



## Chapter 7

# Gucha District Report

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## Teachers' Report

### 1. Knowledge about FPE

The majority of teachers said that they understand FPE as a system of education where children go to school and their parents make no payment while learning materials are provided free. They acknowledged that the system has helped poor families and enabled orphans and street children to go back to school. They said that they first heard about FPE during the 2002 election campaigns from the NARC, the media, headteachers and circulars from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST) through the District Education Office (DEO), teacher advisory tutors (TAC) and school inspectors.

### 2. Goals and rationale of FPE

Teachers felt that the policy aimed at lessening parents' educational expenses thus with the burden of school fees lifted families could enjoy an improved class of living. They also said that FPE aims at catering for the children from poor families and orphans. They also felt that FPE aims to reduce child labour and the menace of street children. Some felt that it is meant to check on exploitation by some schools especially the academies which charge exorbitant fees. Some teachers felt that the government was just trying to fulfil the promises made during 2002 campaigns. Others felt that FPE will contribute to the prevention of diseases such as HIV/AIDS as people will be more knowledgeable. However, some teachers felt that FPE is not absolutely free because parents are supposed to buy uniforms for their children. Accordingly, they recommended that the government should provide uniforms for pupils along with other facilities.

### 3. School enrolment since FPE

Most schools in Gucha District registered an increase in enrolment of pupils with most never having been in school before while some were drop outs. Some girls had previously had been house helpers and

babysitters, while others had dropped out because of unwanted pregnancies. Most of the boys had been herd's boys while others were workers in the soapstone industry in Tabaka. In some schools, the case was different because though enrolment was high especially at the beginning of 2003, by the end of the year, some pupils had already started dropping out.

*"Some families are radicals; they feel that even uniforms should be bought by the government and when the government did not provide them, they opted for their children to stay at home."*

In some families, the children are the breadwinners, so they dropped out of school to go and continue being maids or casual workers. Some teachers attributed the dropout to the difficulty for older students to cope with the learning environment especially with the younger pupils in the same grade. Concerning transfers from private or non-formal centres, most teachers agreed that they had noted increased enrolment in the public primary schools, thus leading to closure of several private institutions. In the case of boarding primary schools, enrolment had decreased because parents felt that the government should also pay for boarding facilities.

On gender balance in school enrolment, most teachers noted a higher enrolment of girls compared to boys. Some respondents attributed this to the fact that the ratio of girls to boys is generally higher. In some schools, the case is different with more boys being enrolled than girls because parents seem to prefer investing in boys' education. Girls also drop out of school due to pregnancy and get married at an early age.

Some teachers attributed the high enrolment of girls to the government's emphasis on girl-child education. Teachers observed that there was no age of admission policy in place, hence, no discrimination in enrolment based on age. Most schools had registered over-age

pupils in their new enrolment. In a certain school, there was a mentally retarded 24 year old pupil in Class 2. Also there were 14 and 15 year olds in Classes 2 and 3. Such pupils did not fit in well with others. However, some schools reported almost an average age of pupils enrolled in the respective grades. Elsewhere in the district, the situation was the same with slight variance depending on location and performance of the school.

#### 4. Implementation of FPE

Most teachers interviewed from all schools agreed that much has been done with the introduction of FPE. For instance, they agreed that teaching and learning materials have been provided. Another accomplishment was that most of the school-age children who had been out of school had enrolled in school. They thus felt that eventually this would eradicate illiteracy in the country.

*“Most children are now out of child labour and are back to school.”*

The teachers also observed that crime and indiscipline cases were reducing. In addition, they observed that repair of furniture, some classrooms and offices, and toilets had been done with FPE funds. The funds were also used to buy facilities for co-curricular activities and buy kerosene for evening preps. Most teachers agreed that FPE has saved a lot of school time for pupils because they are not sent home for fees and thus are able to attend most classes.

