The Impact of the Implementation of Fee-Free Education Policy on Basic Education in Tanzania:

A QUALITATIVE STUDY

March 2017

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Abbreviations and Acronyms:

DED	District Executive Director
DEO	District Education Officer
DFA	Dakar Framework for Action
DFID	Department for International Development
EFA	Education for All
ETP	Education and Training Policy
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GEMR	Global Education Monitoring Report
ICESCR	the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ILO	International Labour Organisation
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MOEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
MOEVT	Ministry of Education and Vocational Training
PEDP	Primary Education Development Programme
PORALG	President Office Regional Administration and Local Government Authority
PTR	Pupil Teacher Ratio
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SFAI	School Fee Abolition Initiative
SLO	Statistical and Logistics Officer
STR	Student Teacher Ratio
TAMISEMI	Tawala za Mikoa na Serikali za Mitaa
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Fund
UPE	Universal Primary Education
URT	United Republic of Tanzania
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

1. Introduction:

1.1 School Fees: A Major Barrier to Education Access

Ensuring access to education for Tanzanian children has always been central to the government policy since independence. National development plans and policies have focused on education to increase productivity and growth. Tanzania's commitments and efforts towards education have further been strengthened by global initiatives that have recently taken place. There are several international instruments, to which Tanzania as a signatory requires the government to provide free and compulsory education. Some of these instruments are the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (Article 26); International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Article 13 and 14); Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 28); Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (Article 10); Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Article 24); UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education (Articles 4); ILO Convention 182 on Worst Forms of Child Labour (Preamble, Articles 7 and 8); African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (Article 11); African Youth Charter (Articles 13 and 16). (Right to Education Project: 2014). Notes on the Article 13 and 14 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights clearly defines what is required from each nation (Rights to Education Project: 2014, 1).

The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) notes clearly defines the two terms which are often used in the education access debate, "free" and "compulsory". The notes on neither "compulsory" state that the element of compulsion serves to highlight the fact that *neither parents, nor guardians, nor the State are entitled to treat as optional the decision as to whether the child should have access to primary education.* The right to education for every child is non-negotiable. It should be emphasised, however, that the education offered must be adequate in quality, relevant to the child and must promote the realisation of the child's other rights. The notes also state that the requirement of "free" education is unequivocal. The right is expressly formulated to ensure the availability of primary education without charge to the child, parents, or guardians. Fees imposed by the Government, the local authorities or the school, and other direct costs, constitute disincentives to the enjoyment of the right and may jeopardize its realisation. They are also often highly regressive in effect. Their elimination is a matter which must be addressed by the required plan of action. Indirect costs, such as compulsory levies on parents (sometimes portrayed as being voluntary, when in fact they are not), or the obligation to wear a relatively expensive school uniform, can also fall into the same category. This provision of compulsory primary education in no way conflicts with the right recognized in article 13.3 of the Covenant for parents and guardians "to choose for their children schools other than those established by the public authorities" (Rights to Education Project: 2014, 3).

Tanzanian efforts have further been guided by recent international efforts to ensure education for all. In 1990 the World Conference on Education for All (EFA) held at Jomtien in Thailand set out a vision for education and restated the goal of achieving Universal Primary Education (UPE) by the year 2000 (UNESCO: 1990). By 2000, it was realised that despite the progress towards achieving UPE, many countries had failed to achieve the goal. Thus, Dakar Framework for Action (DFA) (UNESCO: 2000) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) restated what was required in a more formal way. DFA and MDG goals for education are similar. Both required governments to ensure that by 2015 all children, particularly girls and children in difficult circumstances have access to and complete primary education. These goals required countries to put in place strategies to ensure marginalised children such children with disabilities have access to and benefit from quality primary education.

These EFA goals have been further refined in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). SDGs are goals to be achieved by all the nations by 2030 and these goals will shape educational policies and practices in all countries, including Tanzania. One of the education targets to be achieved by 2030, is to ensure *that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes.* SDG target goes beyond MDG goals by extending compulsory and free education to be provided by states to secondary education and focusing on quality of education.

The meeting held in Incheon, South Korea, in 2015 raised the bar and advocated for making secondary education as well as primary education fee-free. The conference set out a roadmap for achieving the SDG 4 goals for education (UNESCO: 2016a). The Education 2030 Framework for Action, adopted by over 180 countries, committed countries to 'ensure the provision of 12 years of free, publicly funded, equitable quality primary and secondary education, of which at least nine years are compulsory'. Tanzanian commitment towards provision of quality education to all its children will be measured against our commitments made to international bodies. Proclaiming fee-free education is the first step towards meeting the commitments.

1.2. The Case for Free Education:

The Global Education Monitoring Report (2016) paints a gloomy picture of the state of education in the world. It states *"on the current trends, universal primary completion will be achieved in 2042, universal lower secondary completion in 2059 and universal upper secondary completion by 2084".* (UNESCO: 2016, xvii). The report also states that as of 2014, around 25 million children worldwide were not expected to attend school (UNESCO: 2016, 178). Most of these children who are from poor families, and one of the reasons for not attending is the cost of schooling. Free education is necessary to ensure that children of the poor and the vulnerable can access education. In many developing countries parents spend a significant amount of their income to send their children to school. Although in most countries governments pay teacher's salaries, public schools were dependent on school fees, often couched in terms of contributions, for construction and carrying out school repairs. Parents also must purchase school uniforms, textbooks, exercise books and other school requirements.

The level of fees charged varied between countries and between schools. Sources suggest that fees represented a significant proportion of household expenditures on primary education in sub-Saharan Africa, anywhere from one-third in Ghana to one-half in Ethiopia (Kattan and Burnett: 2004). According to a study of Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Kenya, Uganda, and Zambia, undertaken by the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID), education spending is second only to food expenditures (Kattan and Burnett:2004, 17). Prior to elimination of fees in Uganda and Zambia, households spent 33 percent of their discretionary expenditure on education (Boyle et al. 2002). In Bangladesh and Nepal, households pay 32 and 17 percent, respectively. In Egypt, parents pay an average of 10 percent of their annual expenditures toward education (Moreland et al., 1996). Poor families spend a larger proportion of household income on education than do non-poor households. On average, the poorest 40 percent of the population in developing countries spends 10 percent of household income on costs for primary school (Oxfam 2001). In 2001, the poorest 20 percent of the population in Malawi paid more in absolute terms than the richer income groups, except for the wealthiest 20 percent (World Bank 2004b). Field studies undertaken in 2001 in Tanzania, Ghana, and Zambia show that school fees as a percentage of household income and/or expenditures and as a percentage of total spending on primary education was very high (Oxfam 2001). In Tanzania, families interviewed indicated that they paid between US$8 and US$16 per year (the equivalent of one to two months' agricultural wages) to send one child to school. Poor families in Ghana can expect to pay one month's earnings to send one child to primary school. In China, the potential cost of education represents 12.2 percent of household expenditures, with the richest quartile spending 6.6 percent and the poorest quartile spending 47.1 percent on education (Wang, 2001; as cited by Bray et al., 2004). In 2001, parents and teachers in Tanzania said that inability to pay fees was the principal reason children did not attend school (Oxfam 2001). Zambia's Central Statistics Office estimated that

at least 45 percent of children who drop out of school did so because they could not pay school fees (Tembo and Ndhlovu 2005).

