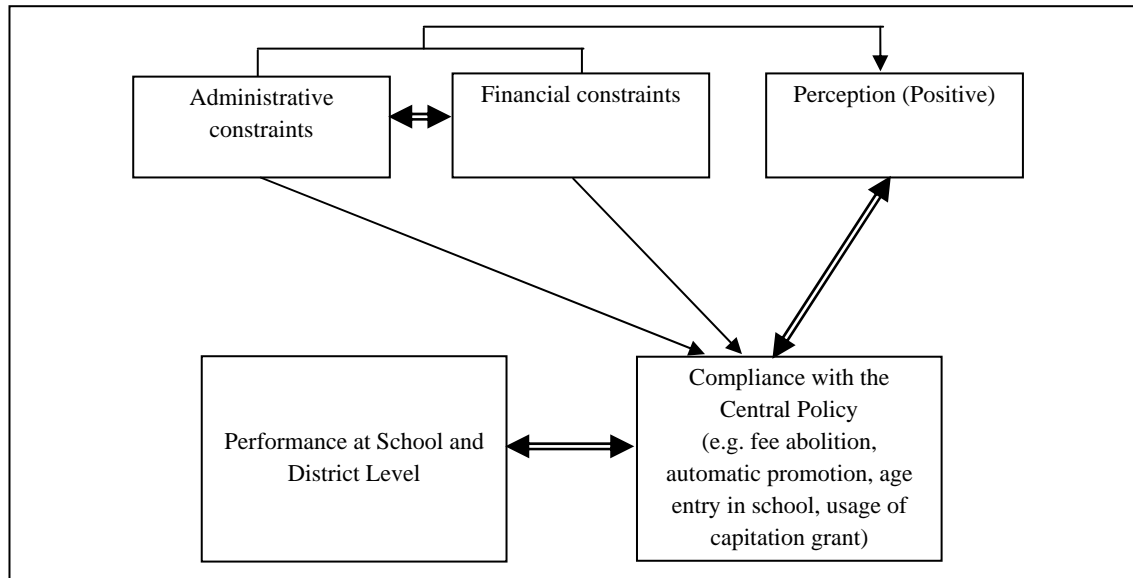
3.5 Links among Administrative, Financial and Perceptive Factors

Administrative and financial constraints have a strong link and mutual effects at both the District and school levels. Financial constraints limit administrative capacity of the districts because they do not receive all the money budgeted for. This leads to re-prioritisation of items on their agenda for the year. Usually, money allocated for workshops and teaching and learning materials, monitoring and evaluation which are funded from the districts are adversely affected. At the school level, the amount of capitation grant they receive is inadequately small and the fact that they are not released on time results in schools not being able to organise school-based INSETs, purchase adequate TLMs, and organise type-written end-of-term examinations for pupils in all three terms. In most schools interviewed, two of the end-of-term examinations are written on the chalkboard. This, for example, results in limiting or eliminating the use of multiple choice questions, the number of questions teachers can set, and the copying of long passages on the chalkboard in the case of English comprehension. This is likely to affect adversely the performance of pupils. The delay or insufficiency of capitation grant therefore limits the capacity of the schools to fully utilise the capitation grant to promote UPE policy adequately.

The study did not find much in terms of lack of administrative constraints on its own at both the district and school levels which may result in inadequate management of local resources for primary education, with the exception of the role of SMCs. The role of the SMCs seems not to be properly defined or not acceptable to head teachers. This creates a bottleneck in the administration of schools. In some cases, the school heads simply work with the SMC chairman to make decisions without consultation with the whole committee. Some head teachers were therefore performing some of the functions designated for SMCs but they thought were not to be performed by SMCs. However, the malfunctioning of the SMCs did not seem to be affecting the schools adversely. It may mean that schools have been run without SMCs traditionally and there is not much room for SMCs to play their role.

The overall perception of parents and SMC members of the UPE policy was however, positive and did not reflect the administrative and financial constraints stated. Financial constraints can similarly affect performance at the school level as well as local compliance with the central policy. All the issues outline above cut across rural and urban schools. The links among the various factors outlined in Figure 1 do not differ between rural and urban schools.

Figure 1. Conceptual map of showing relationship among administrative, financial, perception, compliance and performance



4.0 Conclusion and the Way Forward

The study shows that in Ghana, most educational planning is done at the national level and only implementation was devolved at the district level. Also, the fact that the administrative issues at the district level are the responsibility of three agencies, namely, the central government, district education office and the district assemblies makes coordination difficult. When there are any lapses from any of the three agencies, the administration of UPE suffers. Issues such as construction and rehabilitation of schools, provision of textbooks and provision of other scholastic materials are not under the mandate of the District Director of Education. These are challenges faced by head teachers but have no immediate solutions from the DEOs. This suggests that decentralisation is yet to be fully realised.

Even though all the schools had SMCs, their roles and responsibilities seems not to be clear or acceptable to most head teachers. It is not surprising that SMCs were rated generally as not functioning very well by both head teachers and DDEs. Given that SMCs are to play a key role in producing SPIPs which outline key actions of the school to improve school management, school environment, effective teaching and learning etc., the lack of appreciation of SMCs and their ineffectiveness in discharging their responsibilities is a huge gap in drive to achieve UPE in Ghana.

The cost of schooling includes cost of uniform, transportation to school, school lunch as well as additional tuition (for tutorials) for children. The cost of each of the items is several times higher than the amount of money government pay per child as capitation grant. The abolition of fees amounting only to 30,000 per child can therefore not be equated to fee-free education: parents spend more on the education of their children in the form of direct and indirect costs. The delay in releasing capitation grant to schools creates a huge gap between expectation and performance in the financial management of schools. This could adversely affect teaching and learning and the performance of schools.

Even though the general perception of the UPE policy is positive, the policy of automatic promotion seems to be difficult for head teachers and teachers to comply with. The main reasons for this difficulty center on the performance of pupils. The policy indicates that irrespective of the performance of pupils they should be promoted, provided they had attended school 60% of the time. Schools have, in reality, been repeating pupils with poor academic performance when their parents and guardians and sometimes the pupils themselves permit to do so, contrary to the policy. Sometimes parents and guardians disagree with schools' decision to repeat their wards, which could cause conflict. The various gaps identified in

the implementation of the UPE policy need to be addressed to make the achievement of the policy objectives feasible within the stipulated time.

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Chapter 3. The Case of Kenya

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1.0 Introduction

Achieving Universal Primary Education (UPE) has received considerable attention since the early 1950s. The concept of universal education is, however, not well defined and is used to mean many different things to different people. For instance, universal primary education is used as being synonymous for:

- The capacity within a network of primary schools to provide spaces for all school-age children;
- The mandatory attendance of all school-age children for a stipulated period, which entails enacting a compulsory attendance law; making schools pleasant, attractive, rewarding and inspiring as well as solving family labour and financial problems resulting from the absence of children from home;
- Universal literacy, with instruction available to anyone irrespective of age, regularity of attendance, etc;
- UNESCO generally accepts the definition of universal primary education as the enrolment of all children aged 6-11 years plus 10 percent additional capacity to allow for repetition (Omari 1983).

The purposes and aims for universal primary education are many and varied, though they can be generally categorized into three, namely: human rights, equity, and socio-economic development. First, the right to education in developing countries receives its inspiration and platform from the 1948 United Nations General Assembly, which adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Article 26 of the declaration propounds the right to education as follows: *“Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory...”*. There have been more recent international instruments which call for increased access to education for all children; and among the key ones are the International Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989 and the Dakar Framework for Action adopted in 2000. Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children is one important commitment made in the framework. A strong emphasis on girls’ education is one of its overriding features. It is hoped that by 2015, all children, including girls as well as children in difficult circumstances and from ethnic minorities will have access to completely free and compulsory primary education of good quality (UNESCO 2000).

Second, the economic motives for universal primary education are tied to the fact that primary education increases economic development, and hence, it is central to any long term strategy for economic, social and political modernization. Recognising disparities in educational access within communities, planners in many developing countries have embarked on various strategies for expanding access and increasing school participation. Widening access to education has been a major policy goal in most countries for the past several decades. This has reflected a broad recognition that education is essential to economic and social development. There is overwhelming evidence that education improves health and productivity and the poorest people are said to benefit most. When schools open their doors to the wider society, the benefits multiply and indeed, failing to invest adequately in educating larger sections of the society can reduce the potential benefits of education for the elite. This failure contributes to a high cost in lost opportunities to productivity, to increase income and improve the quality of life (Hill and King, 1993).

This chapter attempts to review the expansion of primary education in Kenya following the achievement of independence in 1963, some policies in the 1990s which contributed to decline in enrolments and quality of primary education prompting the free primary education intervention, the challenges of implementation based on the case study of Kisumu and Butere Districts.

2.0 Expansion of Primary Education and Decline in Enrolments and Quality

The independent government of Kenya, in tandem with the international opinion of the time and the demands of human resource development chose to place the main emphasis on the expansion of higher levels of education and focus on trying to gear higher education to the manpower needs of the modern sector of economic life, while at the same time providing facilities for a slower, but steady increase in primary school enrolment. On the whole, efforts were made to avoid its rapid expansion. Although the enrolments did rise, the rate of increase over the period 1964 to 1969 was only 20 percent; from 1,010,899 in 1964 to 1,209,670 in 1969. The Development Plan 1970-1974 aimed to increase primary school enrolments to 1,833,000, thus planning to cover 75 percent of the primary school age population in 1974 (Republic of Kenya 1969).

Following the December 1973 presidential decree, to provide free primary education in the first four grades, in January 1974, the Ministry of Education had to reorganize its priorities and areas of operation in order to cope with the staggering rise of pupil enrolment. Enrolment in standard I classes rose by a million above the estimated figure of around 400,000. The total enrolment figure for standards I-IV children increased from 1.8 million in 1973 to nearly 2.8 million in January 1974 (Muhoro 1975). Despite this rise, it was estimated that another one to two million children of primary school age were still not attending school in 1974. It was, however, estimated that each year an additional 400,000 to 500,000 would enroll in school. According to this estimate, the enrolment in primary schools would reach 4 million by 1980.

In 1977, the government abolished all forms of school levies in all public primary schools in the country. In 1979 another politically loaded pronouncement was made. This time the government introduced a free milk programme for primary school children. These pronouncements were meant to popularize President Moi's new government following the death of Jomo Kenyatta, the first president of the country. These two measures increased primary school enrolment from 2,994,849 in 1978 to 3,698,246 in 1979. This was an increase of 23.5 percent (Abagi, 1997).

An important policy implementation which had a very serious implication on access and quality of primary education was the World Bank/IMF Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs). The World Bank, through the International Development Agency (IDA) from the late 1980s began assisting the Kenyan government to implement the Structural Adjustment Programme. This was done through the Education Sector Adjustment Credit System (EDSAC). The principle objective of the EDSAC (1990-1991 to 1995-96) was the implementation of the Sessional Paper No. 6 of 1988. Among other things, EDSAC recommended the reduction of the growth rate of the education recurrent budget to sustainable levels (Government of Kenya and UNICEF 1992). In an attempt to reduce the substantial expenditure on education, the government shifted this expenditure to the beneficiaries by introducing the cost-sharing policies in 1988. This policy called upon parents and the school communities to finance capital development and the recurrent expenditure of public primary and secondary education. The government's main responsibility was the payment of teachers' salaries.

This policy greatly contributed to the decline in public expenditure on education, especially at the primary school level. Currency devaluations had the effect of raising the prices of all imported education supplies, including, paper for textbooks. As a result of the SAPs, public expenditure per primary school pupil in Kenya was estimated to have declined by about 40 percent and continued to decline with the increasing economic crisis (World Bank 1989). Increasingly, warning bells were being sounded with regard to the declining Gross Enrolment Rates (GERs). This was despite the steady rise in the Net Enrolment Rates (NERs). According to the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) records, primary education participation reached an all time high of 95 percent in 1989, and thereafter it started a gradual decline in the participation rate, reaching 79 percent in 1995 (National Council for NGOs, 1997). By the turn of the century it had dropped to around 72 percent. It also needs to be mentioned that the decline in the GER also coincided with the rapid expansion of the public universities as the Kenyan government seemed to concentrate more expenditure to that sector in comparison to primary and secondary education.

The provision of textbooks also went under a very severe strain. Although there were many school textbooks on the market, schools generally had a problem of securing the necessary funds to purchase them. In both rural and urban districts, communities through the parent-teacher associations (PTAs) were positive in supporting their schools. However, this did not seem to have worked out effectively. Where harambee (self-help) fund raising meetings were organized, they were generally not able to generate sufficient money needed to build the necessary infrastructure and purchase text books (Sifuna 1997). A World Bank supported survey of primary school facilities expressed alarm at the shortage of teaching and learning materials. An evaluation of school materials completed in 1990 had shown that textbooks and laboratories were in short supply in the education system, especially at the primary and secondary school levels (Government of Kenya and UNICEF 1998). The cost-sharing policy also continued to exert immense pressure on parents as it was their key responsibility to purchase their pupils' and teachers' books. Since under the 8-4-4 education system introduced in 1985, all subjects were examinable (except physical education) and schools usually demanded that parents purchase all the required books. The majority of the parents, especially in the rural areas often found it difficult to purchase such books because of the high costs. One survey estimated that about 4.2 million primary school children were in need of textbooks. The cost of such books was estimated to be around Kshs. 3,960.6 million. However, only 3 percent of this amount was provided (Abagi and Odipo 1997).

3.0 Study Approach

3.1 Study Objectives and Research Questions

The main objective of the study was to review overall national policies and implementation strategies that would enable a comparative analysis of the efforts that have been undertaken in the four countries of Kenya, Uganda, Malawi and Ghana to implement Free Primary Education (FPE) intervention to achieve Universal Primary Education (UPE). The emergent implementation and the way stakeholders perceived FPE had a direct implication on how successful the efforts to provide education to all children would be achieved. The study therefore focused on the extent to which district offices were able to carry out their roles in support of the FPE intervention, the extent to which schools were organized to support and comply with the FPE policies, the finances available at the district and school levels to support the FPE intervention, external support available, and the perceptions of the community on policies, cost and quality of education under FPE.

The study was guided by the following research questions:

- What were the overall national policies and strategies in the implementation of FPE in Kenya?
- What were the administrative strategies and constraints in the implementation of the provision of primary schooling under the FPE policy in the sample districts?
- What were the financial strategies and constraints in the implementation of the FPE policy?
- How did parents and communities perceive the current status of primary education under FPE?
- What are alternative policy strategies in the implementation and sustainability of FPE?
- What are the possible links among administrative issues, financial issues, stakeholders' perceptions, school performance and the actual implementation of FPE?
- How are the links different in urban and rural areas?

3.2 Study Methodology

The study adopted two main approaches in the collection of data. The first was a documentary review of literature on the developments within primary education since the achievement of independence in 1963, with a particular focus on the FPE intervention of 1973 and strategies in the launching of the FPE in 2003 and future strategies.

The second was a participatory data collection approach in the two districts of Kisumu which was in an urban setting in the Nyanza Province and Butere which was in the Western Province. This research strategy provided for considerable and unsolicited inputs in the research process from the district, school administration and the community. Whereas the study was primarily quantitative, utilizing structured questionnaires, researchers held some open ended follow-up discussions with most respondents from each district and school visited. These discussions were guided by questions that served as probes for some of the issues raised in the structured questionnaire and as such, they constituted a kind of interview guide. Where there was more than one member of the SMC, the researchers talked to both of them together in a focus group discussion. In both districts, the researchers visited 16 schools, that is, 6 from Kisumu district and 10 from Butere district (5 in Butere division and 5 from Khwisero division). The sample was as follows:

Officers in District Education Office	11
Head Teachers	16
Teachers	32
School Management Committee (SMC) members	29
Parents	23

Questions for the follow-up discussions were developed from the major issues of administration and financing of FPE and general perceptions of the respondents of the FPE policy/programme. The respondents were also asked/probed for their own suggestions of how issues related to the FPE policy could be addressed/improved.

4.0 The Launching of the Free Primary Education (FPE) Intervention

During the 2002 general elections, the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) party, among its election manifesto was to provide free primary education. Following its victory, on January 6, 2003 the Minister of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) launched Free Primary Education (FPE) to fulfill the election pledge. Fees and levies for tuition in primary education were abolished as the government and development partners were to meet the cost of basic teaching and learning materials, wages for critical non-teaching staff and co-curricula activities. The government and development partners were to pay Kenya shillings (Kshs.) 1,020 for each primary child in that year. The FPE did not require parents and communities to build new schools, but they were to refurbish and use existing facilities such as community and religious buildings (MoEST 2003).

In terms of funding, expenditure on education as a percentage of the total government expenditure rose from 16.5 percent in 2000/01 to 20.1 percent in 2003/04. Likewise as a percentage of the GDP, it rose from 6.1 percent in 2000/01 to 7.1 percent in 2003/04. This was one of the highest allocations to education in Africa. Education also absorbed between 35-40 percent of the government recurrent budget annually of which the primary education sub-sector absorbed 51 percent (Oxfam and ANCEFA 2004). Of the Kshs. 79.4 billion allocated in 2003/4, the government had disbursed about 5.6 billion to the 18,000 primary schools by the end of 2003. By the end of 2004, it had released a total of Kshs. 16 billion. Of this amount, each school received a capitation grant of Kshs. 1020 (\$13) per child to cover the cost of teaching and learning materials, wages for support staff, repairs, maintenance and quality assurance. The government released an additional of Kshs. 300 million for administration and monitoring the progress of implementation.

Donors provided a big chunk of funding for free primary education. Total external support amounted to Kshs. 4.5 billion of which the major donors were the World Bank Kshs. 3.5 billion, the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) Kshs. 0.47 billion, the Canadian International Agency (CIDA) Kshs. 0.48. Other donors who significantly contributed towards free primary education included UN, ADB, DFID, JICA, USAID, UNICEF, UNESCO and several other well-wishers (Oxfam and ANCEFA 2004).

Following the adoption of the FPE, the MoEST held a consultative meeting with various stakeholders and set up a task force to identify the immediate needs for the implementation of FPE. The task force

discussed issues pertaining to curriculum implementation, the management of the high enrolments, the needs of disadvantaged groups and the human, financial and physical resource implications. Subsequently, the MoEST came up with several policy options to guide the UPE implementation and generally revitalize a national education sector. The key policy options included: establishing a national education advisory board that would be responsible for advising the minister on a regular basis on policies and strategies on UPE implementation. The taskforce also recommended the review of the Education Act; strengthening the inspectorate and giving it the capacity and resources to assess, monitor and advise on the implementation of FPE programmes; sensitizing parents and communities about their roles in implementing the new programme (UNESCO 2005). A media unit was established for the sole purpose of communicating free primary education intentions more clearly as the government proceeded to publish and disseminate the Free Primary Education Guidelines. Many observers, however, believed that this was merely a public relations exercise and no meaningful communication regarding free primary education actually took place.

There is little doubt that Universal Primary Education has made a significant difference in the lives of millions of children and parents in the country, especially for many disadvantaged groups of children who would have missed education due to its high costs. Despite fiscal constraints, the government has created substantial resources in support of free primary education programme, while in the overall context, the education sector continued to enjoy the lion's share of government funding. The government has provided strong leadership and commitment for implementation of UPE compared to previous regimes. The government allocated a total of Kshs. 79 billion to education in 2003 representing a 17.4 percent increase (Bruns, et al, 2003).

Although the new launching of UPE in Kenya in 2003 received strong acclaim by many stakeholders, it was unfortunate that the experiences from the earlier attempts to introduce free primary education did not seem to inform the new efforts of implementing the plan in the country. It is clear that political expediency seemed to have superseded the need for sound analysis and assessment of needs, leading to inadequate preparation, consultation, planning, budgeting and a smooth implementation. Consequently, when the UPE programme was launched in January 2003, the ensuing commotion as primary schools opened under the new arrangements was exacerbated by a shortage of personnel at the district and provincial levels (Oxfam and ANCEFA 2004.). Due to a lack of clear guidelines, including an admission criterion on UPE implementation, the first weeks of its introduction were pretty chaotic as hundreds of thousands of children across the country flocked to primary schools seeking admission. Children of all ages sought enrolment and the result was that in some schools, the populations more than doubled.

5.0 Administrative, Financial and Policy Issues in Implementing UPE in Sample Districts

5.1 Roles and Responsibilities

5.1.1 District level

The district level education officers discussed with included the district quality assurance and standards officers (QASOs), administrators at the district education office and the staffing officers. The main roles identified are:

- To ensure effective utilization of FPE funds through monitoring, evaluation, and inspection.
- Ensure up to date statistics (on enrolment, FPE disbursements and auditing, staffing etc).
- As a way of preparing/assisting district education officers in the implementation of FPE initiative, they were provided with the following materials:
- A National module for training officers at a national level,
- A module for TAC tutors on managing FPE

Table 1: Roles and responsibilities in education

	Roles	Person/institution in charge	Observed Challenges
(a)	The overall education planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DEB • DEO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balancing resources with needs • Inaccurate statistics • Difficult to plan with less money • Policy/politics conflict
(b)	Budgeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DEB • DEO • DQASO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amount given is often less due to low enrolment • Inadequate knowledge/skills • Insufficient funding • Unforeseen calamities/disasters
(c)	Monitoring of schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DEO • QASO • DQASO • Officers in/out DEO's office 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District allocation too small • Inadequate QASOs • Lack of adequate manpower (QASO)
(d)	Evaluation of schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DEO • Heads association • QASO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All schools not at same level • Inadequate funding • Inadequate staff
(e)	Development of teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DEO • Staffing officer • TSC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate funds • Inadequate human recourse to meet rising demands • Remoteness of some schools • Some schools are in hardship areas
(f)	Administration of in-service teacher training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DQASO • TAC tutors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to insufficient funds • Inadequate facilities
(g)	Construction and rehabilitation of schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PTAs • SMCs • Parents • MOE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effects of flood and poverty • Inadequate funding
(h)	Provision of textbooks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DEO • MOE • Parents • School administration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate funding
(i)	Provision of other scholastic materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D/DEO • DQASO • MOE • Parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate funding
(j)	Others		NA

Although at the district level, officers mentioned a number of roles they undertake in the implementation of FPE, the study was particularly interested in the monitoring and evaluation of the programme. The researchers sought the respondents' perceptions on the nature of the monitoring and evaluation that is currently in place. It was noted that monitoring and evaluation happens at three levels:

- Zonal level – TAC tutor Mentors
- District and provincial level – where QASO, Audit, TSC and administrative wings are represented. This monitoring and evaluation was said to sometimes coincide with inspection. The head teachers appeared to concur that monitoring and evaluation has been adequately taking place, especially with the onset of FPE. This was well captured by one of the head teacher respondents in the statement below:

I think monitoring and evaluation is done and done effectively because the SMC monitors the head teacher, the auditors at the district level regularly check on the head teachers and there is a seasonal inspection by the district, provincial and divisional level teams to ascertain the returns by the head teacher.

Head teacher, Butere District.

At the national level, the MoE following the launching of the FPE, tried to put into place some monitoring and evaluation mechanisms of the intervention. In response to the initial implementation problems, the Minister convened an urgent meeting in Nairobi in January 2003, which was attended by its officials, the private sector and civil society groups. The meeting attempted to provide guidelines to the implementers and also started to address the most pressing obstacles hindering the implementation of the policy. The meeting set up a taskforce that was mandated to review the situation and advise the ministry on what should be done to implement the policy effectively. The Ministry also sent out its officers to all districts to review the situation on the ground and collect data to inform the implementation process.

To support the FPE initiative, UNESCO was asked by the Ministry to finance and carry out an assessment study to collect much needed data on the initial experiences in the implementation of the policy. A research team was established late in 2003, carried out the study and produced its report in March 2005. The overall aim of the study was to document the experiences of the first year of implementing FPE and use them to address the emerging challenges. The specific objectives of the assessment study were as follows:

- Establish how different stakeholders (teachers, parents and pupils) understood the FPE policy and identify their various sources of information about the policy;
- Establish how the policy had been implemented in schools and capture the initial experiences of the stakeholders;
- Assess the immediate outcomes of the policy in terms of transfers (from private to public or vice versa), change in enrolments, class size, use of existing school resources and others;
- Identify specific resources (money, books and other teaching and learning materials) that schools had received through FPE;
- Establish the perceptions of different stakeholders on the new policy in regard to quality, efficiency, discipline and sustainability;
- Take stock of the challenges, achievements and existing implementation that should be addressed to strengthen the FPE policy; and
- Document the lessons learnt in the first year after implementation of FPE in Kenya.

The team's Assessment Report was, however, not used by the Ministry to shape its policy on FPE.

On the roles of district education officers in the implementation of FPE, the officers were very positive about their contribution although head teachers as well as the teachers had a number of things to say about they considered to bad management styles. It was noted that the education officers have a duty to visit schools frequently to assist teachers and not to harass or victimize them. Their duty should be to see how the FPE is being implemented and to address any problems that may arise. They should be advising teachers on new and emerging challenges that need to be tackled. Many head teachers and teachers were however, unhappy with education officers because they were said to have become more of "fault-finders" than professional advisers. It was argued that when FPE was introduced, their jobs were always being threatened if the programme did not take off well. Teachers said that education officers intimidated them very much and that was quite demoralizing. Instead of being supportive and offering them new ideas, for example, on dealing with large classes and congestion in classrooms, education officers were quite negative and unsympathetic about the situation. Education officers were therefore called upon to change their approach to their duties, visit and inspect schools regularly so that they can familiarize themselves with the prevailing problems. They should deliver information from education authorities to the schools and teachers. They should also hold meetings with teachers to understand the conditions under which they work. They should understand the problems and environment in which teachers work and treat teachers with dignity instead of unnecessarily criticizing them. They also need to broaden their scope of work, do more inspection and dialogue with teachers on how to improve the quality of education under the FPE initiative.

Table 2: The tasks and capacity of the district

	District A (N=4)*	District B (N=7)*
Gaps between tasks and capacity	Yes/No 3/1	Yes/No 5/2
Areas in which gaps exist	Lack of budget to pursue the given tasks Insufficient number of staff Low moral of some officers in charge	Lack of understanding of tasks Lack of training for district officers Insufficient number of staff Low moral of some officers in charge
Cited possible intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruit more officers • Induct all officers on IT • Provide officers with computers • Harnessing recourses so that they are sufficient for the needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular capacity building programmes • Adequate staff to be deployed • Improve terms/conditions of service

*In the subsequent tables District A will refer to Kisumu, while B will refer to Butere.

As the above table indicates, the capacity to carry out a number of functions at the district level is limited due to being understaffed, poor terms and conditions of service and lack of adequate resources for the officers to adequately delegate their duties effectively. Apart from lack of adequate staff, the problem of transportation seems to be common even in Kisumu District which is partly urban. From the district quality assurance officers to the zonal officers, they all lack adequate means of transport to enable them to visit schools on a regular basis.

5.1.2 School level

Before discussing the specific roles and responsibilities at the school level, an attempt was made to gauge the sources of information and understanding of the FPE. The study found that both head teachers, SMC members and parents were first informed about FPE through the media during the 2002 general election campaigns. They heard about it on the radio, television and through daily newspapers. In a more limited way, teachers reported learning about FPE from education officers and circulars from the Ministry of Education. Some mentioned learning about it from fellow teachers, parents and local administrative leaders, chief's *barazas* (meetings), church leaders, community leaders and NGOs. On the whole however, it was through the media that teachers and parents obtained information. What seemed to have lacked since then is sustained and comprehensive communication strategy on the programme. Following the 2003 initial euphoria and the media publicity of the time, little has been officially said about FPE. Although some attempts were made by the MoE after the introduction of FPE to inform schools through circulars, this was not sustained.

The consequence of lack of sustained information about FPE are many including that there is considerable confusion over its meaning and the roles other stakeholders are expected to play. From the outset, both parents and teachers perceived FPE as a system whereby children go to school and learn without paying or buying anything as the government provides all facilities and teaching and learning resources required by schools as well as their maintenance. The FPE policy is still perceived as 'a way of relieving parents of their heavy financial burden.' This is largely because the information is quite vague on the roles and responsibilities of the different stakeholders. With parents' burden assumed by the government, parents can now cater for other needs of their children, such as uniforms, although some believe this should be the responsibility of the government as well. FPE is perceived to be '*a system where the government takes over the responsibility for the provision of education. It provides everything for school-going children.*' In other words, well over five years since the programme was introduced, parents and others are still figuring out what FPE is all about. They however, do know that the government disburses grants to schools for teaching and learning materials.

In the discussions held with various stakeholders at the school level, the researchers sought to establish the different levels at which in-service training existed for the various stakeholders in education. First and foremost, they acknowledged to have received the following materials on the implementation of FPE:

- A head teacher module basically on managing change and special needs,
- A guidance and counseling teachers' module (mainly for strengthening counseling to replace the cane).

The training was aimed at bringing all the schools on board regarding FPE. In Butere District, for instance, from each school, senior teachers (one from lower primary and one from upper primary), one parent and the head teacher were selected for the training in financial management. The main content of training for these levels (especially the head teachers) was financial management, procurement procedures, record keeping and data management.

Whereas the majority of the respondents agreed that the in-service training was necessary, they however, appeared to indicate that the training, especially for teachers and the SMC members, was not adequately internalized. This is clearly expressed in the views below:

It was a crash programme. The government wanted to see things kick off since this was political. However, there is more to be done. For example, not many teachers understood the accounting procedures properly and also, many of those teachers who were in serviced have retired. There is need for the in-service to be on going.

Head teacher, Kisumu District

Most of the SMC respondents noted that they had been trained once for a maximum of 5 days on bookkeeping. For that reason, they appeared to feel inadequate in the very aspects in which they had been trained. They therefore recommended that the training be yearly and cover new and emerging issues on FPE. According to one member:

Yes, in 2003, we were trained for 1 week and in 2005, we were trained for two weeks on basic accounting procedures. This training was not adequate since it was short, yet the documents relating to finance e.g. balance sheets are very difficult to understand in such a sort while. It should be done more regularly or else the government should at least hire one clerk per base (4 – 5 schools).

SMC member, Kisumu District.

Given the increasing needs of these accounting skills on the part of head teachers, some NGOs such as PLAN International have moved in to give remedial training for head teachers and SMC members. The head teachers also raised concerns over the circumstances under which they were trained. The main concern on the in service training was about the short time allocated for the financial management component, which to them, requires more time. The trainers for teachers for instance tended to dwell on general management and curriculum supervision, yet there is need to emphasize on financial management and accounting procedures. There was also concern with the training conditions as reflected in the following:

Sometimes when we go for training, we are exposed to very poor conditions and services such as paying Kshs. 6,000.00 from our own resources, then sit for exams yet there is neither a certificate nor some elevation or promotion.

Head Teacher, Butere District

Table 3: Roles and responsibilities of head teachers (N=16)

Roles and responsibilities	Numbers of head teachers who rated the task as the most difficult	Description of reasons for being the most difficult to observe
(1) supervise other teachers	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cunningness and truancy by teachers • Few teachers compared to increased enrolments • Head teacher is basically a teacher like others • No specialization in primary • Over enrolment • Teachers know their rights • Teachers can sometimes be uncooperative • Higher workload coupled with understaffing
(2) managing SMC	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative attitudes of SMC members • SMC members do not know their roles and responsibilities well • Lack of commitment • Negligence of SMC members • Politicizing and misunderstanding the FPE policy • Some SMC members do not know the value of education
(3) collect fees from students	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government is perceived to be providing everything • Parents are not willing to contribute in any way because of FPE • Poverty level are relatively high
(4) deciding usage of UPE grant	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Already determined by vote heads • The funds are often inadequate • Lack of adequate accounting knowledge and skills
(5) deployment of part time staff	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to get response from adverts • No funds to pay them • Parents are not ready to support • Parents are unwilling to assist because of FPE
(6) request for school construction or rehabilitation	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long procedures involved (bureaucracy) • The funds solicited are not enough • Requests for funding are rarely honored
(7) communication with parents	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ignore their responsibilities • Poor attendance of school meetings unless pupils send to call them
(8) sending teachers to in-service training	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate funds to cater for the training • Some teachers are uncooperative
(9) other (Accounting for FPE funds)	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of adequate accounting skills

The head teachers outlined the following roles as those that they play in the context of the FPE policy.

- Ensure effective implementation of the FPE policy/program.
- Sensitize the school and community on the FPE policy (teachers, parents and pupils). This is because of the great misunderstanding of the policy that was witnessed at its inception and which is still inherent in the community. This sensitization is on their respective roles in FPE.
- Ensure quality education despite the high pupil turn-up in schools due to FPE.
- Solicit resources for supplementation of the shortfalls in the FPE budget. For example, at Rabour Primary School in Kisumu District, the head teacher, through friends and some understanding parents (a result of sensitization on the part of parents), has managed to put up 3 classrooms and a water borehole.
- Encouraging the already frustrated teachers due to the ever-increasing numbers of pupils without a commensurate increase in the workforce and poor terms of service and working environment for the teachers.
- The accounting officer of the FPE funds, secretary of the school instructional material selection committee.
- Managing FPE funds by planning and budgeting for the FPE disbursements.
- Advice SMC on the various vote heads.
- Making the necessary follow-ups incase of dropouts e.g. by way of organizing for guidance and counseling for children to enhance retention.
- Supervise curriculum implementation.