On challenges faced, most teachers complained of the increased workload. They attributed this to the increased number of pupils enrolled without additional teachers. Most teachers felt there is no meaningful learning and teaching that going on in the class. Some classes have up to 60, 70 or 100 pupils with just one teacher to handle them. This caused problems especially when administering and marking

assignments, and also attending to individual pupil’s needs in class. Teachers also mentioned discipline as another problem especially with the ban of caning while counselling was not effective. Another problem cited in most schools in the district is that most parents were uncooperative and neglected their duties like buying uniforms and disciplining their children. In fact, parents were against teachers who punished their children. In some schools, the respondents felt that the stationery and other facilities provided are not well-managed due to the lack of a librarian or storekeeper.

Some teachers felt that there was difficulty in administering tests and exams because there was no money provided for examinations. As a result, teachers were forced to write on the chalkboard and it became a problem when the questions were many since the pupils could not do them at the same rate. In some boarding schools, there were problems related to salaries of the support staff and this was attributed to the fact that the government only caters for a fixed number of support staff. Some schools reported a problem of chronic absenteeism by pupils.

*“The rate of absenteeism is very high... parents do not send their children to school...”*

Some schools reported that pupils stayed home for long periods due to illness. Another problem in most schools was the admission of children who had been out of school before. It was difficult for teachers to determine the grade to admit them. Even after admission, some of the new pupils found it difficult to cope with the regular pupils. The same problem was noted especially when admitting pupils in Class 1 where most of them were enrolling directly without going through nursery school, which is not free. Some teachers noted the problem of lack of books for reference for mother tongue lessons for lower primary Classes 1 to 3. Some teachers raised the issue of disabled children who have no

special facilities and thus have been integrated into classes with normal pupils. Regarding performance, most teacher respondents seemed to feel demotivated because of the workload and as result performance had reportedly deteriorated in some schools.

Teachers also felt that the government should motivate them by increasing their salaries. They said the workload was too much yet their salaries had not increased. However, some teachers felt motivated especially due to the provision of learning materials.

*“We are motivated by the books given ... we want to help pupils acquire the knowledge right from nursery to Class Eight.”*

In some other schools, teachers attributed their motivation to personal motivation to maintain performance of the school.

*“You see, we want to maintain the classes of performance of the school so we still work hard.”*

On the role of the government in the implementation of FPE, most teachers agreed that it had done its part by disbursing funds to schools. The government had sent funds for books and other learning materials, for repairs and employing subordinate staff. The government had also sensitised parents and teachers on implementing FPE through seminars, circulars, and inspecting schools. Teachers also acknowledged that the government had employed more teachers though they were not enough. However, some teachers felt that the government had more to do like sensitising parents on their roles and motivating teachers. Regarding school heads, teachers reported that they had tried to play their part by receiving funds, budgeting procurement of learning materials with help of subject teachers and school committee members, and managing school repairs and other projects. In some schools, they sent teachers to attend FPE sensitisation sessions, they held meetings to pass necessary information and enrol

new pupils without discrimination.

The teachers from all the schools confirmed that teaching was going on well.

*“We have tried to adhere to the code of regulation by teaching or making use of the materials provided like text books, charts and make sure those pupils learn...”*

They also reported that they assisted the headteachers in ordering instructional materials and held meetings to sensitise parents. Concerning the role of parents most of the teachers reported that most parents were trying to meet their responsibilities in the implementation of FPE but still a lot needs to be done for some parents who are not yet aware of what they are supposed to be doing. Some parents had bought boxes, replaced broken and lost materials like books, rulers and pens. Some thought NARC would provide even uniforms and shoes!

Teachers from most schools complimented the local community for being supportive in various ways like providing casual workers and supplying food like vegetables, and others. The local community had also ensured that pupils go to school and that rental houses were built around the school for the teachers. However, in cases, some communities had not done much to help implement FPE. Instead, they were hostile to the school.

Regarding the role of sponsors and NGO's, teachers recognised various churches as the major sponsors though their major role had been spiritual nourishment for pupils. They also assisted in guidance and counselling in cases of indiscipline.

## 5. Teacher preparedness for FPE

Most teachers said that they were ill-prepared to handle large classes and more pupils, and that FPE was implemented hurriedly. Most schools had classes of between 65-80 pupils, and as such the teachers felt the pupils were not well attended to.

However, a few teachers from some schools reported that they were prepared to help the pupils under all circumstances.