Given the effect of fees on access, many policy makers, educators, and development economists have raised concerns about such financial barriers to primary education, and have advocated in favour of "free" primary education, with UNICEF spearheading a School Fee Abolition Initiative (SFAI) since 2005 (World Bank, 2009). In addition, political parties in several developing countries have used school fee abolition as a popular campaign pledge as in Malawi, Uganda, and Kenya (Al-Samarrai, 2003; Vos et al., 2004; World Bank, 2009). Given the substantial share of household income that is spent on school fees, it is not difficult to appreciate the popularity of such pledges.

1.3. The School Fee Abolition Argument

The argument for abolishing school fees is straightforward. School fees and other direct costs that households must bear represent a significant obstacle to enrolment, especially for the poorest and most vulnerable children. Abolishing school fees will make it easier and less costly for these children to enrol in school, thus accelerating progress towards the achievement of EFA goals (USAID: 2007, 2). Free schooling may be the single most important policy measure that has had a dramatic, transforming impact on school enrolment so far. It increases demand for education and encourages children from disadvantaged backgrounds to participate. Enrolment increased significantly in countries where school fees were abolished, enrolment in Uganda nearly doubled in the year after fees were abolished. Similar increases in enrolment followed the abolition of fees in Cameroon, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, and Zambia. Enrolment increased most rapidly among the most disadvantaged children, including girls, orphans, and children in rural areas (USAID: 2007, 2). Removing school fees reduces a significant burden on poor families, but it does not bring the cost to zero. Even if school fees are eliminated, poor and vulnerable children will still face serious barriers to getting an education. Not only do households still bear the cost of uniforms and transportation to and from school, but many schools also rely on contributions for school construction and maintenance, textbooks, and support for teachers (USAID: 2007, 2).

The abolition of school fees however is not a panacea. While cost is a major barrier to enrolment, evidence from country experiences is showing that it alone does not determine the demand for education and that other factors need to be addressed if the gains made are to be consolidated and sustained. These factors range from quality issues to specific measures that ensure the most vulnerable benefit from this policy shift. Regardless of school fee abolition, the indirect cost (i.e., opportunity cost) of school attendance would remain substantial. Experience in several countries indicates that the private cost of schooling to households prevents children from accessing and completing quality basic education. This is particularly significant in countries where poverty imposes tough choices on families and households about how many children to send to school, which children to send to school, and how long they may attend. Contributions of children to household income represent a larger share of total income for the poorest households. Abolishing school fees has no effect on the opportunity cost of schooling (USAID: 2007, 3).

2. Tanzanian experiences with Fee- Free Education:

Tanzania has a long history with free education. To reduce disparity in enrolment based on income, fees were abolished in 1963 in all aided secondary schools because they discriminated mostly against African children (Cameron and Dodd: 1970; 176). Children in 1960s and 1970s could study from primary to university level without paying a single cent as a fee.

In the 1970s Tanzania, like many countries in sub-Sahara faced economic instability due to higher prices of oil among other factors. In response to this devastating problem for African governments and economies, the World Bank and IMF took to implementing an interventionist set of policies in hopes of liberalising the African markets and bringing more monetary capital to these developing countries (Daven: 2008). This was done through the World Bank/IMF programmes termed Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). Tanzania's acceptance of a Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) in 1986 led to accepting conditionality in return for loans to sustain the economy. The conditionality imposed on the country was two-pronged. Domestically, the country was required to increase available resources by reforming the tax system, reducing, or eliminating fiscal deficit and creating new sources of revenue. Tanzanian government was required to cut spending on the social sector to reduce the budget deficit. The notable achievements Tanzania achieved in the education sector in 1960s and 1970s were seriously affected by the adjustment policies. Public expenditure on education declined by a quarter from 1975 to 1990 (UNICEF, 1990: 87). Reduction in resources led to serious impact on the quality and provision of education. The educational deterioration of the 1980s, combined with pressure from international financial institutions led to an increase in "cost-sharing" of education. Household contributions gradually increased and in 1995 an enrolment fee was re-introduced (Daven: 2008).

Fees at primary school level were abolished during the implementation of the Primary Education Development Plan (PEDP). Fees at secondary school level were halved, from 40,000 shillings to 20,000 per year. Abolition of school fees in primary schools because of the implementation of Primary Education Development Plan (PEDP) resulted in a significant increase in enrolment in primary schools. In one year, the enrolment in standard one increased from 1,139,334 in 2001 to 1,632,141 in 2002 an increase of whopping 43.3% (URT: 2005; 13). The focus of fee reduction, or abolition, has always been to increase enrolment without similar attention paid to the improvement of quality.

2.1. Fee-Free Education 2016

Currently, the government of Tanzania is implementing the Education and Training Policy (ETP) of 2014 in which it committed to provision of "Fee Free Basic Education". This replaced the former basic education financing system where government contributed part of the running costs and the rest was contributed through fees and parental contributions. In Tanzania, free primary education was announced in 2001, but parental contributions were required to meet school running costs. There was no set amount of required contributions; each school decided what parents needed to contribute at the primary school level. At secondary level day students were initially charged a fee of 40,000 which was reduced to 20,000 in 2004 and those in boarding school paid 70,000 per year.

The following three circulars issued by the government show how the government intends to implement the fee

free policy as stipulated in the ETP 2014. These circulars were

- Education Circular No 5 of 2015. This circular was issued on 27 November 2015 (URT: 2015a)
- Education Circular No. 6 of 2015. This circular was issued on 10 December 2015 (URT: 2015b)
- Education Circular No. 3 of 2016. This circular was issued on 25 May 2016 (URT: 2016).

Circular No. 5 was a short circular which formalised the commitment in Education and Training Policy 2014 (URT: 2014) and directed public bodies to ensure that primary and secondary education was free. This included the removal of all forms of fees and contributions. The Circular reads:
"Provision of free education means pupils or students will not pay any fee or other contributions that were being provided by parents or guardians before the release of the new circular."

Government released 18bn TZS immediately to schools to cover the cost of implementing the new directive, with 137bn TZS set-aside to cover the full cost of guaranteeing free education for all for the period January 2015 to June 2016. However, there has been mixed understanding and ' perception on "*fee free basic education policy"* at the beginning of the year 2016. Lack of clarity/understanding of Education Circular Number 5 and contradicting statements from some political leaders caused this confusion. Some of the parents perceived *"fee-free basic education"* to mean that they were no longer required to make contributions towards education of their children. This confusion arose even though Circular No. 6 of 2015 categorically stated that parents were required to meet the following costs:

- Purchase school uniforms and uniforms for sports activities, learning material such as exercise books, pens and pencils and food for children attending day schools;
- To pay for the medical expenses of the child;
- Pay travel expenses for their children for both in day and boarding schools;
- Purchase mattress, bed sheets, personal hygiene material for those studying in boarding schools and for those staying in hostels used by government; and
- To provide information where practices contradict provision of fee-free education.