Generally, head teachers and teachers viewed head teachers' role to be one of ensuring the smooth running of school activities. In this regard, head teachers have played a key role in the implementation of FPE. They admitted new pupils in accordance with the government's policy on free education and have implemented such policies in an open and transparent manner and managed the funds according to the prescribed guidelines. Head teachers have played a big role in enlightening teachers and parents on FPE issues. They kept staff informed on FPE funds, budgeted and ensured the purchase and delivery of the various FPE materials in consultation with teachers. Head teachers are required to manage the finances and keep accounts of all materials bought and distributed to the pupils. They also supervise teachers, discipline pupils and attend to parents and other visitors. However, as a result of increased responsibilities due to FPE, head teachers no longer have adequate time for their teaching assignments. On the other hand, owing to teacher shortages, they are expected to be full-time teachers in addition to their school administration duties. It is apparent that many are finding it difficult to balance their administrative and teaching roles. Consequently, this affects their performance in class as many spend more time on school management than teaching. They also spend a lot of time out of school attending meetings instead of teaching. It is proposed that head teachers need to be given enough support staff such as accounts clerks to assist in banking matters.

Therefore throughout these discussions with the head teachers on their roles, it was noted that there is a common feeling on the part of the head teachers that their role had expanded and still does so uncontrollably. This is because despite the roles mentioned above, they are still counted as classroom teachers in terms of staffing. In this arrangement, the staffing criteria provide for only one teacher per stream (including the head teacher). The head teachers therefore feel that they shoulder the heaviest responsibility under FPE, which to some extent leads to conflict of roles. One of the head teachers in Kisumu district vividly captured this in his observation: *"We cannot even breathe. The government has to make a decision whether we are managers or classroom teachers"*.

Table 4: Roles, responsibilities and the current status of SMC

Actual function of SMC	Numbers of schools/district officials that chose the item as roles and responsibilities of SMC		The status of SMC's function (the average rating between 1=very active and 5=not functioning)	
	District officials (N=11)	School head teachers and teachers (N=16)	District officials (N=11)	School head teachers and teachers (N=16)
Roles and Responsibilities of SMC				
(1) To plan school activities	5	16	2	2
(2) To decide the ways of spending UPE/FPE grant	3	15	2	1
(3) To audit school finance	1	8	2	1
(4) To employ part-time staff	3	16	3	3
(5) Others (maintain school traditions, networking with other stakeholders, sourcing funds)	0	3	0	1

Parents/ School Management Committee (SMC) members are comprised of the parents or SMC members. Sometimes, some respondents doubled up both as parents and as SMC members. The following are the roles they pointed out on their part in the context of FPE policy.

- Spreading awareness to parents and the entire community on the policy of FPE particularly stressing on the role of the parents as stakeholders in FPE. This includes informing them on the aspects that are either under funded or not funded at all.
- Ensure equal access to education between boys and girls by way of sensitizing the community on the benefits of education.
- Ensure good learning environment including learning facilities such as classrooms, desks, and others
- Enhance implementation of FPE.
- Ensure effective management of FPE funds.

Table 5: Reasons for SMC not functioning

Reasons for not functioning	Numbers of district officials who cited the following reason (N=11)	Numbers of school teachers who cited the following reason (N=32)
(a) Confusion on their roles under UPE/FPE policy	3	13
(b) Misunderstanding that the government is responsible for everything under UPE/FPE policy	4	14
(c) Lack of interest in education	0	11
(d) Difficulty in attending meetings because of work	3	12
(e) Lack of leadership of the head teacher	1	0
(f) Others (please specify)	0	0

As much as the above roles were singled out as being performed by the school management committees, during our discussions we had the impression that school committees seem to feel that under the FPE, they have been rendered “inactive.” Some members of the committees are only involved in the signing of bank documents and not much involved in actual decision-making. The FPE intervention seems to have made committees irrelevant in school management. In the past, SMCs used to collect levies from parents, planned, used and accounted for it. This is no longer the case as the funds now come straight from the government and goes straight into the school accounts, where head teachers are the only accounting officers. Some heads tend to abuse the use of these funds including paying out pocket allowances for school committees to attend school meetings. Many school committee members no longer visit schools or participate in school development activities without some kind of financial incentive..

Most of the school committee meetings that currently take place are the book committees, when teachers and some committee members meet to select books and make decisions on the numbers to be bought depending on pupils’ enrolment and available funding. In this regard, under the FPE while the chairman and the treasurer of the SMCs are generally active, other school committee members are dormant. In the same regard SMC members are also categorical in that parents too play a minimal role in the implementation of FPE. This is because parents expect the government to provide everything, including textbooks, other teaching and learning materials as well as examination fees. They are no longer supportive and are not interested in participating in school activities or attending school meetings. Some even expect the government to provide their children with school uniforms, including shoes and lunches. FPE seems to have made them so irresponsible that they are not willing to buy their children book bags and even replace lost pens, books and other materials. They perceive their main role as one of ensuring their children attend school since they perceive that everything is ‘free’ and do not want to be involved in the school operations anymore. They are generally unhappy with the fact that they still provide uniforms, food and even continue to provide health care for their children. In some schools, they have continued to provide support like employing teachers or paying teachers some extra money to motivate them to do extra tutoring.

There is a general feeling that school management committees have an important role in the implementation of FPE. They can create greater awareness in the community about the FPE initiative. Through parents’ and other related meetings, the communities can be enlightened on the importance of education in general and the need for sustaining FPE. The SMCs should serve as the link between parents and teachers and its members are encouraged to volunteer to work without expecting inducements in the form of allowances. The committees should assist the school administration in management and problem-solving. The committees could assist in identifying children who are out of school and encourage them to attend as well as soliciting funds for school improvements. The committee should also monitor the performance of teachers and pupils as well as being informed about the FPE capitation and its expenditure. The SMCs should take responsibility of school development and the overall implementation of FPE in general. More importantly, the SMCs need to sensitize parents and communities to understand that FPE is not meant to provide ‘everything free.’ They need to cooperate and assist in their children’s education. Parents need to be involved in providing material support in putting up physical facilities as well as providing the necessary teaching and learning materials especially when there is a delay in the provision of capitation funds by the government.

During the discussions, there was the general impression that most of the financial accounting details have been left to the head teacher, while the parents have been pushed to the periphery. This has brought about pockets of mistrust between the parents and the head teachers. At the same time, the SMC members also noted that the policy has not been well understood by the parents and so it becomes very hard to convince the parents to supplement any of those aspects of schooling that are under funded or not funded at all. To the parents, schooling is 'free' in the sense of them not having to come in at all and so any shortfall is purely attributed to the misappropriation of funds by head teachers.

Table 6: The tasks and capacity of schools

	District A (Kisumu) (N=4)	District B (Butere) (N=11)
Gaps between tasks and capacity (Number of school teachers who rated yes or no)	Yes/No 4/0	Yes/No 7/4
Areas in which gaps exist	Lack of understanding of tasks Lack of training for teachers Lack of budgets to pursue the given tasks Insufficient number of teachers Low moral of some teachers	Lack of understanding of tasks Lack of budgets to pursue the given tasks Insufficient number of teachers Low moral of some teachers Lack of policy guideline from the government
Cited possible intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More training and motivation for teachers ▪ Employing more teachers ▪ In-servicing teachers with emphasis on financial management ▪ Gender staff balancing ▪ Less responsibilities for head teachers ▪ Review vote heads in line with changes in commodity prices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Employ more teachers and classrooms ▪ Improve terms of service ▪ Increase FPE funding ▪ Establish and disseminate policy guidelines

5.2 Financial Issues in Implementing UPE Policy

Before analyzing financial issues in the FPE initiative, it is important to point out that since the colonial period through independence, communities have played a leading role in co-financing primary education. A majority of schools and their physical infrastructure have been developed through community efforts. They have provided labour, building materials, money and supervision for of the physical facilities. As pointed out earlier, the introduction of SAPs in the late 1980s leading to instituting cost-sharing policies, community contribution to primary schools accounted for around 80 percent of the learning costs.

The FPE capitation grant provides among other things, the procurement of instructional materials as per the MoE guidelines. In fact, the provision of instructional materials which includes textbooks was identified as one of the major achievements of the FPE programme, especially through the reduction of the cost burden of education on the parents and thus leading to the influx of more pupils to school.

5.2.1 District level

As shown in the table below, financial implementation of FPE in Kenya does not generally involve district education officers as the capitation grant is normally paid directly into the school accounts which are administered by head teachers and some members of the SMCs.

Table 7: Financial sources of income and expenditure for primary education at the district level

	District A	District B
Source of Income and proportion (if available) for primary education		
(a) List of funds from the central government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FPE grant from the central government School Facility Grant from the central government Other conditional grant from the central government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FPE grant from the central government School Facility Grant from the central government
(b) List of funds generated at the district level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Donations from international agencies, NGO, etc. Parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Donations from international agencies, NGO, etc.
Total amount of expenditure on primary education in FY2005/6	Kshs. 247, 987, 396.00	Kshs. 131, 106, 811.00
By item	Na	Na
(a) Teacher/non-teachers salaries	Na	Na
(b) Non-salary items (goods and services)	Na	Na
(c) Construction	Na	Na
(d) Maintenance	Na	Na
(f) Others (....)	Na	Na

Although districts do not directly receive the FPE capitation grant, the officers are aware that considering the cost of running average primary schools, the money is generally inadequate. They do not receive budgets for monitoring and evaluation of primary schools. These grants were said to fluctuate a lot and are not received on time by their schools. The officers are aware of mismanagement of funds at the school level.

Table 8: List of problems facing education finance in the district

Problems description	Numbers of district officials who cited the following problems (N=11)
Delay of UPE/FPE funds	4
Fluctuation of the budget	0
Mismanagement of funds	2
Accountability of school finance	2
Problem of ghost teachers	0
Inadequate amounts of school finance	1
Insufficient budget for monitoring schools	3
Other (please specify) –Teachers lack financial management knowledge	1

5.2.2 School level

Table 9: Financial sources of income and expenditure for primary schools

	Schools in District A (N=4)	Schools in District B (N=7)
Source of Income and proportion (if available) for primary education	FPE grant and School Facility Grant from the central government, and CBOs, NGOs, FBOs, Harambees, Well Wishers, Parents	FPE grant and School Facility Grant from the central government, and CDF, NGOs
Average total amount of expenditure in FY2005/6	Kshs. 4 ,288 ,842.00	Kshs. 9 ,145 ,520.00
By item		
(a) Salary of teachers and administrative staff	246,500.00	481,272.00
(b) Scholastic material	1,231,465.00	4,450,022.00
(c) Classroom construction	1,100,000.00	406,000.00
(d) Rehabilitation/maintenance of school	541,408.00	1,383,769.00
(e) Extracurricular activities	220,546.00	456,400.00
(f) School lunch	210,000.00	0.00
(g) Other	24,278.00	794,920.00

As pointed out earlier, when FPE was launched, the MoE decided to provide a sum of Kshs. 1020 per pupil, a figure that was not guided by any form of baseline survey to establish the actual cost of primary education in the country. As a result there are likely to be more educational costs than what was estimated by the MoE. During our discussions with head teachers and teachers, there was an overwhelming view that the grant provided was totally inadequate. The aspect of adequacy was investigated at two levels. The first was the direct question of whether the funds are adequate to cater for schools' financial needs and secondly, whether all the aspects of schooling are fully covered under the FPE.

Table 10: List of problems facing education finance at school level

Problems	Number of schools that rated the item as problem (N=16)	Description See under the description of the problems
(1) Delay of UPE/FPE funds	14	
(2) Fluctuation of the budget	7	
(3) Mismanagement of funds	0	
(4) Accountability of school finance	3	
(5) Problem of ghost teachers	0	
(6) Inadequate amount of school finance	0	
(7) Inability of parents to pay fees	4	
(8) Other (...)	1	Inability of parents to pay

One point at which the thinking of all the head teacher respondents converged is the fact that the funds are not adequate. From the costing schedules, one is able to see those aspects that are funded and by how much and those that are not. Another point to note also is the fact that given the costing per pupil, the total disbursement in any of the accounts is determined by the enrolment, i.e. the higher the pupil enrolment, the higher the amount a school receives and perhaps the more likelihood to have enough to cater for those aspects for which the funds have been released. Clearly, the allocation is also skewed towards books (textbooks and exercise books) over and above other aspects, whereas such aspects like buying new facilities such as desks and even building classrooms is not catered for. The only vote-head associated with furniture is the repairs, maintenance and improvement (R.M.I) which is strictly for repairs and not for buying new facilities such as desks, despite increased enrolments.

Other areas noted as receiving largely inadequate allocations include quality assurance (school based examinations and even seminars). The position that what matters for a school's outcomes are good examination results was dominant in most of the discussions. Others include local transport and traveling (LT & T) and even electricity (especially where a school is paying for it). The vote-head for contingencies, which should include medical issues in the school, is also inadequately funded considering that in many activities, medical issues can increase, and thus exerting pressure on the vote head to depletion even before the financial year is half way complete.

Listening to the respondents talking about the adequacy of the FPE funds, there was a clear message that whereas the instructional materials' allocation may not be very badly off, the general purpose account (GPA) poses most challenges to schools. Activity and quality assurance are the most under-funded. For instance, activity is allocated Kshs. 22/= yet considering that pupils are expected to be involved in ball games, athletics drama and music all the way from the division to district to the province up to the national level, this allocation cannot be anything to go by unless a school has high enrolments. The Quality Assurance vote-head which is allocated Kshs. 14/= per pupil is supposed to cater for all seminars and all the school based examinations, which have to be regular, after all the hallmark of a good primary school, at least as per the public opinion is good examination results.

Another key issue raised regarding financing is the timeliness in the disbursement of funds. It was noted that since the launching of the programme funds are not generally disbursed on time. For example, the FPE grant disbursements were not completed on time, as most schools started receiving the funds either during the second or third term, implying that most pupils had very limited access to textbooks late in 2003 and the situation has not changed much. In the sample districts, concerning the timeliness with which FPE funds are disbursed, there was a common observation by the head teachers that the funds are never disbursed on time, thus making it difficult for planning. For instance, at the time this data was being collected (mid September 2007), head teachers in Kisumu district noted that the funds for the FY 2007/2008 had not been released and so they were only depending on borrowing in anticipation of the disbursement. Interesting to note was the case of a school in Butere district which, having missed out twice during FPE disbursements, it was only given one disbursement after complaining, as the previous grant went unaccounted for. There is also the problem of frequent changes in the curriculum which affects the procurement of textbooks. A good example was the curriculum review of 2004 in which schools had mainly to procure new textbooks for classes 1 and 5 and class 8 (which is an examination class).

On procurement procedures, some teachers proposed that to facilitate deliveries and avoid unnecessary red tape, textbooks need to be bought through an established central professional body either at the district or national level. They argued that teachers were spending a lot of teaching hours attending meetings on textbook selection. Similarly head teachers spent considerable amount of time traveling to buy books at the expense of their teaching and administration of their schools. A central professional body for book selection and procurement would, therefore, ensure that the recommended books are supplied to all schools. However, the issue requires a thorough review to identify a more sustainable and ideal textbook procurement system/procedures which do not compromise the quality of teaching and learning while eliminating the bureaucratic red tape being witnessed.

Another important issue in financing was involved with testing and examinations in schools. It was noted that since the introduction of FPE, continuous assessment tests and examinations have been done away with. Teachers no longer give frequent examinations due to lack of money to print the necessary examinations. The funds provided for examinations are very little and parents were not willing to pay for such examinations since school levies had been abolished with the introduction of FPE. Under the current arrangements, the government allocates Kshs. 5 per pupil per term, which was totally inadequate. Teachers are therefore forced to write their examinations, which is generally difficult in cases where there are many examination questions. On the whole, chalkboards are too small to contain many questions and for pupils to cope with the teachers speed of writing questions, especially if they have to keep within their scheduled times on the timetable. Pupils also lack the necessary writing materials in form of books. Head teachers and their teachers highly appreciate the fact that examinations need to be undertaken very regularly to monitor the learning progress and to increase student competitiveness. Unlike before the introduction of FPE, it is now relatively difficult for pupils to put in more effort in their work because they are not closely monitored.

It is noted that if teachers have to organize with parents to buy examination papers, they will just have to be internal ones and they cannot be used to compare one's school performance against another. Teachers proposed that there should be frequent examinations and district mock examinations to allow pupils to compete with others, but they seem to be awaiting the government to give them the required money for examinations at the school level. It was also noted that the examination registration of Kshs. 300 for the KCPE was too high for most pupils and they requested that this amount be incorporated in

the FPE grant. Some children are unable to pay the KCPE fee and therefore end up not sitting for these examinations. In the view of many parents, the continuation of the KCPE levy only proved that primary education is not free. Another important issue is that the government should allow holiday tuition to be conducted to ensure effective syllabus coverage. The ban on tuition was said to be seriously affecting the KCPE performance.

| In the light of the fact that certain strategic aspects of schooling are under-funded in FPE; schools have made certain efforts to supplement the FPE funds in the following ways:

- Donations from parents and friends forcing head teachers to heavily network with other well-wishers. A case in point is a school in Kisumu whose head teacher had managed to fix electricity through the help of a friend financier and to construct a borehole. The parents, after a great deal of sensitization, were able to also chip in and contribute towards the finishing of three classrooms that had stalled.
- Constituency Development Fund (CDF) has also come in, though not always. For the CDF, the personnel coordinate their projects by themselves, be it construction of the classrooms. Other such organizations which supplement FPE funding include; PLAN international, CARE International, ACTION AID and ICDC.
- In cases where parents have been adequately sensitized, they supplement the examination vote-head and also organize for *harambee* (self-help) functions mainly for building classes. Parents also provide school uniforms, which are not funded under FPE. Given that each pupil is provided with a maximum of six exercise books and one or two pencils for the whole year, parents certainly come in since things such as books and pencils often get lost.
- In situations of acute understaffing, head teachers in consultation with SMC/PTA employ some teachers (the so-called PTA teachers). However, in cases where the school's financial capacity is weak, teachers resort to extra teaching, even if they are not to be remunerated, to enable them cover the syllabus. Alternatively, other schools resort to what they call 'amalgamation' of the streams whereby if, for example, class 1 has a total of 150 pupils with two teachers, they are put together in one class and taught together, all in a bid to make up for the teacher shortage.

Generally, supplementing shortfalls in the FPE budget is a very difficult task. This is mainly due to the lack of adequate understanding of the FPE policy by the parents and the community at large; who hold fast onto the belief that education is free where free means 'free of all charges'. Their general attitude towards such supplementation is therefore negative. This calls for more sensitization efforts to enhance better understanding of the FPE policy.

5.3 Stakeholders' Perception of UPE Policy

5.3.1 District level

As shown in figures 5.1 and 5.2 in the two sample districts of Kisumu and Butere, school enrolments shot up following the introduction of the free primary education as was generally the case in most of the country's districts. For example in Kisumu the overall enrolment rose from around 55,000 in 2003 to 60,000 in 2006 representing a 9.1 percent increase. While there was no apparent increase in the number of boys in the district, the number of girls rose from around 28,000 to 31,000, a 10.7 percentage increase. In Butere District, the overall enrolment increase rose from 137,000 in 2003 to 157,000 in 2006 representing 14.5 percent. There was also a steep rise in boys' enrolment from 58,000 to 79,000 which was a 36.2 percent increase, while that of girls rose from 62,000 to 78,000 representing 11.4 percent increase.

With regard to the increased enrolment, especially in 2003 and 2004, education officers talked of the problem of enrolling over-aged children who constituted around 20 percent of standard one enrolments. Within such groups were children who should have been in the fourth year of secondary education or in post-secondary institutions. Such pupils were said to pose some disciplinary problems for teachers.

District education officers also talked of increased grade repetition which was estimated to have risen from around 5 to 10 percent following FPE. They however, reported a decline in the dropout rates from an estimated five to around one percent because of the provision of government grants and abolition of school levies. The education officers also appreciated that FPE had improved the pupil textbook ratio (PTR). On the average, the PTR for mathematics, English and Kiswahili was estimated to be 1:3, while science was around 1:4. Most schools were said to have achieved the desired PTR for certain lower and upper classes, especially in mathematics and English. District education officers were generally unhappy with high teacher/pupil ratios, especially for Butere which was estimated at around 1:60.

Figure 1: Kisumu District: Enrolments

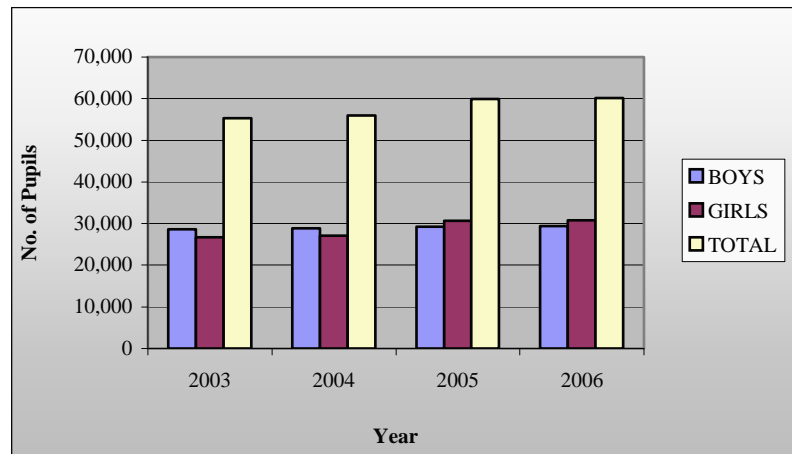
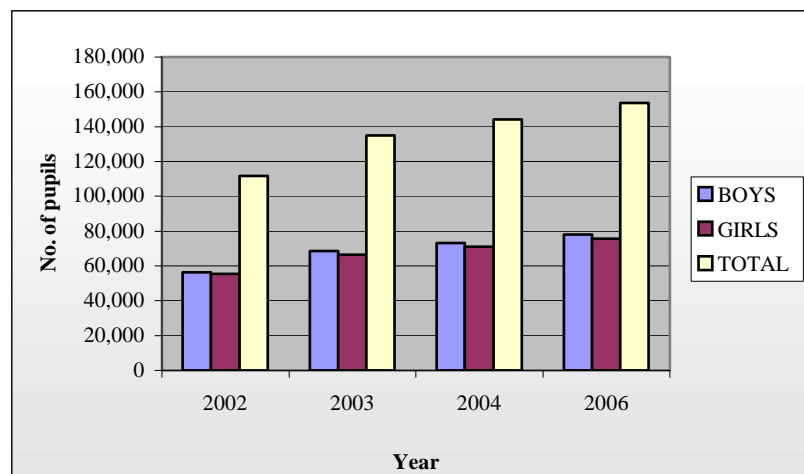


Figure 2: Butere District: Enrolments



With regard to adhering to the UPE policy, education officers were of the view that one of the major issues was one of over-aged children which has already been cited. They also mentioned problems of automatic class promotions that are perceived to affect the quality of education. Officers are of the opinion that because the capitation grant is on the whole inadequate, head teachers experience some problems in handling it.

Table 11: Easiness/difficulty in complying the UPE policy

Policy items	Easiness/Difficulty average rating (1-5) (N=11)
(a) Fee abolition	2
(b) Age entry into school	4
(c) Automatic promotion	3
(d) Handling UPE grant	3
(e) Other components	0

About general perceptions on the UPE policy, it was noted that although the policy is on the whole good, it is not well implemented. Problems of congestion in schools and lack of adequate teachers were among the key challenges in the implementation of the policy. In Kisumu district the perception was that the policy is experiencing problems, but it is generally well implemented.

Table 12: Perception on UPE policy

Perception on UPE policy	Number of personnel answered in each item	
	District A (N=4)	District B (N=7)
(1) The current policy is good and well implemented	0	3
(2) The current policy is good but not well implemented	2	3
(3) The current policy has problems but well implemented	1	1
(4) The current policy has problems and not well implemented	0	0

At the district level, there seems to be a general view that the UPE policy should have been implemented differently, especially the need for consultations with key stakeholders as well as a baseline study to establish benchmarks for a more systematic implementation, would have minimized some of the problems being experienced today. Among the major proposals to improve the implementation included setting up of an effective system of monitoring and evaluating the programme as well as tightening accountability. There is also the need to pay particular attention to orphaned and vulnerable children.

Table 13: Suggested alternative policy options

District	Number of district officials who responded in each to the following question: Could UPE policy have been implemented differently? (N=11)	
	Yes	No
District A	2	1
District B	4	3
Suggested policy options		
District A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Particularly for the OVC to be given upkeep - OVCs be put in boarding school - Tighten systems of accountability so that follow-ups are regular - Set up effective system for monitoring access to provided facilities 	
District B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Issue of inadequate teachers and resources ought to have been addressed before FPE 	

5.3.2 School level

Headteachers in the two districts were generally of the view that FPE had tremendously increased school enrolments, especially at the beginning of 2003 when the programme was launched and even continued to increase enrolments in subsequent years. These enrolments have included children from lower socio-economic backgrounds including orphans and 'chokoras' or street children. New enrolments were primarily those who had never been to school before and those who had dropped out of school due to a failure to pay school levies. The major influx was seen in the lower grades/classes one to three. There were also transfers from the private academies to public primary schools, a factor that initially led to the closure of some of the academies, mostly in the urban centers. However, a majority of the transfers into FPE schools were from poor performing public schools to well performing ones. With abolition of levies, parents also transferred their children to better performing schools near their homes. Some public boarding schools also experienced a decline in enrolments as pupils shifted to public day schools. Nonetheless, as teething problems with FPE started to show, especially by early 2004, with regard to lack of adequate teaching facilities and an increased high teacher pupil ratio, some parents began to move their children back to private and boarding schools, which were perceived to be offering high quality education and performed well in the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) examination. This marked the beginning of high dropout rates with FPE schools. FPE is also known to have brought a new phenomenon of repetition, whereby some of the pupils who had passed their KCPE well and selected to join secondary schools, but lacked the required fees opted for admission back into the upper classes, as they waited for opportunity to get fees and join secondary schools. This phenomenon also included pupils who had passed their KCPE, but not well enough to join secondary schools.

Apart from increased enrolments, teachers perceive the provision of teaching and learning materials by the government as one of the key achievements of FPE. This provision is said to have helped to improve the quality of education. Availability of teaching materials saves both teachers and pupils the time for writing and copying long notes from the chalkboards. It has also contributed to high attendance rates and reduced absenteeism. Some schools have improved the quality of their school facilities through repairs, renovations and minor constructions from the FPE grant. Other schools have been able to employ more non-teaching staff, such as watchmen and a purchase of materials for co-curricular activities that have led to the revival of sports and games.

Teachers also pointed out a number of challenges facing the implementation of FPE. These included:

- Teacher shortages, which force teachers to combine classes for a number of streams. Some schools had to introduce double shifts to cater for increased enrolments;
- A reduction in teacher motivation due to increased workloads and the scrapping of extra tuition which was a major source of income. This has contributed to a decline in the quality of education as it offered teachers opportunity to complete the syllabus and earned them some extra income to supplement their meager salaries;
- Teaching and grading for large classes is difficult as well as effective management of pupils. Teacher pupil interaction is minimal resulting in disadvantaging slow learners. There are also serious disciplinary problems with over-aged children;
- FPE has seriously undermined pre-school education as parents are unwilling to support pre-school education in the belief that education should be free from that level onwards; and
- Lack of effective school parent relationships as parents minimally participate in school activities due to government responsibility in funding all education activities.

Table 14: Teachers' perceptions on UPE policy

Perception on UPE policy	Number of teachers answered in each item	
	Head teacher (N=16)	Teacher (N=32)
(1) The current policy is good and well implemented	3	23
(2) The current policy is good but not well implemented	8	26
(3) The current policy has problems but well implemented	3	14
(4) The current policy has problems and not well implemented	1	15

The following are among the policy options:

- The FPE initiative needs to be well planned with sufficient consultation among all stakeholders. There is a need to undertake a pilot study/baseline survey to establish the actual cost of primary education and the role of different stakeholders. Most of the problems facing FPE have to do with a hurried implementation of the initiative;
- Due to the complexity in the selection, ordering and procurement of the various teaching and learning materials, there is the need to revive the *Kenya School Equipment Scheme*. The government needs to increase the current capitation per pupil which is generally considered to be very low; and
- There is a need to rationalize teacher deployment between urban and rural schools with a view to deploy more teachers to rural schools and reduce work loads for school heads or employment accountants to facilitate the efficiency of head teachers in financial matters.

Table 15: Suggested alternative policy options

District	Number of teachers who responded in each to the following question: Could UPE policy have been implemented differently? (N=32)	
	Yes	No
District A	6	4
District B	11	9
Suggested policy options		
District A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Particularly for the OVC to be given upkeep - OVCs be put in boarding school - Tighten systems of accountability so that follow-ups are regular - Set up effective system for monitoring access to provided facilities 	
District B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Issue of inadequate teachers and resources ought to have been addressed before FPE 	

5.3.3 Parents and SMC members

Like teachers, parents and SMC members discussed with acknowledge that the main achievement of FPE was that it had enabled many children access to school. Through the FPE fund, the government has reduced the cost burden to parents by abolishing school levies and providing teaching and learning materials. There is less absenteeism and drop out of pupils from school. The provision of free learning materials has attracted many children who could not previously afford to attend school, such as orphans and street children. Children are now supplied with free textbooks, exercise books, pens, rubbers, mathematical sets and teaching equipment, most of which items many parents could not previously afford. There have been some repairs of desks and buildings. Some schools have also managed to employ support staff like watchmen, thus boosting the safety and security of schools.

Table 16: Perception on the UPE policy (N=52*)

Policy items	Average rating (1=Very good to 5=Very bad)
(a) Abolition of school fee	27
(b) Provision of textbooks	29
(c) Construction of classrooms	13
(d) The right age entry into school	11
(e) Automatic promotion	23
(f) Parental contribution in provision of labor, lunch, and uniform	31
(g) Other (Provision of exercise books and other instructional materials)	5

* Parents and SMC members who participated in focus group discussions.

Parents and members of the school management committees had a very positive perception of the importance of schooling for both boys and girls. They were also of the view that if school fees were to be charged, they would send children of both genders to school.

Table 17: Perception on schooling

	Number of parents/SMC members who rated in the following					
	Very important	Important	Moderate	Not necessary	Don't know	Total
Schooling for boys	34	18	0	0	0	52
Schooling for girls	34	12	0	0	0	46
	If school fees are charged;					
	Yes	No	Total			
Sending boys to school	32	13	45			
Sending girls to school	43	9	52			

Parents and SMC members generally had stereotyped roles for their children if they would not send them to school. While most boys would likely work in the farms as would traditionally have been the case, most girls would perform household chores and take care of siblings.

Table 18: Perceived activities of out-of-school children

Activities	Number of parents/SMC members who selected the following item for their children's activities if they had not enrolled their children in primary school (N=52)	
	For Boys	For Girls
(1) Work in market	31	31
(2) Work in farms	29	31
(3) Household chores	12	35
(4) Take care of siblings	12	30
(5) Do nothing at home	11	10
(6) Get married	0	1
(7) Other (Get to streets, law breakers)	1	0

As the table below illustrates, despite FPE, it is still very expensive for an ordinary parent to send his/her child to a public primary school. It is estimated that to meet the cost of such items as uniforms, transportation, lunches, extra tuition, some levies and other costs, parents have to raise over Kshs. 10,000 per year, which is extremely high for most of them. It is partly for this reason that many children are unable to access primary education, despite the FPE intervention.

Table 19: Cost of schooling per year (N=52)

Cost of schooling	Mean	SD	Median	Minimum	Maximum	N
(a) uniform	957.50	712.62	900	0	2500	52
(b) transportation	2519.37	3557.54	00	0	9750	52
(c) school lunch	2682.50	3267.17	1500	0	9750	52
(d) scholastic materials	1887.50	4902.87	500	0	20000	52
(e) fees collected by school	483.75	1267.15	00	0	5000	52
(f) additional education (e.g. tutorial)	1991.87	4225.63	600	0	15000	52
(g) other (Harambee, Pocket money)	581.25	1363.43	0	0	4800	52
Total	11103.75	3500	19295.54	0	66800	52
Difference of costs before and after UPE policy implementation						
	Higher now than before		More or less the same		Lower now than before	
Number of parents/SMC members who respond	14		12		26	
Proportion in each response (%)	28.8		26.7		50	

The table below presents some very interesting information regarding parents and SMC members' contributions to school activities and shows the dichotomy between what is perceived and the reality on the ground. As already discussed before, with regard to parents and SMC members' roles and responsibilities, it was clear that following the modalities through which FPE was introduced, these groups of stakeholders have generally been sidelined in decision-making and in many of the school activities. As shown below, both parents and SMC members stated that they visit schools frequently, they also feel that it is very important to contribute to the running of schools; and actually contribute to sustaining the schools by way of attending school meetings, assisting in construction and rehabilitation as well as donating materials to schools. These appear to be perceptions which are not generally translated into realities on the ground.