*"In our school, we chose to be teachers thus have the interest of our pupils at heart, we have been working extra hours to cater for the increased pupils and workload."*

Teachers from almost all schools reported that multi-grade teaching and double-shifting were not taking place. On the contrary, most schools had multi-age classes (pupils of differing ages in the same class). This was a problem because the teachers found it hard to handle multi-age classes.

Concerning teaching materials, teachers reported that they had no problems with handling teaching materials. Some had been trained on how to order and keep records through seminars. However, the major problem was at the start of 2003 when FPE was introduced and the teaching materials were delayed.

## 6. Effects of FPE on the quality of education

Many teachers commended FPE for the improved performance in their schools. They were happy with the funds, and the teaching and learning materials that had been provided. Pupils were no longer sent home for fees thus spent more time in class. However, in other cases, the teachers blamed FPE for the decline the quality of education. Since pupils were not allowed to repeat classes, those who perform poorly proceed to the next class without merit. Another factor cited was understaffing due to few teachers and large classes. Also pupils' misconduct contributed to deterioration in the quality of education. Those above 16 years of age were engaging in boy-girl relationships and others would not do assignments because they know they can not be punished.

## 7. Lessons learnt

Teachers had learnt a number of lessons during the first year of FPE's implementation. First, the government's decision to fund FPE had helped many people who were interested in education but lacked means especially financial, to acquire it. They also realised that when teachers handle large classes, pupils learn very little since many of them require individual help. They noted that currently schools had textbooks and exercise books. Although they noted that this may not be adequate, they felt it was better than what was available before FPE. They pointed out that the government had ignored early childhood education, which gives the foundation for primary school. They observed that many schools had improved in terms of physical facilities because of the funds provided for repair and maintenance.

Teachers observed that headteachers had too many responsibilities that hindered them from performing their core responsibilities, which was teaching. Another lesson learnt was that FPE had caused indiscipline in schools because there was no caning and pupils were free to transfer to any school. Parents were also not informed of their roles in FPE. Most parents were irresponsible and uncooperative. Some teachers noted that there was frequent inspection by education officials in schools, which in the end may lead to improvement of the quality of education in schools.

## 8. What is required to continue FPE

Teachers gave suggestions on what is required for continuity of FPE. They proposed that the government should revise teachers' salaries as a way of motivating teachers. It should also provide enough materials and funds for the construction of more classrooms to ease congestion and that funds should be availed on time. They also recommended that the government

should incorporate nursery class in FPE programme since it was part of primary education (foundation). It should also employ nursery school teachers and supply them with learning materials. Teachers also suggested that the government should reinforce adult education to take care of older children who do not fit in regular primary school classes. It should also subsidise boarding school fees to relieve parents who are taking their children to such institutions. Teachers also wanted the government to establish the exact number of subordinate staff in schools and allocate funds accordingly and to organise and introduce school feeding in schools to cater for children from less fortunate families and who live far from school and can not go back for lunch. They also agreed that the government should establish special unit classes to cater for children with special needs.

Most teachers felt that FPE can only be implemented effectively with the reintroduction of caning. In this regard, they recommended light caning because of the ineffectiveness of counselling. The teachers noted that promotion of pupils from one class to another should be on merit. They also wanted the government to give priority to public schools during Form One selection to national schools, as this would be a motivating factor to pupils and teachers. They suggested that schools should be provided with typing machines for producing school-based examinations.

On the government's role, teachers felt that it should take serious measures against people who employ children of school going-age as house helpers and apprehend them for denying these children an opportunity to benefit from FPE.

On the teachers' role, they agreed that teachers should be committed and work wholeheartedly for excellent performance. They should enhance pupils' discipline through guidance and counselling sessions.

They also agreed that they should ensure that good care is taken for the materials provided. They advised teachers to set good examples for pupils by desisting from unbecoming behaviour like drunkardness during school hours, involvement in sexual relations with pupils and others.

On parents' role, teachers noted that parents should cooperate in providing their children with the necessary support for learning such as buying them uniforms, feeding them and replacing lost items. They also encouraged parents to work closely with teachers to ensure discipline among pupils. It was suggested that school committees continue sensitising parents on what was required of them for success of FPE. It was recommended that school committees should work with teachers to help pupils. They also suggested that the chairman and treasurer of the school committee should ensure that procurement is well done and that funds are not misappropriated.