However, this information was not conveyed to parents either by the government or by schools. Circular Number 3 of 2016 (URT: 2016) of 25 May 2016 is very clear unlike circular 6 of 2015. It clarified how food for children was to be provided. The Circular required parents "to cooperate with school leadership to agree on ways to provide mid-day meals to children in day schools and in hostels in line with their environment.

The central point of these three circulars is that fee free education will be provided to all children in public schools from pre-primary to Form 4. The aim is to ensure that all school age children access education without hindrance. In practice this means that students in ordinary secondary schools will no longer pay the 20,000 shillings fees that were charged to day school students and 70,000 shillings charged for students in boarding school. The circular however states that the Circular number 1 of 2013 that required contributions for school inspection will continue to be implemented. The Circular stipulates that the President's Office Regional Administration and Local Government (PORALG) –"TAMISEMI" will use 50% of capitation grant allocated to secondary school and 40% of the capitation grant for primary school for purchase of textbooks (4). Secondary schools will receive capitation grant of 12,500 shillings per student per year and primary schools will receive 6,000 shillings per pupil per year. Secondary schools will also receive 20,000 shillings per student as fee removal compensation.

The fee – free education will benefit most parents of those in boarding secondary schools as they will not have to pay 70,000 shillings they were paying before; parents of students in day schools will not have to pay 20,000 shillings that they were required to pay. Benefits to parents of children in primary schools are not clear as there is no data which specifies the amount schools required as "contributions". Per Circular 3, parents will still be required to make a significant financial contribution for their children's education. They must purchase uniforms for school and sports activities, exercise books and pens and pay for the medical expenses of their children.

Parents are required to buy mattresses, bed sheets and items for personal hygiene for students studying in boarding schools. Parents will also pay transport costs for their children in day schools, in hostels and in boarding schools. Parents may also agree to make voluntary contributions for mid-day meals for their children and for hostel services for those students in day schools. The Circular states that the office of Regional Commissioner will receive and approve requests from parents/guardians to contribute towards provision of food for children in day schools and other services for those in hostels. According to Circular No.3 of 2016, the school committees and the school boards should work with the community to ensure security of the school property and to ensure schools have temporary teachers for science, maths, and technical subjects. It appears that voluntary contributions would also be required for these activities, which also will require the approval of the Council and the regional authorities.

3. Research on Fee -Free education 2016:

Tanzanian government's initiative to provide free education from pre-primary to Form Four level has received international recognition and has been appreciated by Tanzanians, especially the poor parents. Although the policy and the government commitments are commendable, not much is known about how the fee-free policy is translated at the school level. HakiElimu decided to carry out two researches, one quantitative and one qualitative, to find out the situation on the ground. The aim of the qualitative study was to:

- To assess opinions/perceptions/acceptance by different stakeholders of fee-free education policy.
- Identify any positive or negative implications of the free education policy related to levels and processes.
- Assess the flow, use, adequacy, accountability, and performance of grants/ subsidies to finance fee-free basic education.

3.1 Methodology:

Data for the study were collected from seven districts on Mainland Tanzania, one each from the seven educational zones in the country. The districts were Korogwe, Muleba, Tabora Urban, Njombe, Mpwapwa, Sumbawanga, and Kilosa. In some districts, the District Executive Directors (DED) and District Council chairpersons were interviewed depending on their availability.

In each district, four primary and four secondary schools were randomly selected. In each school the head teacher/master was interviewed to get his/her perception on fee-free education. We were particularly interested in finding their views on the amount of funds received since the policy was implemented in January 2016, the flow of funds and challenges, if any, they faced because of the policy. School committees and school boards were interviewed. School committees and school boards are important organs at the school level that assist in governance, they provide oversight on the actions of school management. School boards and committees approve school budgets, spending requests by schools and vet their financial reports, before being audited and forwarded to district authorities. School boards and committees also act as a link between parents on one side and school management on the other. To get teachers' perspective on the policy, focus group discussions (FGDs) were carried out with teachers. Perhaps, the most important group impacted by the policy are the parents. To get their views on the fee-free education, FGDs were conducted with groups of parents, based on their availability.

These interviews and FGDs provided views of the government through DEOs, DEDs and Council chairpersons; views of the school managements through interviews with head masters and head teachers and from FGDs with head teachers; and views of the primary beneficiaries, views of parents through FGD with parents.

4. Findings:

4.1 Implementing Fee-Free Education:

Implementing fee-free education in 2016, Tanzania could have drawn lessons from its past experiences and experiences of other countries in Africa that implemented fee-free education. The School Fee Abolition Initiative (SFAI) formed by the World Bank and the UNICEF provide guidelines on implementing fee-free education (World Bank: 2016, 10). The guidelines recommend countries to take different steps to ensure that the policy is implemented in an orderly manner without adversely affecting the running of the school. One of the major impacts that implementation of the fee-free policy has in countries, where it is implemented, is on quality. Large number of children who were previously excluded from school because of inability to pay fees enrols in school resulting in stress on available resources. In absence of planning, classroom sizes and teacher load increases, negatively impact on the quality of education.

Fee-free education requires adequate planning before it is implemented. Experiences of other countries show that school fee abolition does not stop at policy declarations; which are mostly political in nature. Political declarations should be translated into sets of policy guidelines and operational frameworks. The abolition of school fees policy can pose formidable challenges related to management and governance, quality, equity, financing, and politics. These challenges need to be foreseen and planned for. Often abolition of school fees results in withdrawal of community support and involvement. This needs to be prevented. Abolition of school fees may not necessarily lead to enrolment of children from marginalised family as school fees do not necessarily constitute the bulk of educational expenditures by parents. It must take into consideration the wide range of household costs of schooling, including the costs of textbooks, supplies and uniforms. These children may need additional, targeted financial and non-financial support to ensure that they benefit from this policy.

4.2 Financing Schools under fee-free education:

The Government of Tanzania should be commended for ensuring that the financial commitments made in fee-free policy have been honoured fully. By abolishing school fees and other parental contributions, the government undertook the responsibility to ensure that schools were provided with adequate funds to operate. The government committed to provide 10,000 shillings per each primary school pupil, of which 4,000 shillings were to be retained by the government for the purchase of textbooks. For schools with special needs, and for units of children with special needs more money was provided. For each secondary school student, government committed to provide 25,000 as capitation grant and 20,000 as fee compensation.

All the schools visited informed that they received monthly capitation grant based on the number of pupils in school. Two problems were noted. The first was that the amount was based on 2015 enrolment and did not include the surge of enrolment in standard one and two in 2016. Also, children in pre-primary classes were not included in calculating the capitation grant sent to school. Table 1 shows the flow of funds to some selected schools taken from different districts.