Table 20: Contribution to school

	Number of parents/SMC members who responded to the item below:	
	Parents (N=23)	SMC Members (N=29)
Frequency to visit school:		
(1) more than once a term	13	22
(2) once a term	11	20
(3) once a year	8	10
(4) never	0	0
Importance to contribute to school:		
(1) very important	14	17
(2) important	11	15
(3) not so important	0	0
(4) not necessary	0	0
Forms of contribution to school:		
(1) attend meetings at school	14	19
(2) help construction or rehabilitation of school	13	18
(3) provide lunch for pupils	12	11
(4) pay more fees collected by the school	12	11
(5) donate some goods to school	12	13
(6) donate some money to school	13	12

Perceptions of the impact of FPE on the quality of education are generally ambiguous. While on the one hand it is accepted that the intervention through the provision of teaching and learning materials has improved the quality of learning, on the other hand there are complaints about the inadequacy of learning materials and facilities which are impacting negatively on the learning environment. For example, the provision of materials was said to have significantly improved the quality of teaching and made the covering the syllabus much easier. It was also said to have enabled teachers to give assignments and make preparations in advance for class work. Pupils were also spending more time in school since they were not being sent home to collect school levies. A number of issues identified as key challenges that seriously impact the quality of education include:

- The introduction of FPE resulted in high enrolments, but the number of teachers has remained unchanged leading to heavy workloads and hence teachers' poor performance is a major cause of decline in the quality of education. This is exacerbated by the elimination of additional tuition;
- There is the issue of congestion in classrooms, shortage of desks and lack of sufficient physical facilities to meet increased enrolments, which are the result of the inadequate grants provided that seriously undermine the quality of education;
- Lack of information from the government about FPE was also identified as serious problem that caused a lot of confusion on the expected roles of the different stakeholders. As a result of the directive abolishing school levies many development projects initiated before FPE had been stalled; and
- With the government assumption of funding all school activities, parents are no longer involved in school development programmes and this has rendered school management committees useless as they do not participate in decision-making. Most of the SMC activities are handled by the head teachers.

Table 21: Perception on quality of education

	Very good	Good	Moderate	Bad	Very bad	Total
Parents (District A)	3	2	1	2	0	10
SMC members (District A)	4	3	1	2	0	10
Parents (District B)	6	3	1	4	0	14
SMC members (District B)	3	4	3	2	0	12
Suggested measures for quality improvement						
District A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employing more teachers and support staff • Providing lunch for pupils and teachers • Ensuring SMC members understand their role • Increase RMI vote head • More facilities • Tighten discipline 					
District B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employ more teachers • Construct more classrooms/provision of laboratories/library/games facilities • Electricity supply to schools • Increase teachers' salary • Increase parents' participation in FPE • Tighten discipline • Create vote head for lunch • More support for orphans • Gender sensitivity in teacher employment • Sensitization of parents on need for high standards • More pupil participation through prefect election 					

In terms of policy options parents and SMC members made the following key proposals, among others:

- School committees have a role to play in increasing the effectiveness of FPE through sensitizing parents and the community. Through meetings, parents and the community could be sensitized on the importance of education and the need for sustaining FPE and ensuring that SMC serve as a link between parents and the community;
- School committees need to take a more proactive approach in helping teachers to mobilize parents to send their children to school and contribute towards school activities. In particular the committees could help in identifying children who are out of school and encourage them to attend as well as assisting the school administration in management and problem-solving;
- To safeguard the integrity of FPE, the government will need to urgently address the role of stakeholders in the implementation of the initiative, as the FPE as is currently being implemented has made parents reluctant to provide money for construction, maintenance and repairs in school because of the perception that education is 'free;'
- Just like teachers, parents felt that the government should allow holiday tuition to be conducted together with morning and evening preps to ensure effective syllabus coverage. Tuition ban was said to be adversely affecting the performance of class/standard eight pupils in their KCPE examination; and

There should be regular inspection to inspire and not to discourage teacher performance, provide support to teachers to improve the quality of teaching. In this regard, the government should ensure that education officers inspect schools and support teachers to improve the quality of their teaching and not harass and victimize them.

Table 22: Perception on UPE policy options

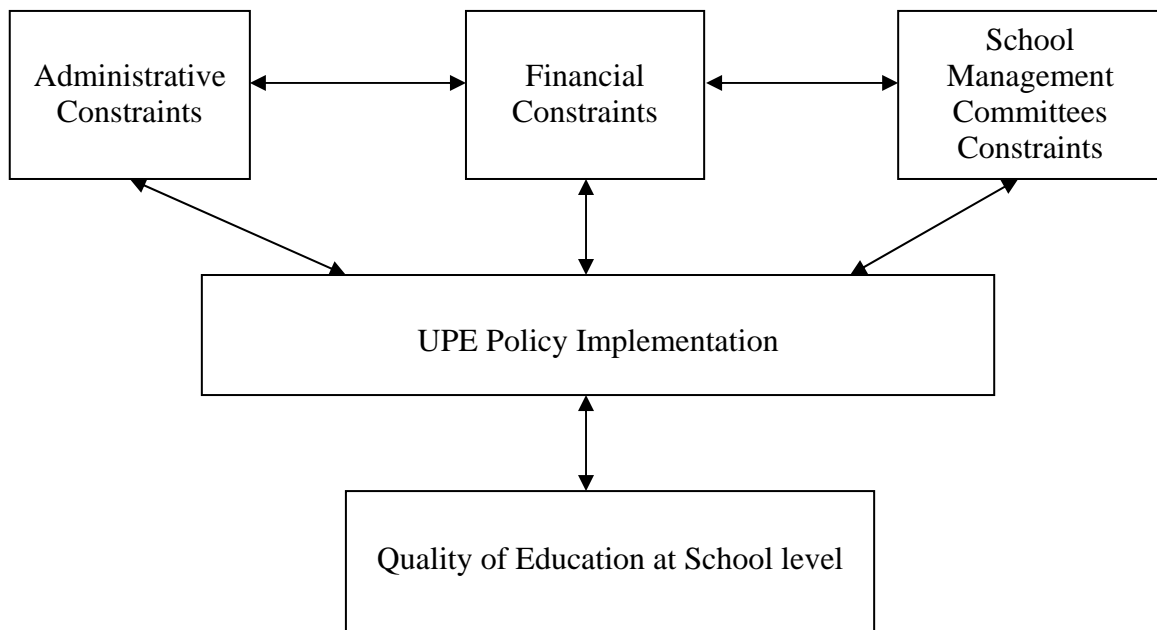
District	Number of parents or SMC members who responded in each to the following question: Could UPE policy have been implemented differently? (N=52)	
	Yes	No
District A	11	9
District B	17	5
Suggested policy options		
District A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More funds for classroom construction and provision of lunch • Government to employ more teachers 	
District B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having separate classes for older children • Basing on learners' ability • Address teachers' staffing • Improve teaching-learning facilities • Carry out needs assessment first to avoid current teacher-pupil imbalance 	

5.4 Links among Administrative, Financial and Perceptive Factors

Administrative and financial constraints have a strong link and mutual effect at both the district and school levels. Financial constraints limit the administrative capacity of the districts to effectively carry out the monitoring and evaluation of FPE implementation, especially by the quality assurance and standards officers. This partly contributes to some cases of misuse of public funds and the provision of poor quality education. Money allocated for monitoring and evaluation at the district level generally reflects under-funding and adversely affects the capability of officers to marshal sufficient resources to regularly visit schools in situations of increased enrolments and overcrowding. At the school level, inadequate money comes from the capitation grant and the fact that it is not released on time results in schools not being able to purchase adequate teaching and learning materials in good time and adversely affects the quality of education and hence the performance of pupils in school and national examinations. The lack of finance or delay in the release of the capitation grant and its inadequacy is therefore limiting the capacity of the schools to fully and adequately implement the UPE policy.

The study established that the introduction of FPE seriously undermined the role of parents and SMC members in the decision-making and their role and responsibilities in supporting schools to provide adequate school facilities and teaching and learning materials, as this is perceived to be the key responsibility of the government which embarked on providing free primary education without adequate consultation with the main stakeholders. The role of the SMCs seems not to be properly defined and hence head teachers tend to largely work with only a few members of these committees. This creates a bottleneck in the administration of schools. In some cases, the schools simply work with the SMC chairman in taking decisions. Some head teachers were therefore performing some of those functions they thought were not to be performed by SMCs. The poor functioning of the SMCs seems to be adversely affecting the implementation of FPE in general and management of primary schools in particular. The low participation of parents and SMC members seems to create mutual mistrust and poor relationships between schools, especially between teachers and the community. Financial constraints which arise due to shortfalls in the capitation do affect performance at the school level as well as the implementation of the UPE policy. All the issues outlined above cut across rural and urban schools and are schematically shown in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3: Conceptual relationship between administrative and financial issues



6.0 Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

There is little doubt that Universal Primary Education has made a significant difference in the lives of millions of children and parents in Kenya, especially for many disadvantaged groups of children who would have missed education due to the high costs. Despite fiscal constraints, the government has provided substantial resources in support of the free primary education programme, while in the overall context, the education sector continues to enjoy the lion's share of government funding.

This study set out to assess the way FPE has been implemented and perceptions on how the policy could be implemented and improved in future. There is a general consensus that the FPE intervention was a major milestone in the country's education system as it opened opportunities for disadvantaged who would have missed the chance to access education. The programme is quite popular and has motivated children to learn as well as teachers to teach more effectively. Pupils are provided with the necessary learning materials and since they are no longer sent away to collect school levies, they attend school more regularly. As for parents who have for long carried the heavy responsibility of paying numerous levies that locked out their children from school, this has been a big relief which has enabled them to attend to other necessary needs of their children.

However, the implementation of UPE faces a number of challenges. Among the key challenges is the lack of a clear policy which clarifies the roles of different stakeholders. For example, while parents and communities are willing to continue supporting schools by providing physical facilities, their roles and level of involvement in school activities have not been clearly defined. Parents and members of the school management committees feel that the implementation of FPE has seriously marginalized them from most school activities. Another key challenge to implementation, especially at the district level is the lack of funds that enable district officers to monitor and evaluate the programme on the ground. In situations in which officers get the opportunity to visit schools, teachers complain of harassment instead of assisting them to tackle the numerous problems which they experience.

Among other major challenges of implementation are financial issues. As already pointed out, at the time of launching of the FPE, the MoE decided to provide a sum of Kshs. 1020 per pupil, a figure that was not guided by any form of baseline survey to establish the actual cost of primary education in the country. As a result there are likely to be more educational costs than what was estimated by the MoE. During our discussions with head teachers and teachers, there is an overwhelming view that that the grant provided is totally inadequate. There is also the issue of timeliness when funds are never disbursed on time, thus making it difficult for planning. The allocation is also skewed towards books (textbooks and exercise books) over and above other aspects whereas such aspects like buying new facilities such as desks and even building of classrooms is not catered for. Head teachers also cited issues pertaining to inadequate training of head teachers in financial management which contributes to poor control of funds, the failure to involve school management committees in the implementation of free primary education programme which has not only caused bad feelings between them and school heads, but has also led to misunderstandings about the purpose of the free primary education. Consequently, school management committees tend to resist efforts to raise extra funds to meet the shortfalls in the capitation fund.

The intervention also faces serious challenges in maintaining quality in primary education. These include increased pupil population, shortage of teachers, expanded roles that overtax head teachers, admission of over-aged pupils leading to indiscipline, and lack of the necessary infrastructure.

At the end of the discussions with the various respondents, the following recommendations were summarized from the discussions, as steps towards strengthening FPE implementation. The recommendations are generally classified into two main categories, the national and school levels:

6.1 National Level

- The Ministry of Education should develop a FPE policy that clearly defines FPE as well as designing an effective communication strategy to create awareness about the FPE policy, what it entails and how it has to be implemented.
- The Ministry of Education should provide clear policy guidelines on how parents and communities should provide the necessary physical facilities like classrooms, latrines, desks, water tanks and others.
- The MoE should develop a comprehensive ECD policy which should cover the various components and support the sector through FPE as well as support by local authorities, communities and parents.
- FPE funding should also embrace feeding programmes, a suggestion that was thought to be a positive move towards reducing dropout rates. FPE funds should be disbursed in good time to afford the headteachers ample time to plan and budget well. Allocations should take into consideration the regional differences.
- The costing as done per child/pupil appears to favour only those schools with higher enrolments and as such, the government may need to consider either giving a starting flat rate (say each school to be first, entitled to a flat figure of Kshs. 30,000.00 and thereafter, proceed with allocations based on enrolment).
- The admission policy of allowing over-aged entry into the mainstream classes and those drawing from the various social-economic backgrounds such as house girls, smokers and others needs to be reviewed with a view of creating bridging classes for such pupils.
- The government should hire more teachers with respect to the rising enrolments since it had been observed that where there are enough teachers and they are committed to their work, performance has had to improve. Beyond hiring more teachers, the government needs to implement all the packages of teachers' salary since many of them feel overworked and discouraged. There is also a need to carry out a thorough staff balancing exercise to ensure that all schools have enough teachers.

- The government needs to strengthen the capacity of the district education officers, especially quality assurance and standards officers to enable them effectively carry out monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of FPE.

6.2 School Level

- Teachers should be taken through in-service courses to train them on new ways of instilling discipline without use of corporal punishment.
- Headteachers, teachers and school committees should be trained on book-keeping, accounting and general procurement procedures.

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Chapter 4. The Case of Malawi

Joseph Chimombo, Demis Kunje, and Keiichi Ogawa

1.0 Introduction

Human development is partly a matter of people and communities improving their own lives and taking greater control of their destinies. Education is broadly used as an instrument for this social change. Education is thus an end in itself, a human right and a vital part of the capacity of individuals to lead lives they value. It gives people the skills they need to improve their own lives and help transform their societies. Education therefore is an indispensable element in the development process of any country. There are many salient motives for universal education. Education provides the necessary human capital required to undertake a broad spectrum of activities through equipping individuals with useful knowledge and skills vital in enhancing productivity. Removing enormous disparities in educational access and inclusion is therefore important because it gives children of the school going age group an opportunity to eliminate insecurity manifested through illiteracy and innumeracy among other forms. No wonder that the international community (through the various declarations) has turned to education as a tool for ensuring that human capital is developed to enable people to fully and meaningfully participate in the socio-economic development of countries.

The critical point of such belief can be traced far back to the 1960s when Theodore Schultz systematically articulated the human capital theory of development. In his voluminously printed works, Schultz argued that population quality and knowledge constitute the principal determinants of the future welfare of mankind (Schultz 1961). Adding to this argument, Harbison and Hanushek (1992) contended that a country which is unable to develop the skills and knowledge of its people and to utilize them effectively in the national economy will be unable to develop anything else. And according to Psacharopoulos (1985:5), education is widely regarded as the route to economic prosperity, the key to scientific and technological advancement, the means to combat unemployment, the foundation of social equity, and the spread of political socialization and cultural vitality. One can also make up an intricate argument in that educating all the children provides stratification costs to oneself and one's children since only in this way will one protect one's own rights. Equalizing the welfare of the individual in society is therefore an important modern desideratum.

It was at the back of these rationales that African, Asian and Latin American governments expressed their intentions for Universal Primary Education (UPE) in the early 1960s with the great conferences in Addis Ababa, Santiago, and Karachi. The 35 Ministers of Education of the African member states of the United Nations (UN) met in Addis Ababa in 1961, (UNESCO 1961:5) and reviewed the educational situation in Africa. They observed that:

Today, for the African states as a whole, only 16 percent of the children of school age are enrolled in school. The situation varies from state to state, ranging from less than two percent of the school age population in school in several states to nearly 60 percent in others. In majority of the cases, the proportion of children out of school exceeds 80 percent. Progress must be made in the years ahead if the educational programs in African countries are to make their proper and full contribution to the social and economic development of African states.

The advocates of UPE contend that mass education will result in an increased supply of educated human power, accelerated economic growth, more social justice, reduced regional disparities, and improved social welfare. At any rate, all children will have an equal start in life regardless of sex, socio-economic background, or geographical location (Coombs, 1985:70). No wonder that as governments strived to reduce poverty and improve the lives of their people, they looked to education as the vehicle for achieving these objectives (MG, 1995). The UPE movement was rekindled by the recent Jomtien and Dakar Education For All (EFA) conferences of 1990 and 2000 respectively. At the end of the Dakar conference, delegates seriously declared:

The international community acknowledges that many countries currently lack the resources to achieve education for all within an acceptable time-frame. New financial resources, preferably in the form of grants and concessional assistance, must therefore be mobilised by bilateral and

multilateral funding agencies, including the World Bank and regional development banks, and the private sector. We affirm that no countries seriously committed to education for all will be thwarted in their achievement of this goal by a lack of resources (World Education Forum, 2000: 9).

It is hoped that by 2015, all children, including girls as well as children in difficult circumstances and from ethnic minorities will have access to completely free and compulsory primary education of good quality (UNESCO 2000). This study was undertaken to assess the progress made by Malawi towards the achievement of this goal- the Universal Primary Education (UPE) goal.

2.0 Overall Background of Malawi toward UPE

2.1 Context of the UPE Reform in Malawi

The Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS), which is the guiding document for the government, recognise this critical role of education. On primary education, the MGDS aim to equip students with basic know-how and skills to enable them to function as competent and productive citizens in a free society. The medium term expected outcomes on this goal are: reduced absenteeism, increased net enrolment, reduced dropout and improved learning outcomes. It can be seen then that the Government of Malawi attaches great importance and emphasis to the various tenets of basic education offered to its citizens. In response to the recommendations made at both the Jomtien (1990) (Thailand) and Dakar (2000) (Senegal) global conferences on Education for All, the government has attempted to implement policies that have enhanced the attainment of UPE. The key Government socio-economic development policy documents include the Policy and Investment Framework (PIF), Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), Vision 2020, National Gender Policy, National Policy on Early Childhood Development and Local Government Reform Programme. Further, a National Education Strategic Plan (NESP) is also in the process of being finalized. Government further recognises the importance of national cooperation in successful implementation of the EFA and NESP programmes. But what progress has been made in achieving the UPE? This is the question that this paper tries to answer.

UPE in Malawi had been on the political agenda since the 1960s before Malawi became independent but was only actively pursued in the 1990s. In 1994, a new United Democratic Front (UDF) government came into power following the first democratic elections and embarked on an ambitious programme of educational reform and immediately declared free primary education (FPE). This declaration was in line with international trends in which major lending institutions (such as the World Bank) and donors shifted their priorities from secondary and tertiary to primary education. In the run-up to the 1994 general elections the Malawi Congress Party (MCP), which was then in government, and its major contender, the UDF, used free primary education (FPE) as a campaign strategy to win the elections. Both parties regarded FPE as the main strategy for achieving UPE. While the MCP's 1993 manifesto promised gradual implementation of FPE, the UDF's manifesto was silent about the mode of implementation but immediately after winning the elections in May 1994, the UDF declared full-scale FPE. In this major policy intervention, the fees abolished included tuition, school fund/extra fees and textbook contributions. In some cases, it also meant the abolition of telephone and water fees. A uniform no longer became a requirement for attending school (MoE, 1996). The FPE policy also merged into one category assisted (those under the responsibility of local education authorities at the district level) and unassisted schools (those established by local communities). The central government with the support of other sectors, assumed the responsibility of financing all these schools (MoE, 1995). There were a number of factors motivating the UDF to introduce FPE such as increasing access to primary education, eliminating inequalities in enrolments and building up a strong socio-economic base within society. In fact the UDF considered primary education as critical to its overall policy of poverty alleviation. Education was here seen as central to sustainable poverty reduction through economic growth with equity (World Bank, 1995). The major assumption was that by improving access to and quality of primary education, the policy would, *ceteris paribus*, contribute to poverty reduction.

FPE was introduced at the time when the economic outlook of the country was not favourable. In 1994, the year FPE was introduced, Malawi experienced negative economic growth with real gross domestic product (GDP) declining by 12.4 per cent owing to a severe drought and the effects of suspension of

development aid by donors because of the human rights violations by the MCP government. The economy also experienced major macroeconomic disturbances characterised by rising inflation, lower revenues, foreign exchange depreciation as a result of the flotation of the Malawi kwacha, a growing budget deficit and expenditure overruns.

Because the policy of FPE arose from a political agenda and because there was no systematic analysis of the education sector undertaken beforehand, implementation became a major challenge for the Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MoEST). The ministry had only four months from the time FPE was announced in May 1994 to plan and implement FPE in readiness for the new school year in September 1994. The MoEST responded to the enrolment increase by recruiting an additional 22,000 teachers, 20,000 of whom were untrained secondary school leavers and 2,000 of whom were retired qualified teachers who were recalled into teaching. In order to help them survive in the field, the 20,000 untrained teachers were given a two-and-half-week orientation course a few weeks before being deployed to schools, the plan being to continue their training during the school year. This was followed by the development of the Malawi Integrated In-service Teacher Education Programme (MIITEP), which was an emergency training programme meant to address the crisis. MIITEP was a mixed-mode training programme consisting of college-based training and distance school-based training and eventually replaced the conventional full-time pre-service college-based training system. Initially the programme faced a number of set-backs because of the lack of capacity for effective co-ordination within the education system, which of course may have affected the quality of the teachers that were produced.

The resource implications of FPE were enormous. The government responded by increasing the budgetary allocation to education and to primary education in particular. Donors too stepped in to provide much needed assistance and resources to support FPE through the provision of teaching and learning materials and resources for school construction and teacher training. The resources however, have not been sufficient to ensure primary education of acceptable quality for all, and despite the promise of 'free' primary education, households still have to meet a substantial proportion of the costs of education and these costs continue to be prohibitive for poor households.

2.2 Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:-

1. What are the administrative constraints that impeded the smooth implementation of the provision of primary schooling under the FPE policy?
2. What are the financial constraints that impeded the smooth implementation of the FPE policy?
3. How do parents and communities perceive the current status of primary education under FPE?
4. Are administrative issues, financial issues and parents' perceptions of primary education under FPE different in urban and rural areas?
5. What are the possible links among administrative issues, financial issues, stakeholders' perceptions, school performance and the actual implementation of FPE?
6. Are the links different in urban and rural areas?

2.3 Objectives of the Study

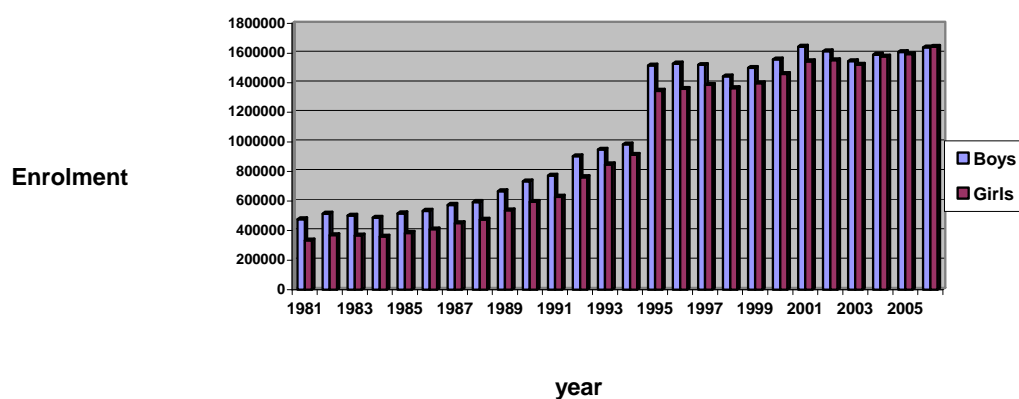
The main objective of the study was to gather data that would enable a comparative analysis of the efforts that have been undertaken in four countries (Kenya, Ghana, Malawi, and Uganda) to support FPE/UPE. The emergent implementation and the way stakeholders perceive FPE/UPE have direct implications on how successful the efforts to provide education to all children will be. The study thus focuses on the extent to which district offices are able to carry out their roles in support of FPE/UPE; the extent to which schools are organized to support and comply with FPE/UPE policies; the finances available at the District office to support FPE/UPE; the finances available at the school level to support FPE/UPE; external support available at the school level to support FPE/UPE; the perception of the community on the quality of education under FPE/UPE; the perception of the community on the support available to schools to implement FPE/UPE policies, and the perception of the community on the cost of schooling under FPE/UPE.

2.4 Achievement of UPE in Malawi

Generally, primary school enrolments in Malawi have been steadily increasing since independence in 1964. Major policy changes in Malawi's primary education were particularly related to school fees and the overall financing of primary education, which according to previous studies were major barriers to access and participation of children in school. Specifically, in 1991/2 the government, with the support of the World Bank, embarked on a phased abolition of tuition fees, starting with Standard 1 and phasing in Standards 2 and 3 in the following two years. Furthermore, in 1992/3, the government, under the Girls' Attainment in Basic Literacy and Education (GABLE) programme funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), introduced school fee waivers for non-repeating primary school girls in Standards 2 to 8. Enrolments increased by 19 percent following the tuition fee waivers in 1991/2 and by 8 per cent following the GABLE fee waivers, with girls' enrolments increasing twice as much as boys' enrolments (12 per cent versus 6 per cent).

When FPE was introduced in 1994, the response of households and communities was overwhelming and unprecedented. Primary school enrolments expanded significantly by 51 percent from 1.9 million children in 1993/94 to 2.9 million children in 1994/95. Before the implementation of the FPE, Malawi had one of the lowest enrolment rates in the Southern Africa sub-region. Throughout the 1980s for example, only half of the eligible school-aged children were in school and gross enrolment rates (GER) remained below 80 percent. The gross enrolment rate increased dramatically from 93 percent in 1993/94 to 134 percent in 1994/95. For the first time ever, UPE (however vaguely defined) had been achieved in Malawi. The high gross enrolment rates which were sustained in subsequent years reaching 139 percent in 1997 seemed to have levelled off to around 136 percent in 1999 and 2000. The 2006 education statistics reported a gross enrolment ratio of 122 percent and the 2007 statistics indicated that the GER was at 116 percent. This is a major step towards the achievement of EFA. It's also worth mentioning that in an attempt to cater for people in difficult circumstances, the Ministry of Education has restructured its special education department for proper coverage. The effects of these efforts are demonstrated by the bar chart presented below.

Figure 1: Enrolment of Pupils since 1981



Source: MoE (2006)

Note: This information is simply for illustrative purposes. This bar chart would have been more illustrative if it was converted into percentage of enrolment.

Two things are highlighted from the bar chart above. First, with no doubt, the Jomtien conference provided the impetus for both national and international bodies to seriously think about the provision of basic education for all in various countries and Malawi is no exception. Secondly, in the Malawian context, since the turn of the 1990s, emphasis has been placed on the education of girls. If there is a country in Sub Saharan Africa (SSA) that has made tremendous strides towards the education of girls,

then Malawi stands out. However, despite these impressive high enrolments rates, a significant proportion of eligible school age children remain out of school and as will be discussed later completion rates are also very low. The net enrolment ratio (NER) has remained below 100 percent throughout the late 1990s and early years of the 2000s.

The contrast between 1982/83 and 1994/95 should be noted. In 1982, the government of Malawi advised by the World Bank, increased school fees. This was the time when the World Bank was experimenting with its economic theories of supply and demand. Bank economists argued that there was excess demand for education in Malawi and that increase in fees would affect those whose opportunity cost of time was high –who were not necessarily the poor. The impact of the increased fees was a drop in enrolment (MoE 1994). These results run counter to the findings of Thobani (1983). Thobani theorised that school fees could be increased in Malawi without having an adverse impact on the poor. He asserted: ‘ that a low user charge often hurts the very poor it is meant to help and that by raising user charges, the expanded (but more expensive) level of service is often more accessible to the poor’ (Thobani 1983:14). The two points show that families are very sensitive to changes in fees when considering the school participation of their children. Thus, the trends show that primary schooling costs, even where fees are very low, feature importantly in family budgets and that small changes in the size of the burden to the family can have a big impact upon total enrolment (Colclough, 1996:597). As opposed to the theories of the World Bank’s economists, this also means that when parents list ‘lack of fees’ as a reason for not sending their children to school, it represents a very real reason and may be a factor of particular importance in rural subsistence-based communities.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Sample

The sample of the study spanned the educational division, the district office level and the school level. Respondents were drawn from the district office and at the school level.

3.1.1 Districts

Two Districts in two different Educational Divisions out of six Divisions were selected for the study. The districts were Zomba Urban which is situated in the South Eastern Educational Division and Blantyre Rural which is situated in the South Western Educational Division. Both of these divisions are situated in the Southern Region of the country. These two districts were selected because they have more or less similar proportions of rural and urban schools. This difference would give an opportunity to see if there were any contrasting issues in the implementation and perception of FPE between urban and rural schools.

3.1.2 Respondents at the District Office

The number and designation of respondents at the District Offices are given in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Number of respondents at the District Offices

District	A	B	Total
Designation			
DEM	1	1	2
CPEA	1	1	2
Accounts officers	3	1	4
Human resource officers	2	1	3
Total	7	4	11

Source: Created by Authors.

3.1.3 Sample schools

Table 2 below gives the number of the schools in urban and rural areas which were selected in each of the two districts.

Table 2: Number of schools in urban and rural areas

District	Urban	Rural	Semi urban	Total
A	2	4	2	8
B	4	6	0	10
Total	6	10	2	18

Source: Created by Authors.

3.1.4 Head teachers and teachers

The number of respondents at the school level in each district is given in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Number of head teachers and teachers in District A and B

	District A	District B	Total
Head teachers	7	8	15
Deputy H/ teachers	1	4	5
Teachers	16	17	33
Total	24	29	53

Source: Created by Authors.

It can be noted from the table that there were a total of 53 head teachers and teachers from the two districts. From the focus group discussions, there were also a total of 82 parents and SMC members that were interviewed in the two districts.

3.2 Instruments

Three interview protocols or schedules were used in the study each targeting specific informants. The first one was the Protocol for the District Office staff. This instrument sought to capture administrative roles and responsibilities at the District Office which were directly in support of FPE. This included issues of planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation of schools, deployment of teachers, provision of teaching and learning materials and construction and rehabilitation. The protocol also sought to find out what handling of finances was necessary to support FPE. The protocol also sought to capture the perception of the officers on the FPE policy and how it was being implemented in the District. It aims to solicit ideas on how differently the policy would have been presented and implemented.

The second interview protocol was targeted at school heads and teachers. It dwelt on roles and responsibilities of head teachers and the challenges associated with attaining goals of the FPE policy. It also looked at the way SMC were functioning and the reasons why some were not performing well in their duties. The protocol also focused on school finances and how they were managed under FPE. Lastly the protocol sought to assess how the teachers perceived the FPE policy and its implementation.

The third protocol was for parents and SMC members. This instrument was meant to capture the perception of parents and the SMC on the FPE policy and how it was being implemented.

It should be mentioned that the study also utilized document analysis of reports, bulletins, and other publications. Documents are tangible evidence, and which, through their analysis, can give a clear overall picture of the perspectives on UPE. An analysis of these documents was conducted, in an effort to produce an illuminative assessment of the issues on UPE. Other different sources of information were also used. In particular, data from the SACMEQ studies were also used.

3.3 Procedure for Collecting Data

Data was collected from the District Offices and schools in September, 2007 after the schools had gone for recess. First the researchers decided to work in Blantyre Rural District and Zomba Urban District. These were chosen because they belong to two different Educational Divisions out the six divisions in the country. They represent rural and urban settings in Malawi. The researchers divided themselves into two teams so that each could visit its own district. The researchers first identified research assistants who could speak English and were well versed with the education system in the country. The research assistants were introduced to the instruments to be used in collecting data in the schools. They were trained on how to capture the data in both the vernacular and in English which is the medium of instruction in the schools. For each team, the first port of call was the District Education Office. Here, the principal researcher introduced the team to the district education manager (DEM) and other officers and proceeded to present the objective of the visit and asked permission to visit schools in the district. The principal researchers have a cordial and professional relationship with the Ministry of Education and its district offices and this helped in getting consent from the DEMs. The DEMs were then asked to provide schools which were deemed very good, average and mediocre by their standards. From the list the researchers selected ten schools which were representative of the suggested categories. Then the DEMs were asked to warn all the selected schools of the impending visit by the research teams.