Regarding the role of local communities, teachers suggested that they should be cooperative and ensure that all children are brought back to school. They should support the development of schools by providing materials for buildings like timber and labour to erect facilities like classrooms. They should stop selling liquor and bhang to pupils as this contributes to high rates of indiscipline. The community leaders, it was suggested, should continue sensitising the community through meetings and enlighten people on issues about HIV/AIDS, which also threaten pupils as they too fall victim. It was suggested that sponsors and NGOs should assist the government in helping needy children like orphans by providing them with food, uniform and other necessities. They should send drugs to schools for pupils like malaria prophylactic and painkillers as well as provide first aid kits. They should also provide schools with sanitation facilities such as toilets and water tanks. Teachers suggested that the local

education officers should organise seminars on issues pertaining to FPE and visit schools more often.

## Pupils' report

### 1. Knowledge about FPE

Most pupils were aware that FPE was a strategy for achieving Education For All (EFA) and that it started in 2003, when they started receiving free textbooks, pens, sets, and others. Pupils noted that FPE was introduced by the government to enable children from poor families get education.

### 2. Effects of FPE on the school and classroom

The majority of the pupils observed that FPE had resulted in an increased enrolment in their schools leading to congestion in classrooms.

*"We are squeezed in class and we sit uncomfortably... Even the desks are not enough ..."*

The ratio of teachers to pupils was also affected. The pupils observed that teachers were handling more than three subjects per class.

*"Due too much work, teachers are not serious with their work. Lessons go unattended and sometimes we come for preps in the morning but no teacher appears."*

They also said they were under-examined.

*"We are under-examined because instead of the teacher giving five sums or ten he gives only two so that he can be able to mark."*

Most pupils reported having received textbooks, exercise books, geometrical sets, rulers, rubbers, pencils etc. They reported that each pupil would be given nine exercise books (of 48 or 64 pages each) for lower primary and 12 exercise books (of 120 pages each) for upper primary pupils. However for textbooks, pupils felt that the ones they had received were inadequate. In some schools, the textbook ratio has improved from 1:5 pupils

to 1:2 pupils. In such cases, pupils felt that FPE had a positive effect in their school.

On class interactions, the majority of the pupils reported that they had no problems in terms of relating with their fellow pupils and even teachers. However, in some schools pupils fear their teachers and, as result, can not interact freely with them.

*"They cane us thoroughly, in fact they even kick us sometimes. This instils in us fear of asking questions in class."*

Regarding school administration, most pupils commended their headteacher and sympathised with their heavy workload. They reported that the headteachers attended to their duties including managing the large number of pupils enrolled and supervising teachers and support staff. The headteachers also attended to parents' matters and maintained discipline in school.

A few pupils reported cases of indiscipline, while a majority felt that their schools were not affected.

*"Our headteacher gives stern warnings to newly enrolled pupils, so most of them do not misbehave since they fear being punished."*

Pupils felt that the banning of the cane had contributed to indiscipline since pupils know that nothing could be done to them.

Indiscipline cases reported include: attempted fights with teachers, rudeness, fights and disputes among pupils.

Regarding double shifts, pupils reported that they did not have double shifts in their schools. All pupils report to school in the morning between 6.30 and 7.00 am and leave in the afternoon between 3.30 and 5.30 pm.

### 3. Effects of FPE on learning

Pupils from most schools reported a remarkable improvement in learning since the introduction of FPE. They attributed this to availability of books but mostly to the time they were investing in class unlike



previously when they would be sent home frequently for fees. On the same note, they also felt that FPE had also improved co-curricular activities like sports. Most reported that previously pupils and even some teachers would communicate in Ekegusii (mother tongue) but with the availability of story-books and other reading materials, they were using English and Kiswahili for communication and improving in these languages.

#### 4. Problems of FPE

Most of the pupils agreed that understaffing of teachers was a major problem.