Table 1: Capitation grant funds received by Selected Primary Schools in 2016

School	Nyombo	Muleba	Chanzuru	Itetemia	Kaengesa	Ilolo
District	Njombe	Muleba	Kilosa	Tabora	Sumbawanga	Mpwapwa
Pupils	481	828	818	738	1060	874
Jan 2016	218,000	494,000	355,000	396,000	498,000	396,000
Feb 2016	217,000	492,000	353,000	396,000	498,000	396,000
Mar 2016	217,000	492,000	353,000	396,000	498,000	396,000
April 2016	215,000	488,000	350,000	396,000	588,000	396,000
May 2016	215,000	488000	350,000	396,000	588,000	499,000
June 2016	215,000	488,000	350,000	396,000	588,000	499,000
July 2016	215,000	488,000	350,000	396,000	588,000	409,000
August 2016	215,000	488,000	450,000	396,000	588,000	409,000
Total	1,723,000	3,918,000	2,911,000	3,168,000	4,434,000	3,400,000
Per pupil monthly	448	591	445	536	522	486

Source: Field data

Overall, it seems that the allocation per child per month is 500 shillings and that the variations that appear are due to the enrolment or attendance numbers that the district authorities may have submitted to the Ministry for calculating the capitation grant. Given the disbursement exercise so far, the government is likely to meet its commitment of disbursing capitation grant of 6,000 shillings for each of the pupil in primary schools. As capitation grant is calculated based on previous year's enrolment, the schools did not benefit from the surge in standard one pupils enrolment. It is likely that the schools will be compensated for these increases in later grants. Primary schools do not get capitation grants for significant number of children enrolled in pre-primary classes. As these children use school resources, it is only fair that their numbers are included in calculating capitation grants.

Table 2 shows the amount of capitation grant and fee compensation disbursed to two secondary schools in 2016.

Table 2: Capitation grant funds received by Selected Secondary Schools 2016

School	Madago Secondary Korogwe			Ruhanga Secondary Muleba		
Category	Fee Compensation	Capitation	Total	Fee Compensation	Capitation	Total
Students	**574**			**445**		
Jan 2016	725,000	692,000	1,417,000	880,000	846,000	1,726,000
Feb 2016	725,000	689,000	1,414,000	888,000	846,000	1,734,000
Mar 2016	725,000	687,000	1,412,000	885,000	842,000	1,727,000
April 2016	725,000	682,000	1,407,000	884,000	842,000	1,726,000
May 2016	725,000	681,000	1,406,000	884,000	842,000	1,726,000
June 2016	725,000	681,000	1,406,000	885,000	842,000	1,727,000
July 2016	725,000	682,000	1,407,000	n.d	n.d	n.d
August 2016	725,000	682,000	1,407,000	n.d	n.d.	n.d.
Total	5,800,000	5,476,000	11,276,000	5,306,000	5,060,000	10,366,000
Per student monthly	1,263	1,193	2,456	1,987	1,895	3,882
Per student per year	15,156	14,316	29,472	23,844	22,740	46,584

Source: Field Data

The amount of money received by Madago is much less than they should have received. The school head master explains why this happened. He states, "My school has received less money than we should have based on the number of students we have in our school. We have been paid based on 400 students we had last year. This year we have 574 students". The amount of funds that secondary schools receive is significantly higher than that received by primary schools; in fact it is seven times as much as that received by primary schools.

4.3. Funding mechanisms prior to the implementation of fee-free education

It was difficult to compare how the current allocation of funds under fee-free education compares with the previous system as data were not readily available from schools. At primary school level, schools received capitation grant irregularly and the amount received was meagre. What is clear is that inadequate funding from the government made the school management use different approaches to access funds, one of them being parental contributions. Parents were often not provided with receipts for the amount contributed and so data on how much funds were collected was difficult to obtain. Few schools could provide data on the funds they collected in 2015. Kagoma Primary School, in Muleba, received capitation of 840,376 shillings during 2015 for 586 pupils, an average of 1,434 shillings per pupil per year. The amount was clearly not adequate to provide quality education. Parental contribution during the year amounted to 775,000 shillings, an average of 1,322 shillings per pupil. The school also received 740,000 from the member of the parliament for the district which was used to construct a toilet block. The total funds collected by the school in 2015 amounted to 2,355,376 shillings. It is likely that the school also collected other amounts, usually small amounts for specific purposes, which were not recorded and accounted for. Another school, Ruhanga received 397,126 shillings as capitation from the government in 2015, an average of 708 shillings per pupil per year. Other sources included 150,000 shillings as parental contribution, 500,000 from the local Member of Parliament, and 300,000 shillings from the church and 800,000 from school projects.

Schools collected funds from parents for different activities. Mahalule Primary school in Njombe required each parent to contribute10, 000 shillings per pupil for food; 1,500 shillings per pupil for security guards; 2,000 shillings per child as allowances for teachers. The school also got 30,000 from selling stone quarried from its premises. Parents were also required to provide labour to dig the foundation of a classroom. The school in 2015 received capitation grant of 270,360 shillings, 866 shillings per pupil, in four quarterly instalments. In the absence of regular and adequate funding from the government, the schools used various means of getting funds to finance their operations. Another school Sovi Primary in Njombe had been mobilising parental contributions whose amount per child was dependent on the class which the child was in. Parents whose children were in Standard 1 and 2 contributed 7,000 shillings per child; those whose children were in standard 3 and 5 contributed 9,000 shillings per year; parents whose children were in standard 4 were required to pay 25,000 shillings. Parents, whose children were in standard 7 contributed 35,000 shillings, while those whose children were in standard 6, contributed 25,000 shillings. The school received on an average 20,000 shillings per pupil. The money collected was used for administrative, academic and sports purposes. The head teacher was given a bonus of 200,000 shillings per annum. However, not all parents paid; some schools, like those in Njombe which is a relatively fertile and rich area, parental contributions were around 80% while those in other districts like Korogwe, they ranged between 50% and 60%.

Head teachers stated that students were not expelled for not making these required contributions. However, there was constant harassment taking place. During the focussed group discussions (FGD), parents stated that children were frequently sent home to get money from their parents. These children were caught in a dilemma, they knew their parents' inability to pay and the school administrations demand for payment. According to one parent "these children roamed the street as they were afraid to go home to get money and were also scared to go back to school without the required contribution". Children of the poor, who were most unlikely to pay, suffered constant harassment at school and thus their learning suffered. Some children of the poor were helped by Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) such as HUYAWA and World Vision.

4.4 Use of funds under Fee-Free Education:

There are strict guidelines from the Education Ministry on how the funds received by schools under fee-free education should be used. There was a guideline attached to the Ministry circular no. 6 of 2015 as "Mwongozo wa Matumizi ya Ruzuku" of 28 December 2015. The guideline specified the percentages of funds to be used for different activities, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Guidelines on the use of funds at Primary and Secondary School level.