The principal researcher in each team interviewed the DEM, the administrative officer, the Coordinating PEA and the Accounts officer using the protocol for the District Office. In the subsequent days the teams visited the selected schools in each District each taking one school at a time. The principal researcher in each team interviewed the head teachers and the teachers while the research assistants interviewed the parents and SMC members. The head teacher at each school was asked to furnish information about the school. This included enrolments, teacher pupil ratios and performance in examinations.

Data from the protocols was coded and entered in SPSS soft ware package for analysis. Frequencies were generated to give the numbers of respondents who had given particular responses. Comparisons between districts were then made.

4.0 Results

4.1. Administrative Issues in Implementing UPE Policy

4.1.1 District level

The District Education Office has at least four departments which are management, human resource, accounts and the advisory services. The functions of each department are coordinated by the DEM. Therefore the DEM is available in most of the activities such as planning, budgeting, deployment of teachers and overall evaluation and monitoring of schools. Issues such as construction and rehabilitation of schools, provision of textbooks and provision of other scholastic materials are not under the DEM's mandate. This makes it difficult for the office to make provisions for schools and therefore hard to make recommendations to schools regarding improvements in teaching and learning materials. Furthermore the DEM can only work with the teachers in the district and has little influence on recruitment of new teachers into the district. The table below highlights the shortfalls in the capacities of the two districts.

Table 4: Roles and responsibilities in education

	Roles	Person/institution in charge	Observed Challenges
(a)	The overall education planning	DEM	There are no planners at the District level and plans are limited to ORT
(b)	Budgeting	DEM, PEA, HR, Accounts	Do not receive enough funding. Given a ceiling
(c)	Monitoring of schools	CPEA and PEA	Not difficult but no fuel for transport
(d)	Evaluation of schools	CPEA and PEA	Very difficult. PEAs have little training and so lack skills
(e)	Deployment of teachers	DEM, Desk officer and HR	There are no teachers. There is no compelling policy and no accommodation and facilities in rural areas for women especially.
(f)	Administration of in-service teacher training	CPEA and PEA	Budget does not allow and so depend on donors like UNICEF and GTZ
(g)	Construction and rehabilitation of schools	District Assembly helped by SMC	School committees get frustrated because there is little assistance. Proposals take a long time to be considered.
(h)	Provision of textbooks	CIDA through Supplies Unit and MIE	This happens occasionally, with UNICEF and MIE bringing special books at times
(i)	Provision of other scholastic materials	Supplies Unit only from this year after four years of no supplies. The DSS project has also just started this year	Not done often enough. The last consignment of teaching materials was delivered four years ago
(j)	Others (School feeding programme)	Bilateral institutions eg UNICEF and WFP, GTZ and Mary's Meal.	Increased enrolments and pupil participation.

Source: Created by Authors. ORT means other recurrent transactions.

Table 5: The tasks and capacity of the district

	District A	District B
Gaps between tasks and capacity	Yes/No Yes= 3 YES No = 5	Yes/No
Areas in which gaps exist	Lack of understanding of the tasks involved Lack of training for officers Budget not supported adequately Insufficient number of staff in the office especially above clerical staff in different departments at the DEM's office and teachers Low morale for teachers as there is no promotion	Few support staff Limited promotion opportunities for both teachers and district staff Inadequate funding Unfilled posts Inadequate training
Cited possible intervention	Train or bring appropriately trained and qualified personnel in the various departments e.g. in computer, management, accounting and administration. Officers given courses too short to have impacts on performance. Office does not work as a team.	Fill all the vacant posts Institute career structures that are attractive Enhance staff's skills in computing Increase allocation to education in general and to primary education in particular

Source: Created by Authors.

The most apparent thing was that the District Offices had no senior officers in the supporting departments of accounts and human resource management. This created a gap between the DEM and the departments. Recruiting senior accounting officers and human resource and management officers to fill the current vacancies was cited as one of the interventions which should take place in the office. This would induce good leadership and good team work. It was also mentioned that there was little coordination between District Office and the Division Office. Also important was the need to train PEAs at the district level and the other junior officers. One complaint from a DEM was that they are not given

enabling conditions to carry out some of their duties. For example it was not possible to deploy teachers to a school where there is no house for the teacher and therefore their capacity to play this role is limited.

4.1.2 School level

In Table 6 below, the roles and responsibilities of head teachers have been presented.

Table 6: Roles and Responsibilities of Head Teachers

Roles and responsibilities	Numbers of head teachers who rated the task as the most difficult (N=15)	Description of reasons for being the most difficult to observe
(1) supervise other teachers	9	Head teachers also teaching and have no time for other duties. Teachers are absent and ill and head is not able to follow up because of distances from school to teachers' homes. Teachers with higher academic qualification than head undermine the head
(2) managing SMC	6	SMC does not contribute constructive ideas. SMC is not active. Some members have stayed too long on the committee and contribute to inactiveness. Lack of communication skills. Lack of incentives for the SMC. SMC lack management skills Sometimes politics come into the management of schools
(3) collect fees from students	2	Fees were abolished. Only few students manage to pay contributions. Difficult to convince parents about paying for some services at the school
(4) deciding usage of UPE grant	5	A new World Bank grant is being tried. The grants are too little and so it is difficult to prioritize. The school has large enrolments and need so much which can not be covered by the grants. Schools are forced to buy from specific suppliers Low quality teaching and learning materials are procured.
(5) deployment of part time staff	1	Many schools have no part time staff as there is no funding to pay them. The salaries are too little to attract good part time teachers. Those who want part time teachers or teachers who want to do part time do this after classes. However, some communities do employ volunteer teachers
(6) request for school construction or rehabilitation	7	Not easy to convince parents to be fully committed to school development. Schools get no responses from those requested to assist so that in some schools there are thousands of burnt bricks because of lack of support . There are poor communication systems. There are no funds for construction and rehabilitation
(7) communication with parents	5	Message by head teacher is received negatively by parents. When pupils do not pay teachers send them back and this is perceived negatively by parents. This is particularly so under the FPE policy Parents were not happy with previous head teacher. Rich parents always give excuses not to be available.

Roles and responsibilities	Numbers of head teachers who rated the task as the most difficult (N=15)	Description of reasons for being the most difficult to observe
(8) sending teachers to in-service training	3	In service courses are rare. There are very few opportunities for this. It is difficult to decide who should attend because every one needs in-service. There are very few teachers and when one is sent for in-service there is a wide gap left at the school. There is lack of team spirit at the school and even lack of transparency. Schools cannot mount these because there are no grants for this kind of activities.
(9) other	3	Keep all children in class Ensure children come to school in good time Write monthly returns Teach while managing the schools

Source: Created by Authors.

For most head teachers, the most difficult tasks were those that kept them busy every day and these were ensuring that children come to school in good time, keeping children in class, giving out punishments, teaching at the same time as managing the school, and writing monthly returns. These were seen to be time consuming and take them away from their main duties. Managing and supervising teachers was also listed as one of the major challenges because they said the teachers were difficult to deal with as they had multitudes of problems such as sickness in the family, long distance to walk to school and financial stress. These resulted in a lot of teacher absenteeism and excuses to be absent. Some activities were said to be difficult to fulfil because there were no opportunities available for them to do the work. For example, if there were no in-service training opportunities offered from the DEM then there is very little the school head can do to send teachers to in-service training. However, these responses from the head teachers give an indication that school heads are not properly oriented towards school-based in-service. It is important that head teachers are trained on how they can organize school-based in-services courses but of course they will need some sort of support for this.

Major challenges after UPE and countermeasures are outlined in the table that follows; some of the major challenges that emanated after the introduction of the FPE policy and the counter measures that have been taken so far have been presented.

For most head teachers and teachers, the major problems posing challenges to UPE are overcrowded classrooms indicating that there is an acute shortage of classrooms. In overcrowded classrooms, teachers are not able to render individual assistance to pupils, let alone give and mark homework. This leads to many pupils dropping out and failing or repeating classes. The school authorities tended to put the blame for these problems on inadequate support from parents. The most common approach to surmounting these challenges were to use shift systems so that two classes can use one room in a day or get some classes to be taught outdoors. To reduce failing and dropping out, schools try strategies such as conducting remedial classes or putting all repeaters in one stream so that the teaching can be made easier than in mixed classes. Another way is to meet individual parents to discuss a pupil's performance in class. Parents are encouraged to work with their children.

Teachers could also be a problem, as their morale has been described as declining. In this case, teachers are always encouraged to work harder and seek ways to reduce their stress by specializing in a few teaching subjects only. The community at large is also encouraged to support the teachers who are working under difficult or nearly impossible conditions. In some cases, schools which are close to each other are asked to assist each other by sharing experiences and resources.

Table 7: The major challenges after UPE and countermeasures

Challenges	Number of head teachers/teachers who rated each problem as a major challenge (N=53)	Countermeasures taken so far
(1)overcrowded classrooms	52	Teachers float from one class to another. Arrange outdoor classes. Shifting classes. Employing volunteer teachers. Divide classes into streams. Mould bricks to construct more classrooms. Register only pupils aged 6 years and above. Make pupils work in groups
(2)passive attitude of parents	29	Discuss with the parents. Convene SMC and PTA meetings to sensitise the parents. Encourage parents who are role models to be active. Counselling and convince parents about the goodness of schooling. Ask the chief in the village to intervene on behalf of the school.
(3)passive attitude of SMC	7	Ask school proprietor to conduct fresh elections for SMC. Ask the chief to assist. Conduct meetings to share ideas about the way forward.
(4)decrease of school finance	25	Conduct fund raising or self-help activities. Encourage parents to contribute to school fund. Work with what is available. Lobby for donor support
(5) insufficient number of classrooms	48	Outdoor classes. Shifting classes. Ask parents to mould bricks. Mobilise assistance from local leaders eg. MP. Solicit assistance from NGOs. Ask SMC to assist.
(6) dropout of pupils	36	Call parents at PTA meetings. Talk with individual parent. Ask SMC and chief to assist. Use of school feeding programme
(7) repetition of pupils	29	Put all repeaters in one class and using strong teachers. Ask pupils to do part time schooling or attend remedial classes. Discuss with parents. Encourage pupils to work hard. Schools to use national examination format from lower classes.
(8)decline of morale/incentive among teachers to teach large classes	25	Ask teachers to work hard in the difficult circumstances. Share subjects among the teachers. Involve community to encourage teachers to work hard
(9) other:	25	Ask assistance from other schools. Ask school committees to buy teaching and learning materials. Teachers to use more teaching and learning materials. Use of TALULAR

Source: Created by Authors.

In most schools the responsibilities of the SMC listed in Table 8 above were not prominent because these depend on whether the school has access to sufficient financial resources or not. For most schools, the main responsibilities were to initiate developments efforts at the school and to oversee school discipline. This means that the SMC is responsible for the discipline of teachers as well as children. The SMC acts as a bridge between teachers and school children in times of misunderstandings. The SMC also oversees the welfare of the teachers regarding housing and how well they are integrated into community activities. It brings harmony between the community and the school. The SMC is responsible for overseeing how well the school is running. It monitors to check if school is functioning smoothly. As indicated in Table 8, there were some SMCs which were thought to be working very well while there were also others which were thought to be rather dormant in carrying out the various duties. However, most SMCs were perceived to be very capable of planning and deciding how to use the newly introduced Direct Support to Schools fund.

Table 8: Roles, responsibilities and the current status of SMC

Actual function of SMC Roles and Responsibilities of SMC	Numbers of schools/district officials that chose the item as roles and responsibilities of SMC		The status of SMC's function (the average rating between 1=very active and 5=not functioning)	
	District officials (N=11)	School head teachers and teachers (N=53)	District officials (N=11)	School head teachers and teachers (N=53)
(1) To plan school activities	9	44	6	2.2
(2) To decide the ways of spending UPE/FPE grant	10	43	11	2.1
(3) To audit school finance	8	34	10	2.3
(4) To employ part-time staff	8	22	6	3
(5) Others	7	30	7	2.3

Source: Created by Authors.

From the district education office's point of view, each school has unique characteristics of SMC with some working well while others are described as dormant. It was the head teachers and the teachers who were closest to the SMCs who were able to say exactly how their SMCs were working. Most school personnel cited confusion about their roles under FPE as one major reason for SMC not working well. A bigger majority mentioned that the SMCs were not working well because they lacked funds as they did not have good fundraising strategies. Some added that in schools where there were no Parent Teachers' Associations, SMC found it difficult to operate. This then suggests that it is necessary to have both SMC and PTA at a school.

Table 9: Reasons for SMC not functioning

Reasons for not functioning	Number of district officials who cited the following reason (N=11) Both Districts	Number of school teachers who cited the following reason (N=53) Both Districts
(a) Confusion on their roles under UPE/FPE policy	0	12
(b) Misunderstanding that the government is responsible for everything under UPE/FPE policy	5	9
(c) Lack of interest in education	4	8
(d) Difficulty in attending meetings because of work	5	7
(e) Lack of leadership of the head teacher	0	3
(f) Others (lack of funds, lack of fund raising strategies, absence of PTA)	9	17

Source: Created by Authors.

Capacity at the school level was seen in terms of the number of trained teachers in the system. Most head teachers and teachers mentioned that the lack of trained teachers in schools was the major root of many problems. This coupled with lack of budgeted funding to schools created gaps in attaining UPE. Low teacher morale was also mentioned by a good proportion of the teachers as a cause for the existing gap in performance at the school. The teachers suggested that teacher training should revert back to the pre-service mode and that more teachers should be put on the training programme. Increasing teachers' salaries was also mentioned to be one of the possible interventions to reduce the gap that exists now. Policies to guide schools in difficult situations were also needed especially regarding overloading head teachers. They also suggested that the government should continue to supply schools with teaching and

learning materials and that PTA should support government's efforts by increasing their fundraising activities.

Table 10: The tasks and capacity of schools

	District A (N=24)	District B (N=29)
Gaps between tasks and capacity (Number of school teachers who rated yes or no)	Yes/No Yes=11; No=6; missing= 7	Yes/No Yes=23; No=6
Areas in which gaps exist	Lack of understanding of tasks= (7) Lack of training for teachers = (17) Lack of budget to pursue task =(13) Insufficient number of teachers = (24) Low teacher morale = (10) Teacher absenteeism = (6) Lack of policy guidelines from government = (8) Other issues = (7)	
Cited possible intervention	Use the pre service training mode for teachers Train and employ more teachers Increase teachers' salaries Increase head teachers' salaries Head teachers are overloaded and should not teach. Construct more class rooms Should rely on government for teaching and learning materials School teachers should work as teams PTA should increase fund raising activities.	

Source: Created by Authors.

4.2 Financial Issues in Implementing UPE Policy

4.2.1 District level

The funds for primary education come from the government in form of ORT. These funds are divided into what are called sub programmes. The main sub programmes are management and support services, inspectorate and advisory services and school management. The management and support services include activities such as management meetings with headquarters, district assembly, head teachers in zones and school committees, maintenance of capital assets, buying stationery and other consumables. The inspectorate and advisory services includes activities such as advisory and inspection visits to schools, in-service training, production or buying of teaching and learning materials, and fuel and maintenance of motor vehicles and motorcycles. The third sub program is school management and this involves transport for payment of salaries, transferring teachers, staff welfare, which is mostly buying coffins and transporting remains of dead teachers. One district estimates that seven teachers die every month. Leave grants and support to national examinations activities also come under this sub programme. Districts are also mandated to allocate 2% of their total ORT to activities geared towards combating the HIV and AIDS pandemic. Teacher salaries are not included in the District budget because this is processed from the central office.

However District A received only about MK10,000,000.00 for the fiscal year 2006-2007 out of a budget of MK27.5 million and was allocated MK11,000,000.00 for the fiscal year 2007 – 2008 out of a budget of MK27.5 million. From this amount the DEM has to pay MK3.0 million in leave grants to the teachers which depletes the coffers and does not leave much for the budgeted activities and operations. Therefore the DEM is unable to carry out most of their mandated duties especially in-service and advisory services to schools. Apart from leave grants the DEM has to grapple with the problem of teacher deaths and transfers which are considered to be important duties of a DEM. Maintenance of buildings and equipment suffers and construction of any kind is not even thought about.

Table 11: Financial sources of income and expenditure for primary education at the district level

	District A	District B
Source of Income and proportion (if available) for primary education		
(a) List of funds from the central Government	Other Recurrent Transactions(ORT) and teachers salaries	ORT and teachers salaries
(b) List of funds generated at the district level	None	None
Total amount of expenditure on primary education in FY2005/6	MK10,000,000.00	12,749,826.00
By item		
(a) Teacher/non-teachers salaries (Leave grants)	MK3,000,000.00	4,864,960.00
(b) Non-salary items (goods and services)		553,717.00
(c) Construction	0	0
(d) Maintenance of buildings and motor vehicle		0
(f) Others (Development Fund....)		363,585 (sports and HIV/AIDS)

Source: Created by Authors.

Table 12: Distribution of Budgeted Expenditure on ORT

Sub programme	District A (MK)	District B(MK)
Management and support services	12,310,110.00	9,374,833.00
Inspectorate and advisory	3,972,550.00	2,000,123.00
School management	11,224,810.00	4,864,960.00
Total	27,507,470.00	16,239,916.00

Source: Created by Authors.

DEMs suggested that leave grants should be left out of the District activities and be lumped together with salaries. They also suggested the money for purchase of heavy equipment such as motor vehicles and computers should be separated from ORT.

Table 13: List of Problems facing education finance in the district

Problems	Description
Delay of UPE/FPE funds	This does not affect the way the District Office functions because the funds go to schools through the District Assembly. However the delay affects teaching in schools because they do not know when they will get their materials to plan for classroom activities.
Inadequate amount of school finance	Leave grants deplete all the funds and it is not possible to carry out other functions adequately to cover schools
Inadequate funds	Districts are given low ceilings for their budgets and then the funds which are received are much lower than the budgeted amount. Most of the funds received go towards servicing funerals
Insufficient funds for monitoring schools	Advisory visits to schools are curtailed as there are no funds available for this activity.

Source: Created by Authors.

Table 14: Financial sources of income and expenditure for primary schools

	Schools in District A	Schools in District B
Source of Income and proportion (if available) for primary education	- school funds raised by SMC through pupil contribution - UPE grant by World Bank (DSS)	DSS and School fund
Average total amount of expenditure in FY2005/6	MK27,000 and school fund	MK27,000, school fund and Donations
By item		
(a) Salary of teachers and administrative staff	0	0
(b) Classroom construction	0	Not handled by the district
(d) Rehabilitation/maintenance of school	MK20 per pupil per term	MK35 per pupil per term
(e) Extracurricular activities	0	0
(f) School lunch	0	Some schools are on GTZ school feeding program
(g) Other scholastic materials	MK27,000 (DSS)	DSS @ US\$200 per school

Source: Created by Authors.

Sources of income in schools were limited to school funds contributed by parents who have children at the schools and the newly introduced Direct Support to Schools (DSS). However the DSS is not available as liquid cash but as vouchers to purchase prescribed types of teaching and learning materials. The amount of school funding collected from parents is dependent upon the needs of a school and also on the capacity of parents to pay. Schools in urban areas demand greater contributions than schools in rural areas because the former tend to respond more positively than the latter. Some schools do not have non teaching staff while others need security guards and volunteers.

Schools said they usually do not know when the DSS is going to be disbursed. There is no specific timing for the funding. For example, the last DSS came at the end of the second term and it meant that much of the year was spent without the teaching and learning materials which had been expected at the beginning. When it came to school funds, the schools complained that they can never tell how many pupils were going to pay in a particular term and so it is difficult to know the exact amount of funds to be put into school planning. The amount of funds collected is always less than the required funds for any development activity. Accountability of school funds is sometimes problematic, especially when there is no transparency in the way the money has been spent. The problem of ghost teachers has nothing to do with school finances. Ghost teachers are created at the central level and the confusion that arises rests at that level and does not affect individual schools. The only problem is that there are constant checks on the number of teachers at each school and this becomes irritating to the teachers.

Table 15: List of Problems facing education finance at school level

Problems	Number of schools head teachers and teachers that rated the item as problem (N=53)	Description
(1) Delay of UPE/FPE funds	21	Schools do not know the exact time of the year the newly introduced Direct Support to Schools grant will be disbursed and can not plan well in advance.
(2) Fluctuation of the budget	6	Some parents pay school fund in time and others need a lot of persuasion and it is not usually known what amount of money will be collected at any given point in time.
(3) Mismanagement of funds	6	Some SMC have been accused of not being transparent with the way they spend school fund and this causes a lot of disillusionment among the parents.
(4) Accountability of school finance	10	Keeping financial records in some schools was said to be sloppy
(5) Problem of ghost teachers	0	School level personnel are not capable of knowing whether their school is funded more than necessary because of ghost teachers
(6) Inadequate amount of school finance	31	Not all parents pay and so it is not easy to do any development project.. DSS fund is small and is not given according to the size of enrolment at a school.
(7) Inability of parents to pay fees	12	Some parents are poor while others are not convinced they still need to pay for the education of their children. In any case the amount requested by schools is not prohibitive but still the problem arises.
(8) Other	9	

Source: Created by Authors.

4.3 Stakeholders' Perception of UPE Policy

4.3.1 District level

The District Office staff realize that the requirements for implementing FPE are multitudinous and that the government alone cannot make all the requirements available. Some form of contribution by parents is required and so complete abolition of fees is difficult to conceptualise. The restriction of age is a new phenomenon in Malawi and the staff realize there are bound to be some difficulties at the beginning when implementing this policy. In the case of automatic promotion, all staff were unanimous in agreeing that not many people and schools are prepared to accept this policy without dire consequences for individuals and the primary school system itself. The DEMs act as a facilitator in making DSS available to schools and therefore encounter a few problems doing this.

Table 16: Easiness/Difficulty in complying the UPE policy

Policy items	Easiness/Difficulty average rating (1-5)	Description (Reasons)
(a) Fee abolition	5	This is difficult because parents are still asked to pay for some school requirements. So poor children go to where there are no development projects going on because they do not ask for much contribution.
(b) Age entry into school	3	There were those who also thought this limits the clever children who are less than five years old. It was also thought that children of the new generation are growing fast and refusing them entry due to age will result in them overgrowing the primary cycle. They will be too big physically for the primary school. Some parents use the school as the place for keeping their children so that they can be free to do other things.
(c) Automatic promotion	5	Repetition is a big problem meaning that many children fail and it would not be a good idea to promote them when they fail. In this way they cause more problems in the subsequent classes as they will not understand many things. But some donors in Malawi are pushing for this
(d) Handling UPE grant	2.5	Many people are involved in deciding what to buy. There are unnecessary controls imposed by the terms of operation of the DSS in choosing even the shops from where and what to buy. Schools are also not provided with transport for collecting the bulky materials.
(e) Other components		High teacher pupil ratios are contributing to low quality of education. This mainly caused by inadequacy in the number of teachers

Source: Created by Authors.

The DEMs and their staff in the two districts all agreed that the current policy is a good one but it has serious flaws in its implementation. They perceive a situation where the policy can be implemented perfectly. They can see why the policy is failing to attain its goals and are able to visualize the remedies for these shortcomings. The officers see themselves as being handicapped by limited resources and unfavourable coordination between schools and the District Office and between the District Office and the Division Office or the Central offices.

Table 17: Perceptions of UPE policy

Perception on UPE policy	Number of personnel answered in each item	
	District A (N=7)	District B(N=4)
(1) The current policy is good and well implemented	0	0
(2) The current policy is good but not well implemented	7	4
(3)The current policy has problems but well implemented	0	0
(4)The current policy has problems and not well implemented	0	4

Source: Created by Authors.

Personnel at the DEMs office suggested that introducing some sanctions against parents who do not send their children to school and children who do not go to school would be a better option for the current FPE policy. They also suggested that any policies should be accompanied by funding and not as it has been implemented in Malawi. However, advocating for compulsory schooling does not make sense in the Malawian case given the experience we have had with the FPE policy.

Table 18: Suggested Alternative Policy Options

District	Number of district officials who responded in each to the following question: Could UPE policy have been implemented differently? (N= 11)	
	Yes	No
District A	7	0
District B	4	0
Suggested policy options		
District A	4.2 Lobby for increased funding to individual schools 4.3 Need more funding to monitor schools 4.4 Train enough teachers 4.5 Build more school infrastructure 4.6 Make teaching and learning materials available 4.7 Sensitise parents and children about what Free Primary Education means and then advocate for UPE. 4.8 Teachers are not serious any more 4.9 Construct a better office to support the teachers and the schools 4.10 Parents and children should respect teachers 4.11 Sanctions of some kind should be given to parents and children who do not comply with the requirements of UPE	
District B	4.12 implement gradually 4.13 Teachers are not serious 4.14 Pupils and parents misinterpret democracy 4.15 More funding to schools 4.16 More community mobilization and sensitization is needed 4.17 Encourage double shifting 4.18 More school feeding programmes 4.19 More teachers to reduce teacher pupil ratio 4.20 More books are needed 4.21 Female teachers absent from school too much	

Source: Created by Authors.

4.3.2 School level

Teachers expressed mixed feelings about the FPE issues in Table 19 above. Some teachers thought it was easy for government to abolish fees because the fee was too small and was never adequate to cover all the requirements of a school. These claim other costs were also incurred by parents just as they are currently doing. Those who see fee abolition as difficult offer that even when this happens, parents still have to pay some form of school fees meaning that it is impossible to have completely free education under the present circumstances. In the case of restricting entry age, many believe it is a good practice but others thought some children are physically too big and even too intelligent for their age and it would not be in the interest of these children to turn them away on the basis of age alone. Most teachers were not in agreement with automatic promotion as it makes teaching difficult in the upper classes. The majority of the teachers thought handling the UPE grant was not so difficult as it was done without hard cash. It should be emphasized here that most of education institutions in Malawi (Divisions, University, etc) operate under very difficult conditions because the funding is grossly inadequate.

Table 19: Easiness/difficulty in complying the UPE policy by schools

Policy items	Easiness/Difficulty average rating (1-5) by teachers (N=53)	Description (Reasons)
(a) Fee abolition	3.1	It is not possible to run a school without funds in the way Malawian schools are required to function. There are some parents who understand and still pay and they have a lot of indirect costs to pay. Government fees were not benefiting individual schools equally. Schools still need to pay for security, preparation of examinations and teaching and learning materials. Handling government finances is a difficult undertaking.
(b) Age entry into school	2.9	Parents whose children were turned away due to school age are bitter as they claim education is free.
(c) Automatic promotion	4.1	There is a policy not to promote failures. Failures do not perform well in final primary school examination which is crucial in deciding how good a school is. May help children who are over age for their class. There is a new curriculum which relies on continuous assessment and children are likely to be easily promoted to the upper class.
(d) Handling UPE grant	2.8	In some cases not all stakeholders are involved in making decisions on how to spend the money. Materials which are bought are not from the cheapest shops. Funding is not adequate to address the need of a school and not proportional to the number of pupils in a school. There could be collusion between DEM and shops where the materials are to be bought. The system lacks transparency and accountability

Source: Created by Authors.

As shown in Table 20 above, the majority of head teachers and teachers thought the current FPE policy was a good one but it is not being well implemented. A good proportion of the teachers also thought the policy is not good and it is not possible to get good results trying to implement a policy which is already flawed. Yet there are also a few others who think the policy is good and it is being implemented in the way its supposed to be implemented. These are all interesting observations as each set of teachers have their own good reasons albeit debatable.

Table 20: Teachers' perception on UPE policy

Perception on UPE policy	Number of teachers answered in each item	
	Head teacher (N=15)	Teachers (N=38)
(1) The current policy is good and well implemented	0	6
(2) The current policy is good but not well implemented	11	23
(3) The current policy has problems but well implemented	0	2
(4) The current policy has problems and not well implemented	2	9

Source: Created by Authors.

The majority of the teachers and head teachers in schools agreed that the UPE policy should have been implemented differently. In most cases they attribute their reasons to unpreparedness of the system for the changes when the policy was being introduced. They therefore dwell on shortcomings of the present

implementation rather than actual change in policy. The major suggestion brought forward is to make primary education compulsory which is a departure from the current policy. Also interesting is the suggestion to enrol children depending on the availability of facilities, especially teachers. The idea of school funding from government is also new to the system as it is currently being piloted by World Bank to determine how feasible this can be.

Table 21: Suggested alternative policy options

District	Number of teachers who responded in each to the following question: Could UPE policy have been implemented differently? (N=53)	
	Yes	No
District A	25	2
District B	17	4
Suggested policy options		
District A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make schooling compulsory • Train more teachers first • Resources should be ready first • Go all the way in implementing the programme with all the resources. • Deploy teachers in their own homes and communities so they do not bring down the education of their communities. • Learners should pay something to solve school financial problems. • Schools charging different school funds is a problem. Need one standard payment • Remove teacher laziness in schools • Increase salaries for teachers. • Teacher pupil ratios should determine pupil enrolment • Ask donors and government to assist schools 	
District B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring back school fees as more funding is needed • Implement FPE gradually, training more teachers first • Train more teachers • Mobilize resources first • Introduce more programmes like DSS • There was need for proper planning before implementation • It was not good to say there is free primary when in reality there is nothing free. The terminology is misleading. 	

Source: Created by Authors.

4.3.2 Parents and SMC members

Table 22 below shows the perception of parents on the quality of the policies and also on the state of affairs regarding the implementation of the policies. Abolition of fees was a welcomed policy, but parents were surprised they still had to pay for other school expenses. Teaching and learning materials were not provided in adequate numbers and parents had to foot this bill, which should have been done by the government. This was also echoed during the focus group discussions with both the SMC and members of the PTA. Regarding construction of classrooms, one FGD produced the following:

FPE had an adverse effect on classroom construction. Previously parents were used to paying fees, so making financial contribution towards construction of a school block was not a big problem, but now primary school is free parents are reluctant to make financial contributions. They understand free primary education as not making any payment financially. This year the school on its own managed to construct toilets for boys and girls only. The school has a school block constructed with financial assistance from the constituency's parliamentarian (Parents at Namiwawa school).

Provision of textbooks was also good as more children had access to textbooks, but still it takes a long time to replace torn or lost books and the situation reverts back to one where pupils have no text books. Parents were also sceptical of the policy of automatic promotion as it encouraged laziness among teachers and pupils. They also added that it is possible for a child to finish school without knowing how to read and to write. This would be a disaster for FPE. In the case of the right entry age, parents expressed their opinions that in the absence of pre-school classes the policy is not fair. Parents would like to send their children to school as early as possible, That is why they try to enrol underage children. Doing this is an advantage for the parents as they can engage in other income generating activities, while the children are away in school.

Table 22: Perception on the UPE policy

Policy items	Average rating (1=Very good to 5=Very bad)	Description (Reasons)
(a) Abolition of school fee	1.2	This is good because most poor people can now send their children to school but others say this has eroded the value of education to children
(b) Provision of textbooks	3.5	The policy is a good idea but schools have inadequate books and replacement of torn books is rare.
(c) Construction of classrooms	3.4	Some schools have benefited from projects by donors and this is good but most schools still need more classrooms
(d) The right age entry into school	1.9	This was a good policy but it needs enforcing and it also prevents bright children enrolling earlier.
(e) Automatic promotion	4.3	Most parents agreed that this is not good because a child can finish school without attaining any literacy.
(g) Parental contribution in provision of labour, lunch, and uniform	2	Most parents said they contribute to school in many forms especially labour and providing children with other requirements such as uniforms and food when they come home. They said they try to meet the needs but are not able to do everything.
(g) Others		Education is more expensive now than before because before the FPE parents were only paying fees and buying uniform but now because of inadequate government provision, parents are made to pay for many other things.

Source: Created by Authors.

Almost all parents indicated that they favored sending their children to school regardless of whether the child is a boy or a girl. Very few were still skeptical about the advantages of sending children to school. This means that there are few parents who still have doubts about the benefits of schooling, mainly due to their disappointment with some examples of citizens who made use of their education. Thus, it is important that as we promote schooling for all our citizen, efforts must also be made to make sure that the education that they acquire has a role to play in their everyday lives.

Table 23: Perception on schooling

	Number of parents/SMC members who rated in the following					
	Very important	Important	Moderate	Not necessary	Don't know	Total
Schooling for boys	80	3	0	0		83
Schooling for girls	79	2	1	0	1	83
	If school fees are charged;					
	Yes	No	Total			
Sending boys to school	78	5	83			
Sending girls to school	78	5	83			

Source: Created by Authors.

The first reaction to this question was to talk about the worst possible outcome if children do not attend school. For boys, most parents feared they would become robbers, stealing farm inputs and smoking Indian hemp or marijuana and drinking illicit beer. All these indicate a hopeless future for the boys who do not attend school. It was also mentioned that such boys would contribute to the destruction of the environment by burning and selling charcoal. On a hopeful note some parents said such boys would become casual labourers and maybe even engage in sporting activities. For girls who did not attend school, the parents feared they would end up becoming prostitutes. They would also end up destroying the environment by burning bricks and selling them. It was also mentioned that they would become

casual labourers if they were lucky.