*“Teachers are over-loaded, the pupils are so many in the classes, thus teachers can not give adequate attention to all pupils especially the slow learners who need individual attention.”*

Another problem reported was lack of enough desks for pupils. Thus in most cases pupils had to squeeze by sharing three to five pupils per desk. Some desks were broken and most classrooms congested. In some schools, the nursery class children and Class 1 pupils sit on the floor because desks are not enough. Some pupils have classes under banana shades. Some boarding primary schools reported that they had inadequate beds. They said that this had forced some pupils to share beds, which left them uncomfortable.

A number of schools were reported to have problems with sanitation. The available latrines were not enough to cater for the large number of pupils. Some pupils reported that a few parents and committee members were not happy with the way FPE funds were handled as they wanted to budget for the funds themselves.

#### 5. Implementation of FPE

It was noted that many new pupils had been enrolled in their respective schools including dropouts and those who had been out-of-school due to financial reasons. Many pupils had stopped engaging in casual

employment and now concentrated on school work.

Pupils also noted that some facilities such as stores, classrooms and offices had been put up in their schools from funds provided by the government and some renovations had also been done. Pupils from all school reported that they had received reading and writing materials. In some schools FPE funds had been used to purchase games and sports facilities like balls and nets among others. In a few schools, respondents reported having received new teachers, while in others parents had decided to employ teachers and support staff like cooks and watchmen.

On problems faced, most pupils complained of teacher shortages, inadequate learning materials, congestion and the poor state of classrooms. While on teachers' performance, some pupils agreed that the teachers were doing their best with the available learning materials and a good number of pupils reported that their teachers were demotivated and did not attend all classes.

According to the pupils, various stakeholders had specific roles in the implementation of FPE. They agreed that the government had played its role by providing funds for the purchase of teaching and learning materials. It had helped those who had dropped out of school to enrol by abolishing levies and had relieved parents of the burden of school fees. However, most pupils felt that the government should provide more funds to purchase more books and for renovation of physical facilities. The headteachers had played a major role as revealed by the pupils. They had received funds from the government, budgeted and purchased materials with help from teachers and the school committee. They also enrolled pupils.

Regarding parents' role, pupils said that their role was to bring their children to school and they had done that. Some

parents were reportedly making follow-up and ensuring that pupils did their homework and attended school as expected. They were assisting with discipline at home. In some schools, parents provided lunch for teachers through contributions.

On the role of school committee members, most pupils reported that they had worked with the headteachers to budget for and buy teaching and learning materials. They had mobilised parents to support and engage in various school development projects like constructing classrooms and toilets. In some schools, the school committee had worked with the headteachers and parents to employ workers in schools including some teachers on PTA basis.

Teachers were reported to have played their role by distributing books to pupils textbooks and exercise books and other learning materials. They were working hard to teach and assist the newly-enrolled pupils to cope. They were also helping the headteachers in maintaining discipline through guidance and counselling. The sponsors, mainly churches, provided

spiritual nourishment to pupils and helped in raising funds for school development projects.

## 5. Improvement of FPE

To improve FPE most pupils felt that the government should employ more teachers to ease the workload of those in service. They also suggested that teachers' salaries be increased to motivate them. In most schools, pupils requested more desks and more classrooms to ease congestion. Some said they needed a health clinic to serve their school and local community.

Other pupils noted that some parents were not supportive enough since they always expected them to do various domestic chores at the expense of their school work. Some pupils from boarding schools suggested that a water supply system be provided in their school because they found it hard to fetch water from the nearby stream.

Some pupils suggested that electricity be provided to enable them do morning and evening preps. Some felt that they were



Children having fun outside classroom.

under-examined and suggested that there should be frequent joint tests or assessments to enable them improve their performance. In addition some respondents suggested that schools should be provided with typewriters to enable them to produce their own exams. Also, some pupils felt that teachers needed to put in more effort. The children with special needs should be taken care of and the government should send trained teachers for them.

A number of schools had mostly temporary structures and classrooms were earth-walled and floored. In such cases, pupils urged the government to increase funds for school development to help parents put up permanent structures.