Primary		Secondary
Material	30%	Office expenses 35%
Administration	10%	Academic purposes 30%
Maintenance	30%	Continuous assessment 15%
Exams	20%	Medicine and expenses related to female students 10%
Sports	10%	Minor repairs 10%

Source: As reported by Head teachers and Head Masters

Details of how the funds allocated to be used were provided by the Head master of Ruhanga Secondary school in Muleba. He said that per the directives the funds were to be spent only for the following purposes:

- 35% of the total fee compensation grant to be used for office expenses, masijala (registry?), planning, security, electricity, and water. 10% of the 35% is paid to the head master as responsibility allowance.
- 30% to be used for academic purposes, for purchasing reams of paper, chalks, manila paper, for school inspection, and contributions for UMISETA;
- 15% to be used for continuous assessment, mock examination, weekly and monthly tests and for printing and photocopying tests;
- 10% for medicine for First Aid; and,
- 10% for minor repairs like purchasing locks, repairing desks etc.

As stated earlier, the schools receive funds regularly every month and in the stated amounts. Although, nearly all the school heads agree that the current system is better than the previous one, they are unhappy about some aspects of the implementation of the policy. As schools are instructed to use money on specified items only, and as schools are barred from seeking contributions from parents, certain activities carried out in the past have stopped. For example, many schools had farms as income generating activity. This cannot be continued as there were no funds allocated for the purpose. As one head teacher stated, "under what line item will the expenditure on buying seeds, buying tools for farming be allocated?" Farms used to produce food to provide mid-day meals to children. In other schools, parents contributed for mid-day meals for their children. Now parents refuse to contribute as they have been told that there will be no contributions required from parents and that they should report any head teacher who asks for contributions.

Nearly every head teacher or head master complained about the inadequacy of funds received. Heads of secondary schools were particularly concerned about the funds they receive for academic and administrative purposes. One head master said that out of the funds received for administrative purposes they had to:

- Prepare identity cards for students and teachers;
- Buy files and other stationery for school use;
- Pay for electricity, water, security guards.

From the funds received for academic purposes they should hire temporary teachers to teach subjects for which no teacher was posted to school.

Head teachers and head masters raised their concerns about the new policy. The Head master of Patema Secondary stated:

> *"We get 128,400 shillings per month for academic purposes but we need to hire teachers for subjects where we do not have teachers. Our school does not have even a single biology teacher. So, we hire a person who has recently finished university or form 6. We pay him/her 100,000 shillings per month to teach. This leaves us with only 28,400 shillings. A carton of chalk costs 51,000 shillings. Similarly, schools spend 35% of the amount for office expenses which in our case is 149,000 shillings. From the amount, we must pay for identity cards for students, pay electricity, and water bills, as well as pay the salary of the watchman and set aside 10% to be used for emergencies. To carryout minor repairs we get 42,800 shillings per month, a total of 256,800 shillings in the last six months. This amount was spent on repairing desks that had broken down and we have no money to carry out other repairs."*

The head masters were concerned that the new system will affect quality. One of the head masters stated:

> *"In the previous years, we had panels for different subjects. These teachers used to meet and discuss ways of improving teaching of these subjects. These teachers were provided with transport and meal allowances. We cannot do that now. Similarly, head masters cannot attend meeting of all heads as there is no budget for that. I am a member of the* Tanzania Heads of Secondary Schools Association *(TAHOSSA) Umoja wa Wakuu wa Shule. We have been instructed that we cannot use school funds to pay for our membership fees or travelling allowances."*

Teachers were also of the opinion that guidelines on the use of funds restrict their ability to make best use of funds for the benefits of students. The head master of JM Makweta secondary school raised another concern about the policy. He stated, "I fully support fee-free education. However, I feel that it is not fair to treat all schools in the same way. Allocation should not be based on the number of students but on the school plan. Each school has particular needs, different from other schools, which need to be considered. For example, the amount allocated for examinations and repairs is not enough. Administration requires frequent travelling, but this has stopped now as there are no funds for that." The head master went on to say, "The shortcoming of the previous policy was that some parents were unwilling to send their children to school, absenteeism was high and there were often conflicts between parents and school administration on demands for parental contributions. We used to hold frequent meetings with parents to educate them. For those who were unable to pay, the Council helped".

The head master of Ikuna secondary school was also positive about the policy. He stated:

> *"Fee- free education is good for parents. There are more girls enrolled in schools than ever before as parents in this area do not value girls' education. On the part of schools there are many challenges on the guidelines on fund expenditure. The amount for laboratories has been overestimated and that for academic purposes underestimated; the amount allocated for repairs is also little compared to needs.".*

Parents are feeling uninvolved in the education of their children. A head master stated:

> *"Free education has meant that parents have left all the responsibility of education of their children on government's shoulder. Recently, we called a meeting of parents of children who are in Form 4 to discuss how we can improve their performance. Out of 28 parents only 3 turned up for the meeting! In the past most parents would have attended."*

According to the Head master of Ruhanga Secondary school certain areas of school will suffer. These are the treatment of female students (Budgeted Tshs50, 000). Moreover, schools will not be able to hire teachers for subjects where there are no teachers. This was a practice in most secondary schools as there was great shortage of science teachers in schools. Schools usually hired a fresh university graduate or a student who had finished Form 6 on temporary basis to teach that subject. This will not be possible now and the teaching of science subject will suffer as a result. Attendance in the Board meetings will also suffer as there are no allocations for travel and sitting allowances for Board meeting allowances. Schools will also not be able to provide mid-day meals to their students as no money has been allocated for the purpose and we are barred from asking for

parental contributions for the purpose. The salary for the watchman is also not part of the funds that we receive. According to TAMISEMI capitation grant is only for laboratory chemicals and equipment. As one head master aptly put it, "*We have plenty of laboratory equipment and chemicals but no teachers to use them!*"

4.5. Perceptions of fee- free education:

Education Circular No. 3 of 2016 dated 25/5/2016 spells out the role of various stakeholders in implementing the fee free education policy. This circular clarifies many of the misconceptions that had arisen in implementing the policy. Fee – free education policy is one of the most important education policy statements in the country. It is therefore crucial that it is successfully implemented. Successful implementation of the policy will require support from all the stakeholders, from the Minister level down to a parent in rural areas. The research sought to find out perceptions of various stakeholders regarding the policy. In this section, we will discuss the perceptions of different stakeholders towards the fee-free education policy.

Overall, various stakeholders were positive about the fee-free policy in the country. Discussion with parents and teachers showed that details about the policy were not shared with various stakeholders leading to misconceptions about it. Head teachers and head masters received government circulars on the implementation of the policy. These circulars expounded the role that each stakeholder had to play to ensure successful implementation of the policy. However, these circulars were mostly kept in the files, accessible only to the heads of schools. Even teachers were given verbal information on the policy; the circular was not shared in any of the schools that were visited. Copies of the circulars were not even provided to members of the school committee or the school Board. It was therefore not surprising that few people had read these circulars. As one member of a Board in Sumbawanga stated, "We have not seen the circular (No.6 of 2015) but what we know is what the head master has told us, we make decisions based on what the head master informs us". The cost of photocopying the circulars and sharing those, at least with teachers, would be minimal but the benefits would have been immense.