Table 24: Perceived activities of out-of-school children

Activities	Number of parents/SMC members who selected the following item for their children's activities if they had not enrolled their children in primary school (N=83)	
	For Boys	For Girls
(1) Work in market	14	35
(2) Work in farms	39	21
(3) Household chores	11	43
(4) Take care of siblings	2	3
(5) Do nothing at home	0	0
(6) Get married	22	48
(7) Others	52	26

Source: Created by Authors.

Differences in location of a school such as urban, semi urban and rural areas dictate the costs of items. In urban areas children may be required to take minibuses to school. Some parents take their children to school using family vehicles and the costs may be very high. In the semi and rural areas, children walk or ride bicycles and this determines how much they pay for transportation. However, the majority of children walk to school in the two districts. Only children in the upper standards may be allowed to use family bicycles. In some cases, the children in the upper standards buy their own bicycles from the wages they receive from casual work in farms. In terms of uniform, most parents have them tailored for their children and the cost also depends on location of the school. During the FGDs, both SMC and the PTA agreed that it is necessary that school pupils be in uniform for identity purposes and also for equalizing the attire in school to remove competition among students. Similarly, scholastic materials are priced differently from urban to rural areas. In terms of lunch, most pupils leave at around one o' clock so that they can go back home in time for lunch and therefore do not need to spend money on this item. However, some form of lunch is needed for schools which offer remedial afternoon classes especially in the upper classes. Some take lunch money while others take snacks to school. Overall the majority of the parents thought that they were paying more money under FPE than before FPE.

Table 25: Cost of schooling per year (MK)

Cost of schooling	Mean	SD	Median	Minimum	Maximum	N
(a) uniform	923	741	700	300	5000	83
(b) transportation	120	670	0	0	5000	43
(c) school lunch	2918	2048	2400	0	60,000	62
(d) scholastic materials	1240	735	1000	200	4,000	79
(e) fees collected by school	133	187	90	25	1400	76
(f) additional education (e.g. tutorial)	720	1288	150	0	8,000	63
(g) other (xx)	107	239	0	0	900	31
	Difference of costs before and after UPE policy implementation					
	Higher now than before		More or less the same		Lower now than before	
Number of parents/SMC members who respond	60		3		17	
Proportion in each response (%)	75		3.8		21.3	

Source: Created by Authors.

Most parents indicated that they attend school meetings very often and considered this as being very important. Almost all parents contributed to the rehabilitation and construction of their schools. About half the parents indicated that they paid a contribution towards school fees for hiring security or paying for the school's post office box number or any other school development projects. It was thus clear that paying money towards the school fund was a common occurrence in many schools. A few said they

donated some goods toward school development but not money. A few others said they offered services in the free food programmes at some schools. A few others said that they offered technical assistance to help teachers teach well or help initiate and supervise projects at the school.

Table 26: Contribution to school

	Number of parents +SMC members who responded to the item below:
	Parents and SMC Members (N=83)
Frequency to visit school:	
(1) more than once a term	76
(2) once a term	7
(3) once a year	0
(4) never	0
Importance to contribute to school:	
(1) very important	74
(2) important	6
(3) not so important	0
(4) not necessary	0
Forms of contribution to school:	
(1) attend meetings at school	83
(2) help construction or rehabilitation of school	82
(3) provide lunch for pupils	59
(4) pay more fees collected by the school	43
(5) donate some goods to school	4
(6) donate some money to school	0
(7) other	5

Source: Created by Authors

Table 27: Perceptions of quality of education

	Very good	Good	Moderate	Bad	Very bad	Total
Parents + SMC (District A and B)	6	12	35	19	10	83
Suggested measures for quality improvement						
District A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Government and donors to support parents when they have school development projects - Increase the number of teachers and improve their housing facilities. - Increase teachers' salaries and motivate them to work hard - Improve the availability of teaching and learning materials. - Improve safety and security of school premises. - There is need to provide civic education to parents on the need for FPE - FPE enables poor families to send children to school. - Use research results to convince government of the need to focus on critical issues in education. - Government should put more funds and monitoring systems for primary schools. - Consult all stakeholders when deciding on any major changes in policy in education. - Funds from government to be sent direct to schools. - Increase collaboration between teachers and the communities. - Raise the status of teachers by increasing their salaries and provide a sound career path. - Children rights must be observed at all times. 					
District B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduce teacher pupil ratio. - Supply more and adequate T/L materials - Construct more school blocks - Equalize teacher distribution (many female teachers in urban areas) - Allow pupils to take books home - Give frequent homework - Institute SMC and PTA at every school - Encourage community participation - Very important to send a girl child to primary school because it has been proven in modern times that a girl child's place is not only the kitchen. - More female teachers in the rural areas 					

Source: Created by Authors

Apart from the ideas tendered above there were also specific activities which were seen to be complementary to whole school development and quality improvement. These included:

1. Bringing electricity to schools.
2. Schools to have desks for all children

3. Providing medical care at school
4. Introducing school feeding
5. Parents to be in the forefront, taking charge of the welfare of their children at school
6. Use more role models in schools.
7. Introduce national examination in Std 5.
8. Schools to have adequate money in the school fund
9. Introduce primary school national quiz.
10. Encourage children to work hard in school.

These ideas show that parents see a lot of possibilities which can bring about improved quality of schooling.

Comments given by parents give an indication of how badly or how well the UPE policy is being implemented. Important issues which have come out of these are that there is no funding for schools. Most parents complained that they were spending more money on primary education now than was the case before the UPE policy was introduced. It appears the system has no strict monitoring mechanism to check whether UPE is progressing well or not. Teachers are in short supply and if children do not work hard, they fail to reach expected achievement levels. The suggestion to enforce primary education by legislation is indicative of the desperate situation the system in Malawi is faced with. However, this suggestion needs to be taken with care, especially after the experiences of the FPE policy.

Table 28: Perceptions of UPE policy

District	Number of parents or SMC members who responded in each to the following question: Could UPE policy have been implemented differently? (N=83)	
	Yes	No
District A	28	55
Suggested policy options		
District A	4.22 Government to introduce free nursery schools to prepare children for primary education. 4.23 Teachers should be trained first and should be in adequate numbers. 4.24 Primary education should be enforced by law. 4.25 More funding should be made available for primary education. 4.26 Introduce feeding programmes to all schools. 4.27 Government should install a strict school monitoring system	
District B	4.28 It should not have been politicised 4.29 More preparation was necessary before implementation to ensure availability of necessary resources 4.30 Should have tackled problems of few qualified teachers, overcrowded classrooms, inadequate textbooks, closure of some TTCs, during implementation 4.31 They should have re-distributed teachers 4.32 Each primary school should have a quota of pupils to be selected to secondary 4.33 Government to re-introduce school inspectors like before FPE policy and not these PEAS.	

Source: Created by Authors

4.4 District Difference in UPE Policy Implementation

There is little connection between the Regional or Divisional Office and the District Offices. The Division Office tends to focus on secondary education more than primary education. Most primary school issues are dealt with from the Central office through the District office. This section looks at administrative issues, financial issues and policy implementation at the district level, the school level and at the SMC level.

4.4.1 Administrative issues

District Level

It was apparent that staffing at the district office levels was low. Only junior staff positions were filled. The accounts and the human resource sections did not have any senior staff. There were vacancies

which needed to be filled. Consequently, the DEM had problems working with the junior staff. The junior staff also lacked knowledge of some of their work. The junior staff agreed that they needed more training and they needed good leadership in their departments. The most pressing issue for district B was inadequate staffing in schools. There were many schools with only three to five teachers and yet these schools offered classes in standards 1 to 8. Given that the UPE policy attracted many pupils into schools, the DEMs have a very difficult job of making schools function according to the norms.

The DEMs also bemoaned the lack of coordination between the District office and the Divisional office. They also thought there were crucial issues such as teacher recruitment and support to schools which were still being carried out by the central office and made it difficult for the DEM to address important issues in support of FPE/UPE.

While some DEMs commented that funding had improved under the decentralization policy, coordination between the DEM and schools was also a problem because of limited budgetary allocation. The DEM was not able to visit or meet school authorities as often as planned because transport was not readily available due to limited funds.

Deployment of teachers was also an important issue which proved difficult for the DEM. Many schools especially in the rural areas had poor housing facilities for teachers. It was therefore unethical for the DEM to force any teachers to go and teach in such schools. In addition rural areas lack many amenities such as hospitals and shopping centres and many teachers, especially female teachers, refuse to go and teach at schools in such areas.

School level

Most urban schools have little staffing problems. They tend to have many more female teachers than male teachers. The disadvantage of this is that the women tend to excuse themselves in order to attend to family problems, thus contributing to teacher absenteeism. In contrast, rural schools have few teachers and this results in large teacher pupil ratios. Teachers float or follow multi grade teaching to solve the problem of teacher shortage.

Schools in urban areas also tend to have large enrolments and this causes large class pupil ratios. As result most schools have outdoor classes. Some schools follow some kind of shifting system or conduct classes outdoors. Head teachers need good organizational skills to run such schools because late coming and truancy become very common amongst the pupils. Pupils in urban areas are more likely to have attended pre-school than those in rural areas because such schools are mostly run by private individuals and the fees tend to be high. Similarly the entry age of pupils in urban areas tends to be lower than in rural areas as there are more opportunity costs in rural areas than in urban areas.

4.4.2 Financial issues

All districts receive monthly subvention depending on budgets presented to the Treasury. The money is given through the district assemblies. However, the subvention tends to fluctuate from month to month because the government runs on a cash budget. Moreover, this money is usually much less than what the district needs. Some districts are targeted by NGOs and thus benefit more than others. Most NGOs focus on poverty reduction and rural districts are more likely to benefit from this than urban districts.

School level

Urban schools tend to ask for a greater contribution from school children in the form of school funds than rural schools. In urban areas there are more issues which require funding than rural schools. These include services like water bills, telephone, security and post office box fees. Parents in urban schools were more likely to pay the contribution than rural parents. In addition, a few parents in urban areas indicated that they give transport money to their children. SMCs in the urban areas have more fundraising opportunities than their counterparts in rural areas.

4.4.3 Perceptions

There is very little contact between the Regional Education or Education Division offices and the District Education offices in the implementation of FPE/UPE. The schools and the District Education offices deal directly with the Central office on all issues concerning the provision of primary schooling. Therefore this study focuses only on district differences and not regional differences. This section looks at the perceptions of personnel at the district level, school level and the SMC level. The perceptions of education officials, teachers and parents on FPE are a result of what they see being implemented and what the gaps are. At the district level, the officers see their limitations in supporting FPE. At the school level, teachers and parents realize they can only do what is possible under the prevailing circumstances. They are in a position to gauge what the possibilities are and what else is needed to make FPE a success. The following paragraphs outline the perceptions of the stakeholders on FPE in Malawi.

District perceptions

According to the officers consulted at the two District Education Offices, the FPE policy is good for the less privileged students. They pointed out that resources were inadequate to support FPE. They noted that the situation has made teachers less committed to their work and do not seem to be taking their jobs seriously any more. The perceived low levels of take home salaries make this worse. Similarly, school children were not working hard any more. School seems to be a waste of time under FPE. Inadequate funding prevents the District office from monitoring schools. Schools do not have enough teachers. Volunteer teachers and retired teachers were not working well in schools and therefore are not a good option. Poor accommodation in rural areas prevents teachers from accepting teaching positions at the schools. Thus unequal distribution of available resources between urban and rural schools makes the implementation of UPE very difficult.

School level perceptions

At the school level, head teachers and teachers were of the opinion that education should be made compulsory, but given that the government is struggling to implement the FPE policy, this suggestion does not sound plausible. They bemoaned the lack of adequate trained teachers and other resources in the schools. Teachers were becoming lazy as they were facing too many unsolved problems at school. Some teachers were of the view that teachers should be posted to their own homes where they can work hard in their communities. They were unanimous in proposing that teacher salaries should be increased. The teachers also thought that the schools needed to be monitored frequently. They suggested that Free Primary Education needed to be accompanied by adequate funding for the schools. However they said children must still contribute somehow to the school development fund while the government and donors should assist schools on large projects.

SMC perceptions

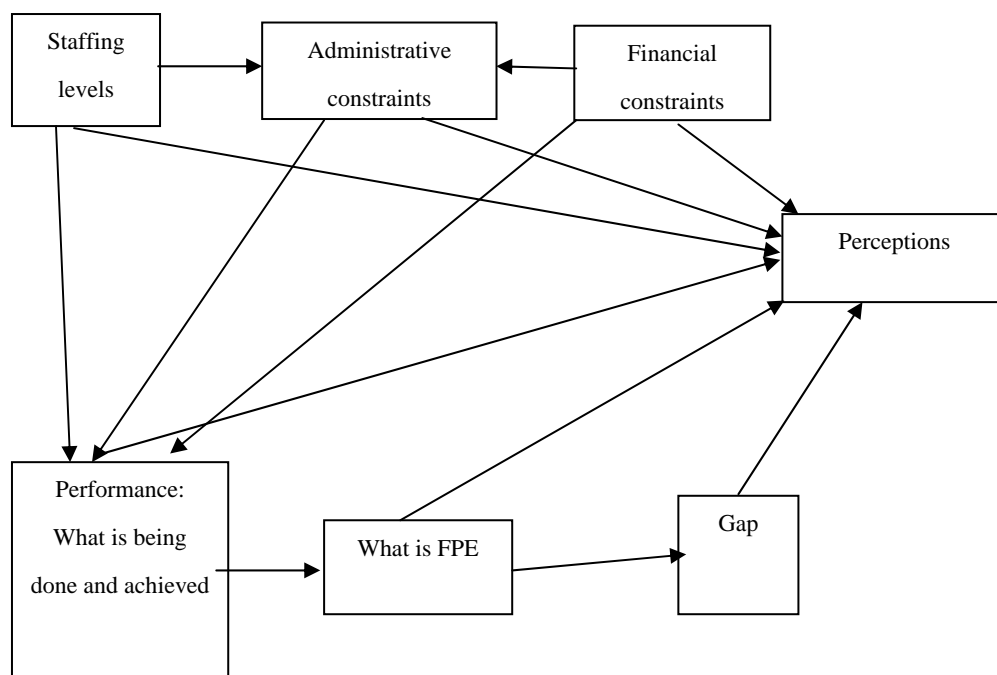
Members of the SMC and parents commented that when they initiate development projects at the school, they usually received little or no support from the government and donors. They felt teachers needed good salaries and some promotional incentives. They also thought that FPE brought about awareness to the masses of the need to contribute to education but this awareness needed to be sustained through constant campaigns. The parents felt the government should be made aware of research results and perhaps things might change for the better.

4.5 Links among Administrative, Financial and Perceptive Factors and School Performance, and Local Compliance with UPE Policy

Figure 2 above shows the links among administrative, financial constraints and the perceptions of stakeholders on the implementation of FPE/UPE. The perceptions of FPE/UPE from parents, SMCs, teachers, head teachers and district officials are influenced by what actually happens in the different arenas that affect schooling and what they perceive to be the ideal. First the stakeholders have their own perceptions of what FPE/UPE should be. This may have been influenced by the political rhetoric and their understanding of what FPE/UPE should be. Then they see that there are gaps between what is actually happening in schools and the perceived ideal. These gaps change their reactions to FPE/UPE

and as a result the stake holders are capable of influencing what should now happen in schools to reach the ideal. All the stakeholders make efforts to get the schools to operate according to their perception of FPE/UPE. However, they realize that the school's performance is directly influenced by other conditions. They see that schools have no teachers and learning materials. Furthermore, they see that there is not enough money to make the schools work. In addition, the finances allocated to District Offices are not enough to support school operations. They see that the supporting District Education offices have inadequate staff and so cannot render adequate support to schools. They find that the administrative instruments such as policies and regulations to support FPE/UPE are not followed or adhered to because of constraints beyond their capacity to deal with. All these shape their perceptions of how FPE/UPE is being implemented. The result is that some stake holders tend to support the system while others feel they have no power to change the implementation to reach the ideal. Still others abandon the whole effort and send their children to private schools even when they are very expensive, while others do not see any reasons to send their children to what they perceive as a failed school system. These perceptions by stakeholders have resulted in the existence of some good schools in urban areas, some bad schools in rural areas, an increased proliferation of private schools and others abandoning the idea of schooling completely even when it is "free."

Figure 2: Case of Malawi



Source: Created by Authors

Therefore, the performance at the school level is affected by staffing levels, administrative constraints and financial constraints both at the school level and at the District Office level. Financial constraints translate into inadequacy in provision of material and professional support and schools are compelled to operate under very difficult conditions. Performance can also be affected by the perception of the stakeholders. The stakeholders are capable of introducing positive or negative changes to the way schools perform. They can influence what goes on in a school as a result of what they perceive as a failing or a successful schooling system.

4.6. Challenges to the Achievement of UPE

The introduction of FPE resulted in increased enrolment and this has brought about so many challenges because FPE was introduced when the necessary elements for quality education were not yet in place. In general, the infrastructure was not in place to cope with the demand for free education. There are several related important factors that have led to the poor performance of the implementation of EFA in Malawi. These issues are discussed below.

4.6.1 Shortage of classrooms

There was already an acute shortage of classrooms in all districts in the country. The implementation of FPE made the situation even worse. With the increase in enrolment to about 2.9 million, the system had a deficit of a staggering 32,000 new classrooms. This meant that the existing facilities could not accommodate the influx. This resulted in overcrowding and a lot of classes were conducted outdoors, under trees. Consequently, most learning periods have to be cancelled during rainy days. Apart from the shortage of classrooms, the reform also brought about an acute shortage of furniture, which is an essential part of the classroom. In many schools, most pupils sit on the floor. Evidence from the SACMEQ data shows that 56.4 % of the standard six pupils sat on the floor (Chimombo et. al. 2005).

4.6.2 Shortage of teachers

The case of teachers was similar to that of classrooms. Teachers present in the system were far less than the number required. Yet, with the existing infrastructure and without well-trained teachers, the government scraped off user fees in order to allow many pupils to access basic education. The proportion of qualified teachers dropped from 84% in 1993 to about 50% in 1997 rising again to 89.9% by 2006. This meant that in the early years of FPE, a teacher who was supposed to teach a fewer number of pupils was suddenly forced to teach almost close to double the original number. During the FGDs, parents pointed out that one teacher can teach as many as 300 pupils. Naturally, very little attention could be given to any one pupil during class, thereby compromising the quality of education. Teachers in such cases avoid giving assignments to pupils because of the perceived enormous amount of work they have to look at.

4.6.3 Shortage of teaching and learning materials

Apart from the inexistence of sufficient school buildings and well trained teachers, there were very few learning and teaching materials. In almost all schools, there was a big shortage of textbooks and exercise books, pencils and slates and desks to cope with the increased number of pupils. It was only late in the life of FPE that Canadian International Cooperation Agency (CIDA) came in to assist. The studies conducted by Civil Society Coalition for Quality Basic Education (2003) have indicated that over 50% of the schools did not receive textbooks in the first six months of the 2002/03 financial year and the 2006/07 report noted that government has not distributed textbooks to schools since 2004. It is no wonder that parents in the FGDs observed that primary schooling is more expensive now than it was before FPE because they have to provide for all these things.

4.6.4 Under and over-aged pupils

FPE flooded the system with over-aged pupils. The official entry age to Malawi schools is 6 years. However a lot of under-aged and over-aged pupils entered the system. SACMEQ study (Milner et al 1998) conducted on standard 6 pupils, indicated that most pupils were over-aged with a national average of 15 years. This shows that most pupils were 3 – 4 years older than the average expected from the official starting age. This means that the age gap in class is too much and can negatively affect the learning of the younger pupils. There are many reasons for having over aged pupils. The MoE statistics indicate net enrolment ratios of more than 100% due to these problems. Some parents in the FGDs complained that setting an entry age limit is violating their freedom to send their children to school as they wish.

A largely important quality issue is over-crowding in classrooms. This has relevance for access issues also, but it greatly impacts upon the child's learning experience. The targeted ratio for classroom to pupils in Malawi is 1:60. While classes of that size may still present major challenges to the teaching and learning processes, the actual ratios fall far short of the target. Congestion is mostly prevalent in the lower three standards. The classroom to pupil situation improves from standard 4 onwards, due to the high drop out from primary schools. Crowding in classrooms is exacerbated by repetition of grades and overcrowding is made worse by the large number of over-age children.

4.6.5. Eroding quality in education

The rapid expansion of enrolments following the implementation of FPE resulted in further deterioration of an already overstretched primary education system, characterized by poor quality and low internal efficiency. Thus, Malawi needs to urgently and seriously address the quality of education if enrolment gains made through the implementation of FPE are to be sustained. This requires a massive injection of resources, which under the present difficult economic circumstances cannot be raised from government resources alone and thus will require substantial donor input. Several indicators provide information on the dimensions of quality. A selection of these indicators is presented for Malawi in Table 29 below.

Table 29: Indicators of school quality

Rates and ratios	90/1	91/2	92/3	93/4	94/5	95/6	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06
Trained teacher	71	86	87	84	58	67	51	50	54	62	59.5	----	70.1	----	84.8	89.9
Pupil/teacher	78	71	68	68	62	59	-	67	63	82	59.6	----	68	72	71	76
Pupil/classroom	96	116		115	162	189	156	204	93	93	113.5	----	107	107	85	107
Dropout rate	11	13	12	17	27	11	16	11	11	10	10.8	9.4	10.6	----		
Repetition rate	17	20	18	18	29	15	15	15	14	15	15.1	15.5	18.3	----	19.3	
Transition rate	8	13	12	9	9	9	8	11	11	10						
Desk pupil ratio	16.9	18.9	18.2	20	17.7	----	-----	17.4	17.7	15.2	15.4	----	11.6	----	-----	

Source: Created by Authors

All key quality indicators of primary education worsened after the enrolment increases. It has been suggested that it might have been wiser to delay EFA and ensure that the school conditions and teachers were of reasonably good quality for some of the pupils, and then slowly expand (Chimombo, 2005). It takes time to equip schools well, produce sufficient textbooks and train good teachers. These results indicated that quality in education matters. The challenge to the EFA agenda is not just enrolling all children in school. *These schools must also be of certain standards in order to achieve the acclaimed benefits to education* (Chimombo, 2005: 168). Trends in pupil performance have not been easy to track, owing to the lack of periodic national assessments to monitor performance, but evidence from the SACMEQ studies and the recent PCAR baseline study and indeed many more are pointing to the fact that children are promoted to subsequent grades before they have mastered the prerequisite skills.

4.6.6 Dropout and low completion rates

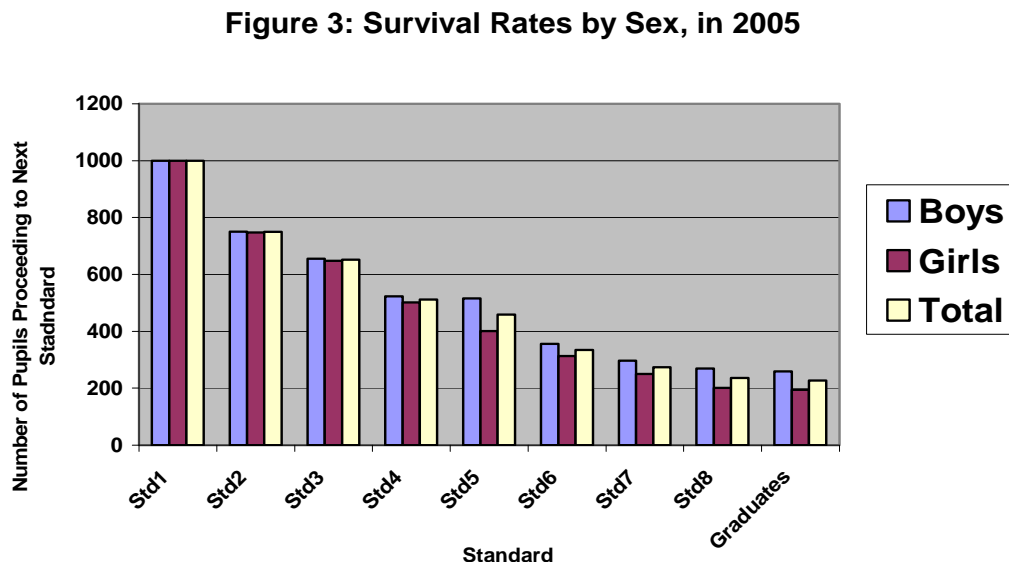
Gains in net enrolment are negated by the relatively high dropout rates, especially between Standards 2 and 1. Many reasons have been suggested to explain this trend. Among these, the critical ones include negative attitudes of certain communities towards education especially for girls, long distances covered by pupils when going to school, early pregnancies, lack of food and clothes in households, general levels of poverty and lack of resources for quality education. The evidence in Malawi seem to indicate that despite the many achievements made by GABLE through several interventions, GABLE as a project has not been able to satisfactorily address the problems of quality and efficiency in the Malawian education system. The evidence indicates that one challenge still remains: *to maintain current enrolment levels in primary schools and simultaneously improve the quality and efficiency of the*

1 See the UNDP's National Human Development Report 2000

system.

The need to improve quality to curb the problems of dropout need not be overemphasized. There is a great deal of loss of opportunity which is resulting from the loss of the many children who show interest and start school, but find themselves not welcomed by the prevailing conditions of the system. These results were also confirmed by Chimombo and Chonzi (1999). Our major challenge is to see to it that those who start school (especially girls) remain in the system. This will remain our challenge for some time to come. It does not help us much to woe so many pupils into a system that is weak in retaining them.

The Malawi experience demonstrated some of the kinds of difficulties to be encountered when trying to implement EFA. The major problem was one of the supply of education. Overall levels of supply by the state were so low that effectively, what happened was that many pupils were marshalled into schools that were not equipped in terms of materials and human resources to teach them. According to Chimombo (1999), the drive towards EFA was undermined by the persistently large number of pupils taking longer than normal to complete the cycle and the many who dropped out (or are dropping out) before attaining permanent literacy as demonstrated in *Figure 3* below.



Source: MoE Education Statistics various years.

The information from the figure points to the long-standing problem of diminishing enrolment in Malawi primary schools. The main message from *Figure 3* above is that Malawi faces an uphill battle in building an education system capable of providing EFA.

4.6.7 High levels of inequalities

The provision of basic education for all children is sometimes hampered by inequalities in provision between urban and rural areas or between the sexes or different social classes. Lockheed and Verspoor, (1991) observed that major impediments to education in rural areas include a general lack of resources such as teachers, materials, facilities and equipment. In this section of the report, the challenge towards EFA is assessed through unequal distribution of resources and unequal achievement using the SACMEQ data. The rural/urban differentiation is displayed in Table 30 below.

Table 30: Distribution of resources between rural and urban schools

Percentage of Pupils				
	Isolated/Rural		Town/City	
	Mean	SE	Mean	SE
Reading Teachers house Poor or Major Repair	86.6	3.55	65.5	8.21
Maths Teachers house Poor or Major Repair	82.1	4.15	67.4	7.67
Schools with no Water	29.7	5.10	22.1	6.63
Reading Teachers Female	10.09	3.6	69.29	7.43
Maths Teachers Female	14.20	3.76	58.10	7.88
School Buildings poor or Major Repair	59.5	5.54	55.5	8.33
Means				
	Isolated/Rural		Town/City	
	Mean	SE	Mean	SE
Pupils' Number of Days Absent	2.1	0.21	1.8	0.20
Reading Teachers No. of Periods per Week	33.84	1.63	27.13	2.31
Mathematics Teachers No. of Periods per Week	33.46	1.72	23.00	2.36
Average Distance to Facilities	20.3	1.75	9.0	2.09

Source: Created by Authors

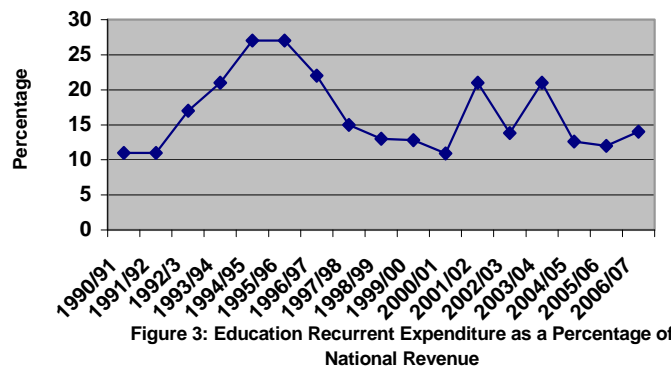
It can be noted from Table 30 that in the isolated/rural area, 87 percent of standard 6 pupils were taught by reading teachers who indicated that their houses were poor or needing repair. In the town/city area, 65 percent of Standard 6 pupils were taught by reading teachers who indicated that their houses were poor or needing repair. These differences were significant and there were also similar significant differences for the math teachers. In terms of percentage of pupils with female teachers, it can be noted from Table 29 that only 10.09 percent of the pupils in isolated areas had female reading teachers while 69.29 percent of the pupils in town had female reading teachers. Again these were significant differences. In fact, the rural versus urban differentiation as measured by the variables in Table 30 were significant for all the variables except for the conditions of school buildings.

An attempt was also made to examine how the pupils performed by sex, socioeconomic status and school location using the SACMEQ data. The analysis showed that whether examined by sex, socio-economic status or school location, there were significant differences in the performance of pupils by these sub-groups. Thus, boys performed better than girls in both, reading and mathematics; pupils from lower socio-economic status achieved significantly less than those from upper socio-economic classes and pupils from rural areas also achieved significantly less. These differences in achievement demonstrated the difficulties embedded in achieving EFA.

4.7.8. Financing

The achievement of EFA requires substantial financing and many governments realize this and commit themselves to the cause. The Government of Malawi's commitment to the education sector is demonstrated by the steady increase from 20% in the 1993/94 to 27% in the 1994/95 in the government's recurrent resources allocated to the education sector. This represented one of the highest allocations in Sub-Saharan Africa. In Figure 4 below, the expenditure levels in education as a percentage of the national total budget have been presented.

Figure 4: Education Recurrent Expenditure as Percentage of National Revenue



The trend shown by the graph above indicates that there was a steady increase in the percentage of money allocated and spent for educational purposes from 1992 to 1994/95 (the year in which free primary education was introduced). This high level of recurrent allocation continued until 1997 when there was a drastic decrease in the allocation to education. Two issues arise from the figure above. The first issue is that there are a lot of fluctuations in the allocation of resources to the education sector, which means that planners and managers are never sure about the amount of resources available for the sector. The second issue is that the high commitment to education after the FPE dwindled as the years passed. Again all these trends demonstrate the difficulty embedded in attempting to provide for genuine EFA. Thus, if the emphasis of self-help at the recipient level suggests not only being in the drivers' seat but also that the country should make a substantial contribution towards the financing of the reform agenda and long-term sustainability, the evidence rendered above shows that this national obligation is clearly at odds with any regime with a substantial degree of aid dependency (King, 2004).

The third Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD III) in October, 2003, reaffirmed, as a continuing principle for the future, the ideal *partnership based on mutual trust and respect between Africa and the rest of the international community* (italics added). Are international governments and institutions living up to expectations? In Malawi, external donors continue to play a significant role in education financing, especially with regard to the purchase of teaching and learning materials, equipment, and furniture and the building of educational institutions, their renovation and maintenance. Local communities and parents are also increasingly playing a role in educational finance, especially with regard to sharing in the cost of buildings and their maintenance, transport to schools, food, uniforms, learning materials, extra-curricular activities and monitoring performance like homework checks.

Evidence from Malawi shows some negative elements in the whole North-South relationship and the politics of aid. This relationship is shaped by the way the so-called MDGs are formulated which dictates that the donors are more central to the implementation of the new modalities (King, 2004). Commenting on this aspect, the formulator of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) in Malawi had this to say:

There is often an underlying assumption on the part of development partners that because they are benevolent donors, everything they do is in the best interests of Malawians and they are above criticism. However, the reality is that at best, donors do not effectively use their resources for poverty reduction, and at worst help to exacerbate poverty by undermining Government's planning and priority setting. (GoM 1995, 93)

The people who formulated the PRSP went further say that the preparation of the PRSP basically involved three stages. These were mobilisation, preparation and validation processes. The three stages were aimed at: building broad Malawian ownership of the PRSP; building consensus on PRSP in order to enhance likelihood to policy adoption, implementation and sustainability; to ensure donor “buy in” to PRSP and to meet donor requirements (GoM, 1995,:143). The technocrats in Malawi still had to take into considerations the donors’ interests for fear that they would not buy in to their strategies. The question then is, whose agenda is being fulfilled under these circumstances?