## Parents' report

### 1. Knowledge about FPE

Parents viewed FPE as a system of education where the government provides teaching and learning materials like exercise books, textbooks, pens and funds for school building. It was meant to help poor children and street children. Parents reported to have obtained information about FPE from sources such as the NARC campaign strategy of 2002, newspapers, television and radio. Some had got the information through school general meetings and 'barazas' by local community leaders. Parents said that the main goal of FPE was to eliminate illiteracy in the country and to stop crime. They said that FPE had enabled poor parents to take their children to school.

### 2. Effect of FPE on Enrolment

Most parents reported that many new pupils had enrolled, some of whom had dropped out of school because of the cost of education, child labour or unwanted pregnancies. Many schools were reported to have received pupils from private academies leading to closure of some of them. Other schools had reportedly admitted pupils with special needs who had

been kept at home. On gender, it was observed that more girls had been enrolled than boys. They said some of these girls had been maids and others may have been married off by their parents for money. Most parents observed that some pupils were older than the ages they claimed to be. Some pupils joined classes they were not suitable for.

### 3. Implementation of FPE

Parents agreed that some accomplishments had been made in the implementation of FPE. They noted that pupils had been issued with learning materials including 12 exercise books (of 120 pages each) for upper primary and nine or 12 exercise books (of 64 pages each) for lower primary pupils. Textbooks had also been bought and issued to pupils, who shared one among three of them. Repairs had also been done on furniture like desks and classes while in some schools, the money was used to construct some classrooms, offices and toilets. Also some schools were able to employ some subordinate staff.

Schools were admitting pupils without any conditions unlike in the past when some applied unfair rules. Parents also noted that indiscipline among the pupils had reduced significantly.

On challenges faced, most parents cited the problem of insufficient funds especially for repairs and maintenance.

*"Some schools need to construct latrines and classes to accommodate the increased enrolment but the money provided for repairs and maintenance is not sufficient for such projects."*

They also reported that most schools faced severe teacher shortage and that had affected learning.

*"Our school now has more than 400 pupils with only six teachers to handle such a big number... its hectic."*

Parents had also noted that some teachers do not observe the teachers code of

conduct. They said that some do not observe the official working hours and drink during work hours.

Most parents noted that nursery education had been neglected yet it sets a foundation for Class 1 pupils. The government had not catered for nursery education in terms of learning materials and teachers.

Some parents from boarding schools complained of some vote heads that were not adequate for such schools, for instance, for lighting, salaries for support staff and others, which they said had higher budgets than what was provided.

Regarding teachers' performance, parents reported low teacher performance attributing it to overload of class work.

*"It is difficult for a teacher to have a look at all assignments given to pupils because of the large numbers... at times pupils exchange books in class and correct for themselves."*

In other schools, parents felt that the teachers were trying.

*"There is high performance among the teachers and they are more motivated than before. They are determined to teach pupils and realise good results... they come to school around 6 to 6.30 am to assist pupils in their work."*

On the role of the government in implementation of FPE, parents agreed that the government had relieved them of a big burden of paying fees and purchasing learning materials by issuing funds for purchase of materials in schools, repair and maintenance. The government had also made sure that the school-going age children were in school.

Parents also reported that school heads had opened accounts as directed by the Ministry of Education through which they received FPE funds, budgeted and did procurement with school committee members. They also ensured that teachers were in class teaching and always updated them on FPE

matters. They admitted all the new pupils without discrimination.

They noted, however, that a number of parents had withdrawn their financial support to schools. In most cases, though, they bought uniforms and bags for their children. They attended school general meetings and worked with teachers to instil discipline in pupils. Some parents supported school development projects.

*"We gave 10 bricks each to the school for construction of more classes to accommodate more pupils. Some parents assisted in construction of two new toilets."*

Parents agreed that the school committee had worked with headteachers to do procurements and plan for other school projects like repairs of various rooms and furniture, and construction of toilets. They also organised meetings to enlighten parents on FPE.

On teacher's role in implementing FPE, parents observed that they assisted school heads in admission of new pupils to various classes. In addition, they planned with headteachers for procurement of especially text and exercise books and did the issuance to pupils. Parents recognised the role of the local community as ensuring that every school-age going child was in school.