District level officials:

District level officials were frank in giving their opinions about the policy; they highlighted both the positives and negatives. A District Education Officer in one of the districts stated that the government's policy on fees has vacillated overtime. According to him, although government has the primary responsibility of providing education from time to time it has sought parental contributions. He said, there was an inverse relationship between fees and parental contributions. "When fees were high, parental contributions were low. The government reduced school fees for secondary school students from 40,000 to 20,000 shillings which led to decreased funds for school. To compensate for this deficit, parents were required to make various contributions to meet the shortfall resulting from the reduced school fees".

District officials suggested that elimination of fees resulted in increased enrolment at primary schools, in some schools there was an increase of more than 100%. At secondary schools, a District Education Officer (DEO) Secondary, stated, "as enrolment does not solely depend on the ability of parents to pay fees, the fee-free policy has led to decrease in drop-out of students. The policy has led to improvement in girls continuing with their education".

Some of the DEOs were concerned about the way in which Form 2 national exams are being conducted. One DEO said, "Ward Education Officers (WEO) are now involved in marking the examination. These exams are now duplicated at the school level. This has reduced the cost to the government but is "expensive" for schools, students and parents. This practice has devalued the Form 2 exams."

District Education Officers were also concerned about the inadequacy of the funds that schools were receiving,

a DEO said, "the amount for administration that schools receive is not adequate. Many schools have reduced the number of security guards that they employ. Moreover, some schools have used money allocated for UMISETA for conducting mock examinations".

School Board/School committee members:

School Board and School Committee members were concerned about the impact of fee-free education on managing schools. In a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) conducted with school committee members in Njombe one member said, "We were given a seminar by the head teacher on what the government would cover under the fee-free education and what parents will have to pay for. We are having difficulty making parents pay for mid-day lunch for their children. Many children have been enrolled in my school, they have been piled in classroom where desks are inadequate. So, where is free education? The policy has come with challenges that will take long to solve".

Head teachers/ Head masters:

According to Education circular No. 3 of 2016, head teachers and head masters were central to implementing the fee-free education policy. Their role was academic, administrative and management. They were required to ensure that funds received from the government were spent per government rules and regulations. Heads of both secondary and primary schools agree that fee-free education policy has greatly helped poor families. A head teacher stated: "The new policy is better than the previous policy when parents were asked to make contributions, as it makes it possible for children from poor families to freely enrol in school. It reduces the financial burden on families". One head master believed that there were some positives in the previous policy where parents were required to make contributions, "it created a relationship between parents and schools, parents realised that they have a responsibility towards their children's education by ensuring the schools function properly. I saw greater involvement of parents; this I believe was very positive." Another head master stated, "In the past parents used to come to school to ask how their children were progressing in school. With the implementation of fee – free education parents seem to feel that they have no responsibility towards the education of their children. Hardly any parent comes to enquire about the progress of their children" (a head master in Korogwe).

Teachers:

Teachers are central to provision of education and have a key role to play in implementing the fee-free education at the school level. This centrality of teachers to the process has not been taken into consideration. It is highly likely that Tanzanian Teachers' Union (TTU) was consulted while developing the education policy but at the school level, the involvement of teachers in implementing the policy is marginal. In this section, we would discuss how they perceive fee-free education and how it will affect their work. Teachers were aware of the fee-free education. Most heard about the policy at the staff meetings where the head teacher or head master read the relevant circulars from the government. When asked if these circulars were discussed by the teachers, one teacher replied "we wanted to discuss it but were told by the head teachers that government circulars are for implementation and not for discussion".

Nearly every teacher interviewed was positive about the policy-all agreed that it will reduce the financial burden on parents. They also agreed that teachers will not be required to constantly deal with children who did not pay the required contribution. "*Imetupunguzia kazi kukimbizana na wazazi"* (the policy has lightened our load of chasing parents for contributions). It also removed the conflicts between parents and teachers as children were no longer being sent home to collect money. One teacher said:

> *"In the past parents were reluctant to come to school because they thought we would demand money, now they come freely. The new policy has created a positive relation between schools and the community, which is good for the education of the children.*

It is also good for children because in the past when they were sent home they felt humiliated. Some children dropped out as a result. I am sure the new policy will reduce the dropout rate in schools."

The overall positive views were tempered by views that reflect unplanned implementation of the policy. Teachers argued that implementation of the policy without reflecting on the consequences has led to resource shortages in school. They argued that the sudden surge of pupils will affect the quality of education. While more children were enrolled the number of classrooms and teachers remained the same. Teachers were optimistic that over time things will improve but they stated that this "fire-fighting" approach needs to be replaced by a planned approach for education changes.

Most teachers believed the policy favoured parents and "there was nothing for us". One of their major complaint was that fee -free education has increased their workload and that they should be compensated for the additional work they were doing. Their workload has increased because the enrolment, especially in standard one has increased. The Head teacher of Nyailigamba Primary school, for example while praising the policy noted "The fee-free policy is good as it allows children from poor families to access primary education. It reduces the financial burden on poor families. The fee-free education benefits parents, what does it do for us? Our workload has increased without being adequately compensated for it."

Parents:

The majority of the parents heard about the fee-free education on radio or through newspapers. Most were unclear about what it meant and thought that they would not have to make any contribution for the education of their children. One parent during FGD stated "We learned about fee free education at a meeting. We were told that the government has decided to reduce the burden of education on parents." However, there, were different perceptions by parents on what this meant. Some believed that the government will pay for all the expenses, including food for the children. There was no clear message that was given at the meetings held at the villages. Some parents learned about the policy on radio. One school committee member stated "we are getting problems from the parents, they are refusing to contribute for the mid-day meals as they believe that the government will cover that". The situation is made difficult by local politicians who threaten head teachers by saying "*ole wake mwalimu akithubutu kuchangisha wazazi hela*" (any teacher asking parents to make financial contributions will be taken to task).

Parents were obviously delighted with the policy. One parent stated, "In the past we used to pay fees and other required contributions but now it is only uniforms. We have seen families that are poor bringing their children to school now. In the past this did not happen. In the past, to enroll a child, you were required to contribute for a desk, now you don't have to".

4.6. Implementation challenges of the fee-free education:

Although the funding part of the fee-free education policy has been implemented smoothly, head teachers see that the policy faces several challenges that need to be addressed. One of the key challenges is related to how funds received by the schools are to be utilised. It is understandable that the government should specify, in detail, how much and for what purpose the received funds were to be spent to ensure there was no misuse of funds at the school level and to ensure that schools operate as smoothly as possible.

The required specifications on the use of funds, on the other hand, is problematic for the head teachers. Several activities that were carried out in the past have no funds allocated to them. In the past, both at the secondary and primary school levels, members of the school committees and the school board were given allowances for meeting transport and lunch expenses. Under the guidelines on the use of funds there is no provision for giving

such allowances to committee and board members. Heads of schools were concerned that committee and board member will not attend the meetings in future as the incentives have been removed. The Head master of Ikuna Secondary (Njombe) said: "We used to pay school Board members 40,000 for travel and sitting allowance. This time we paid them only 30,000 shillings each. We are not sure what amount we need to pay the board members; we need guidance on this. We are lucky as we do not have electricity and water charges to pay from the funds from administration". There were no funds allocated for "mock examinations" which were conducted for Form 4 students as preparation for the national examinations. These mock exams are necessary for several reasons. First, the students get practice in sitting for such an exam which may reduce their anxiety. Secondly, it serves a diagnostic purpose – teachers can find out the weaknesses of their students and provide additional classes to address these weaknesses before the national exams. This time round, head masters used funds allocated for academic activities and in some cases for UMISETA for mock exams – against the guidelines from the government.