There is also the problem of the hidden agendas of the countries of the North. The nature of the North-South relationship is such that the South should always agree with what the North has already laid out. Any recipient country that stands firm on what is believed right invites drastic measures from the donor side. The action by the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) to withdraw all aid from Malawi in 2002 amidst massive innovations orchestrated by DANIDA herself can be described as one such cruel action of the North. Indeed, the many times IMF has frozen aid to Malawi directs us to the realization that in the North-South relationship, the aid politics of the North is what matters. It would seem that in this relationship, where one party has funds to allocate and the other seeks these funds, equality is not possible. *If so, then dialogue, partnership and similar terms become a façade to obscure the entrenchment of dependence* (Samoff, 1999). This means that the people of the South must lose their consciousness, must lose their integrity and indeed must lose “their-self” if they are not to lose the precious “aid” from the North. Where is the *partnership which is supposed to be based on mutual trust and respect between Africa and the rest of the international community?*

There are also other concerns regarding the unpredictability of the financing of education by donors. Declarations made at Jomtien and Dakar conferences are too broad and lack a clear and detailed elaboration of the funding mechanisms if a genuine Education For All is to be achieved. The donors mean little to the program and strategy planners at the country level. Malawi was one of the first developing countries to respond to the Jomtien declaration by making a board decision to remove fees. What became clear in Malawi after the FPE was that because of lack of internationally instituted “modulus operandi”, the local donors could not coordinate in a manner that ensured that adequate levels of required resources were mobilized. Analysis elsewhere (Chimombo 1999) indicated that Malawi should have been spending 30 percent of her GDP if quality education was to be provided. Clearly, the message from Malawi then is that the achievement of EFA is impossible without heavy donor support with its implications for increased aid dependency. The other message arising from Malawi’s experience is that leaving it to local donor agencies to respond to a country seriously committed to the provision of EFA simply thwarts the achievement of the Dakar pledges. Thus, in increasing the role of the state, we need to be cognizant of the fact that the scale of external support required for implementation of policies for genuine EFA counters the ownership and sustainability initiatives of national plans and priorities.

5.0 Conclusions

The way district officials, head teachers, teachers, SMC and parents perceive the implementation of FPE has implications on whether the policy needs further support or needs to be rethought or even replaced. In the foregoing chapters, views of the stakeholders have been laid out. Conclusions about regional differences are difficult to draw as districts deal directly with the central office. Differences between districts may also be difficult to discern as they get similar treatment from the central office. However some districts are better endowed with support from NGOs than others and it is possible to see the impact of their projects. Here the focus is mainly the differences between rural and urban schools and district variations are accorded a cursory glance. In conclusion, we answer the questions posed at the beginning to see the link between perceptions of how FPE was being implemented and financial and administrative issues in the system.

5.1 Administrative Constraints that Impeded Smooth Implementation of the Provision of Primary Schooling under the FPE Policy

It was clear from the preceding paragraphs that staffing in the district offices was a problem. Junior officers mainly at the clerical level were manning the offices at the district level. Senior posts were

unfilled and this caused a lot of mistrust between the DEM and the supporting departments in the office. The junior staff lacked skills and much of the work was being done by the DEMs themselves. It was also apparent that the Central office was still responsible for much of what the schools needed to comply with FPE. Books, teaching and learning materials, teachers and even construction of schools were decided upon by the Central office and this made the implementers on the ground powerless to affect any quality improvements at school level. The problem with this arrangement was that the Central government cannot change policy to suit individual schools. This prevents individual districts from trying out innovative practices. Deployment of teachers remains the function of the Central office and it offers little alternatives for schools and districts if they wanted to recruit capable teachers. This is the main problem with the top down implementation of policies or with the power coercive nature of policy formulation and implementation.

5.2 Financial Constraints that Impeded Smooth Implementation of the FPE Policy

The district office which is directly concerned with the operations of schools has no funds to support the schools. The only funds available for schools are teachers leave grants and teachers' welfare and are part of the ORT. In effect, the DEM has no budgeted items for individual schools in the district. In addition, the monthly subvention which the district gets from the central government is smaller than requested in the budget and usually fluctuates in concert with a cash budget. The district office budgets for inspection visits to schools, but these are not implemented to the full as the funds received are usually depleted by other pressing issues such as leave grants and teachers' welfare and funerals. Starting from last year, the World Bank has organized Direct Support to Schools amounting to around K30,000.00, but this fund is provided through the District Assembly and the DEM only guides the schools on how to proceed in accessing the funds. Therefore the DEM and officers have limited opportunities to play their roles of monitoring and evaluating schools. They are not able to provide teaching and learning materials because this is not their mandate.

At the school level, parental contributions are very small, usually meant to pay for some repairs and services. In rural areas there is always some resistance from parents to contribute, as the perception is that schooling is free and the government is responsible for all finances at the school. This perception is slowly dying out as more parents realize that apart from contributions in kind, schools also need some kind of financial support to function properly. None of the schools reported of any financial support from well wishers or donors during the last fiscal year. But according to the DEMs there were schools in the districts which sometimes benefit from such support.

It should also be pointed out that apart from the meagre contribution to the school fund from parents; there is little scope for other fundraising avenues especially in rural areas.

5.3 The Perception of Parents and Communities on the Current Status of Primary Education under FPE

It was clear that parents saw that the number of teachers in school was inadequate and that children were learning outdoors. They also reported of buying teaching and learning materials which the government was supposed to supply. They saw teachers as needing some kind of incentives such as increased salaries to arrest the growing negative attitude towards FPE. The parents saw the need to increase monitoring of schools, as some reported that teachers and pupils were becoming lazy. A few parents thought that the quality of education was not bad and many believed it was moderately good. However, parents in particularly disadvantaged schools saw little to admire in the quality of education offered under FPE.

5.4 Administrative Issues, Financial Issues and Parents' Perceptions of Primary Education under FPE in Urban and Rural Areas

All schools rural and urban are placed under one district education manager. The decision to deploy teachers is dependent upon availability of accommodation and other facilities at a school. Decisions to build good infrastructure at a school are made by central government as SMC can only perform few actions. Therefore the perception of primary education in an area depends on the availability of school

facilities. Parents in rural schools contribute cash as well as labour while parents in urban areas are more likely to contribute cash over labour. Urban schools normally have good buildings (although these are normally not enough) and have more than adequate numbers of teachers. Teachers tend to be overworked in rural areas because of lack of adequate number of teachers. Parents in urban areas can support their children when schools cannot provide learning materials. Children in urban areas tend to do better than pupils in rural areas and these tend to portray a good picture of schooling in urban areas while lack of facilities in rural areas tend to portray a negative picture of schooling. This is one of the major challenges in the achievement of EFA goals.

5.5 Possible Links among Administrative Issues, Financial Issues, Stakeholders' Perceptions, School Performance and the Actual Implementation of FPE

The central office provides teachers and the schools with little opportunity to recruit trained teachers. Therefore, the current high teacher pupil ratios in schools have a negative impact on school performance. Similarly, the central office is responsible for supplying teaching and learning materials. As this was not happening in the last four years, parents had to provide their children with these materials. This was not easy in rural areas and thus the performance in such schools suffered considerably. The introduction of DSS is a welcome idea but it is said to be too little to cater for the needs of a school, especially big schools. It probably will take a few more similar funding regimes to get schools to a situation where they can claim to have the necessary materials. Outdoor classes will continue to plague some schools as SMC have shown to have little manual support for the construction of durable and well-designed classrooms.

5.6 Links in Urban and Rural Areas

The perception in rural areas about the school development fund leads to reduced attendance as teachers sometimes send children back to collect funds as agreed by SMC and parents. As one teacher mentioned, poor children move from one school to another trying to avoid paying the school fund. This takes the children away from school for a considerable period of time. In urban areas it is a nemesis of FPE. Parents who perceive school performance under FPE negatively tend to send their children to high fee paying private schools especially to avoid age restriction and to benefit from the perceived good quality of teaching in the schools.

5.7. Conclusions and the Way Forward

The various efforts taken towards achieving EFA have brought with them a number of successes. With the introduction of Free Primary Education in 1994/95, the gross enrolment in the primary schools soared to 3.2 million pupils from about 1.9 million and many children are setting their feet into a school of some kind. The other achievement that has been realised through the implementation of FPE in Malawi has been a proliferation of both primary and secondary schools throughout the country. There have been a number of policies formulated together with legislation promulgated to create a framework for the monitoring and delivery of EFA. The major policy and legal instruments for the achievement of EFA are:

- The Policy Investment Framework
- The Early Childhood and Development policy
- Orphans and Vulnerable Children policy
- The EFA Action Plan
- The Girls Re - entry policy
- Policy on special education
- National Education Sector Plan
- Review of the National Youth Policy
- Review of the Adult Literacy policy
- National Gender policy

Despite all these efforts since the early 1990s, Malawi is still a long way from achieving the Education for All goals. In tracing the attempt to improve the provision of Education for All, it is clear that this global agenda has come a long way. Right from the great conferences that followed independence, to

the famous Jomtien and Dakar conferences, efforts to expand education have not achieved their targets. The obvious question then arises, what is the problem? What has happened to the declaration of 1960s, the vision for EFA of 1990, and the reaffirmation of these in Dakar in 2000? Has the international community succeeded in shaping the future of African education? What is clear in all the target settings is a manifestation of the narrow mindedness of the international community in coming to grips with the problems of the developing world.

We want to emphasize that as long as the international community is in the driver's seat in determining the targets, the set declarations will not be realized. There is a need for the generation of home-grown knowledge that takes into account the context in which schooling takes place. There is a need to enable local researchers and policy makers to generate more relevant information and policy alternatives. This also means that teachers, researchers, policy analysts and indeed policy makers in education should be in the process of fundamentally re-conceptualizing what it is that they do and how they have to do it in the future. Our minds should focus on answering the following questions: How can we make our children literate and numerate? How can our teachers be prepared to deal with the large numbers of pupils in the classroom? Thus, the core challenge is for us to come up with a coherent strategy that links our actions to what is happening in the system and therefore focus on where the problems in the system is. There is need for a situation analysis of how the key actors in the system can be supported so that our complex reforms can be rendered more effective. These cannot be achieved by the one-size-fits-all school of thought propagated by the big bang approach. There is need for a mind-set change that begins to use and apply research findings. It is this further research, aimed at identifying policy investment strategies and local action, that will be cost effective in raising the quality of primary schools and hence the learning curves of young children.

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Chapter 5. The Case of Uganda

Albert Byamugisha and Mikiko Nishimura

1.0 Background of UPE

Education is a necessary condition for development in the widest sense, because empowering people, especially the poor with basic cognitive skills is the surest way to render them self-reliant. It has been noted that primary education in particular has a significant impact on economic growth of a country and enhances earnings of individuals who have benefited from it. Social rates of return for those who have completed primary education are the highest among all levels (Psacharopoulos, 1994).

The need for free primary education was emphasised by the United Nations General Assembly (1948). This assembly adopted the universal declaration of human rights, which among other things stated that: *“Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free for at least the elementary and fundamental stage”*. However, for developing countries, this remained more of an ideal than reality due to colonialism at that time. It was not until majority developing countries had won their independence in the early 1960s that the first concrete foundation for mass education was laid in most countries.

In Uganda, the great potential of primary education, as an engine of economic and social development was recognized right from independence in 1962. Prior to this, the education system was narrow and elitist and hence alienated the majority of the citizens from participating in it.

In order to redress the situation, the immediate post independence government appointed the E.B. Castle commission in 1963 to review the system and advise it on a suitable education system for a newly independent country. The commission recommended that there was need to expand primary education in order to meet the high level demand for manpower created by the needs of a newly independent state. However, in the short term priority was given to secondary and post primary education in order to produce manpower needed for economic development at that time. It was not until the period of 1972-1976 that concern was expressed about the neglect of primary education, which was reaching only 50% of the school-going age group.

Also, the 1982-84 recovery programme, which aimed at making primary education available to the children, remained more of a wish than a reality because of the political turmoil that diverted resources from education to military operations.

It was not until 1987, when the Education Policy Review Commission (EPRC) was reappointed to review the education system. It recommended policy reforms right from primary to tertiary education (Ministry of Education, 1989). They further pointed out that primary education is the only formal education that most Ugandan children can ever hope to receive. The commission also noted that primary education is a good foundation upon which the subsequent education levels are built; therefore it should be taken critically.

The emphasis on basic education was demonstrated at the world conference on Education For All held in Jomtien, Thailand (1990) which ensured that all participating countries commit themselves to providing every child, youth and adult the opportunities to achieve an acceptable level of learning. It therefore represented the world leaders and organisations' commitment to basic education globally. It also guaranteed donors' support to countries that could adopt basic Education for All policies.

Four years later, in 1991, the government decided to implement measures designed to reverse the declining trends in the quality of education over the past two decades. In a policy statement contained in the “Background to the budget, June 1991” government declared its sectoral strategy on primary education as follows (Government of Uganda, 1991);

The focus for the new decade and beyond will be primary education in terms of both universal and high quality...This entails shifting resources from secondary and tertiary institutions particularly where they are being used for non – instructional subsidies toward primary level...

During the 1996 presidential campaign, president Museveni made it as one of his platform issues and pledged to provide free primary education to four children per family. Consequently after being elected, the president fulfilled his pledge and the implementation of UPE began in January 1997.

In April 2000, the World Education Forum held in Dakar, Senegal, reaffirmed the vision of Jomtien but called for a new level of commitment, designed to achieve targets that have been stated regularly but rarely delivered. This forum came up with the Dakar framework of action 2002, which states that; *“Governments must make firm political commitments and allocate sufficient resources to all components of basic education” and that “no countries seriously committed to Education For All will be thwarted in their achievement of this goal by lack of resources. Funding agencies should coordinate their effort to provide flexible development assistance...”*

To supplement previous efforts towards education for all, the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) conference held in Dakar (2002) identified bridging the education gap as one of the most important strategies to eradicate poverty. This was to be achieved by working hand in hand with donors and multilateral bodies to achieve the international goal for universal primary education by 2015.

1.1 Aims and Objectives of UPE

The overall goal of UPE in Uganda is to increase **access**, **equity** and **quality** of primary education in Uganda. Its specific objectives include:

- i. Establishing, providing and maintaining quality education as the basis for promoting necessary human resource development
- ii. Transforming society in a fundamental and positive way.
- iii. Providing the minimum necessary facilities and resources to enable every child to enter and remain in school until the primary cycle of education is complete.
- iv. Making basic education accessible to the learner and relevant to his or her needs as well as meeting national goals.
- v. Making education equitable in order to eliminate disparities and inequalities.
- vi. Ensuring that education is affordable by majority of Ugandans.
- vii. By aiming to achieve UPE, government would be fulfilling its mission to eradicate illiteracy while equipping every individual with the basic skills and knowledge with which to exploit the environment for both self and national development.

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1.2 Design and Implementation Strategies

UPE was designed in 1997 as a national programme aimed at providing free education for 4 children per family. It is funded jointly by international development partners (Funding Agencies), Government of Uganda and the community and is implemented by the local government.

The programme was designed with five components including; Infrastructure provision, capitation grant, qualified teacher provision, primary school curriculum review and provision of instructional materials. These were areas that were critical to providing basic education and total achievement of the programme objectives.

Under the infrastructure development component, government undertook to construct and furnish new facilities (i.e. classrooms, sanitary facilities and teachers houses) and complete unfinished classrooms and provide eighteen three-seater desks to each classroom built. The objective of this component was to expand facilities to accommodate increased enrolments. In order to achieve this, government set the following targets; classroom: pupil ratio of 1:55, desk: pupil ratio of 1:3, latrine: pupil ratio of 1:40, and at least 4 teachers’ houses per school. For schools in conflict areas and other schools with special

requirements, the School Facility Grant (SFG) was made flexible enough to meet diverse needs.

With regard to capitation grants, government undertook the responsibility of payment of tuition fees for four children per family there by relieving parents of the burden of payment of school fees. This guaranteed resources to schools, necessary resources for running school activities. These include; extra instructional / scholastic materials, co-curricular activities, management of the school and administration. The grant was targeted at only government-aided primary schools.

It is the role of government to provide adequate and qualified teachers for effective implementation of the programme. It is important to note that when UPE was announced, many children were attracted to school. Increasing enrolments therefore necessitated an increase in the number of teachers. In order to increase the number of teachers, government introduced the in-service teacher training programme which enabled all under trained teachers to upgrade their education and obtain the minimum requirement for a primary school teacher.

In order to make the UPE program relevant to the needs of the children, a review of the primary school curriculum was undertaken. The review was aimed at making basic education relevant to the needs of individuals by equipping every individual with basic skills. This was to help develop functional literacy and numeracy, effective communication skills in local languages, appreciation of diversity in cultural practices, traditions and social organisations, acceptance of variety of social beliefs and values.

Furthermore, government undertook the responsibility to provide increased instructional materials. It was aimed at ensuring quality and equity through improving access and usage of scholastic materials. Instructional materials in primary schools include: Core text books, teacher's guides, supplementary text books and basic teachers' professional references and pedagogic materials, pupils' basic reference books (Atlas and Dictionaries), supplementary reading books and learning aids specifically wall charts. In 1993 there were 37 pupils for every book. In 2004, the ratio was 3:1 for primary three to primary seven for core subjects and is currently standing at 1:1 in most schools. The Ministry is now committed to ensure that these books are put in the hands of the pupils.

Finally, a number of complimentary programs and strategies have been adopted to consolidate the gains from UPE. These have been mainly in the area of special needs education and non-formal education.

In Uganda, existing literatures find that the UPE has made a great impact on enrollment increase from 3 million in 1996 to 5.3 million in 1997 (Business Synergies, 2003). Its impact on enrollment of poor girls and completion rate up to Grade 4th for boys and Grade 5th for girls are found (Deininger, 2003; Nishimura, et al., 2008). By the year 2000, the number had increased to 6.5 million and by 2006 it had increased to 7.3 million children. In addition, the number of teachers on the payroll increased from 88,247 in 1997 to 110,366 in 2000 and to 124,137 by the year 2004. This number now stands at about 128,057 teachers. With regard to infrastructure, the number of classrooms increased from 25,427 19997 to 50,370 in 2000. By the year 2004, this number had increased to 78,403 and now stands at 102,648.

The pupil teacher ratio (PTR) has also been improving since the inception of UPE. In should be noted that since the inception of UPE, the PTR has been reducing. In the year 2000, the PTR was 65:1. This kept on improving and reached 54:1 by the year 2004 and now stands at 52:1. This is a great improvement as this is one of the quality indicators. In addition, the pupil classroom ratio has also improved from 106 in 2000. to 85 in 2004 and now stands at 72:1.

Nevertheless, internal efficiency of education (e.g. repetition and dropout) is a serious challenge (Nishimura, et al, 2007). The available information suggests that only 22% of children that enrolled in primary one in 1997 managed to reach primary seven in 2003 (Byamugisha, 2006). In fact, quality of education suffers to a great extent. According to the data in 2006, the percentages of pupils who reached defined competency levels in literacy and numeracy were 46% and 43% respectively for P3 and 34% and 31% respectively for P6 (UNEB, 2006).

2.0 Introduction to the Field Study

Universal Primary Education (UPE) Policy has become popular in many countries in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) for achieving Education for All (EFA) since the mid-1990s. However, the UPE policy lacks analytical studies on its impacts and challenges.

Under such recognition, a comparative analysis of the administrative, financial and perception gaps in UPE was organized to analyze how UPE policies have been formed, implemented and evaluated in each country and what kind of administrative and financial issues should be raised from these comparative perspectives of Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, and Uganda. The general policy review and situation analysis was conducted in 2006 (Graduate School of International Cooperation Studies, Kobe University, 2007). Based on the findings made by the previous study, we intend to investigate further administrative factors, financial factors, and stakeholders' perception at local level in order to find the link of those with educational performance and policy compliance.

2.1 Study Objectives

The study was organized with four major objectives or targets as follows;

1. To create a common comparative analytical framework to examine educational administration and finance for UPE policies in sub-Saharan Africa;
2. To grasp common (i.e. regional) and unique (i.e. country-specific) issues of the UPE policies and administrative and financial systems for primary education sub-sector; and
3. To produce a joint policy recommendation on UPE policies and administrative and financial issues for each country as well as the SSA region as a result of academic collaboration of researchers in Africa and Asia.

This particular field study was conducted to address the following questions:

1. What are the administrative constraints for smooth implementation of provision of primary education under the UPE policy?
2. What are the financial constraints for smooth implementation of provision of primary education under the UPE policy?
3. How do stakeholders perceive UPE policy?
4. Are administrative, financial, and perceptive issues different in urban and rural areas?
5. What are the possible links among the administrative, financial and perceptive factors, school performance and local compliance (incompliance) with the central policy?
6. Are these possible links different in urban and rural areas?

2.2 Scope of the Research

The research was conducted in Kabale district and Soroti district covering 20 primary schools. A head teacher and two teachers were interviewed from each of the 20 primary schools. In addition, one School Management Committee (SMC) member and two parents were also interviewed in each of the 20 primary schools. The research covered critical issues for comparative analysis which included performance at district and school level, compliance with the policy, administration, finance, and perception. The study also involved the District Education officers (DEO), District Inspector of Schools (DIS), Chief Administrative Officers (CAO), and Chief Finance Officers (CFO). In Soroti district, a secretary of education was also interviewed as a representative of the Local Council.

3.0 Methodological Design

Qualitative case study methodology was used to obtain common and unique themes grounded in identified gaps.

3.1 Sample Selection Criteria

A total of 20 primary schools were selected from Kabale district in the Western region and Soroti

district in the Eastern region. Two districts were selected since they are quite different in terms of geographical location, ethnic composition, and educational performance. Kabale is relatively good in all performance indicators, while Soroti is an average performing district, as shown in Table 1. The criteria for selection of schools were based on the spread location and variety of performance (good performing, average, and poor performing). In Kabale district, 10 schools were selected from the four counties which include; Ndorwa, Rukiga, Rubanda and Kabale Municipality. Sixty percent of the schools selected were rural, 30% were peri-urban while only 10% was urban. In Soroti district, 10 schools were chosen from the four counties including Soroti Municipality, Gweri, Kasilo, and Serere. Seventy percent of the schools selected were rural and 30% were peri-urban.

Table 1. Characteristics of the Sampled Districts (2006)

	PTR	PCR	Completion Rate			NIR		
			Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Kabale	37	56	67	62	64	86	76	80
Soroti	54	77	56	39	48	77	76	76
National Total	51	77	52	39	46	59	58	59

Note: PTR: Pupil Teacher Ratio, PCR: Pupil Classroom Ratio, NIR: Net Intake Ratio
Source: Ministry of Education and Sports.

3.2 Interview Protocols

Semi-structured interview were used so that the interviewers probe questions as the need arises. Individual interviews were conducted with the district officials such as DEO, DIS, CAO and CFO.

4.0 Findings of the Study

The findings from the field are presented according to the issues that were studied and these include; administrative, financial and perception issues. These issues were studied at district and school/community level. In addition, they have been presented according to both district and school levels as well as making a small comparison between the rural schools and the peri-urban schools.

4.1 Administrative Issues under UPE Policy (District Level)

4.1.1 Roles and responsibilities

The research attempted to study the various roles and responsibilities of different district officials with respect to education. These included overall education planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation of schools, deployment of teachers, administration of in-service teacher training, construction and rehabilitation of schools, and provision of textbooks.

The findings indicate that the District Education Committee is responsible for the planning and budgeting for education, while the District Education Officer (DEO), District Inspector of Schools (DIS), District Internal Audit, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer, and the School Management Committees (SMCs) are responsible for Monitoring Schools. On the other hand, evaluation was reported as a responsibility of the DEOs, DIS, and head teachers as well as Uganda National Board of Examination (UNEB).

Administration of in-service teacher training is the responsibility of the Principal of the Primary Teachers College, DEO and the Chief Administrative Officer. (CAO).

Construction and rehabilitation of Schools is the responsibility of the central government and the district council while provision of instructional materials was totally reported as a responsibility of the central government.

Provision of scholastic materials is the responsibility of the parents although parents are not very cooperative in providing for their children.

There was some confusion among district stakeholders on each role. The obtained responses were not exactly uniform. A few officers mentioned that provision of scholastic materials is the responsibility of the central government and local council.

4.1.2 Difficult roles and responsibilities

The district officials also identified roles and responsibilities which are most difficult to observe. Among the most difficult roles was monitoring and evaluation of schools as reported by all district officials interviewed while three officers (out of four) in Kabale and three officers (out of five) in Soroti said that construction and rehabilitation as another difficult role to observe. The reasons cited for difficulty in monitoring were lack of facilitation in terms of transport and having too many schools with very few staff while rehabilitation and construction of primary schools was cited as difficult because of too much demand from Schools during the time when even School Facilities Grant (SFG) has been suspended in both districts due to the resource shift to the Universal Secondary Education (USE) programme.

In addition, deployment of teachers was reported as difficult because of lack of teachers' houses and the social problems that teachers face in both districts. One respondent in Kabale said that education planning and budgeting is a difficult role because the committee members are not trained in the area of education planning and budgeting, while two of the respondents in Soroti mentioned that evaluation of education is difficult due to inadequate assessment of pupils in schools, scattered schools, and lack of funds. Lastly, in-service training was reported as a difficult task simply because the PTCs are not very cooperative.

All of the respondents in Soroti and in Kabale districts acknowledged the gap between the tasks and capacity at the district level. The majority felt that there is a lack of training for district officers in the areas of data management, planning, IT, human resource management and budgets to undertake their tasks. The major reasons for the gap in Kabale were lack of a budget to pursue the given tasks, low moral of some officers and insufficient number of staff.

4.1.3 Views on roles and responsibilities of the School Management Committees (District level)

The roles and responsibilities of the School Management Committees (SMCs) in primary school that were identified during the study include; planning school activities, deciding on the ways of spending UPE/FPE funds, auditing school finance, and employing part-time teachers.

The findings indicate that all the district officials mentioned to plan school activities as one of the roles and responsibilities of the SMCs. Almost all district officials, except for one, also mentioned that deciding on the way of spending UPE funds is the responsibility of the SMCs. Only one of the district officials in Kabale and none in Soroti reported that the SMCs are also involved in auditing school finance, since they are not trained for auditing. Employment of part time teachers was not regarded as their role since there is no budget to employ these staff under UPE. Instead, three district officials in Soroti mentioned monitoring schools as an important role of the SMCs.

On the level of function, three district officials (out of four) interviewed in Kabale said that the SMCs are **active** in planning school activities and deciding the ways of spending UPE funds, while in Soroti only two out of five officials responded the same. With regard to employment of part time teachers, three officials in Kabale and four officials in Soroti reported that the SMCs are not functioning due to the recognition that the government is responsible for everything under the UPE policy in addition to lack of skills and budgets by most of them.

4.1.4 Views on the roles and responsibilities of head teachers (school level)

At school level, the head teachers and teachers were asked what the roles and responsibilities of the head teachers were. These are summarized in Table 2.

Table2: Roles and responsibilities of the head teachers and teachers.

S/N	Roles and Responsibilities	Kabale		Soroti	
		N	%age	N	%age
1	Supervise other teachers	30	100.0	30	100.0
2	Managing the SMCs	8	26.7	21	70.0
3	Collect fees from Students	5	16.7	11	36.7
4	Decide Usage of UPE funds	8	26.7	18	60.0
5	Deployment of part time teachers	2	6.7	8	26.7
6	Request for School construction or rehabilitation	22	73.3	27	90.0
7	Communication with Parents	22	73.3	30	100.0
8	Sending Teachers for In-service training	9	30.0	20	66.7

Source: Created by Authors.

From Table 2, it is observed that 100% of the respondents identified supervision as the main role of the head teacher in both districts, while the majority in both districts reported that the head teachers' second and third role is communication with parents and to request government for construction/rehabilitation. A sharp contrast in two districts can be seen in managing the SMCs and deciding usage of UPE, whereby head teachers in Soroti district seem to be more actively involved in managing SMCs and UPE grant. On the other hand, to deploy part time teachers and collection of school fees do not seem to be regarded as the head teachers' role under the UPE policy.

4.1.5 Difficult roles and responsibilities to observe in practice

Some of the roles and responsibilities of the Head teachers were cited as most difficult to observe in practice. Table 3 is a presentation of the above scenario as was reported by the respondents.

Table3: Head teachers' responses on the roles and responsibilities difficult to observe

S/N	Roles and Responsibilities	Kabale		Soroti	
		N	%age	N	%age
1	Supervise other teachers	6	60.0	3	30.0
2	Managing other SMCs	4	40.0	1	10.0
3	Collect fees from Students	4	40.0	5	50.0
4	Decide Usage of UPE funds	5	50.0	2	20.0
5	Deployment of part time teachers	0	0.0	3	30.0
6	Request for School construction or rehabilitation	5	50.0	10	100.0
7	Communication with Parents	5	50.0	3	30.0
8	Sending Teachers for In-service training	3	30.0	2	20.0

Source: Created by Authors.

From Table 3 above, in Kabale, 60% of the head teachers said that supervising teachers was the most difficult task to observe because the teachers do not admit their mistake. Deciding the usage of UPE funds, requesting for construction/rehabilitation of schools and communication with parents were the second difficult roles to observe. On the other hand, communication with parents is also difficult because most parents have a negative attitude accelerated by politicians who mislead them. Deciding on the usage of UPE capitation grant is difficult because the funds come late and are too inadequate. Other difficult roles to observe include; managing SMCs who are by virtue of their appointment have powers over the head teachers, collection of fees from students because parents do not cooperate, and sending teachers for in-service training.

In Soroti, on the other hand, all head teachers mentioned that requesting government for construction or rehabilitation was difficult because the government takes very long to give feedback and they hardly obtain the chance to get classroom constructed. Some head teachers find it difficult as to where they can send a proposal to. To collect fees from students is the second most cited difficult task, since parents are passive in contributing even small amount of in-class exam fees or lunch fee. Head teachers in Soroti seem to feel more comfortable in associating with SMCs and parents than do their counterparts in

Kabale.

4.1.6 Challenges after UPE Policy

After the introduction of UPE, a number of challenges have been faced in primary schools. During the field study, the respondents listed a number of them as presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Challenges after UPE

S/N	Challenges after UPE	Kabale		Soroti	
		Frequency	%age	Frequency	%age
1	Over crowded classrooms	28	93.3	28	93.3
2	Passive attitude of parents	27	90.0	28	93.3
3	Decrease of School finance	25	83.3	27	90.0
4	Insufficient number of classrooms	24	80.0	24	80.0
5	drop out of pupils	22	73.3	21	70.0
6	repetition of pupils	12	40.0	16	53.3
7	Decline of moral/incentive among teachers	22	73.3	24	80.0
8	passive attitude of SMCs	9	30.0	8	26.7

Source: Created by Authors.

From Table 4 above, over 90% of both head teachers and teachers reported that overcrowded classes was the major challenge after the introduction of UPE, followed by passive attitude of parents. Decrease of school finance is also indicated by 90% of head teachers as a major challenge in Soroti, while 83.3% cited it in Kabale. Insufficient number of classrooms, decline of moral among teachers to manage large classes and dropout of pupils are persistent problems under UPE. On the other hand, passivity of SMCs and repetition of pupils are not frequently cited as major challenge. Teachers and administrators perceive automatic promotion rather detrimental in terms of quality assurance of learning in school and thus do not seem to regard repetition as problem.

As counter measures for the above challenges, the teachers and head teachers said that more teachers had been deployed to reduce overcrowding; parents had been sensitized to reduce on their passive attitude and drop out, top up allowance from parents in form of PTA provided to teachers in order to motivate them.

4.1.7 Head teachers and teachers' views on the roles and responsibilities of SMCs.

As their roles and responsibilities are very key for the success of UPE, the study solicited the views from both teachers and head teachers on what they thought the roles and responsibilities of SMCs were as presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Head teachers' and teachers' responses on the roles and responsibilities of School Management Committees

S/N	Roles and Responsibilities of SMCs	Kabale		Soroti	
		Frequency	%age	Frequency	%age
1	To plan school activities	30	100.0	29	96.7
2	To decide the ways of spending UPE funds	30	100.0	25	83.3
3	To audit school finance	20	66.7	21	70.0
4	To employ part time teachers	9	30.0	6	20.0

Source: Created by Authors.

From Table 5 above, it is observed that all of head teachers and teachers in Kabale and the majority in Soroti said that the roles and responsibilities of the School Management Committees were to plan school activities and decide the ways of spending UPE grant. On the other hand, 66.7% in Kabale and 70% in Soroti said that their role is to audit school finance while only about 20% reported that their role is to employ part time teachers. Other roles that were mentioned include employment of non teaching staff, monitoring and ensuring discipline; and sensitizing parents.

4.1.8 Status of School Management Committee Functioning

Head teachers and Teachers were asked what the status of the School Management Committees was like in executing their roles and responsibilities. The summary findings have been presented in Table 6 below.