*"If a parent does not take his/her child to school, we report him/her to the local clan elder who will follow up the matter with the assistant chief."*

Most sponsors were reported to be giving no financial assistance but only spiritual nourishment to schools.

#### 4. Effect of FPE on learning

Most parents observed that there was improvement in performance because teachers and pupils had books and other learning materials. Also, some parents noted that pupils had more time for reading.

*"Pupils were now able to concentrate in class unlike previously when they would be sent home frequently for fees, books, and others.."*

However, some parents had contradicting views as they observed that education quality had deteriorated because of congestion in classes and shortage of facilities such as desks. Thus, the parents suggested that the government should employ more teachers. They also want the government to specify the roles of the various stakeholders, especially parents, in the implementation of FPE. They suggested that there should be frequent examinations and district mocks to enable pupils compete with others in the district. The parents said caning should be re-introduced to instil discipline. They also agreed that all parents should give pupils time to read and do their homework.

*“Some parents assign their children a lot of domestic chores, thus denying them time for private studies. This is very wrong because some pupils go back to school with incomplete homework.”*

They urged the government to allow holiday tuition to be conducted together with morning and evening preps to enable teachers to cover the syllabus. Also, the government should motivate teachers by providing them with lunch and tea. They wanted more funds to be allocated to schools to assist in completion of projects like construction of classrooms.

## 5. Lessons learnt

Parents noted that many children had been enrolled in schools.

*“The government has achieved great success in getting such pupils away from idleness and drunkenness which would have ruined their lives.”*

Parents were also happy to be relieved of the burden of school expenses. Some schools had managed to employ support staff, thus relieving pupils of manual work. Parents observed that the learning materials provided were inadequate. Some parents felt that it was not clearly defined to what extent FPE was ‘free’ and where parents should chip in. Parents also felt that the headteachers were overloaded with

administrative, financial and classroom roles. Since repeating of classes was stopped, parents felt that pupils were not serious and were promoted without merit.

*“Since pupils are not allowed to repeat classes, they do not prepare well to master the basics of the current class.”*

## 6. What is required to continue FPE

Parents suggested that the government should employ more teachers and incorporate nursery education into FPE programme thus provide learning materials and teachers for the same. They suggested that more classrooms be constructed and more desks provided. They said that orphans should be fully cared for through provision of uniforms and other necessities. They also said the government should review teacher’s salaries to motivate them. They recommended that the government should abolish exam fees for Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE). They said funds should be provided to schools on time and that the duties of the treasurer and headteacher should be clearly stipulated.

Parents urged the government to provide tapped water and electricity to schools and revise the vote heads for boarding schools. They also urged teachers to be dedicated to their work and instil discipline in pupils through counselling. They said the teachers should set good examples for pupils and observe the code of conduct and working hours, and avoid liquor during working hours.

On their role, parents said that they should help children by taking good care of the learning materials provided and support their children by providing kerosene or other sources of light for homework at night. They should also monitor their children’s behaviour and help in instilling discipline. Parents said that the local education officers

should visit schools more often and penetrate the remote areas. They should sensitise both parents and teachers about FPE. Community leaders should also sensitise parents on the importance of FPE and mobilise the community to support school development activities. The school committee should monitor various fund allocations and expenditures and encourage parents and teachers to work together.

On the role of sponsors, it was suggested that they should assist with development activities in the schools by funding them like provision of clean drinking water, construction of classrooms, sanitary facilities. They should also support pupils like orphans in provision of uniforms, food and other basic needs.

## Remarks from headteachers

The headteachers recognised FPE policy as a good move towards having an educated population and giving every child an opportunity to learn. They agreed that they had received funds for buying writing and reading materials and repairs and maintenance. They said that FPE enabled many pupils to enrol in school and reduced absenteeism. Some schools managed to construct new classrooms, offices, toilets and stores and also added desks to cater for the increased number of pupils. Some headteachers reported that they received new teachers to help in FPE implementation. They recognised other stakeholders like teachers, school committee members, parents and sponsors. Teachers had been devoted to their work though they were overloaded.

*“Without their devotion, little could have been achieved especially after rapid increase in numbers of pupils.”*