Another common problem that secondary schools were facing was of hiring of temporary teachers. From our discussions with head masters and the school board members it appears that it was common for secondary schools to hire temporary teachers to teach subjects for which no teachers were allocated to the school. There is a big shortage of science teachers in the country and it has not been possible for the government to allocate science teachers as required. Schools hired students who had either finished Form Six or graduated from universities on temporary basis. These temporary teachers were paid from parental contributions. As schools cannot ask parents to contribute and, as schools have not been provided with funds for the purpose, schools are unable to hire teachers.

Both primary and secondary school heads were concerned that no funds were allocated for hiring of security guards and for providing mid-day meals to students. The statement of the head teacher of Nyailigamba secondary school reflected the opinion of the majority of head teachers and masters:

> *"The government should allow parental contributions for some specific activities like hiring of science teachers. There are parents who are more than willing to contribute to ensure that their children get properly educated and do well in examinations. If we do not have a chemistry teacher and the government does not provide us with one and it also does not allow parents to contribute to hire one, then students will suffer. There is need for building flexibility in the policy. Applying it rigidly will do more harm than good. There are also other areas where parents can contribute. For example, the toilets in the school are broken down and money to carryout major renovations is not forthcoming from the government. Parents should be able to contribute and solve the problem. How do we handle a case where a student breaks a desk, should the parent not be required to pay to replace it?"*

4.7. Impact of fee-free education:

4.7.1. Increase in enrolment:

The main reason for abolishing school fees was to enable children from the poor families to attend school. The argument for abolishing school fees is straightforward. School fees and other direct costs that households must bear represent a significant obstacle to enrolment, especially for the poorest and most vulnerable children. Abolishing school fees, the argument continues, will make it easier and less costly for these children to enrol in school, thus accelerating progress towards the achievement of EFA goals. School fees are a significant obstacle to enrolment for many households, and removing this obstacle invariably leads to a dramatic increase in the number of children in school.

Indeed, one of the most visible impacts of fee free education was the surge in enrolment in standard one. At the pre-primary school level the total enrolment increased from 1,069,823 in 2015 to 1,562,770 in 2016 an increase

of 46%. Nationally, 2016 standard one enrolment rose by 38.4 percent over the standard one enrolment in 2015. Standard One enrolment in 2016 was 2,120,667 compared to 1,531,746 in 2015 (TAMISEMI website –Open data). This huge rise in enrolment was slightly lower than the rise in 2001 when fees were abolished when PEDP was launched. In 2002, the first year of PEDP, Standard One enrolment was 1,632,141 compared to 1,140,554 in 2001, an increase of 43.1 percent. (Data on enrolment from *tamisemi.go.tz/BEMIS – DASH BOARD)* Increases in Standard One enrolment in 2016 can be partly attributed to abolition of school fees and it is partly a result of the implementation of the new education policy. According to the new education policy, the age for enrolling in Standard One was reduced from seven to six (URT: 2014, 24). The increase in Standard One enrolment was also partly due to younger children joining Standard One. The increase varied by school. In Kagoma primary school, in Muleba district, Standard One enrolment increased from 81 in 2015 to 136 in 2016, an increase of 68%. In Muleba primary school, enrolment increased from 183 in 2015 to 257 in 2016, an increase of 40%. These are significant increases and occurred across the country.

Increases at secondary school level were less dramatic. Form One enrolment rose significantly, though this has more to do with increased Form One spaces available than the direct effect of fee- free education. Enrolment in Form One increased from 372,719 in 2015 to 538,826 an increase of 44.6 percent. Students enrolling in Form One in public schools do so after doing well in Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE). In the past year, there were students who did not join secondary schools or dropped out because their parents could not afford to pay fees. The abolition of fees would increase the chances of children from poor families to join secondary schools if they get selected. Abolition of fees in itself will not increase enrolment; though it will affect the dropout rate. Anna Tibaijuka School were allocated 160 students by the selection board but the school managed to take only 80 given the shortage of classrooms at the school. At Ruhanga secondary school enrolment increased from 127 in 2015 to 179 in 2016, an increase of 41%.

4.7.2. Declining quality indicators:

This surge in enrolment has created quality problems at schools. Lack of classrooms is an obvious one. The second has been the increase on teaching load. The surge in enrolments that follows the abolition of school fees may overwhelm the available supply of schools, teachers, and educational materials. Tanzania is not unique in this respect. In many countries where fee-free education was implemented, quality indicators were negatively impacted. In Malawi, for example, the ratio of pupils to classrooms increased to 119:1, the ratio of pupils to teachers increased to 62:1, and the ratio of pupils to textbooks increased to 24:1. There is a solid body of evidence from around the world that suggests that the single most important factor in children's educational success is an effective teacher. One likely consequence of a surge in enrolments is a dramatic rise in the number of pupils per teacher. Many of the teachers in the study raised cited the large number of pupils that they had to deal with as a major concern. Asking teachers to work with twice as many students is likely to lead to academic failure for many students, most notably the poor and vulnerable children who are the supposed beneficiaries of abolishing school fees. (USAID: 2007, 3).

As shown in the preceding section fee-free education led to significant increases in enrolment at pre-primary, primary and secondary levels. Compared to 2015, enrolment in pre-primary rose by 492,947 children and by 588,921 in primary schools in 2016. As pre-primary classes are part of the primary schools, additional space for 1,081,868 children needed to be provided. Taking a ratio of 40 pupils per classroom means that local councils had to build 27,000 additional classrooms to accommodate the increase. Our experience shows that this did not happen. A similar, albeit on a smaller scale

situation emerged at secondary level. Additional 2,670 classrooms were needed to accommodate additional 93,518 students joining Form One in 2016.

Similarly, 27,000 additional teachers were needed at primary school levels to cope with the increase in enrolment.

Not only this but additional books and other teaching and learning material were also required to be purchased. The situation seems to have worsened in 2017 as shown by a recent front page report in the *Citizen* Newspaper of 9th January 2017.

4.7.3. Equity and equality

How has fee-free education in Tanzania addressed the issues of equity and equality? In this section, we will find if fee-free education had planned to address the issues of equity and equality in education. In education, equity and equality are important issues from the perspective of social justice and fairness and we see these terms quite often mentioned in documents, both national and international. The terms equity and equality are sometimes used interchangeably, which can lead to confusion because while these concepts are related, there are also important distinctions between them.**Equity** involves trying to understand and give people *what they need* to enjoy full, healthy lives. **Equality**, in contrast, aims to ensure that everyone gets the same things to enjoy full, healthy lives. Like equity, **equality** aims to promote fairness and justice, but it can only work if everyone starts from the same place and needs *the same things*. Therefore, addressing equity is a pre-requisite to achieving equality. School fee abolition has a direct impact on equity and inclusion, and it addresses the rights and needs of marginalized, excluded, and vulnerable children.