Table 6: Status of SMC functioning at school level.

Roles & Responsibilities of SMCs	Very Active		Active		Moderate		Rarely Functioning		Not Functioning	
	K	S	K	S	K	S	K	S	K	S
Plan school activities (K=30, S=29)	14 (46.7)	5 (17.2)	11 (36.7)	16 (55.2)	5 (16.7)	7 (23.3)	0 (0.0)	1 (3.4)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Decide ways of spending funds UPE (K=30, S=25)	12 (40.0)	9 (36.0)	15 (50.0)	11 (44.0)	3 (10.0)	4 (16.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (4.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Audit school finance (K=27, S=21)	6 (22.2)	8 (38.1)	7 (25.9)	9 (42.9)	6 (22.2)	3 (14.3)	5 (18.5)	1 (4.8)	3 (11.1)	0 (0.0)
Employ part time teachers (K=29, S=8)	0 (0.0)	1 (12.5)	5 (17.2)	1 (12.5)	2 (6.9)	0 (0.0)	8 (6.9)	2 (25.0)	14 (48.3)	4 (50.0)

Source: Created by Authors.

Note: K=Kabale, S=Soroti. Numbers in parenthesis are percentage share by each role.

4.1.9 Gap between capacity and tasks

Two thirds of the head teachers and teachers in both districts reported that there was a gap between their capacity and the tasks given to them at school. This gap was attributed to several major reasons such as lack of understanding of the tasks, insufficient number of teachers, lack of budget to pursue the given tasks; and low moral of some teachers. Other reasons mentioned by the respondents include; lack of policy guidelines from the government, lack of training for teachers and teacher absenteeism.

Both the head teachers and teachers suggested these capacity gaps could be filled by using bottom up approach to education planning, increasing funding to UPE, training teachers whenever the curriculum is changed and providing new instructional materials, eliminate conflict in government policies such as automatic promotion in primary which is not in secondary, and massive sensitization to help teachers understand their tasks fully. The general feeling at school level is that there is an absolute lack of funds at school level and insufficient number of teachers who handle a large number of pupils. In addition, teachers have not been well trained in how to handle UPE money and the meaning of auditing was not clear to most of them.

4.2 Financial Issues in Implementing UPE Policy (District Level)

4.2.1 Sources of income for primary education

The findings indicate that 100% of the district officials interviewed reported that the sources of income for primary education were UPE capitation grant and School facilities Grant (SFG). Other sources of income reported were local tax revenue, donations from the international agencies/NGOs and other conditional grants on education from the central government. It was however reported that the donations from NGOs are made direct to the schools and the District Education Office is just informed. In Soroti, there is also Local Government Development Program (LGDP) funds, Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF), and grants from the African Development Bank to cater for the education sector. In addition, UNICEF was providing teachers in Soroti district with training for war-affected children.

4.2.2 Decision on annual budget

The decision on annual education budget at district level is taken based on the planning indicative figures from the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MoFPED). These indicative figures are then discussed at the budget conference at district level for brainstorming. Then politicians identify problems. Budgeting is based on the 3-year District Development Plan (DDP) with unfunded priority. Committees of council meet (while sectoral committee brings ideas from technocrats) and try to fit in the indicative planning figures for the budgeting ceiling. The District Councils hold final decision.

4.2.3 Expenditure on primary education

Financial information was obtained to determine how much is spent on various items under the primary education subsector at district level. The findings are summarized in Table 7 below.

Table 7: Education expenditure on primary education per different expenditure items FY2005/06

S/N	Expenditure Item	Kabale		Soroti	
		Amount	%age	Amount	%age
1	Teachers Salaries	7,668,352,011	81.1	4,570,665,061	76.1
2	Non teacher salaries (Goods & Services)	673,867,266	7.1	1,300,858,064	21.6
3	Construction (SFG)	1,097,826,800	11.6	100,000,000	1.7
4	Others (Running Cost of District Education Office).	11,113,000	0.1	379,000 (Maintenance) 37,787,515 (Other)	0.01 0.6
Total		9,451,159,077	100.0	6,009,689,640	100.0
Enrollment (2005)		152,133		118,711	
Per capita Expen.		62,124		50,624	

Source: Created by Authors.

Note: The numbers are in Uganda Shillings (1US\$=1,824Ushs. as of 2 January, 2006).

Table 7 above shows that teachers' salaries took the lions share in the allocation of the total district education expenditure for Financial Year 2005/06, which occupied 81.14% and 76.1% of the total education expenditure in Kabale and Soroti respectively. The second largest consumer of the budget was construction which took 11.62% of the total district education budget in Kabale, while a non-teacher salary item was the second largest expenditure in Soroti. It is also noted that running the District Education Office was allocated the least proportion of 0.1% and 0.7% in Kabale and Soroti respectively.

Table 7 also shows an outstanding difference in expenditure levels in both districts. Dividing the total primary education expenditure by the number of pupils in each district, we obtain the approximate per pupil expenditure at US\$62,124 in Kabale district and US\$50,624 in Soroti District. This means that pupils in Kabale receive 22.7% higher than those in Soroti. The difference is mainly due to high teacher salaries in Kabale, which is 30.9% higher than that of Soroti in per pupil terms, while per pupil non-teacher items has only 3% difference whereby Soroti district has higher per pupil expenditure.

4.2.4 Challenges with education finance

The District officials interviewed reported that Primary schools were found to be facing a number of problems regarding school finance. The findings indicate that the most common problems are; delays of UPE funds (responded by all officials in both districts), fluctuation of the budget (responded by three officials in Kabale and all five officials in Soroti), and inadequate amount of school finance (responded by three officials in Kabale and all officials in Soroti). Accountability of school finance (responded by three officials in Kabale and all officials in Soroti) was also noted whereby all five respondents

acknowledged that accountability of school finance is problematic and 4 respondents note that mismanagement generally occurs at school level. Two out of four of the Kabale District respondents also reported that there was mismanagement of funds.

4.3 Financial Issues in Implementing UPE Policy (School Level)

4.3.1 Sources of income

Like was the case at the district level, school head teachers and teachers were asked to mention the sources of income for their schools. Majority (87% in Kabale and 100% in Soroti) of the respondents said that the sources of income for the school was UPE grant from the central government, about 75% in Kabale and 67% in Soroti said that they have received the School Facilities Grant (SFG). In Soroti, one head teacher responded that they have received LGDP grant for classroom construction and furniture. Less than 30% in Kabale and 13% in Soroti reported sources like donations (i.e. such as from NGOs and Old Boys), fees collected from parents (e.g. exam fees, boarding fees, development fund, mid-day meals, and PTA fees), and fundraising. This is an indication that schools entirely depend on government for the provision of primary education.

4.3.2 School finance

During the study, data was collected on the school finance by specifically looking at the teachers' salaries, school construction, extra-curricular activities, and rehabilitation and, maintenance and other items upon which the school finances were being spent. Only four schools in Soroti and six schools in Kabale (out of 10) could show the breakdown of school expenditure.

The findings in Kabale indicate that, the major consumer of the school budget was the teachers' salaries accounting for 62.6% of the total school budget during Financial Year 2005/06. The details are summarized in Table 8 below. It is important to note that extracurricular activities were least funded with only 2% of the school budget and yet they are very important in the development of children's physical and mental abilities.

Table 8: Percentage share of different expenditure items in education expenditure FY 2005/06 by type of school (Soroti District)

S/N	Expenditure Item	Urban 1	Urban 2	Rural 1	Rural 2
1	Teachers Salaries & Administrative staff	21.0	56.6	93.9	95.6
2	Scholastic Materials	2.37	15.2	2.14	2.55
3	Construction	0	0	0	0
4	Rehabilitation/Maintenance of School	2.75	0	0	0
5	Extra-Curricular activities	2.64	10.8	1.53	1.82
6	School Lunch	35.6	0	0	0
7	Others (Management & Administration, Contingency)	35.7	17.4	2.45	0
Total		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total school finance (in UShs.)		52,350,800	5,769,056	38,923,723	32,220,806
Enrollment		480	891	665	732
Per pupil expenditure		109,064	6,475	58,532	44,017

Source: Created by Authors.

Table 9: Percentage share of different expenditure items in education expenditure FY 2005/06 by type of school (Kabale District)

S/N	Expenditure Item	Urban 1	Urban 2	Rural 1	Rural 2
1	Teachers Salaries & Administrative staff	86.51	88.0	50.8	58.2
2	Scholastic Materials	1.96	4.8	1.01	2.3
3	Construction	0	0	46.0	36.7
4	Rehabilitation/Maintenance of School	1.20	0.43	0.40	0
5	Extra-Curricular activities	3.73	2.22	1.11	1.3
6	School Lunch	0.84	0.52	0	0
7	Others (Management & Administration, Contingency).	5.8	4.11	0.78	1.53
Total		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total school finance (in UShs.)		35,774,116	53,642,669	113,389,802	65,307,092
Enrollment		424	1587	1,433	1,746
Per pupil expenditure		84,373	33,801	79,128	36,258

Source: Created by Authors.

Although with the limited data of four schools in Soroti, there was a sharp difference between urban schools and rural schools. Urban schools tend to have less percentage share of teachers salaries in the total school expenditure, while teachers' salaries occupy over 90% of the school expenditure in rural areas in Soroti. Urban schools tend to spend more on management and administration of school, while diversifying their expenditure items such as scholastic materials, extra curricular activities, and school lunch.

It can also be seen from Table 8 and 9 that the per capita expenditure at school level varies widely across schools and that the biggest consumer of the primary education budget by school location was teachers' salaries for all schools in Kabale. However, a slight difference in percentage share by school location was observed between the urban and rural schools. The cause for this difference is attributed to the bigger number of staff found in urban schools. It is also important to note that construction activities consume over 37% of the primary education budget for the rural schools.

4.3.3 Problems faced with regard to school finance

The most common problems faced in education finance at the school include; delays in UPE funds (100%), Fluctuation of the budget (56.7% and 80.0%), inadequate amount of school finance (66.7% and 100.0%), and inability of parents to pay fees (40.0% and 60.0%) as presented in Table 10 below. Teachers would not know why UPE funds delay and its amount has been reduced. In terms of parental inability to pay fees, teachers reported that although parents and the SMCs agree on school activities, they do not contribute anything to school due to their perception that everything should be funded by the government under UPE.

Table10: Problems facing Education Finance

S/N	Problems	Kabale District		Soroti District	
		Frequency	%age	Frequency	%age
1	Delays of UPE funds	30	100.0	30	100.0
2	Fluctuation of the budget	17	56.7	24	80.0
3	Mismanagement of UPE funds	2	6.7	1	3.3
4	Accountability of School Finance	0	0.0	3	10.0
5	Problem of ghost teachers	0	0.0	0	0.0
6	Inadequate amount of school finance	20	66.7	30	100.0
7	Inability of parents to pay fees	12	40.0	18	60.0

Source: Created by Authors.

Regarded as an improvement in the management of education finance were the reduced cases of mismanagement where only 6% and 3.3% of the respondents reported this case in Kabale and Soroti respectively. Other problems of education finance as reported by the district officials included; lack of flexible guidelines which should suit particular problems of different schools in different localities. Another aspect reported was on the UPE enrolments which have been increasing over time but the funds instead been reducing. One teacher in Soroti indicated a case of corruption at district level over the reduced amount of UPE funds.

4.3.4 Private cost of schooling per pupil

Parents/School Management Committees (SMC) were asked how the cost of schooling has changed before and after the introduction of UPE policy and what it would cost them to send a child to school per year. In Soroti, all but one SMC member in good performing urban school (96.7%) responded that the cost of schooling is lower now than before.

Table11: Average cost of schooling per year <Kabale District>

S/N	Item	Mean	%	SD	Median	Min.	Max.
1	Uniform	20,788	8.5	18,141	12,500	5,000	70,000
2	Transport	53,750	21.9	41,908	55,000	15,000	90,000
3	School Lunch	79,488	32.4	29,844	82,000	30,000	123,000
4	Scholastic Materials	11,570	4.7	6,227	10,000	3,000	25,000
5	Fees collected by the School	21,357	8.7	33,207	10,000	6,000	96,500
6	Additional Education (Tutorials)	25,000	10.2	10,817	30,000	9,000	36,000
7	Others (Test fees and dev't fees)	33,686	13.7	45,313	7,400	6,000	100,000
	Total	245,639	100.0	-	-	74,000	540,500

Source: Created by Authors.

Table 12: Average cost of schooling per year <Soroti District>

S/N	Item	Mean	%	SD	Median	Min.	Max.
1	Uniform	11,683	25.6	7,719	9,500	2,500	34,000
2	Transport	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	School Lunch	11,033	24.2	23,849	0	0	90,000
4	Scholastic Materials	11,574	25.4	9,652	10,412.5	0	39,000
5	Fees collected by the School	533	1.2	1,942	0	0	9,000
6	Additional Education (tutorials)	500	1.1	1,943	0	0	9,000
7	Others (voluntary development fund, exam fees)	10,277	22.5	30,606	0	0	120,000
	Total	45,600	100.0	-	-	2,500	301,000

Source: Created by Authors.

From Table 11 and 12 above, it is observed that the cost varies across districts as well as within districts. The average total cost of schooling in Kabale district is **5.6** times higher than that of Soroti district. The gap between minimum and maximum total cost of schooling is generally high, while Soroti shows a larger gap (**12 times**) than Kabale (**7.5 times**).

The cost components also vary between two districts. While transport, school lunch, and scholastic materials occupy almost two thirds of the total cost for schooling in Kabale, it is uniform, school lunch, and scholastic materials that amount to one forth of the cost each in Soroti. The transportation cost and tutorials also occupy substantial part of the cost for schooling in Kabale, while such costs are minimal in Soroti. In addition, it is evident that while schools do not charge school fees as they used to be, they still

charge voluntary fees such as development fee for building and some school projects, PTA fee, and exam fees, which amounts to 22.5% of the cost in Soroti and 17.6% in Kabale respectively.

4.4 Stakeholders' Perception on UPE Policy (District Level)

4.4.1 Easiness to comply with different aspects under UPE policy

The various aspects studied under the UPE policy included; fee abolition, age entry into P.1, automatic promotion, and handling UPE grant. The findings reveal that automatic promotion and handling UPE are problematic on the ground. While handling UPE fees was moderate to be complied with according to three out of four respondents in Kabale, in Soroti four out of five respondents of the respondents claimed that handling UPE fees is difficult or very difficult. Difficulty lies in the lack of funds, the SMC not understanding the guidelines, and corruption at school level.

As for automatic promotion, the responses ranged from moderate to very difficult in Kabale, while four out of five respondents in Soroti said that automatic promotion is either difficult or very difficult to comply with. This is due to fear that the education quality would continue to deteriorate and concerns that automatic promotion underestimates the factors for low performance.

Other reasons given for non compliance with some aspects like fee abolition are that schools still charge fees because of inadequacy of UPE funds. As for age entry into school, one district officer mentions that age entry is difficult since there is no alternative education for younger children and old children. In addition, district officers in Soroti indicated that high PTR ratio and poor quality of education are the most serious problems in UPE policy. One officer noted that "UPE has become a program for the poor. The affluent ones go for private schools."

There were mixed responses on the implementation of the current UPE policy in Kabale, while Soroti district obtained a relatively uniform response. Each district official interviewed in Kabale perceived the implementation of the current UPE policy differently. One official said that the current UPE policy is good and well implemented, other one said the current policy is good but not well implemented; while one viewed it as having problems but well implemented and another viewed it as having problems and not well implemented. On the other hand, 53% of the school level respondents said that the UPE policy is good but not well implemented, 13% said that the policy is good and well implemented, another 13% said that the policy has problems but well implemented while 20% said that the policy has problems and not well implemented.

In Soroti, four out of five respondents said that the current policy is good but not well implemented; while one officer said that the current policy is problematic and not well implemented. In general, Soroti district officials tend to have more negative perception on implementation of UPE policy than those in Kabale district.

Two out of four district officials said that UPE could have been implemented differently by ensuring timely release of UPE funds, training head teachers in financial management in Kabale. In Soroti, four of the five respondents mentioned that the UPE policy could have been implemented in a different manner. Alternative ideas include: 1) encouraging parental contribution; 2) implementation in the phased-in approach; 3) consultation with people prior to policy implementation; and 4) increasing funds for construction, teacher deployment, and school monitoring. One district officer mentioned as follows:

"UPE was top-bottom policy without any consultation with people. The only option was 'to adjust ourselves to accommodate it.' People own things that they have made decisions themselves. People do not see it as their program because there was no consultation. People should have been consulted."

4.5 Stakeholders' Perception of UPE Policy (School Level)

4.5.1 Easiness to comply with different aspects under UPE policy (school level)

Head teachers and teachers were asked how easy it was to comply with fee abolition, age entry into school, automatic promotion and handling UPE grant as indicated in Table 13.

Table13: Easiness/difficulty to comply with UPE policy by schools

Easiness	Kabale District					
	Very Easy	Easy	Moderate	Difficult	Very Difficult	Total
Fee abolition	10 (33.3)	5 (16.7)	5 (16.7)	10 (33.3)	0 (0.0)	30 (100.0)
Age entry	4 (13.3)	14 (46.7)	6 (20.0)	5 (16.7)	1 (3.3)	30 (100.0)
Automatic promotion	1 (3.3)	4 (13.3)	2 (6.7)	9 (30.0)	14 (46.7)	30 (100.0)
Handling UPE grant	7 (23.3)	13 (43.3)	6 (20.0)	3 (10.0)	3 (10.0)	30 (100.0)
Easiness	Soroti District					
	Very Easy	Easy	Moderate	Difficult	Very Difficult	Total
Fee abolition	7 (23.3)	9 (30.0)	2 (6.7)	6 (20.0)	6 (20.0)	30 (100.0)
Age entry	0 (0.0)	14 (46.7)	5 (16.7)	10 (33.3)	1 (3.3)	30 (100.0)
Automatic promotion	1 (3.3)	1 (3.3)	4 (13.3)	18 (60.0)	6 (20.0)	30 (100.0)
Handling UPE grant	3 (10.0)	16 (53.3)	5 (16.7)	5 (16.7)	1 (3.3)	30 (100.0)

Source: Created by Authors.

Note: Numbers in parenthesis are percentage share by issue.

From Table 13, it is observed that 16.7% of the respondents said that it was easy to comply with fee abolition while 33.3% said it was **very easy**. On the other hand, none of the respondents reported **difficult** in compliance with fee abolition in Kabale district. In contrast, 20% of the respondents claimed that fee abolition was difficult. The reasons given for non compliance include; delays in capitation grant and inadequate amount for running school. This issue was crosscutting in both urban/peri-urban schools.

The easiness to comply with age entry to school ranged from **very easy** (13.3%) to **difficult** (46.7%) in Kabale, while those ranged from **easy** (46.7%) to **very difficult** (3.3%) in Soroti. Difficulty in complying with age entry was commonly reported in rural schools where there are no nursery schools or childhood development centers. Teachers reported that parents regard school as nursery school and that there was no way to check the age while some children were too young to cope with learning at school.

As indicated by district officials, automatic promotion also seems to be viewed as problematic at school level. Respondents (46.7% in Kabale and 20% in Soroti) reported that it was **very difficult** to comply with automatic promotion. It was especially common in urban/peri-urban schools that expressed fears that the education quality would continue to deteriorate.

Some teachers indicate the problems expressed as follows:

“Many pupils’ performance is too far below average due to low attendance, no writing materials, parents not monitoring, too old pupils, teachers not able to contact all children in a large class.”

“Under the automatic promotion policy, children will reach end of primary not knowing how to read and write.”

Handling UPE funds seems relatively easy as compared to other issues, but some teachers indicated that UPE funds are hard to handle due to its irregularity of transfer, insufficient amount, misconception of parents on corruption. According to one teacher, some parents believe that a head teacher keeps UPE money at home. It was also reported that fluctuation of UPE funds makes the administration in debt and teachers have to pay out of their pockets.

Other notable points that were made by teachers include high Teacher Pupil Ratio, and handling dropouts. The respondents noted that the Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR) is too high while the ceiling for teacher deployment is fixed

4.5.2 Views on implementation of UPE policy

It can be observed from Table 14 that, 40% of the head teachers and 60% of the teachers in Kabale and 30% of the head teachers and 80% of the teachers in Soroti said that UPE policy was good but not well implemented. It should also be noted that 20% of the head teachers and teachers in Kabale respectively reported that UPE policy has problems and is not well implemented, while as much as 50% of the head teachers in Soroti perceive problems in UPE policy and its implementation. None of them in Soroti reported that the UPE policy was good and well implemented, whereas in Kabale those who believed so amounted to 20% of the head teachers and 10% of the teachers.

With regard to whether UPE could have been implemented better, 45% of the teachers in Kabale and 96.7% of those in Soroti said that UPE could have been implemented differently. They gave reasons such as; clear clarification of roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder, using of bottom up approach in education planning and policy formulation, carrying out regional comparative economic analysis and intensive sensitization of stakeholders in Kabale.

Table14: Perception of head teachers and teachers about UPE policy

Views on Implementation of UPE policy	Head Teachers				Teachers			
	Kabale		Soroti		Kabale		Soroti	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Good and Well Implemented	2	20.0	0	0.0	2	10.0	0	0.0
Good but not well implemented	4	40.0	3	30.0	12	60.0	16	80.0
Has problems but well implemented	2	20.0	2	20.0	2	10.0	0	0.0
Has problems and not well implemented	2	20.0	5	50.0	4	20.0	4	20.0
Total	10	100.0	10	100.0	20	100.0	20	100.0

Source: Created by Authors.

In Soroti district, teachers raised the points listed in Table 15. Their alternative ways around UPE policy focus on school finance and consultation with stakeholders, followed by teachers' needs, pupil teacher ratio (PTR), automatic promotion, and political interference. It seems that many teachers perceive that the policy was not readily implemented with sufficient funds or sound institutions. Teachers recommend that there should have been enough sensitization and consultation with necessary stakeholders prior to policy implementation. Teachers also perceive that UPE policy underestimated actual learning environment at school by introducing automatic promotion, too high PTR, and poor teaching environment.

Table 15: Major alternative ways of UPE policy perceived by teachers in Soroti District

Category of Policy Issues	Number of teachers indicated the issue	Description of the alternative policy implementation
1. School Finance	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Govt. should have put aside adequate amount of money for UPE when implementing it and released regularly. - The UPE capitation grant should have been used as bursaries for pupils who excel in class. - The govt. could have specified the use of the UPE funds according to the grade of the schools.
2. Consultation with Stakeholders	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There should have been adequate. Sensitization of the population on their roles in the policy, provision of infrastructure and adequate personnel to man the program. Other stakeholders (politicians, professionals, churches and teachers) should have been consulted to own the policy. - Consultation with the teachers, parents, LC councilors should have been put in place and mobilization should have begun before the implementation stage. - There should have been adequate sensitization of the parents, so that they fully understand and appreciate their roles and responsibilities under UPE policy.
3. Teachers Needs	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teachers' interests should have been fully integrated (accommodation, motivation and sponsorship for future education) - Government should have provided adequate teachers accommodation.
4. Pupil Teacher Ratio	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training and recruiting more teachers to cater for the large number of pupils.
5. Automatic Promotion	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Automatic promotion should not have been introduced. - Promotion of pupils should follow the performance of pupils.
6. Political Interference	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Technocrats (DEO, DIS, and CAO at district level) should have been involved in policy making rather than politicians. - Interference from the politicians should have been avoided (i.e. the implementation should have been handled by the education sector without the politicians who confuse parents.).

Source: Created by Authors.

4.6 Parents and SMC Members

The perception of parents and SMCs about UPE were solicited during the interview. The key areas were abolition of school fees, provision of textbooks, construction of classrooms, age entry into primary school, automatic promotion, and parental contribution in the provision of labour, lunch and uniform. Other aspects included their perception on sending either boys or girls to school in case they are charged fees, the cost of schooling of their children, their contribution to school, their views on the current quality of primary education and the current modality under which UPE is being implemented.

4.6.1 Perception of parents/SMCs on different aspects of the UPE policy

The majority of both parents and SMCs (69.2%) said that the provision of textbooks and construction of classrooms are very good ideas by government unlike automatic promotion that was most criticized according to 50% of the parents who said it was a very bad idea because it undermines the quality of UPE pupils as well as deteriorating the education standards in general.

In Soroti district parents and the SMC members seem to perceive most of the UPE policy components as either very good or good except for automatic promotion. The major concerns about automatic promotion are about insufficient learning experience caused by automatic promotion. Since pupils have to pass the Primary Leaving Exam (PLE) at the end of the primary cycle (P7) in order to obtain primary certificate, parents seem to be anxious that automatic promotion ends up with poor performance at PLE that leads to no further education. Some quotes from parents are as follows:

"The child should first pass the existing grade before being promoted. Since he or she will run into problems in higher grades (P7). This policy breeds laziness among the children."

"It would be waste of money if a child who does not write and read well is promoted."

"It is very bad because children cannot achieve anything at the end of education."

Table16: Parental perception on some aspects of UPE policy

Perception	Kabale District					
	Very Good	Good	Okay	Bad	Very Bad	Total
Fee abolition	12 (40.0)	7 (23.3)	5 (16.7)	4 (13.3)	2 (6.7)	30 (100.0)
Provision of textbooks	18 (60.0)	6 (20.0)	3 (10.0)	2 (6.7)	1 (3.3)	30 (100.0)
Classroom construction	18 (60.0)	5 (16.7)	4 (13.3)	2 (6.7)	1 (3.3)	30 (100.0)
Age entry at 6	8 (26.7)	5 (16.7)	6 (20.0)	7 (23.3)	4 (13.3)	30 (100.0)
Automatic promotion	1 (3.3)	2 (6.7)	3 (10.0)	11 (36.7)	13 (43.3)	30 (100.0)
Parental contribution	7 (23.3)	10 (33.3)	8 (26.7)	3 (10.0)	2 (6.7)	30 (100.0)
Perception	Soroti District					
	Very Good	Good	Okay	Bad	Very Bad	Total
Fee abolition	18 (60.0)	9 (30.0)	1 (3.3)	2 (6.7)	0 (0.0)	30 (100.0)
Provision of textbooks	17 (56.7)	10 (33.3)	3 (10.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	30 (100.0)
Classroom construction	25 (83.3)	5 (16.7)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	30 (100.0)
Age entry at 6	17 (56.7)	9 (30.0)	4 (13.3)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	30 (100.0)
Automatic promotion	3 (10.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	20 (66.7)	7 (23.3)	30 (100.0)
Parental contribution	11 (36.7)	16 (53.3)	1 (3.3)	1 (3.3)	1 (3.3)	30 (100.0)

Source: Created by Authors.

Note: Numbers in parentheses are percentage share by policy component.

4.6.2 Views on how important it is to send children (i.e. both boys & girls) to school

Findings from the field indicate that 84.6% of the parents/SMCs in both rural and urban/peri-urban schools viewed sending children (i.e. whether boy or girl) as **very important** in Kabale, while 96.7% of the parents/SMCs said that education is **very important** for boys and 100.0% responded so for girls. In Kabale 92.3% said that even if they were charged school fees, they would still send both boys and girls to school, whereas in Soroti the percentages of parents who said that they would send their child to school even if fees are charged were 96.7% for boys and 93.3% for girls. However, parents/SMCs in rural schools noted that this would only be affected by the high poverty levels among parents although the willingness is very high.

On what their children would do if not in school, over 40% of the parents in both districts said that boys would work in farms, while these percentages for girls are about one third in both districts (see Table 17). It is observed that there is a clear distinction between girls' activities and those of boys. It is indicated that whereas 61.5% and 20.0% of the parents/SMCs reported that girls would do household chores in Kabale and Soroti respectively, only 26.7% and 10% respectively said that the boys would be involved in such activities. This leads to a conclusion that parents still hold on to the African culture where household chores were meant to be for women or girls. It is also clear that girls tend to be susceptible for early marriage than do boys, whereby parents who would send their girls to get married if not in school amounted to 16.7%, while the numbers for boys stayed at 6.7% in both districts.

It should be noted that activities such as Boda Boda business was only reported by the parents in the urban/per-urban areas. In Soroti, a few parents responded that if their child was not in school, they would become wild and disturb the neighborhood by stealing and criminal activities. It was basically found that parents generally do support UPE and believe that children should stay at school.

Table 17: What children (boys and girls) would do if not in school

S/N	Work done if not in school	Boys				Girls			
		Kabale		Soroti		Kabale		Soroti	
		N	%age	N	%age	N	%age	N	%age
1	Work in market	7	23.3	1	3.3	2	6.7	1	3.3
2	Work in farms	10	33.3	14	46.7	8	26.7	10	33.3
3	Household Chores	8	26.7	3	10.0	10	33.3	6	20.0
4	Take care of siblings	1	3.3	0	0.0	5	16.7	1	3.3
5	Do nothing at Home	1	3.3	4	13.3	0	0.0	4	13.3
6	Get Married	2	6.7	2	6.7	5	16.7	5	16.7
7	Other (e.g. Boda Boda, commit crimes)	1	3.3	6	20.0	0	0.0	5	16.7

Source: Created by Authors.

Note: Numbers in percentage is a percentage of parents who answered yes to each work out of 30 parents/SMC members surveyed. The question was asked in the multiple choices with unlimited numbers.

4.6.3 Parents' contribution to the school

Parents/SMCs were asked the frequency of their visit to school and 88.9% of the parents as well as 100% of the SMCs reported that they visit the school more than once a term in Kabale, while numbers in Soroti were 60.0% and 100% respectively. In Soroti, all parents responded that they come to school at least once a term.

With regard to the importance of parents/SMCs to contribute to school, the overwhelming majority of parents and SMCs rated it as very important while 5.6% of parents in Kabale and none in Soroti and SMCs in both districts rated it as not necessary.

Parents/SMCs elaborated that their major contribution is seen in terms of attending meetings. All parents and SMC members in Soroti said that they contribute to school by attending meetings, while a little less than two thirds of parents in Kabale seem to attend meetings. The majority of parents and SMCs seem to contribute their labor to construction and rehabilitation of schools. In Soroti, parents in peri-urban schools also contribute their labor, despite conventional knowledge that it is difficult to obtain labor contribution in urban areas.

Table18: Parents' Views on how important it is to contribute to School

		Parents				SMC Members			
		Kabale		Soroti		Kabale		Soroti	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
(a) Importance to contribution to school									
1	Very important	14	70.0	13	65.0	5	50.0	9	90.0
2	Important	4	20.0	7	35.0	5	50.0	1	10.0
3	Not so important	1	5.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
4	Not necessary	1	5.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Total	20	100.0	20	100.0	10	100.0	10	100.0
(b) Forms of contribution that have been made to school									
1	Attend meetings	15	75.0	20	100.0	8	80	10	100.0
2	Help in construction or rehabilitation	15	75.0	12	60.0	6	60	7	70.0
3	Provide lunch for pupils	3	15.0	7	35.0	0	0.0	5	50.0
4	Pay more fees collected by the school	8	40.0	11	55.0	1	10.0	6	60.0
5	Donate some goods to school	2	10.0	2	10.0	0	0.0	1	10.0
6	Donate some money to school	2	10.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	10.0
7	Others	2	10.0	2	10.0	0	0.0	4	40.0

Source: Created by Authors.

On the other hand, they contribute very less in donating some goods and money such as PTA to school. Also noted is the fact that it is not common for parents to provide their children with lunch during lunch

hours. Only about one thirds of parents reported that they provide their child with lunch in Soroti. However, contribution of more fees collected by the school was reported commonly in urban/peri-urban schools. Even some rural schools in Soroti charged voluntary fees such as development fees, exam fee, and PTA fee, though the payment is not mandatory under UPE. Other contributions include assisting some projects (e.g. agriculture), monitoring of school, cooking lunch for school.

4.6.4 Current educational quality

Findings shown in Table 19 indicate that the majority views on the current educational quality rated it as either good or moderate. It is also evident that parents seem to have more positive judgment on quality of education at school than do SMC members. Forty-five percent of parents in Kabale and 70% of parents in Soroti rated the education quality as either very good or good against 50% and 60% of the SMCs respectively. On the other hand, those who rated the education quality as either bad or very bad occupy 15% of parents in Kabale and 10% in Soroti, whereas numbers for SMCs are 20% in Kabale and 10% in Soroti respectively.

Table19: Parents/SMCs perception on quality

Perception	District	Very Good	Good	Moderate	Bad	Very Bad	Total
Parents	Kabale	2 (10)	7 (35)	8 (40)	2 (10)	1 (5)	20 (100.0)
	Soroti	1 (5.0)	13 (65.0)	4 (20.0)	2 (10.0)	0 (0.0)	20 (100.0)
SMCs	Kabale	2 (20)	3 (30)	3 (30)	2 (20)	0 (0.0)	10 (100.0)
	Soroti	0 (0.0)	6 (60.0)	3 (30.0)	1 (10.0)	0 (0.0)	10 (100.0)

Source: Created by Authors.