School fees are a form of regressive taxation, which imposes a disproportionate burden on the poor. The tremendoussurge in enrollment after abolishing fees—particularly among poor,previously excluded, and vulnerable children (girls, children living inremote rural populations, child labourers, children with disabilities, andchildren affected by HIV/AIDS and social conflict)—reveals that theprivate costs of education to families are particularly burdensome tothese groups. Enrollment of children from such groups is very sensitiveto fees, even small fees.

However, abolition of school fees still leaves considerable private costs for parents. Circular No. 3 states what parental responsibilities still are:

- School and sports uniforms
- Exercise books and pens/pencils
- Health expenses
- Contributions for mid-day meals for day students and for those in hostels
- For those in boarding schools: mattress, bed sheets, items for personal hygiene
- Transport to and from school.

The amount parents spend on educational related activities varies, but not much. For primary schools the biggest expenditure is on uniforms. Parents of Mzindawa primary school in Korogwe stated that their annual cost for financing the education of their children was 72,000 shillings for a female child and 51,000 shillings for boys. For girls, they needed two skirts (25,000); 2 shirts (20,000); T-shirt (5,000), 2 pairs of shoes (12,000); exercise books (40 x 250 = 10,000)). For boys, they needed 2 shorts (20,000); two shirts (12,000), T-shirt (5,000), and two pairs of shoes 12,000 shillings. Exercise books plus pens cost 12,000 per year. Private costs for education for parents is at least 10 times higher than the 6,000 shillings per pupil capitation grant that the government provides for running the school. Obviously, capitation is only a small part of the total cost of running a primary school. These costs do not take in account the opportunity costs of children.

Costs are higher for children in secondary schools. These were two pairs of uniforms including skirts and shirts (27,000 shillings); T-shirt/sweater (20,000 shillings); shoes (44,000 shillings); counter books (10 x 3,000 = 30,000 shillings); bag, compass, ruler (35,000 shillings); giving a total of 156,000 shillings per annum. For boys, the costs were slightly higher, 163,000 shillings. For students in boarding schools, there are additional costs of

mattress (30,000); bed sheets (20,000); pillow and pillow case (10,000); and items of personal hygiene like soap, tooth paste; tooth brush etc. whose yearly cost will be approximately 20,000 shillings. A parent, whose child is in boarding secondary school, will pay around 250,000 shillings to educate the child in the first year. He/she may not have to pay for the mattress the second year. These are significant costs that parents have to bear.

These costs, both at primary and secondary levels will consume a significant portion of the family income, especially for the poor ones. It is likely that there are children who are unable to enrol in schools because of these private costs. In order to ensure that all children attend school, the Government will have to consider how these private costs to parents can be reduced or totally eliminated.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

The government initiative for fee – free education policy needs to be commended. Any goal of removing financial obstacles to quality education for all children, especially children of the poor, orphans and vulnerable children needs to be applauded. School fee abolition is not just about fees (which do not necessarily constitute the bulk of fees). It must take into consideration the wide range of household costs of schooling, including the costs of school uniforms, health costs, bedding for the children in boarding schools and for those in hostels; and costs related to sports and transportation. These private costs are several times higher than the fees that have been abolished. For the poorest the opportunitycost of the child's contribution to family income may decide if the child attends school or not. Abolition of school fees alone is unlikely to encourage all children, especially the most vulnerable children, to enrol in school. Orphans, street children, children of the very poor need money to survive; using their time for activities that do not feed them and their families is not an option for them. Abolishing fees in itself, will not attract the poorest of the poor to enrol in school. We need to consider different sets of policies that do that.

The current fee-free policy has not been implemented as a planned intervention. As with the implementation on the PEDP earlier, the policy has resulted in a surge of enrolment in Standard One leading to shortages of classrooms, desks, teachers and other teaching and learning resources. This was pointed out by nearly all the heads of school, parents, and school committee/board members. The sudden increase in enrolments has created problems at the school levels negating, in part at least, the benefits of the policy.

However, we need to consider if implementing fee-freeeducation is the best policy option and the best use of national resources. Several school heads stated that the fee-free approach will reduce involvement of parents in their children's education. The fee –free education also treats all the children equally, those whose parents are rich and those whose parents are poor. Should national resources be used to subsidise the education of those children whose parents can afford to contribute?

One policy option could be to support the neediest ones with abolition of fees and other financial incentives while continuing to collect revenues from those who can afford. Such policies may include conditional income transfers to poor households, as in Brazil's Bolsa Escola programme and South Africa's targeted fee waivers for students from the poorest households (USAID: 2007,6). Different levels of support can be designed depending on the poverty level. Those who can afford can continue to pay, with the amount depending on their ability to pay. Children of the marginally poor may be exempted from paying fees. Those in extreme poverty should be exempted from paying fees and other education related expenses such as uniform, exercise books, meals. These should be paid for by the state. Giving cash incentives for attending schools will reduce dropout as opportunity cost of working will no longer appear attractive.

Government needs to ensure that the fee-free education is sustained over a period to ensure children of the poor enrol and remain in school. PEDP too was a fee-free commitment by the government whereby the government agreed to provide 10$ per pupil as capitation grant. Overtime the capitation grant received by school declined and parental contributions increased, defeating the purpose of fee-free education. Whatever policy options are

considered, the focus on equity and quality should be maintained if schools fee abolition is to be successful.

5.2. Recommendations:

- Governments need to undertake rigorous context-specific cost benefit and social analysis on the policy options that are feasible and that yield the best results. The minimum objective is to ensure that no child is excluded from schooling because of inability to pay or other financial reasons.

- The focus on equity and quality should be maintained if school fee abolition is to be successful. Children from excluded, marginalized, and vulnerable groups may still not be able to attend school, despite fee abolition. These children may need additional, targeted financial and non-financial support to ensure that they benefit from this policy.

- There is need to ensure that information on the policy is shared with and debated by various stakeholders. It is important for stakeholders to be clear about what the aims and goals of the policy are and what is their role is going to be in implementing the policy. Each school should photocopy the circulars that are sent and share them with teachers. These circulars should be prominently displayed on the noticeboards of schools and village offices.

- To improve governance there is need for openness at the school and community level. School management cannot be held accountable by the nearest stakeholders like parents if they are not clear about the policy.

- Government should urgently develop a strategic plan to overcome the quality indicator problems that have arisen because of the implementation of the policy. Shortages of classrooms, teachers, textbooks and other teaching and learning material need to be urgently addressed.

- Communities can play crucial roles in furthering and sustaining effective and quality schools. Abolishing school fees must thus not reduce community support to schools. On the contrary, school fee abolition should expand and strengthen community engagement. Communities should not be prevented from providing additional resources (including in-kind contributions) at their own initiative, as long as they do not entail mandatory contributions by low-income families.

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