Note: Numbers in parenthesis are percentage share of each response.

After rating the quality of education under UPE, proposals were made on how to improve the current quality of education. In Kabale, both parents and SMCs recommended that the government should abolish automatic promotion that has denied children a chance to sharpen their brains, provide more trained teachers, provide children with meals so that they do not have to go back home at lunch time, provide more classrooms, and sensitize the parents.

In Soroti, major improvement measures indicated by parents and SMC include improving pupils' discipline (36.7%), improving teaching environment (e.g. accommodation and more deployment of teachers) (30%), improving quality of teachers (23.3%), providing more textbooks and scholastic materials (20%), improving PTR (16.7%), and change in teaching methods (16.7%). The responses from parents and SMC members imply that pupils and teachers do not attend school regularly and are often late for school. Furthermore, regular exam is not conducted for continuous assessment of pupils' performance. In addition, 13.3% of the respondents mentioned that automatic promotion policy should be removed and that stakeholders need to be consulted on how to improve the education quality with improved school management.

4.6.5 Views on how UPE could have been implemented

Views on how UPE could have been implemented are divided almost by half. More than half (53.8%) of the parents/SMCs interviewed in Kabale and exactly half of them in Soroti said that the current implementation of UPE is good and therefore they do not think that UPE could have been implemented differently. However, another group (46.2%) in Kabale and half of the respondents in Soroti think that UPE could have been implemented differently.

In Kabale, parents mentioned that while Free Primary Education is not free as of today, misinformation was given in that the government took over all the responsibility. Such misinformation should have been avoided. It was added that, UPE could have been implemented differently by not introducing automatic

promotion that has retarded the quality of primary education under UPE. And finally, the government should have made the roles and responsibilities of parents very clear because up to date, parents still think that government is even responsible for uniform.

In Soroti, similar observation was made, but more specifically, three policy categories were raised; the usage of UPE (26.7%), provision of teachers' accommodation (20%), and automatic promotion (13.3%). As for the usage of UPE funds, apart from the regularity and increase in the amount, parents perceive that usage should be more relaxed in responding to the needs of school. For instance, teacher accommodation and classrooms could have been catered for. Also noted is the fact the usage should be different between rural and urban schools and between small and large schools. The uniform amount of UPE funds and guideline of its usage prevents the UPE funds from being utilized in an effective manner in some cases. There was also an observation that in-kind provision of materials could have been better than direct monetary transfer to avoid all complications of transfer and mismanagement.

It was also revealed that parents perceive that there is some link between teachers' moral and absenteeism and lack of teachers' accommodation at school. Parents in general suggest constructing teachers' accommodation in order to "moral boost." One parent indicated that teachers normally get delayed on rainy days when they commute from far. In addition, there was one parent who claimed that parents should have continued with paying of PTA funds in order to improve on the teacher's welfare. This simply seems to indicate that the UPE funds and SFG as well as other existing local government funds are far from sufficient to cater for improving teaching and learning environment.

4.7 Regional Differences in UPE Policy Implementation

4.7.1 Administrative issues

Difference between urban schools and rural schools did not reveal in terms of administration perhaps because they all follow the same guideline by the district. Instead, difference between two districts was evident in a few areas at school level. First, it seems that the SMC is more actively involved in planning school activities in Kabale district than it is in Soroti district. This is supported by interviews with district officers, head teachers and teachers. As Kabale district performs well in EMIS indicators, there is seemingly some relation between the function of SMCs and school performance. Second, it is revealed from the interview with head teachers that head teachers in Soroti district seems to take much greater control over managing SMCs and usage of UPE funds than do those in Kabale district. This shows a sharp contrast to the activeness of SMCs in both districts. In other words, where head teachers control school activities and UPE funds, we find less active SMCs. Third, difficulties encountered by head teachers in two districts are quite different. While head teachers in Kabale find difficulties in daily management of school (e.g. supervision of teachers, usage of UPE funds, to request for construction, and communication with parents), those in Soroti district seem to find to request for school construction or rehabilitation and collection of fees from students as distinctly much more difficult than other daily school management.

4.7.2 Financial issues

Most notable difference in financial issues is that of disparity in education finance between districts and between urban and rural schools. The difference in per pupil expenditure on primary education reveals that pupils in Kabale receive public primary education expenditure 22.7% higher than those in Soroti under the UPE policy.

Although only half of schools visited could present the detailed financial information to us, when looking at the breakdown of the school expenditure, it was found that urban schools allocate their expenditure to extra-curricular activities approximately double to five times more than do rural schools. School lunch program takes some shares only in urban schools. None of the schools visited in rural schools had school lunch program. Also, the share of expenditure on management, administration and contingency is also outstandingly higher in urban areas than in rural areas, the ratio of which is as much as four and fourteen times the amount of the rural schools. One peri-urban school in Soroti district whose share of teachers' salary in the total school expenditure was as low as 21% was the top

performing school in the district. Variability in school finance obviously accounts for different quality of education available at school.

Thus, it can be generally mentioned that rural schools suffer more than urban schools in terms of lack of spending on learning activities other than teachers' salaries. Although the majority of schools visited note that there is an absolute lack of funds, the financial structure and needs are fairly different between urban and rural schools. The reality is that various voluntary fees are charged and that parents in well-performing urban schools are more responsive than parents in poor rural schools.

4.7.3 Perceptive issues

Regional difference in stakeholders' perception is evident in terms of the overall evaluation on UPE policy. District officers, head teachers, and teachers in Kabale district tend to view UPE policy slightly more positively than do the counterparts in Soroti district. This may be because Kabale district enjoys relatively low PTR and good completion rate under UPE policy while Soroti district suffers from high PTR, CPR, and low completion rate.

Urban-rural gap is revealed in teachers' and parental perception on policy on age entry to school and parental perception on the direct and indirect cost of education. First, policy on age entry at the age of 6 is well taken in urban area whereas teachers and parents in rural areas do not regard it as feasible due to unavailability of nursery schools or childhood development centers. Second, while almost all parents noted the importance of primary education and their willingness to send their children to school even if they are charged school fees, parents and SMC members in rural area are actually more concerned about high poverty levels that may impede enrollment under fees charged. As a matter of fact, parents in urban or peri-urban schools contribute to voluntary fees more than those in rural schools. On the other hand, as for the indirect cost, the various opportunities for earning forgone income are given in urban areas. Parents in rural areas are more concerned about the possibility that the child would stay idle at home and commit to crimes and theft, suggesting a relatively lower opportunity cost of primary schooling in rural areas.

4.8 Linkage among Administrative, Financial, and Perceptive Factors, School Performance, and Local Compliance with Policy

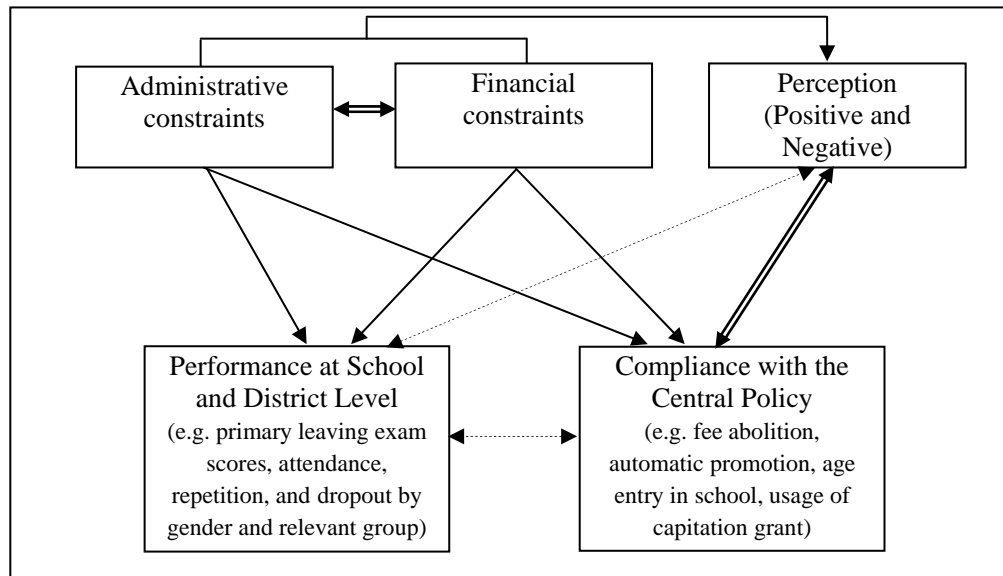
The previous findings suggest some important linkage among administrative, financial and perceptive factors, school performance, and local compliance with the policy (see Figure 1). What has been made clear by this field study is that the administrative and financial constraints jointly affect stakeholders' perception on UPE policy particularly with regard to its implementation and not necessarily its policy direction itself. Because of the overall lack of capacity in administration and finance at all levels (e.g. delays and inadequate amount of school finance, mismanagement of funds, inadequate staff at district and school levels, lack of in-service training on teaching and school management), majority of stakeholders perceive UPE policy as good but poorly implemented.

Financial and administrative factors also do seem to affect performance at school and district level. Whereas Kabale district that has more active SMCs with less control by head teachers and more financial resources available at all levels (i.e. district, school, and household) seem to run schools better than Soroti district that has less active SMCs for school planning (i.e. hence more control by head teacher alone) and more limited resources at all levels. Similarly, the interview at school level reveal that relatively good performing schools have active SMCs and resource base at community level, which all in all enables a school to facilitate quality learning by obtaining scholastic materials, management, and lunch for pupils, and so on.

It is also noted that administrative and financial constraints cause policy conflict and hence lead to incompliance with the central policy. Most notable is the policy conflict between automatic promotion with overcrowded classrooms and between fee abolition and inadequate amount and delay of UPE capitation grant. Automatic promotion is feasible only when schools are run properly with adequate class size and adequate number of teachers. With a massive inflow of pupils in a classroom with inadequate teachers and delay of funds, one cannot expect proper learning. Our interview results that

clearly indicate that all stakeholders wish to abolish automatic promotion policy simply reflect common concerns about actual quality of learning activities at school.

Figure1. The case of Uganda



Similarly, the current amount of UPE funds are generally less than what schools used to get from parents and the delay of funds affect daily school activities such as continuous exams and sports activities. This necessitates schools to charge some voluntary fees to parents.

Administrative and financial constraints also affect policy compliance through stakeholders' perception. For instance, the issue of age entry has been serious in rural areas since parents perceive that incapacity of the government or private sector will not provide them with adequate early childhood care centers and thus use primary schools as their option to send their children early.

Government has put in place many policy interventions to improve quality of education such as the introduction of the thematic curriculum. With the current administrative and financial constraints and that to keep pupils in the class without mastering the knowledge will not benefit school or the child.

Policy compliance also affects stakeholders' perception, together with administrative and financial constraints. For instance, when transfer of capitation grant delays, head teachers get in trouble to execute planned school activities and frequently put them in debt or charge voluntary fees from parents. If a school has strong SMC, stakeholders may commit themselves to try to solve the problem. However, if school management is weak and head teacher is isolated from SMC and parents, there appears mistrust of parents (and also teachers) against head teacher over management of UPE funds.

What this study did not reveal clearly is the linkage between performance at school and district level and stakeholders' perception and also between performance and compliance with the central policy. Perception does not seem to affect performance and vice versa, since our interview results show that parents do have relatively positive views on school performance and that such views do not correlate with the actual school performance. This implies that the demand or the capacity of parents and SMCs to demand for quality of education is not strong enough to pressurize schools to be accountable for quality of education. As for policy compliance and performance, it was shown that when schools do not comply with fee abolition and charge fees, there are parents who could pay and those who could not. A school where many parents pay such voluntary fees could raise its quality of teaching by providing scholastic materials and top-up salaries for teachers. What is clear is that school resources vary and so as performance under UPE policy.

5.0 Conclusions, Challenges, and Recommendations

5.1 Summary of Research Findings

We could summarize the findings according to the research questions set for this study.

Research Question 1: What are the administrative constraints for smooth implementation of provision of primary education under the UPE policy?

The administrative constraints are mainly seen in the areas of monitoring and evaluation, automatic promotion, large class management, and dealing with passivity of parents. These constraints are rooted mainly in lack of clear understanding about the roles and responsibilities among stakeholders, insufficient training, and financial constraints.

First, policy conflict is seen at both district and school level. At district level, the reduced budget for monitoring and evaluation does not allow the district officers to monitor the increased number of schools and pupils. At school level, teachers are under pressure to promote every pupil to the next class, while handling a much larger class size than before.

Second, most of the roles and responsibilities which appear difficult or not done are simply because of misunderstanding that the government is responsible for everything.

Third, most people charged with responsibilities lack training in such aspects as data management, accounting, and human resource management. Finally, the gaps which exist in the capacity of education stakeholders to execute their function is also caused by deployment of insufficient number of teachers and lack of budget to pursue the given tasks, which lead to low moral of some teachers.

Research Question 2: What are the financial constraints for smooth implementation of provision of primary education under the UPE policy?

Financial constraints are much clearer: those are delays of UPE funds, inadequate amount of school finance, fluctuation of UPE funds, and lack of monitoring budget. These constraints are rooted in the fact that the education budget at district level and school level are heavily dependent on the central budget. District resources are minimal and the central budget on education can be susceptible to diversion to other sectors according to the decisions made by the district council under the decentralized system. This is why education expenditure has distinctive diversity by district even after controlling UPE capitation grant that is fixed by the central government according to the number of pupils in the district. It should also be noted that school finance and household expenditure on education also vary based on the capacity of SMC and parents to contribute to school. Under such circumstances, rural schools with weak resource base are prone to suffer from insufficient and unpredictable budgets to implement planned activities.

Research Question 3: How do stakeholders perceive UPE policy?

Majority of stakeholders at district, school, and community level perceive UPE as good policy but poorly implemented. Some even say that UPE policy was bad and poorly implemented. These perceptions are based on the gap between their initial expectation and the reality caused by the administrative and financial constraints. Parents and SMC members generally acknowledge the importance of schooling and think that the exemption of parents from paying school fees as a good thing. Also, they seem to be aware of their roles and responsibilities of providing the children with basic school requirement (i.e. uniforms, transport, exercise books stationery, feeding, hygiene and medical care, shelter) and basic child nurturing and support (i.e. preparing the child to attend school, provision of safe home environment, discipline guidance and direction etc). However, majority of them still think or choose to think that it is the government's work to pay everything that a child requires to attend school. Some politicians also interfere and stop schools from asking for parental contribution. Passivity of parents in terms of actual contribution to school other than attending meeting is still a challenge after 10 years of implementation of the UPE policy.

Research Question 4: Are administrative, financial, and perceptive issues different in urban and rural areas?

There are various differences between urban and rural areas as well as between districts. As for urban-rural difference, the areas that witnessed distinct difference include school finance, teachers' and parental perception on policy on age entry to school and parental perception on the direct and indirect cost of education. Urban schools generally enjoy more budgetary allocation to learning activities than rural schools. Parents in rural areas tend to take under-age pupils to school due to unavailability of early childhood development centers. The capacity to pay direct cost of education is generally higher in urban than in rural areas, while indirect cost seems to be lower in rural areas.

Regional difference is also noted in the field of school management, education expenditure, and the overall evaluation of the UPE policy.

Research Question 5: What are the possible links among the administrative, financial and perceptive factors, school performance and local compliance (incompliance) with the central policy?

The previous findings suggest some important linkage among administrative, financial and perceptive factors, school performance, and local compliance with the policy. First, the administrative and financial constraints jointly affect stakeholders' perception on UPE policy particularly with regard to its implementation. Second, financial and administrative factors also do seem to affect performance at school and district level. Third, administrative and financial constraints cause policy conflict and hence lead to incompliance with the central policy. Fourth, administrative and financial constraints also affect policy compliance through stakeholders' perception. Fifth, policy compliance also seems to conversely affect stakeholders' perception, together with administrative and financial constraints. What this study did not reveal clearly is the linkage between performance at school and district level and stakeholders' perception and also between performance and compliance with the central policy.

Research Question 6: Are these possible links different in urban and rural areas?

Possible urban-rural difference may lie in the linkage between performance at school and district level and stakeholders' perception and also between performance and compliance with the central policy. These linkages may be stronger in urban areas than in rural areas. This is because parental perception may lead to school performance in urban areas where parents are keener on education and demand for quality education. There are also more schools to choose from in urban areas than in rural areas. As for policy compliance and performance, urban schools that are supported by many parents who could pay voluntary fees may be able to improve school performance even if that is not in compliance with the UPE policy.

5.2 General challenges

- i. The biggest challenge still facing Universal Primary Education is the large numbers of children in classrooms which are insufficient. These numbers have resulted into overcrowded classes.
- ii. The most common challenges facing UPE especially financing were delays of UPE funds, fluctuation of the budget, and inadequate amount of school finance.
- iii. Another challenge facing the programme was reported to be the passive attitude of parents. In this case, parents are very reluctant to offer support such as supervising school activities such as construction of classrooms, visiting children on school days, and providing children with lunch.
- iv. Inadequate of monitoring and evaluation of education programmes accelerated by lack of facilitation such as transport is also one of the biggest challenges.

5.3 Recommendations

1. In order to continue and improve on UPE the government needs to increase the education budgets so as to improve on quality. The financial resources to education are the key factor of its functioning and efficiency to meet the goals of society's economic, technological and cultural development. There is great need to increase the absolute amount of financial resources to education. The entire system of financing, both the appropriation and the distribution of funds should be reviewed. If this is done, it will enable the realization of several basic goals including the rational use of funds, to ensure quality and efficiency of education and to guarantee the universal right to education. This can best be achieved through strengthening advocacy and partnership with all the stakeholders.
2. In addition, the Ministry of Education and Sports needs to closely monitor the flow of funds from the center to the local governments so that the point of delay is detected and worked upon.
3. There is still need for government especially from the political wing to come out clearly and clarify on the roles of government and stakeholders/parents in the implementation of UPE. Otherwise, the notion that government is to provide everything will persist.
4. In addition, government needs to review some of the policies like the policy of automatic promotion. This policy is said to have retarded education standards because children are simply promoted to next levels without having the basic competences in literacy and numeracy.
5. Establishing early childhood centers is also worth noting to stop early entry into primary school in rural areas.
6. There is need for government to carry out comprehensive consultation whenever a new programme/policy is to be introduced. Bottom-up approach to education planning should be applied because the grassroots people understand very well the problems affecting their schools. This will eliminate resistance and increase success of government policies.
7. There is also need to improve on the quality of the learning environment. The improvement of the quality of the school-learning environment may be augmented in an assortment of ways. There is need to develop stopgap strategies for offsetting shortages of teachers, learning materials and other educational inputs associated with the budgetary cuts, including the revival of cost-saving organizational and operational innovations.

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Appendix. Interview Protocols

<Interview Protocol for the District Level>

Background Information:

Date:

Name of the District:

Interviewee:

Position of Interviewee:

Sex of Interviewee:

(Briefly explain the purpose of the research and ask for cooperation. Also ask for the data and documents you like to have with regard to district performance (i.e. enrollment by gender, repetition, dropout, national exam scores) and budget over the last 3-5 years and any other relevant documents at district level).

<Administration>

1. Who are responsible for the following roles in the district?

- (a) The overall education planning -> _____
- (b) Budgeting of the education sector -> _____
- (c) Monitoring of schools-> _____
- (d) Evaluation of schools -> _____
- (e) Deployment of teachers -> _____
- (f) Administration of in-service teacher training-> _____
- (g) Construction and rehabilitation of schools -> _____
- (h) Provision of textbooks -> _____
- (i) Provision of other scholastic materials -> _____

2. What roles or responsibilities are the most difficult to observe in practice? Please circle up to three appropriate numbers.

- (1) Education planning (2) Budgeting (3) Monitoring of schools
- (4) Evaluation of schools (5) Deployment of teachers (6) In-service teacher training
- (7) Construction and rehabilitation of schools (8) Provision of textbooks
- (9) Provision of scholastic materials (10) Other (please specify _____)

3. What makes responsibilities difficult to observe? Please give reasons for each aspect below.

- (a) Education planning: _____
- (b) Budgeting: _____
- (c) Monitoring of schools: _____

- (d) Evaluation of schools: _____
- (e) Deployment of teachers: _____
- (f) In-service teacher training: _____
- (g) Construction and rehabilitation of schools _____
- (h) Provision of textbooks: _____
- (i) Provision of scholastic materials: _____
- (j) Other: _____

4. What are the roles and responsibilities of School Management Committees? Please circle the appropriate number(s).

- (1) To plan school activities (2) To decide the ways of spending UPE/FPE grant
(3) To audit school finance (4) To employ part-time teachers
(5) Other (please specify: _____)

5. In your district, how are SMCs functioning? Please circle the appropriate number for each role.

- | | (1) very active | (2) active | (3) moderate | (4) rarely functioning | (5) not functioning |
|--|-----------------|------------|--------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| (a) To plan school activities: | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| (b) To decide the way of spending UPE/FPE grant: | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| (c) To audit school finance: | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| (d) To employ part-time teachers: | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| (e) Other (specified under question 4): | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |

6. If you answered (4) or (5) in Question 5 above in any of the function of SMCs, why are they not functioning? Please circle appropriate number(s).

- (1) Due to confusion on their roles under UPE/FPE policy
- (2) Due to misunderstanding that the government is responsible for everything under UPE/FPE policy
- (3) Due to lack of interest in education
- (4) Due to difficulty in attending meetings because of work or other reasons
- (5) Due to lack of leadership of the head teacher
- (6) Other (please specify: _____)

7. Do you think that there is a gap between your capacity and tasks given at the district level? Please circle the appropriate number.

- (1) yes (2) No

8. If you chose (1) yes in Question 7, in what sense is there such gap? Please circle the appropriate number(s).

- (1) Lack of understanding of tasks (2) Lack of training for district officers
(3) Lack of budget to pursue the given tasks (4) Insufficient number of staff
(5) Low moral of some officers in charge
(6) Other (please specify: _____)

9. How could the gap be filled?

10. Is there any other aspect that you would like to mention in terms of educational administration under the UPE/FPE policy? Please mention freely.

<Finance>

11. What kind of sources of income do you have for primary education at the district level?

Please circle the appropriate number(s).

- (1) UPE/FPE grant from the central government
(2) School Facility Grant from the central government
(3) Other conditional grant on education from the central government
(4) Local tax revenue
(5) Donation from international agency/NGO/private company
(6) Other (please specify: _____)

12. How do you decide the annual budget for primary education at the district level?

13. How much was the education expenditure in your district for FY2005/2006?

14. How much were spent on the expenditure item below in FY2005/2006?

- (a) Teachers/non-teachers salaries: _____
- (b) Non-teacher salary items: _____
- (c) Construction: _____
- (d) Maintenance: _____
- (e) Running cost of district education office: _____
- (e) Other (please specify _____): _____

15. What are the processes of deciding expenditure?

16. What problems do you face in education finance at your district? Please circle the appropriate number(s).

- (1) Delay of UPE/FPE funds (2) Fluctuation of the budget (3) Mismanagement of funds
(4) Accountability of school finance (5) Problem of ghost teachers
(6) Inadequate amount of school finance (7) Insufficient budget for monitoring schools
(8) Other (please specify _____)

17. Is there any other aspect that you would like to mention in terms of educational finance under the UPE/FPE policy? Please mention freely.

<Perception on Policy>

18. How easy is it to comply with the following aspects of UPE policy? Please circle the appropriate number for each item.

(1) very easy (2) easy (3) moderate (4) difficult (5) very difficult

- | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| (a) Fee abolition: | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| (b) Age entry into school | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| (c) Automatic promotion | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| (d) Handling UPE grant | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| (e) Other component (please specify) | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |

19. If you answered (4) difficult or (5) very difficult in Question 18., why is it difficult for you to implement them? Please give specific reasons for each item below.

(a) Fee abolition: _____

(b) Age entry into school: _____

(c) Automatic promotion: _____

(d) Handling UPE grant: _____

(e) Other component: _____

20. How do you regard UPE policy? Please circle the appropriate number of your opinion.

(1) The current policy is good and well implemented

(2) The current policy is good but not well implemented

(3) The current policy has problems but well implemented

(4) The current policy has problems and not well implemented

21. Could UPE policy have been implemented differently? Please circle appropriate number.

(1) Yes (2) No

22. If you answered (1) Yes in Question 21, how differently could it have been implemented?

Thank you for your cooperation.

<Interview Protocol for the School Level>

Background Information:

Date:

Name of School:

Interviewee:

Position of Interviewee:

Sex of Interviewee:

(Briefly explain the purpose of the research and ask for cooperation. Also ask for the data and documents you like to have with regard to school performance (i.e. enrollment by gender and grade, number of teacher on payroll and not on payroll, test scores at the national exam) and budget over the last 3-5 years and any other relevant documents at school.)

<Administration>

1. What are the roles and responsibilities of the head teacher? Please circle the appropriate number(s).

- (1) Supervise other teachers (2) Managing SMC (3) Collect fees from students
(4) Deciding usage of UPE grant (5) Deployment of part time staff
(6) Request the government for school construction or rehabilitation
(7) Communication with parents (8) Sending teachers to in-service training
(9) Other (please specify): _____

2. What roles or responsibilities are the most difficult to observe in practice? Please circle up to three appropriate number(s)

- (1) Supervise other teachers (2) Managing SMC (3) Collect fees from students
(4) Deciding usage of UPE grant (5) Deployment of part time staff
(6) Request the government for school construction or rehabilitation
(7) Communication with parents (8) Sending teachers to in-service training
(9) Other (please specify): _____

3. What makes the responsibilities difficult to observe? Please give specific reasons for each item if applicable.

- (a) Supervise other teachers: _____
(b) Managing SMC: _____
(c) Collect fees from students: _____
(d) Deciding usage of UPE grant: _____
(e) Deployment of part time staff: _____
(f) Request for construction/rehabilitation: _____

8. If you answered (4) or (5) in Question 7 above in any of the function of SMCs, why are they not functioning? Please circle appropriate number(s).

- (a) Due to confusion on their roles under UPE/FPE policy
- (b) Due to misunderstanding that the government is responsible for everything under UPE/FPE policy
- (c) Due to lack of interest in education
- (d) Due to difficulty in attending meetings because of work
- (e) Due to lack of leadership of the head teacher
- (f) Other (please specify: _____)

9. Do you think that there is a gap between your capacity and tasks given at the school level? Please circle the appropriate number.

- (1) yes (2) No

10. If you chose (1) Yes in Question 9, in what sense is there such gap? Please circle the appropriate number(s).

- (1) Lack of understanding of tasks (2) Lack of training for teachers
- (3) Lack of budget to pursue the given tasks (4) Insufficient number of teachers
- (5) Low moral of some teachers (6) Teacher absenteeism
- (7) Lack of policy guideline from the government (8) Other (please specify:_____)

11. How could the gap be filled?

12. Is there any other aspect that you would like to mention in terms of educational administration under the UPE/FPE policy? Please mention freely.

<Finance>

13. What are the sources of school income? Please circle the appropriate number(s).

- (1) UPE grant from the central government
- (2) School facility grant from the central government
- (3) Donation (please specify the sources: _____)
- (4) Fees collected from parents (please specify the name of fees: _____)

(5) Other (please specify: _____)

14. How much was the education expenditure at school level for FY2005/2006?

15. How much were spent on each expenditure item below?

(a) Salary of teachers and staff not on payroll: _____

(b) Scholastic materials: _____

(c) Classroom construction: _____

(d) Rehabilitation of school: _____

(e) Extracurricular activities: _____

(f) School lunch: _____

(g) Other: _____

16. What problems do you face in education finance at your school? Please circle the appropriate number(s).

(1) Delay of UPE/FPE funds (2) Fluctuation of the budget (3) Mismanagement of funds

(4) Accountability of school finance (5) Problem of ghost teachers

(6) Inadequate amount of school finance (7) Inability of parents to pay fees

(8) Other (please specify _____)

17. Is there any other aspect that you would like to mention in terms of school finance under the UPE/FPE policy? Please mention freely.

<Perception on Policy>

18. How easy is it to comply with the following aspects of UPE policy? Please circle the appropriate number(s) for each item below.

(1) very easy (2) easy (3) moderate (4) difficult (5) very difficult

(1) Fee abolition: (1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

(2) Age entry into school (1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

(3) Automatic promotion (1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

(4) Handling UPE grant (1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

(5) Other component (please specify) (1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

19. If you answered (4) Difficult or (5) Very difficult in Question 18., why is it difficult for your school to implement them? Please mention specific reasons for each item below.

(1) Fee abolition: _____

(2) Age entry into school: _____

(3) Automatic promotion: _____

(4) Handling UPE grant: _____

(5) Other component: _____

20. How do you regard UPE policy? Please circle the appropriate number in your opinion.

(1) The current policy is good and well implemented

(2) The current policy is good but not well implemented

(3) The current policy has problems but well implemented

(4) The current policy has problems and not well implemented

21. Could UPE policy have been implemented differently? Please circle appropriate number.

(1) Yes (2) No

22. If you answered (1) Yes in Question 21., how differently could it have been implemented?

Thank you for your cooperation.

<Interview Protocol for Parents and SMC Members>

Background Information:

Date:

Name of School:

Interviewee:

Position of Interviewee:

Sex of Interviewee:

(Briefly explain the purpose of the research and ask for cooperation.)

<Perception on Policy>

1. What is your perception on UPE/FPE policy? Please circle the appropriate number(s) regarding each aspect of UPE/FPE policy.

(1) Very good (2) Good (3) Okay (4) Bad (5) Very Bad

- | | | | | | |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| (a) Abolition of school fee: | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| (b) Provision of textbooks: | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| (c) Construction of classrooms: | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| (d) The right age entry into primary school (Age 6): | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| (e) Automatic promotion between grades: | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| (f) Parental contribution
in provision of labor, lunch, and uniform | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| (g) Other (please specify: _____) | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |

2. If you answered (4) Bad or (5) Very bad in any aspect asked in Question 1, please give specific reasons for your thinking for each item below where applicable.

- (a) Abolition of school fee: _____
- (b) Provision of textbooks: _____
- (c) Construction of classrooms: _____
- (d) The right age entry into primary school (Age 6): _____
- (e) Automatic promotion between grades: _____
- (f) Parental contribution _____
in provision of labor, lunch, and uniform:
- (g) Other (please specify: _____): _____

3. How important is it for you to send your boys to primary school? Please circle the appropriate number.

(1) Very important (2) Important (3) Moderate (4) Not necessary (5) Don't know

4. If you were charged school fees, would you send your boys to primary school?

(1) Yes (2) No

5. How important is it for you to send your girls to primary school? Please circle the

appropriate number.

(1) Very important (2) Important (3) Moderate (4) Not necessary (5) Don't know

6. If you were charged school fees, would you send your girls to primary school?

(1) Yes (2) No

7. If you do not send your boy to primary school, what would your boy do? Please circle the appropriate number(s).

(1) Work in market (2) Work in farms (3) Household chores (4) Take care of siblings
(5) Do nothing at home (6) Get married (7) Other (please specify:_____)

8. If you do not send your girl to primary school, what would your girl do? Please circle the appropriate number(s).

(1) Work in market (2) Work in farms (3) Household chores (4) Take care of siblings
(5) Do nothing at home (6) Get married (7) Other (please specify:_____)

9. How much does it cost you to send a child to primary school per year on each item below?

(a) Uniform:_____

(b) Transportation:_____

(c) School lunch:_____

(d) Scholastic materials:_____

(e) Fees collected by school:_____

(f) Additional education (e.g. Tutorials):_____

(g) Other (please specify:_____):_____

10. How different is the cost of schooling before and after UPE policy? Please circle the appropriate number(s).

(1) Higher now than before (2) More or less the same (3) Lower now than before

11. How often do you come to school?

(1) More than once a term (2) Once a term (3) Once a year (4) Never

12. How important is it for parents to contribute to school under UPE/FPE policy?

(1) Very important (2) Important (3) Not so important (4) Not necessary

13. In what ways do you contribute to school? Please circle the appropriate number(s).

(1) Attend meetings at school
(2) Help construction or rehabilitation of school
(3) Provide lunch for pupils (by paying lunch fee)
(4) Pay some fees collected by the school (please specify the name of fee:_____)
(5) Donate some goods to school
(6) Donate some money to school

(7) Other (please specify:_____)

14. How do you see current educational quality in this primary school? Please circle the appropriate number(s).

(1) Very good (2) Good (3) Moderate (4) Bad (5) Very bad

15. How could quality of education be improved in this primary school?

16. Could UPE policy have been implemented differently? Please circle appropriate number.

(1) Yes (2) No

17. If you answered (1) Yes in Question 16., how differently could it have been implemented?

18. Do you have some more comments on current provision of primary education under UPE policy?

Thank you for your cooperation.



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